

The BankScan Program

If you have to work with financial documents obtained by outside sources you probably understand the difficulty involved in turning such documents into an electronic form suitable for analysis. Certainly investigators and forensic accountants working money laundering and fraud cases deal with a large amount of bank statements obtained through subpoenas. Banks mostly provide these statements as paper or PDF files. Usually the PDF files are just scanned images of the statements, but they can also contain the underlying textual data as well. The task of the investigator is to organize and analyze this financial data, a task best done if the data is normalized into a common electronic format like a spreadsheet or database.

How does one do this? With the advent of inexpensive scanners and accurate optical character recognition (OCR) programs such as OmniPage or Abbyy FineReader, one can quickly convert paper or PDF images into electronic text files. But these text files are raw and unstructured. OCR programs can attempt to tabularize what is recognized, but given the great variety of formats that banks present their statements in, the results normally require extensive manual corrections.

What is desired is an automated method to extract the specific financial transaction data from these documents. BankScan does just that; it is an expert system that uses a library of templates that encapsulate the knowledge about how different banks format their statements. Using BankScan is straightforward. First an off the shelf OCR program is used to create text files from paper or PDF files. These files are input into BankScan, along with the template to use for extracting the data. BankScan then creates a normalized output in several possible formats, such as Excel, CSV, or QIF.

If an OCR program's text recognition accuracy were 100%, BankScan would literally be a "One-Click" operation. Unfortunately banks often provide sub-par quality documents. For example, the figures below show what kind of documents banks can provide. Figure 1 is very clean and legible, and can be expected to translate very accurately into text. Figure 2, because of the small font and poor quality reproduction, will have much less accuracy. This means that the resulting text file will likely contain character errors and other "garbage" text. It may be that an amount like \$100.87 is recognized as S100.37. BankScan has extensive error checking capabilities and a means for the operator to make corrections to the files it processes. The key to getting the most success from BankScan is to provide it with the best possible input, i.e. getting the most accurate recognition from whatever OCR program is being used.

SUNTRUST BANK
P O BOX 622227
ORLANDO FL 32862-2227

PAGE 1 OF 2
83/E00/0175/30/ 40
0782000360397
03/31/2004

SUNTRUST

ACCOUNT
STATEMENT



QUESTIONS? PLEASE CALL
1-800-786-8787

LAST YEAR'S TAX CUTS MAKE IT A GREAT TIME TO PURCHASE BUSINESS EQUIPMENT. BUT THESE CUTS ARE SET TO EXPIRE JAN. 1, 2005, SO NOW MAY BE THE TIME TO BUY. AND SUNTRUST OFFERS TERM LOANS FOR EQUIPMENT TO HELP YOU FINANCE YOUR PURCHASE. STOP BY A BRANCH OR CALL 1-877-370-5108 TO LEARN MORE. NORMAL CREDIT CRITERIA APPLY.

ACCOUNT TYPE		ACCOUNT SUMMARY		STATEMENT PERIOD		TAXPAYER ID	
BASIC BUSINESS CHECKING				03/01/2004 - 03/31/2004			
DESCRIPTION		AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION			AMOUNT	
BEGINNING BALANCE		\$12,222.62	AVERAGE BALANCE			\$35,869.21	
DEPOSITS/CREDITS		\$117,301.59	AVERAGE COLLECTED BALANCE			\$35,794.99	
CHECKS		\$24,646.13	NUMBER OF DAYS IN STATEMENT PERIOD			31	
WITHDRAWALS/DEBITS		\$17,223.93					
ENDING BALANCE		\$87,654.15					
DEPOSITS/CREDITS							
DATE	AMOUNT	SERIAL #	DATE	AMOUNT	SERIAL #	DATE	DESCRIPTION
03/16	200.00		03/31	2,101.59			DEPOSIT
03/03	15,000.00						ONLINE BANKING TRANSFER FROM 0175 782000359528
03/24	100,000.00						INCOMING FEDWIRE CR TRN #003387
DEPOSITS/CREDITS: 4				TOTAL ITEMS DEPOSITED: 4			
CHECKS							
CHECK NUMBER	AMOUNT	DATE PAID	CHECK NUMBER	AMOUNT	DATE PAID		
3986	160.06	03/01	4004	48.94	03/22		
3987	9.50	03/01	4005	27.95	03/23		
*3990	551.00	03/03	4006	451.01	03/19		
3991	384.53	03/03	4007	8.06	03/22		
3992	296.60	03/01	4008	1,388.62	03/24		
3993	222.82	03/04	4009	1,530.00	03/29		
*3995	39.75	03/01	4010	166.42	03/24		
3996	42.92	03/01	4011	25.43	03/22		
3997	30.00	03/01	4012	7.46	03/26		
3998	756.56	03/01	4013	16.19	03/29		
3999	140.58	03/09	4014	345.26	03/30		
4000	13,395.49	03/08	4015	296.60	03/29		
4001	1,991.44	03/16	4016	215.00	03/30		
4002	390.61	03/23	4017	13.72	03/29		
4003	937.05	03/22	4018	756.56	03/30		
CHECKS: 30 *BREAK IN CHECK SEQUENCE							
WITHDRAWALS/DEBITS							
DATE	AMOUNT	SERIAL #	DESCRIPTION				
03/01	39.95		ELECTRONIC/ACH DEBIT MERCHANT SERVICE 0102043205 492600102043205				
03/02	49.49		ELECTRONIC/ACH DEBIT MERCHANT SERVICE 0102033750 492600102033750				
MEMBER FDIC				CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE			

Figure 1. Ideal statement – uniform legible font, minimal graphics, clean background

