

Case Study

education

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University of South Florida (USF)

Ricoh Provides Student Printing Services to Reduce Bottlenecks

"Students have faster, easier access to affordable printing services at more places across campus. We have structured, standardized print services that can be maintained more economically."

– Craig Woolley,
Assistant Vice President:
Information Technology,
University of South Florida

– Eric Pergola,
Technology & Systems Manager:
Information Technology,
University of South Florida



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

As its enrollment approaches 50,000, USF is committed to serving the needs of every student. Its IT team collaborated with USF student government and Ricoh representatives to overhaul print services at every print location, for every student. The goal was to make printing more accessible for students and more affordable for the university.

CHALLENGE

The serpentine lines formed early in the day. Beginning at the sign-in desk and stretching past the dozens of personal workstations and out through the door, students grew frustrated as they waited in the student center to print assignments, notes and other important school documents.

"They could have saved time by printing elsewhere on campus," said Craig Woolley, Assistant Vice President: Information Technology, USF. "The student center averaged about six million prints every year. Even though there are about 20 other print locations across campus, they only averaged about 1.5 million prints combined. Students didn't want to pay for printing services."

With a growing disconnect between the IT-managed pay-for-print labs and the labs run by the student government organization, the university needed to consolidate efforts to give students easier printing access without sacrificing student funds or IT budgets.

CHALLENGE

- Decentralized on-campus print services
- Long lines for students at popular print center
- Pay-for-print locations underused
- Students granted more than allotted number of free prints

SOLUTION

- Collaborative approach for centralized print management
- Ricoh Professional Services, printers and MFPs
- Integration with embedded Pharos Uniprint and iMFP
- Authentication to monitor usage

RESULTS

- Successful partnership between USF Student Government and IT
- Print usage evenly distributed around multiple campus locations
- Higher volumes of prints handled more quickly, economically
- Overall higher user satisfaction

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SOLUTION

The best partnerships evolve over time. For more than 25 years, Ricoh provided copiers and printers for USF. Then, in a discussion with a key decision-maker of the IT team, Ricoh was asked to conduct an analysis of the on-campus print centers. The IT team believed that the free print services offered by the student-run print centers were too expensive to maintain.

“We needed to improve our relationship with the student government organization,” said Pergola. “RicoH representatives helped spearhead change by showing us exactly where our bottlenecks were, and more importantly, by offering suggestions to minimize them.”

IT wanted to curb excess free printing while expanding free print services to the other print labs, including the current coin-only devices managed by multiple IT teams.

The primary student-managed campus print center was located in a prominent building that served as a hub for everyday student activities. Since each student was allocated 40 pages per day free of charge at this location, it was usually overcrowded. Students seeking to save money were willing to stand in lines for free printing instead of paying a nominal fee to print at a nearby print location.

“The long lines at the popular print center were becoming a disturbance for other groups on campus,” said Eric Pergola, Technology & Systems Manager: Information Technology, USF. “The students waiting in line for upwards of an hour to print weren’t too happy either. With limited print services, students had few choices but to wait in line.”

When students arrived, they showed their student ID to the helpdesk. The employee would manually search for the student’s name in a large database. It was a cumbersome process. It also offered minimal accountability for employees and students, with many students granted additional free prints by friends working the desk.

Three different IT divisions managed the coin-operated print labs across campus. Instead of working together, however, the two entities battled for the same customers.

Each group was responsible for providing their own printers, toners, paper and other supplies. IT representatives wanted to collaborate with student government officers to implement a centralized solution. An analysis was conducted on the labs managed by student government. With an abundance of inefficient processes and desktop printers, the print labs were very expensive to operate.

Ricoh collaborated with multiple campus groups to centralize print services. The team installed new Ricoh devices and new chargeback software to simplify print operations for students and administration tasks for the university’s IT team.

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Ricoh standardized all print devices. With the first installation, 17 Ricoh copiers, printers and MFPs were added to the fleet. An additional 15 devices were added in a separate installation. Each device offered new capabilities, including scan-to-email — which allowed users to send documents to any email inbox at no cost in only moments.

Since 2002, the university used Pharos Systems software to monitor and assign chargebacks for printer use in selected areas. For the new Ricoh devices, a single print driver was configured to work with an updated version of the Pharos Systems software implemented by the university. With the chargeback system in place, enrolled students are allotted \$2.50 worth of free prints daily. Additional prints cost \$0.11 for black-and-white prints and \$0.22 for color prints.

The new devices include user authentication integrated with the student ID system. Now, users swipe a student ID card to access printer and copier capabilities. All the jobs are managed in a single queue on the single server. Users only have access to their jobs. The authentication features provide added security by restricting unauthorized access to print output. It simplifies the print process and offers more protection for students printing sensitive information or unwilling to potentially share documents with other students.

“The new single server system also simplifies printing for students on the move,” said Woolley. “Students can print to any of the devices across the 20 print locations if they have a wireless connection. The job is stored until released by the student at the copier or printer of their choice.”

RESULTS

The lines have dissipated. In many cases, they’ve been replaced with smiles from students able to print important documents quickly without missing class or deadlines while waiting in line. As a result, more students are more willing to print on campus. In fact, students are printing about 2.5 million more document pages — up to 10 million annually.

By working together to analyze the problem and agree on a solution, USF IT, USF student government leaders and Ricoh were able to implement a print system that benefits everybody. Print services are more evenly distributed across campus. Students still receive affordable printing, but with more convenience. Plus, the university can use the new financial resources for other projects to help students.

When students exceed their allocation of free prints, they can choose to use their Bull Bucks student ID cards for additional prints at a low cost. Because the allocation is set high, students don’t have to worry regularly about incurring excessive print charges.

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They can worry less about time constraints, too. Students can go to any print location and print or copy documents in a matter of moments. They can even begin the print process from their dorm room, computer lab or from any device with wireless access. Plus, they can take advantage of around-the-clock printing at some locations to print when most convenient.

“The revamped print services are favorable for the university, too,” said Woolley. “We have fewer devices to manage. They’re also easier to monitor, because they’re standardized. The new devices eliminate the need for release stations, which saves space in the print centers.

With the transition to new technology and fixed toner and ink costs for all Ricoh devices in the fleet, the university has reduced price per page costs. Ricoh also offers maintenance services when issues arise, so the devices are operational when needed most. Coupled with the increase in revenue from the students’ daily print allowance, the university has been able to help fund other programs for the IT department and student government.

Other universities have taken notice. Two nearby colleges using Pharos for chargebacks have contemplated a similar centralized pay-for-print network on their campuses.

Centralized printing has encouraged more printing while reducing operating costs. The university has been able to help fund other programs for the IT department and student government with the revenue generated from the program.



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