



APPLICATION STUDY

Lincoln Public Schools Links Up With RSA for Great Success

In an age of ever-tightening budgets and demands for accountability, public school systems are under pressure to operate efficiently and maximize every resource. One area where significant advantages can be realized is in the creation, production and management of the myriad of documents produced daily in every school system.

Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) in Lincoln, Nebraska is one such school district that is making the grade by leveraging tools for efficient printing and document management across the entire school district.

The documents produced at LPS are typical of any school system, according to Kirk Langer, Director of Technology. "They include every type of classroom document, from worksheets, tests and exams to licensed materials from online and print resources. Then there are the manuals, forms, district and school newsletters—everything used in any district this size."

Multiple Challenges

From administrators to teachers to support staff, the 33,000-student district operated under conditions common to its counterparts across North America. LPS possessed an aging fleet of stand-alone copiers and relied on a disparate fleet of laser printers. The typical document production process was to print a single original on a small laser printer and make copies on local copiers at each school. This required teachers and staff to spend valuable time making copies rather than on more productive tasks. "It was not a good use of teachers' time," relates Langer. "And not only was it expensive, the costs were neither track-able nor controllable. Even more frustrating, LPS was unable to replace the existing machines on a cycle that would ensure equity among the different schools."

Realizing the print and copy model was untenable, LPS moved to a cost-per-impression model using nearly 300 multi-function devices (MFDs) that could copy, scan and fax. All MFDs are connected to LANs in each of the school district's 60 buildings, which are in turn connected to a fiber-optic network linking the entire school system and a central print

facility housing a variety of print engines. This strategy helped alleviate the print-then-copy process, but LPS wanted to go even further.

"We wanted to optimize the potential of the MFDs, our network and of the production-class machines in the print center," says Langer. "We needed a sophisticated solution, but it had to be one that was easy to use and wouldn't intimidate the people who would be using it every day."

That seemed like a tall order for a system already producing as many as 91 million impressions annually. LPS wanted to print and manage all types of documents, control costs, and eliminate duplication of effort at different schools.

"To build the solution, we worked with Rochester Software Associates to use WebCRD, QDirect, and QDirect.SCAN, in conjunction with the printers to track costs and ensure all documents were printed as efficiently as possible."

Submit to Win

The intelligent MFDs can be used for traditional walk-up copy work, but QDirect.SCAN adds far greater capabilities. A teacher scans a job in, enters job ticketing electronically, and the job is submitted to the Print Center, along with the ticket information. A confirmation page is printed directly at the MFD so the submitter has peace of mind. Because the ticketing is sent electronically along with the scanned job, there is no re-keying, eliminating mistakes.

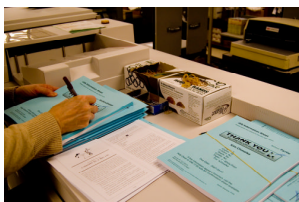
When a teacher creates a test, for instance, they can use SurePDF™ from the classroom, home, or office to "File->Print" the document to PDF, based on Adobe PDF JobReady™, for 100% document fidelity. Upon approval, the job is automatically uploaded to WebCRD and electronically ticketed via the web-based graphical user interface.

"Each day is unique and RSA's software allows us to adapt to the many types of documents we have across the system."
Kirk Langer,
Director of Technology

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The Print Center at LPS works with numerous document types including manuals, forms, newsletters, handouts, tests, quizzes, and more.

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The Advantages of Agility

Based on quantity, paper stock, and finishing, the job can be routed to whichever printer is most appropriate. "QDirect works like an air traffic controller," notes Langer. "There are a lot of different print jobs coming in all the time. Each day is unique and RSA's software allows us to adapt to the many types of documents we have across the system. It's really about agility... What RSA has done with QDirect is provide the agility needed to get each job to the best device for the job's characteristics, to handle large volumes, and automate as much of the process as possible."

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"More importantly," he continues, "we've been able use the data collected about all of these jobs to write processes and decisions into the fabric of QDirect. It has helped us understand what the volumes are like at the different schools and how the machines in the print center should be setup to meet different needs. For example, reports from QDirect told us that the printer in the print center should be running white paper exclusively and that it is the best machine for jobs that represent the greatest daily volume."

No Teacher Left Behind

And QDirect goes further still. For Lincoln Public Schools, RSA created a pathway from QDirect that places both newly created and scanned documents in a repository so they can be easily distributed, shared and printed. This lets all seventh grade science teachers, for example, easily share and use the same course materials, ensuring consistency across the district. This type of enterprise content management is especially powerful for all school systems because it increases efficiency, aids communications and raises the bar on content for all classes and courses.

Key Benefits

Langer cites three key benefits to the relationship with RSA and Lincoln Public Schools. First, teachers can now create re-printable documents instead of duplicating them. Second, there is increased efficiency in having documents produced on the device with the lowest per-copy cost. Finally, QDirect, QDirect.SCAN and WebCRD have been critical in helping LPS assess and evaluate the true cost of document production and management while building accountability into the system. Teachers are responsible for controlling their production costs and principals can monitor them via monthly reports.

By the Numbers

In just over a year since installation, 250,000 print jobs have been output and delivered to teachers and administrators! "The secret to our success has been the fast easy way that users can send us orders using SurePDF and WebCRD," observes Langer. "Our promise is that if we receive the order by 3.30pm, it will be delivered by 7.30am the next day. Increased efficiency in document submission translates to more time that can be spent on the process of instruction."

A Great Partnership

Much of this comes from the decade-plus relationship between RSA. "You could tell there was a true partnership because RSA was able to customize their software to work directly with our environment. It's that agility thing again. If a company has totally proprietary software they can't make a change very easily. But with RSA, you're talking to the engineers and they aren't afraid to make the change. They say, 'Yeah, we can do that.'"

Langer believes the best software does exactly what you need and you don't have to pay for anything else. "That's rare in the software industry," he notes. "With RSA, the degree of customization available is impressive—so you only pay for what you need. Just as important, RSA treats customers like true partners. Their customer's success is as important to RSA as it is to their customer. And for us at Lincoln Public schools, RSA made sure we had a solution that met our needs."

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Jobs are routed to the best printer for each job, based on job characteristics and printer capabilities.