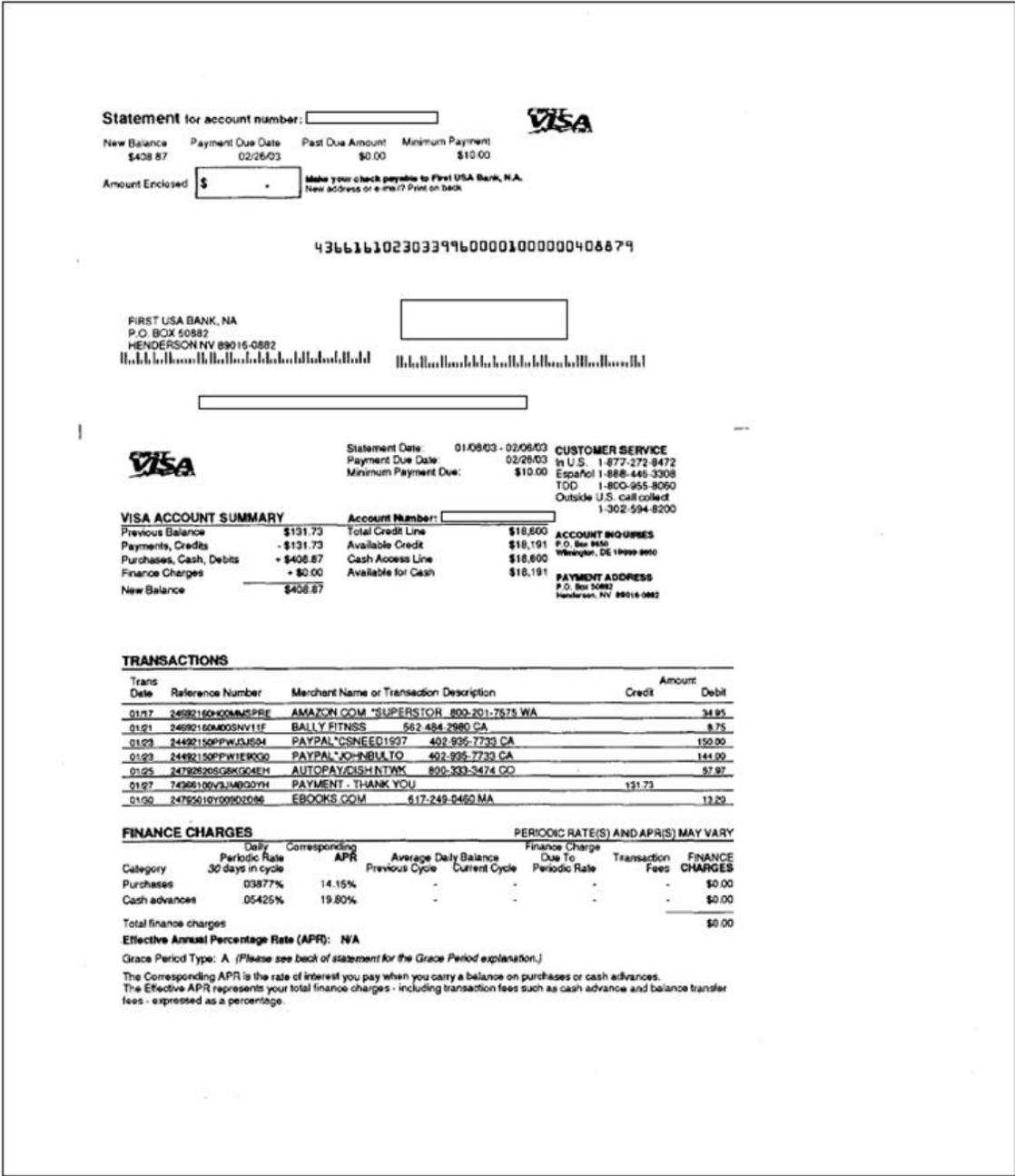


Figure 2. Poor statement – tiny illegible font

BankScan does not attempt to re-invent the wheel with OCR, a field that has been extensively researched for decades. Millions of lines of source code have been written to create commercial products reaching a very high level of accuracy. Our experience from scanning hundreds of different bank statement formats has determined that the OmniPage program sold by Nuance combines the most accurate recognition with a very easy to learn user interface. Features in OmniPage such as the ability to zone specific areas for recognition and a simple means of training to improve accuracy make this the recommended program to use with BankScan.

OmniPage and BankScan are not integrated together, they are standalone applications. For example, if an office has only a few scanners, then several scanning stations can be set up with a copy of OmniPage at each one. An operator can scan and recognize their statements then take the text files to their desk and use BankScan there. In this sense BankScan does not attempt to be a “systems solution”. It is not an evidence management database or analysis tool. It does one thing very well, convert unusable information into usable information.

BankScan Walkthrough

In this section we will walk through the operation of BankScan on a typical generic bank statement. The first step is to check the statements to be scanned. Statements should be in date order and checked for missing pages, duplicates; any issues that would complicate processing further down the line. Then the statements are scanned in OmniPage and converted into text files. Figure 3 shows a view of the OmniPage program in operation. The recognized text can be saved in many different formats, but for BankScan we just need a simple text (.TXT) file.

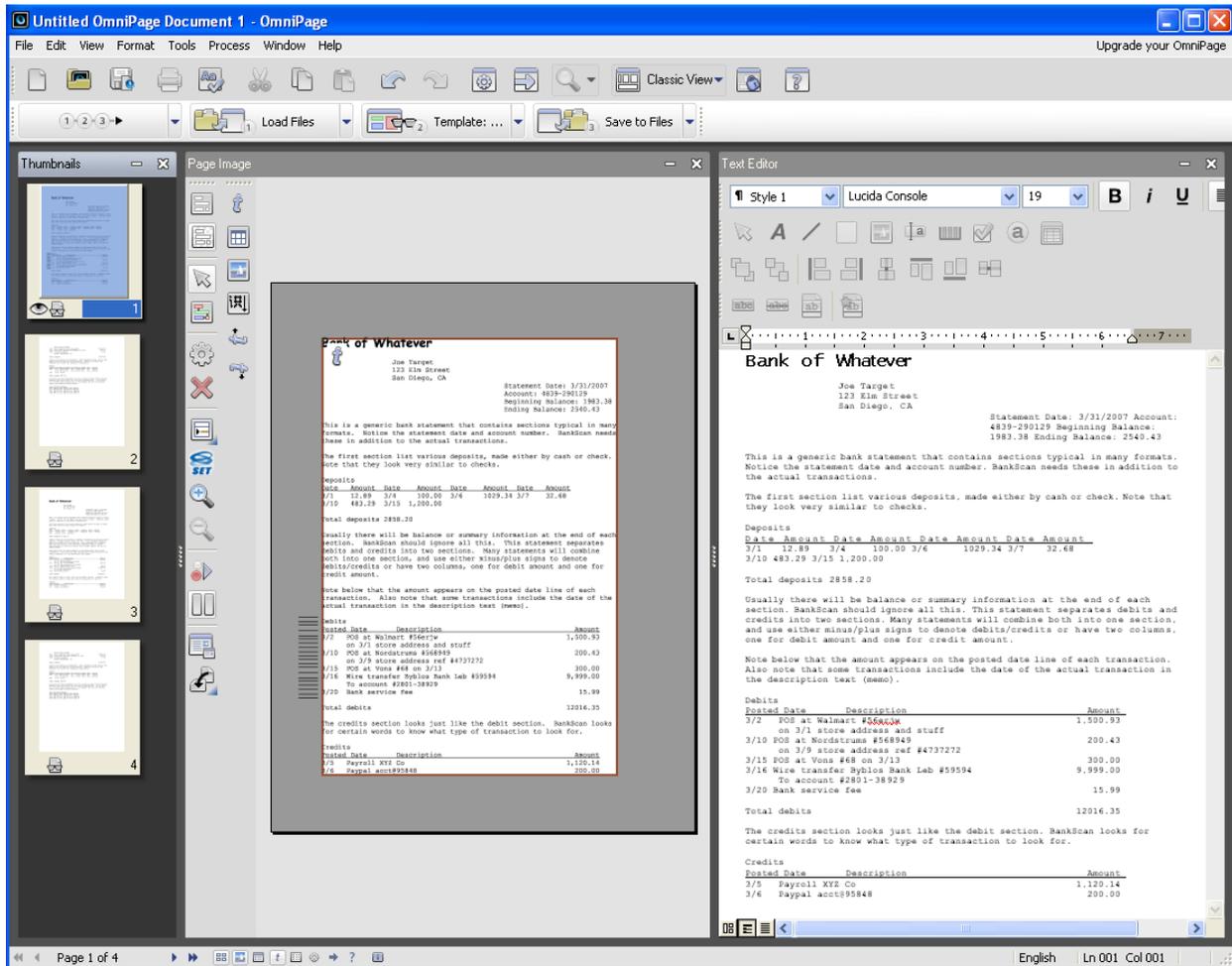


Figure 3. OmniPage graphical user interface

The resulting .TXT file is shown below in WordPad. Notice that OmniPage can preserve much of the original formatting of the original image. This is important when transactions (debits or credits) can only be distinguished by what columns their amounts fall under. The next step is to start BankScan and read in this file for processing.

