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Western Kentucky University

Western Kentucky University saves more than files
with new digital records processes

"Ricoh worked with my office and IT to develop a plan to scan and import documents into our enterprise database. Now, we can access any transcript in moments, so we can offer faster, better customer service."

– Western Kentucky University Registrar

"We worked with Ricoh Document Scanning Services and our own technical support team to recreate our entire filing system, making it faster and more intuitive."

– Western Kentucky University HRIS Administrator

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is a growing university with more than 20,000 students located in Bowling Green on an idyllic hilltop campus acclaimed as one of the most beautiful in the nation. True to its spirit, WKU offers an inviting, nurturing, and challenging environment, which is responsive to the needs of a diverse and ambitious learning community. Its engaged campus community strives to deliver long lasting solutions for everyday problems as part of its transformation into a leading American university with international reach.

CHALLENGE

Ricoh is one of several premier vendors that WKU uses for its fleet of document output devices. Ricoh Managed Services has staffed the WKU Print Center for faculty and staff since May of 2002 and the Student in Free Enterprise (SIFE) print center since 2006. In February of 2011, Ricoh expanded its onsite services to mail fulfillment and processing. When the university issued a request for proposal (RFP) to improve records retrieval for its Office of the Registrar, Ricoh representatives saw an opportunity to bring even more value-added services to campus.

Office of the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar stored about 150,000 paper transcripts that were issued from 1906 to 1990 in a large vault lined with file cabinets. Every time a transcript from that era was requested, an employee walked to the vault, located the transcript, printed a copy, re-filed the original and then returned with the copy to the front of the office where it was prepared for mailing. Transcript changes posed another challenge. The older records were placed on microfilm. Unfortunately, the outdated technology prevented amendments from making it to the microfilm file.

CHALLENGE
- Paper-based student transcript and personnel file processes
- Reduce transcript production time and HR records retrieval time

SOLUTION
- Ricoh Scanning Services
- Scan transcripts and HR records for WKU to import into their existing document management system
- Use bar codes to capture the index data

RESULTS
- Expedited retrieval of student and employee personnel files
- Increased productivity and efficiency

Human Resources Department

With more than 2,500 employees on campus, the Human Resources Department sought more efficient ways to manage faculty and staff personnel records. Each record comprised numerous documents, many including sensitive or confidential information.

HR staff entered key information from every file into WKU's electronic records system. Then, they filed the paper documents—following a precise chain of custody process—into one of 14 file cabinets in a secure room.

SOLUTION
Office of the Registrar

University officials were impressed with Ricoh's experience and string of on-campus success stories. "Ricoh had integrated scanning solutions to streamline workflow in other education environments with enterprise database systems," said WKU's University Registrar. "We were confident that they could do the same for WKU."

The Office of the Registrar isolated about 23,000 student transcripts—comprising nearly 65,000 images—for the first phase of the project. These students had attended the university both prior to and after 1990, and therefore had both a paper and electronic transcript. The goal was to index the paper transcript into the university's document management system. Ricoh transported the paper transcripts to the Ricoh Document Scanning Services center in nearby Louisville where each one was scanned by experienced technicians.

Because the transcripts contained social security numbers and other confidential information, Ricoh Document Scanning Services established a clear chain of custody. A barcode system was utilized to capture the student ID to be used for indexing. Each student transcript had

an ID number prior to scanning so the hardcopy records could be identified quickly. In addition, every box filled with transcripts was clearly marked and every step of the process was documented to help ensure every file was secure and accessible the entire time.

WKU IT staff worked with the Ricoh project manager to develop a plan to integrate the scanned documents with the university's enterprise database that has housed all student transcripts since 1990.

Human Resources Department

HR stakeholders wanted to improve document imaging workflow, too. "We needed a reliable, fool-proof system to reduce workload for our team," said WKU's Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) Administrator. "We worked with Ricoh Document Scanning Services and our own technical support team to recreate our entire filing system, making it faster, more intuitive and more cost efficient."

The Human Resources Department conducted a trial test of the new system that included ten personnel files comprising more than 2,000 documents. Initially, the team was skeptical of confidential employee information leaving the premises. But, Ricoh's work with the Office of the Registrar bolstered trust and goodwill throughout campus. The Human Resources Department was also assured that Ricoh's processing center was secured with controlled, restricted and monitored access. In addition, all documents, from the point of pickup to final delivery, are subject to robust security measures.

Every paper document in the personnel file—including copies of driver's licenses, resumes, background checks, letters of recommendations and more—were scanned and prepared for import directly into the department's enterprise database. "The documents came in all shapes, sizes and conditions," said the HRIS Administrator. "Some of them were barely legible. We were shocked when many documents were easier to read after they were scanned."

Case Study

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RESULTS

Office of the Registrar

Ricoh Document Scanning Services scanned the documents and provided a test file for WKU to evaluate prior to scanning all of the transcripts. Then, it provided the WKU IT team with the 23,000 scanned student transcripts to be imported into the existing enterprise database. Now, WKU is one step closer to having every student transcript in an easy-to-use system. The second phase of the project involved student transcripts prior to 1990 — approximately 128,000 student transcripts comprising more than 305,000 images. The images were scanned as PDF/A with OCR.

"Scanning in the older transcripts has made it easier for office staff," said WKU's University Registrar. "Now, when a transcript is requested, the employee can find it online and print it immediately. Instead of walking all the way to the vault for a search, they're done after reaching over to pick it up from the printer."

The new process, however, was not without its unique complications. "The scans were too good," said WKU's University Registrar. "We could actually see the glue from when we affixed labels to the transcripts. Ricoh was able to adjust the scan settings and reduce noise to produce a clean and readable copy."

Human Resources Department

More than 140,000 documents have been scanned and integrated with WKU's HR enterprise database. As part of the transition, HR stakeholders clearly defined which documents are required and which ones can be discarded. Each document is scanned as PDF/A with OCR so HR staff can quickly search for relevant data with ease.

"We're thrilled with the adoption of the new document imaging system," said the HRIS Administrator. "We can flip through files one click at a time now. As a result, a file preparation process that once took us hours to complete can be performed in a matter of minutes."

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