

R S A

APPLICATION STUDY

Pembina Trails School Division Leads the Way for Print Shop Success

Wired is the word to describe Pembina Trails School Division (PTSD) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This school system, in the wide-open plains of central Canada, is a leader in information technology.

In fact, Pembina has been recognized nationwide for innovation and connectivity. Through creative partnerships with technology leaders such as Dell, Microsoft, and Rochester Software Associates, Inc., Pembina has elevated the ways 2,000 teachers teach 14,000 students and communicate throughout 34 buildings.

Created by merging two formerly separate divisions, PTSD invested in its own 23 mile-long backbone of 48-strand dark fiber-optic cabling that delivers an amazing 1 gigabit data transfer rate between school buildings—the fastest in Canada.

While this investment has dramatically enhanced the transfer of information throughout the division, provided PTSD with its own phone system, and actually brought in revenue from other schools in the Winnipeg area, one of the greatest advantages is how it facilitates printing of 2 million pages per month on a wide variety of printers throughout the division.

Printing it old school

In the old model, teachers would print out their worksheets or handouts, for example, and make copies on local copiers.

In many cases, this meant waiting their turn at an overworked copier in their building. For larger jobs, the originals would be picked up by a divisional courier and transported to that school's designated centralized print operation (if one existed) or a local print shop for reproduction.

This could take two or three days and the manual job ticketing process required extra work on the part of the printer operators.

A significant volume of the work was done by local printers, increasing print costs across the division. Pickup and delivery also added time and costs.

To each his own

"Anyone on the network can print to any local printer or the central print shop," explains Don Reece, Director of Information Technology at PTSD.

"We use WebCRD from Rochester Software Associates, for routing jobs to the appropriate printer based on each job's ticketing requirements and each printer's capabilities."

"If teachers are making copies, they're not having contact time with students or working on lesson plans. Using RSA's WebCRD lets printing staff do the bulk of the printing and frees teachers to spend more time with students. It also gives us a more professional job."
 - Don Reece,
 Director of Information Technology

Fulfilling the promise

Using WebCRD, RSA's Portal to the Print Center, was another part of streamlining Pembina's print production process.

WebCRD enables teachers to electronically submit jobs from any desktop, including from home. At PTSD, WebCRD provides greater accuracy for local printing and complete print instructions for jobs submitted to the centralized print facility.

Like many other school systems, PTSD wanted to help teachers be more productive while relieving them of the time-consuming copying and printing of handouts, exams, worksheets and other course materials.

But even though WebCRD promised to make their lives easier, Reece expected pushback from teachers who often change lesson plans at the last minute.

"Teachers want to retain flexibility in planning and reduce potential waste, so they didn't want to have to order materials they would need three days ahead."

But the anticipated pushback never came.

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Pembina now has a modern, streamlined, productive print center as well as even more productive teachers!

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The Print Center can interpose color with black and white pages and put a coil binding on the document, which can't be done with the black and white copiers in the individual schools.

Speedy delivery

"Typical jobs submitted using WebCRD are turned around in 24 hours or less. Since teachers can be confident their job will arrive in time, they just put their order in the day before. They can still print locally if they need something right away or at the last minute," says Reece.

Letting teachers teach

While some schools encourage teachers to use the print center for most jobs, the enabling power of WebCRD lets PTSD takes a different view.

"The difference in cost to print locally versus the print center is not all that great. Wages are about 85 percent of total costs in a school system. So if teachers are making copies, they're not having contact time with students or working on lesson plans. Using WebCRD lets printing staff do the bulk of the printing and frees teachers to spend more time with their students."

"WebCRD also gives us a professional job," observes Reece. For example, we can interpose color pages with black and white pages and put a coil or tape binding on the document, which we can't do with the black and white copiers in the individual schools."

Plays well with others

One of the most important parts of the system at PTSD is the integration with Microsoft Active Directory, the integrated and distributed directory service that is part of the Microsoft Windows Server platform. Pembina uses Active Directory for numerous tasks, both print- and non-print-related, so it was essential that RSA's solution would integrate with their infrastructure for a single user sign-on.

"This was a critical requirement for PTSD, so we worked closely with RSA and their team of programmers to configure their software to work with Active Directory. RSA's technicians were able to turn on a dime and were very responsive to our specific needs. The way they work is what makes RSA different. They are personally involved in seeing that what they install is working properly."

Other technical partners involved in the Pembina Print Center include Xerox, Objectworld, and Colubris. Reece expects great things through the collaborative efforts of these companies along with Rochester Software Associates, Inc., making WebCRD an even more powerful tool.

Do the math

The use of RSA's WebCRD has dramatically streamlined job submission, job ticketing, document management, and enabled teachers to work more efficiently. Since the integration of WebCRD, centralized print volume has increased from about 600,000 pages per month to over 2 million. At the same time, staffing requirements have declined by about a third, and Pembina's teachers have more time for students and planning.

"RSA has been an important part of the dramatic reduction in costs and increase in operational efficiency at Pembina Trails School Division," remembers Reece. "Because of some of the things we wanted to do, it was a challenging installation. We had high demands and specific goals. But with RSA it has been a true collaborative effort. We gave them a high target and they are there. I use three words to describe RSA: competent, cooperative and caring." The lesson here is that even for one of the most wired enterprises, it is the human touch that makes the difference.

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