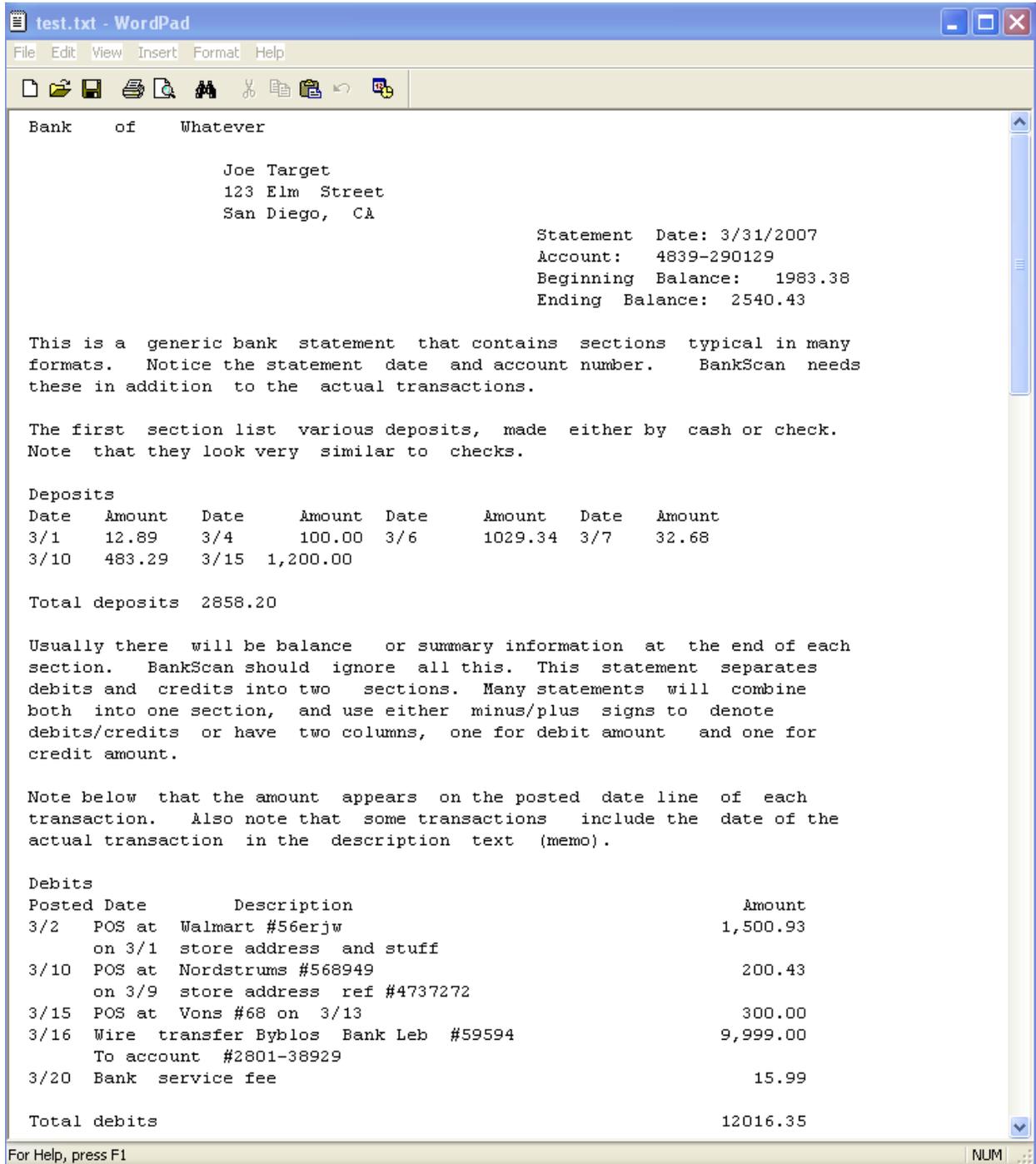


Figure 4. The recognized text – notice formatting is preserved

The BankScan user interface consists of two main areas. The top half has several tabs that provide information about its operation and results, the lower half is a specialized text editor window for making corrections in less than 100% accurate files.

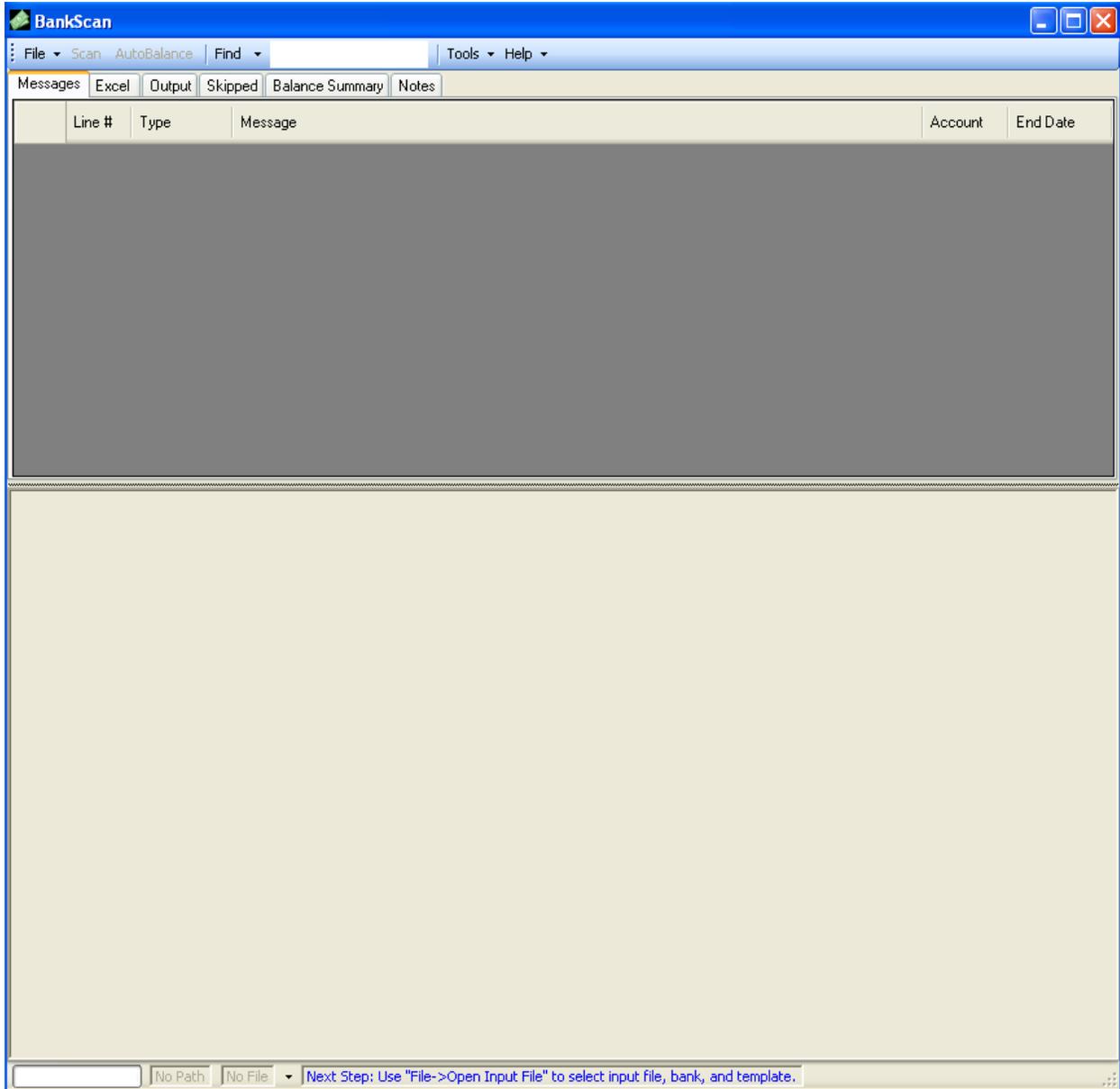


Figure 5. BankScan graphical user interface

The operator opens the text file to be processed, then selects the appropriate template from the BankScan library. This template tells BankScan everything it needs to know about how to extract the transactions out of a particular statement format. Each template has an associated image representing that format. Selecting the correct template is done by making a visual comparison of the statements to be processed against each template image for that bank. Early attempts to try and detect the correct

template automatically proved infeasible, it is much faster to use the pattern matching capabilities of a human! Banks can have MANY different formats, and they are constantly changing them.

Figure 6 shows how the template is selected in BankScan. First the bank is selected from a drop-down list, and then the template images for that bank are checked against the statements being scanned. The closest matching image is selected. If none of the template images match the statement then a new template must be created and added to the library.

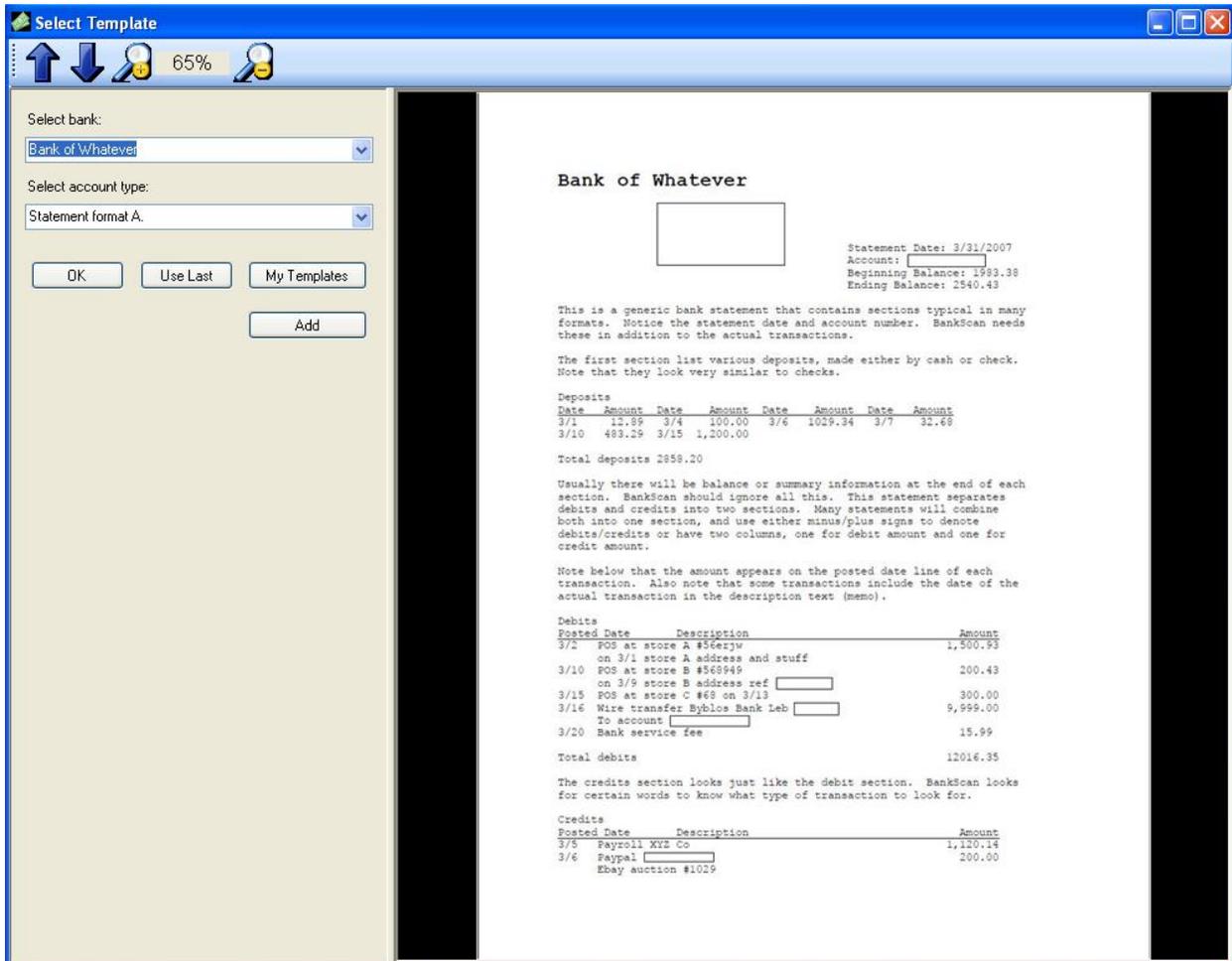


Figure 6. Template chooser

After the template is selected BankScan processes the text file and reports any issues it might have had extracting the transactions. It does this by displaying yellow warning messages in the Messages tab and marking the suspect area in the lower editing window. In Figure 7 we see that BankScan has found three issues that need operator attention. For example, at line #00045 a date 3/15 has been misrecognized to be 3115. In many cases BankScan knows what the problem is, but errs on the side of caution and requires operator verification. For recognition errors that are common to a particular format, the template can be built with automatic corrections. The task of the operator is to either make corrections

in the editor window or tell BankScan to ignore the warning (again erring on the side of caution. BankScan can flag non-issues).

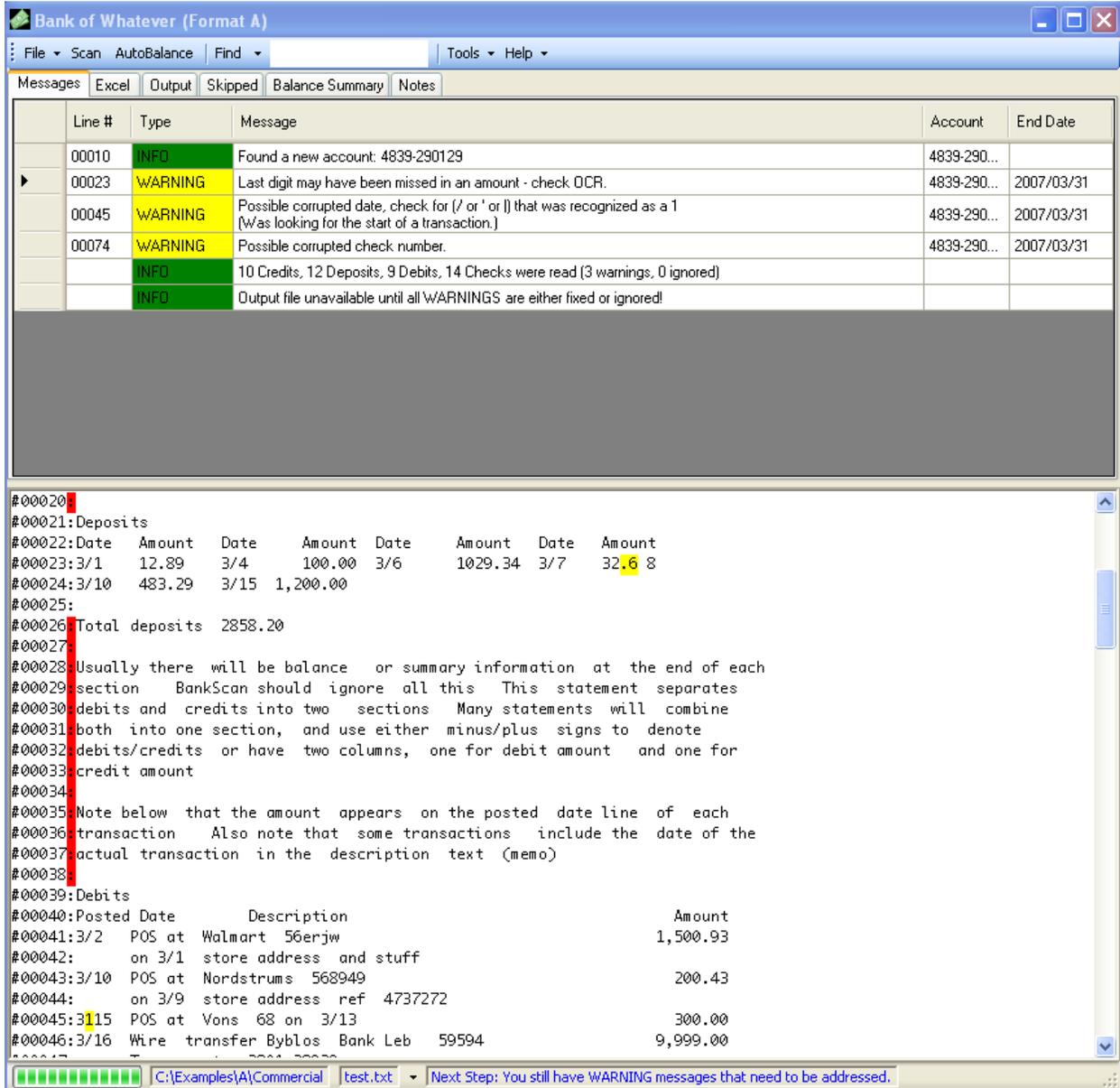


Figure 7. Messages tab

The number of warning messages the operator may have to clear depend on the accuracy of the OCR results. Poor quality statements (those with small or illegible fonts, low contrast, artifacts such as speckling, etc...) will require more corrections. For example, some fonts certain banks use make it very difficult to distinguish 6 from 8, which can cause balance checks to fail when an amount of \$606.86 gets turned into \$806.68!

In order to avoid the operator from having to flip through stacks of paper statements for making corrections, OmniPage can create a searchable PDF of statement images that BankScan can link to. For

example, suppose in Figure 8 that the amount 1,X00.93 needs to be corrected for the bad digit X. The operator can quickly locate the correct amount by double-clicking on the warning message. This causes the PDF to be displayed and the area in question to be highlighted. Then, checking the image it can be seen what the digit X should actually be. This feature is most convenient when the operator has two monitors, one for the PDF display window, and the other for the BankScan program.

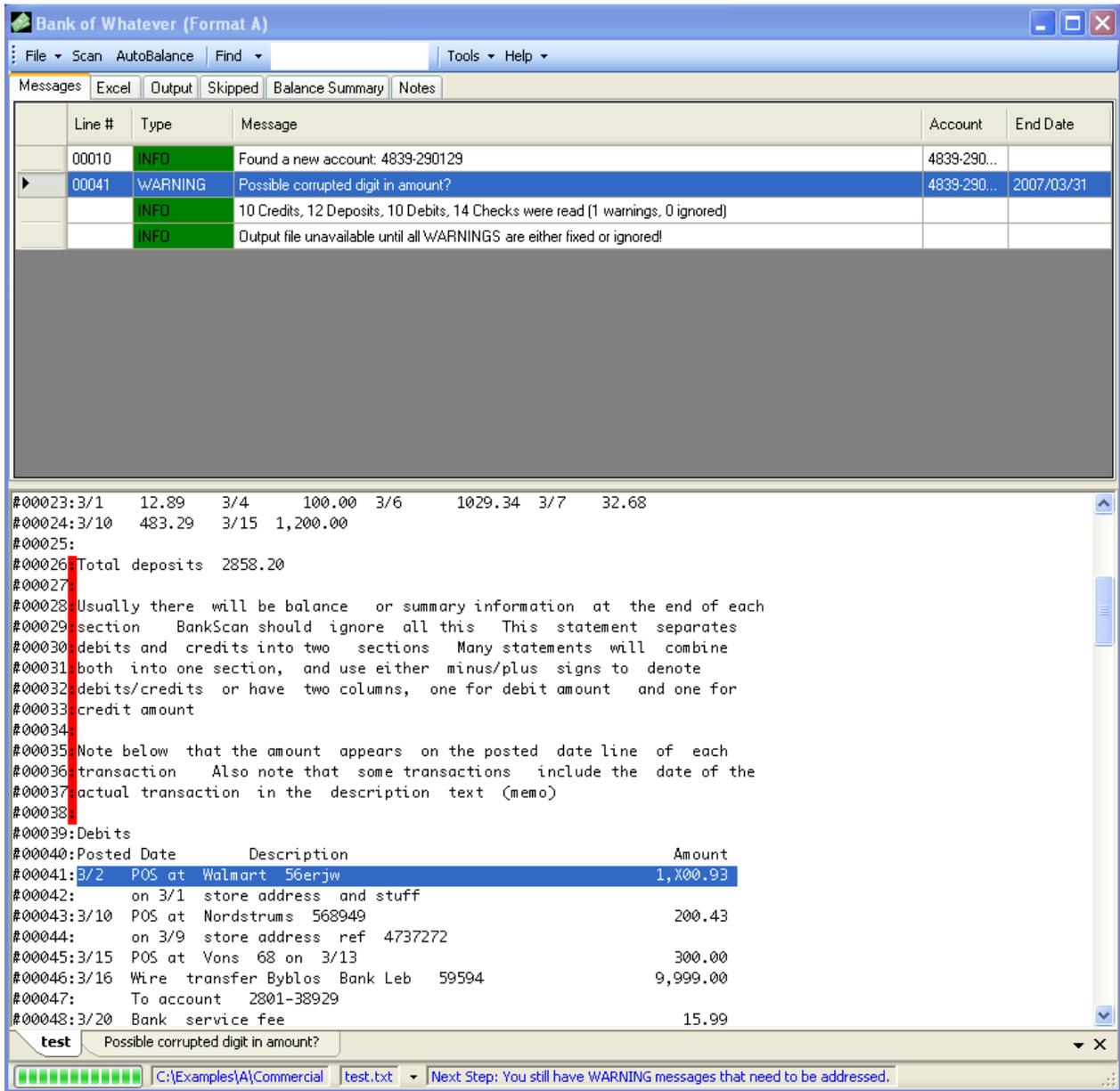


Figure 8. Warning message about a corrupted digit

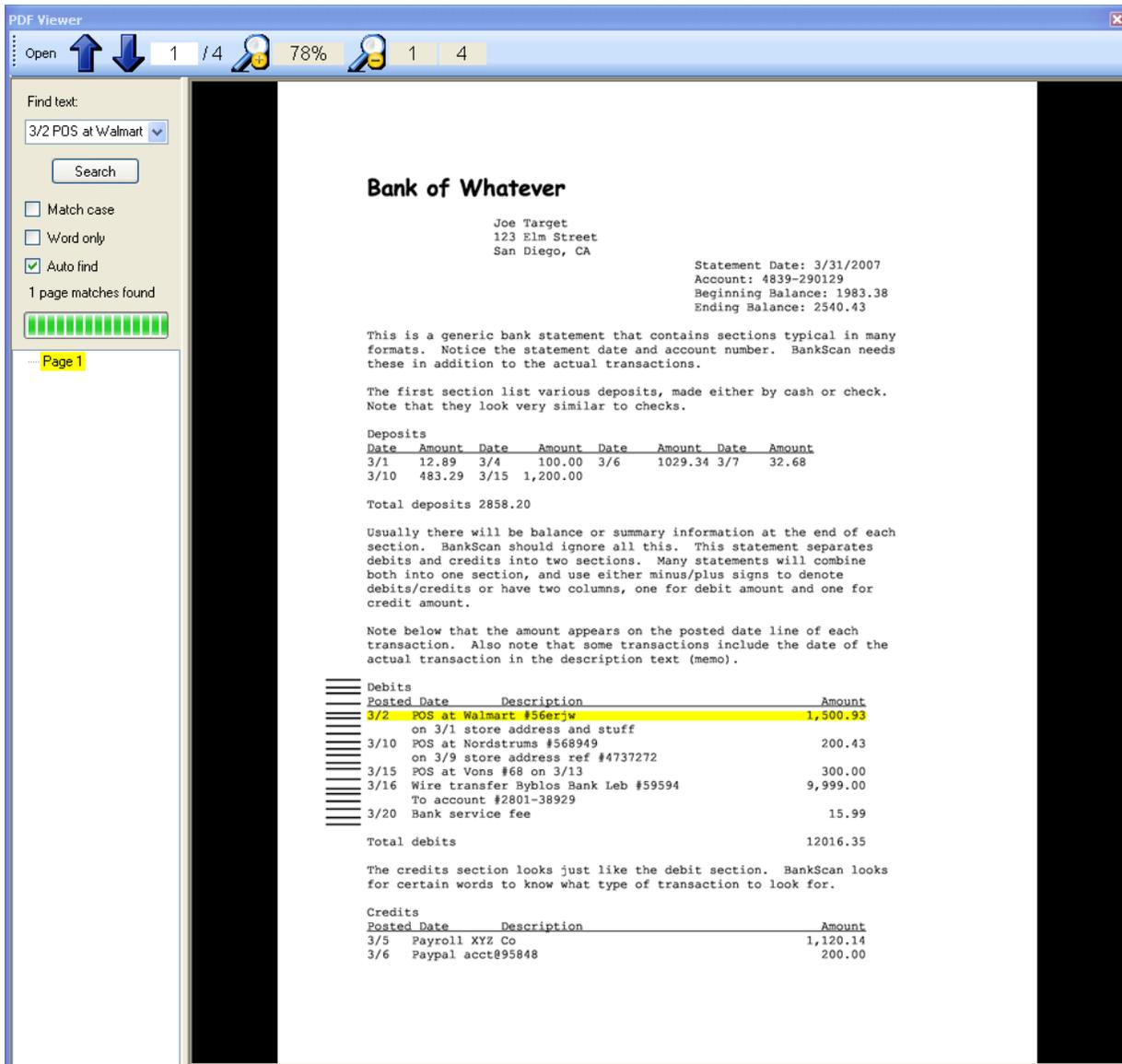


Figure 9. Locating a correction in the PDF of the statement

The other tabs in the top half of BankScan show the transactions that have been extracted, lines that have been skipped over, and the results of the AutoBalance function.

The screenshot shows the 'Bank of Whatever (Format A)' application window. The 'Output' tab is active, displaying a table of transactions and a log of the AutoBalance process.

Line #	Type	Account	Trans	Posted	Credit	Debit	Balance	Description
00024	DEPOSIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/10	483.29	0.00	3,641.58	DEPOSIT
00024	DEPOSIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/15	1,200.00	0.00	4,841.58	DEPOSIT
00041	DEBIT	4839-2901...	2007/03/01	2007/03/02	0.00	-1,500.93	3,340.65	POS at Walmart 56erjw on 3/1 store address and stuff
00043	DEBIT	4839-2901...	2007/03/09	2007/03/10	0.00	-200.43	3,140.22	POS at Nordstrums 568949 on 3/9 store address ref 4737272
00045	DEBIT	4839-2901...	2007/03/13	2007/03/15	0.00	-300.00	2,840.22	POS at Vons 68 on 3/13
00046	DEBIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/16	0.00	-9,999.00	-7,158.78	Wire transfer Byblos Bank Leb 59594 To account 2801-38929
00048	DEBIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/20	0.00	-15.99	-7,174.77	Bank service fee
00057	CREDIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/05	1,120.14	0.00	-6,054.63	Payroll XYZ Co
00058	CREDIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/06	200.00	0.00	-5,854.63	Paypal acct@95848
00061	CREDIT	4839-2901...		2007/03/10	9,999.99	0.00	4,145.36	Wire transfer First Bank 848
00062	CREDIT	4839-2901...	2007/03/18	2007/03/19	200.43	0.00	4,345.79	POS return Nordstrums 568949 on 3/18

The output log below the table contains the following text:

```

#00030: debits and credits into two sections Many statements will combine
#00031: both into one section, and use either minus/plus signs to denote
#00032: debits/credits or have two columns, one for debit amount and one for
#00033: credit amount
#00034:
#00035: Note below that the amount appears on the posted date line of each
#00036: transaction Also note that some transactions include the date of the
#00037: actual transaction in the description text (memo)
#00038:
#00039: Debits
#00040: Posted Date      Description      Amount
#00041: 3/2    POS at Walmart 56erjw      1,500.93
#00042:      on 3/1 store address and stuff
#00043: 3/10  POS at Nordstrums 568949      200.43
#00044:      on 3/9 store address ref 4737272
#00045: 3/15  POS at Vons 68 on 3/13      300.00
#00046: 3/16  Wire transfer Byblos Bank Leb 59594
#00047:      To account 2801-38929
#00048: 3/20  Bank service fee      15.99
#00049:
#00050: Total debits      12016.35
#00051:
#00052: The credits section looks just like the debit section BankScan looks
#00053: for certain words to know what type of transaction to look for
#00054:
#00055: Credits
#00056: Posted Date      Description      Amount
#00057: 3/5    Payroll XYZ Co      1,120.14
#00058: 3/6    Paypal acct@95848      200.00
#00059: 3/10   Wire transfer First Bank 848
#00060: 3/18   POS return Nordstrums 568949 on 3/18
#00061:      Interest payment

```

Figure 10. Output tab, transactions that have been found

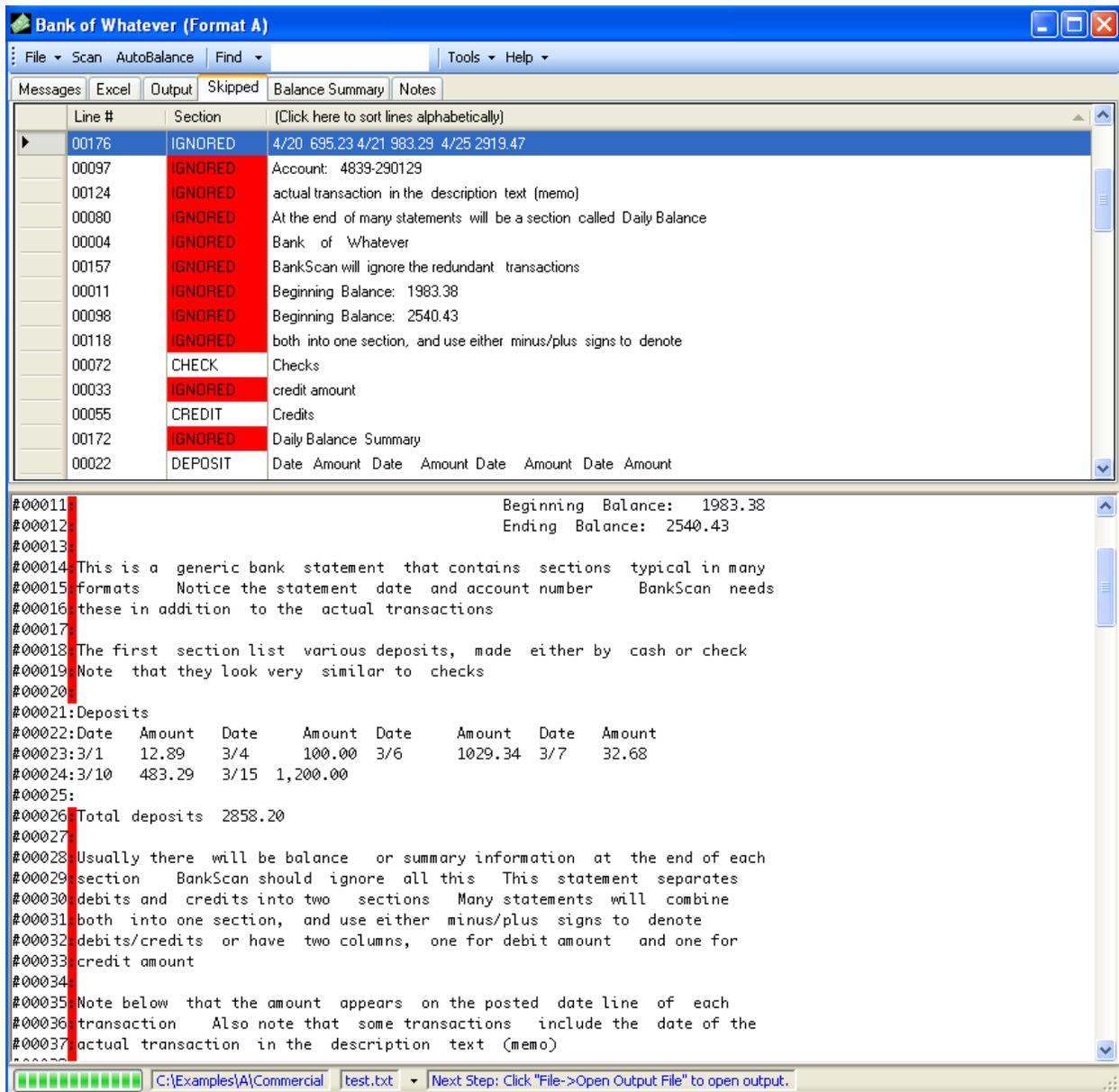


Figure 11. Skipped tab, all of the “left over” lines

AutoBalancing compares calculated statement balances for each month and account number to the expected balances pulled from the statement summaries. It provides an audit check to help make sure that the data has been accurately extracted. All of these tabs are cross indexed to the editor window, making it easy to navigate around the file being processed. BankScan has a number of tools, like daily balance summary marking and balance column checking, to help the user more quickly locate the bad amount digits that throw off the AutoBalance.

The screenshot shows the 'Bank of Whatever (Format A)' application window. The top menu bar includes 'File', 'Scan', 'AutoBalance', 'Find', 'Tools', and 'Help'. Below the menu is a tabbed interface with 'Messages', 'Excel', 'Output', 'Skipped', 'Balance Summary', and 'Notes'. The 'Balance Summary' tab is active, displaying a table with the following data:

Line #	Account	End Date	Expected Starting Balance	Expected Ending Balance	Calculated Ending Balance	Difference
00076	4839-290129	2007/...	1,983.38	2,540.43	2,540.43	0.00
00163	4839-290129	2007/...	2,540.43	4,784.62	4,784.62	0.00

Below the table is a text editor window showing a bank statement. The text is as follows:

```
#00002: IMAGE_FILE C:\Program Files\BankScan\Templates\Images\E\exampleA.jpg
#00003:
#00004: Bank of Whatever
#00005:
#00006: Joe Target
#00007: 123 Elm Street
#00008: San Diego, CA
#00009: Statement Date: 3/31/2007
#00010: Account: 4839-290129
#00011: Beginning Balance: 1983.38
#00012: Ending Balance: 2540.43
#00013:
#00014: This is a generic bank statement that contains sections typical in many
#00015: formats Notice the statement date and account number BankScan needs
#00016: these in addition to the actual transactions
#00017:
#00018: The first section list various deposits, made either by cash or check
#00019: Note that they look very similar to checks
#00020:
#00021: Deposits
#00022: Date Amount Date Amount Date Amount Date Amount
#00023: 3/1 12.89 3/4 100.00 3/6 1029.34 3/7 32.68
#00024: 3/10 483.29 3/15 1,200.00
#00025:
#00026: Total deposits 2858.20
#00027:
#00028: Usually there will be balance or summary information at the end of each
#00029: statement
```

The status bar at the bottom shows the file path 'C:\Examples\A\Commercial test.txt' and a message: 'Next Step: Click "File->Open Output File" to open output.'

Figure 12. Balance summary tab

The Excel tab is used to select the desired data columns and their names and positions in the output spreadsheet.

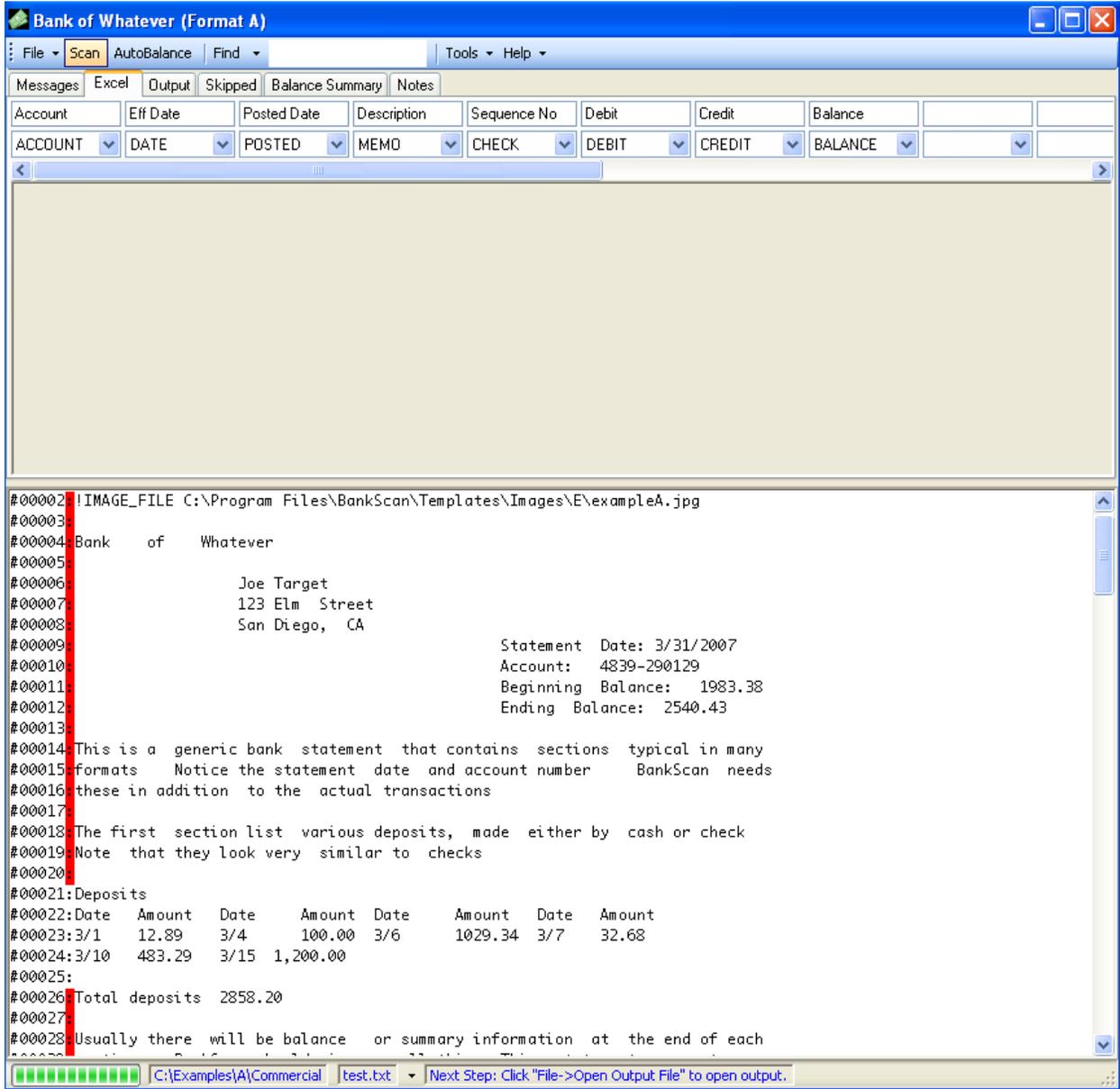


Figure 13. Excel tab

After the operator has cleared any warnings and checked that calculated and expected balances match, BankScan writes the output to an .XML or .XLS file that can be opened in Excel. Once the data has been imported into Excel it is now in the hands of the analyst. The job of BankScan is finished.

Account	Eff Date	Posted Date	Description	Sequence No	Debit	Credit	Balance
4839-290129		3/1/2007	DEPOSIT			\$12.89	\$1,996.27
4839-290129		3/4/2007	DEPOSIT			\$100.00	\$2,096.27
4839-290129		3/6/2007	DEPOSIT			\$1,029.34	\$3,125.61
4839-290129		3/7/2007	DEPOSIT			\$32.68	\$3,158.29
4839-290129		3/10/2007	DEPOSIT			\$483.29	\$3,641.58
4839-290129		3/15/2007	DEPOSIT			\$1,200.00	\$4,841.58
4839-290129	3/1/2007	3/2/2007	POS at Walmart 56erjw on 3/1 store address and stuff		-\$1,500.93		\$3,340.65
4839-290129	3/9/2007	3/10/2007	POS at Nordstrums 568949 on 3/9 store address ref 4737272		-\$200.43		\$3,140.22
4839-290129	3/13/2007	3/15/2007	POS at Vons 68 on 3/13		-\$300.00		\$2,840.22
4839-290129		3/16/2007	Wire transfer Byblos Bank Leb 59594 To account 2801-38929		-\$9,999.00		-\$7,158.78
4839-290129		3/20/2007	Bank service fee		-\$15.99		-\$7,174.77
4839-290129		3/5/2007	Payroll XYZ Co			\$1,120.14	-\$6,054.63
4839-290129		3/6/2007	Paypal acct@95848			\$200.00	-\$5,854.63
4839-290129		3/10/2007	Wire transfer First Bank 848			\$9,999.99	\$4,145.36
4839-290129	3/18/2007	3/19/2007	POS return Nordstrums 568949 on 3/18			\$200.43	\$4,345.79
4839-290129		3/29/2007	Interest payment Annual percentage .56			\$2.32	\$4,348.11
4839-290129		3/3/2007	CHECK #1011	1011	-\$110.00		\$4,238.11
4839-290129		3/5/2007	CHECK #1012	1012	-\$21.49		\$4,216.62
4839-290129		3/7/2007	CHECK #1014	1014	-\$392.21		\$3,824.41
4839-290129		3/10/2007	CHECK		-\$100.00		\$3,724.41
4839-290129		3/12/2007	CHECK #1015	1015	-\$129.50		\$3,594.91
4839-290129		3/14/2007	CHECK #1016	1016	-\$1,000.00		\$2,594.91
4839-290129		3/20/2007	CHECK #1017	1017	-\$54.48		\$2,540.43
4839-290129		4/2/2007	DEPOSIT			\$22.79	\$2,563.22
4839-290129		4/5/2007	DEPOSIT			\$150.50	\$2,713.72
4839-290129		4/7/2007	DEPOSIT			\$1,050.30	\$3,764.02
4839-290129		4/8/2007	DEPOSIT			\$42.88	\$3,806.90
4839-290129		4/11/2007	DEPOSIT			\$553.60	\$4,360.50
4839-290129		4/16/2007	DEPOSIT			\$1,500.00	\$5,860.50
4839-290129	4/1/2007	4/3/2007	POS at Costco 76erjw on 4/1 store address and stuff		-\$540.03		\$5,320.47

Figure 14. Output in Excel spreadsheet

The BankScan Template Library

To date the BankScan template library contains over 3800 templates covering over 2500 financial institutions. This is by no means complete, new templates are constantly being added. When a new template is needed, a sufficient sample of statement data is provided as both a PDF image file and the recognized text file. The sample should cover at least a year and include all possible account types (checking, savings, loans, etc...) and transaction types (checks, deposits, electronic, etc...) Using this sample a new template is built. A simple statement template can take as little as 15 minutes to create.

If a sample used to create a template does not contain a particular account type or transaction type, those types may be skipped over in subsequent statements that have them. The BankScan editor window contains tools for pulling in skipped transaction sections and inserting information such as account numbers, statement ending dates, and starting/ending balances as a temporary work around until the existing template can be updated with the new information.

Currently a BankScan licensee does not have the ability to create templates; it is done as a support service for the program. Not only are new templates added to the library, but updates to existing ones also occur on a regular basis. Keeping the program and library updated is done through a simple web based download. First BankScan downloads a signed list of template files along with a hash for each file. It compares these hashes with those calculated from its local templates. If they match then the files are up to date, if not the remote template is downloaded and its hash verified with that in the signed list. If it matches then the local file is replaced.

For installations running BankScan on several machines, a central library location can be defined so that only one library needs to be kept updated. For installations where an internet connection is not allowed for security reasons, an update file can be created on one internet connected machine and then installed on the isolated ones.

Extending BankScan – FileScan

BankScan is a specialized subset of a much more general built in tool called FileScan. FileScan uses templates to extract desired data fields from almost any type of document – shipping invoices, medical records, FedWire reports, etc... Figure 15 shows some of the types of documents that can have data fields pulled out of them. Because of the more generic nature of FileScan there is far less error checking involved.

The image displays four distinct scanned documents. On the left is a 'Non-Returnable Manifest' from Health Way Pharmacy, listing various medical supplies like prenatal tabs and personal care items with their respective quantities and prices. In the top right is a shipping invoice from DHC HealthCare, detailing a shipment of composite wrist braces with a total value of \$20,000.00. The center features a FedEx Services tracking page with a search bar and a list of tracking numbers. On the right is a Bank of America check for \$20,000.00, dated 2/4/2010, payable to the order of [redacted], with a memo line indicating 'Funds Transfer'.

Figure 15. Sample of documents read by FileScan

To illustrate the usefulness of FileScan, consider that banks often provide images of printed checks that have been issued on an account. These images contain important items such as the payee, address, and “memo” line, which do not appear with the associated transactions in the bank statement (which will just show date, sequence number, and amount). These check images can be converted by OmniPage to text, and FileScan used to extract the additional data items. A special merge tool can also be used to match up and combine this data with the overall bank statement spreadsheet.