



University of Western Sydney

On-demand service simplifies print operations and removes hidden costs

Case Study, July 2009



University of Western Sydney installs e-commerce enabled web-submission digital print services to streamline print delivery.



"We're giving our clients the flexibility to work when and how they want, with easy access to print quotations and efficient production services."

– Alec Doran, Manager Print Services, Information Technology Services

Introduction

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) has six campuses located in Greater Western Sydney, spread geographically across 8000 square kilometers. UWS Print Services is a business unit within the Information Technology Services department and is located on the Penrith campus. Operating entirely on full cost recovery without allocated funding, the unit delivers competitive, contemporary print management services to students, university staff and a business community of external clients.

The key offerings of UWS Print Services include in-house digital printing, copying, scanning and mailing services, covering large volume orders and special requirements such as student courseware, exam papers, confidential documents and other time-sensitive printing.

Facing several document management challenges related to aging equipment and system integration, UWS Print Services found it harder to offer a streamlined and efficient service. Turnaround times were hampered due to manual, hard copy job submissions from each campus via internal mail, print quality output was inconsistent and reorder processes were cumbersome.

In consultation with Fuji Xerox Australia, UWS Print Services implemented a mass upgrade of its workflow and production print environment. The resulting web-submission-driven print environment was the first of its kind in an Australian university, delivering comprehensive, digital 'print-on-demand' services – black and white and colour – to clients and customers both internal and external to the University.

Challenges

"As we used outdated technology from multiple vendors, it was problematic to offer a streamlined and efficient service," said Alec Doran, Manager Print Services, Information Technology Services.

"Our main print devices were more than ten years old. Consequently we had daily integration and compatibility constraints, extremely slow file processing speeds and inconsistent quality output. It severely hampered our efforts to improve productivity and turnaround times."

Manual processes were contributing to production and distribution bottlenecks. Specific issues involved manual work practices around paper-based delivery of jobs, which had to be scanned into workflow, plus double and triple handling of job ticketing data.

"Academics submitting jobs had to either rely on scheduled daily pick-ups; use the internal mail system operating between campuses, or if they missed these services and had an important job deadline, we would have to organise special urgent pick-ups using Print Services own frontline staff," explains Doran. Overall the print submission system was unwieldy across the campuses and "valuable production time was being lost".

Additionally, the print management and quoting software being utilised had been originally designed for offset rather than digital production, and certain other print technologies in use were no longer current with industry specifications.

There was also miscommunication across departmental print budgets, and staff



members' authorities to print. "Print jobs were being submitted without full authorisation, and it was increasingly difficult for UWS Print Services to manage rights and access," added Doran.

Legacy workflow technologies contributed to print processing delays. The use of multiple vendors meant UWS Print Services faced inefficiencies in its own supply dealings.

Business Solution

Following a collaborative and extensive review of UWS Print Services' print production environment, as well as the administration and business processes involved in the delivery of print services to all University stakeholders, Fuji Xerox Australia recommended a fully-automated print solution that enabled 24/7 online submission and multiple customer payment options.

It included a web-based 'shopfront' that worked seamlessly with new monochrome and colour digital print capabilities, whilst integrating with the wider University's business process for accounting and reporting.

Black and white production capabilities were expanded with the installation of the Xerox DocuTech 6180 and the light production Fuji Xerox 4110. To meet increasing demand

for colour work, the Xerox DocuColor 5000 digital colour press, with its outstanding image quality and wide media latitude, was also installed.

Tying together the production environment, was the Workflow automation Services Platform (WaSP): a modular set of workflow tools for automation and interconnection of different and diverse systems.

For web-based submission and e-procurement, FreeFlow Web Services: an off-the-shelf, end-to-end information and workflow management software solution with online ordering, job quoting and variable data capabilities, was installed.

"Using Fuji Xerox FreeFlow 'off-the-shelf' software modules and FreeFlow Web Services has enabled us to displace the legacy production management quoting tool, and has also provided a PDF-based workflow – from online ordering through to fulfilment – as well as creating a foundation for further automation in the future," said Doran.

Benefits

According to Doran, the switch to online ordering and web submission has "re-engineered" UWS Print Services, with exponential positive shifts within the organisation.

"Previously almost all jobs were submitted manually which meant our staff needed to enter each individual order into our costing system prior to commencing the scanning and print production processes. Since implementing the new FreeFlow Web Services system that has shifted down to around 30 per cent submitted manually and 70% ordered directly by customers using the online FreeFlow web interface. There's no longer any need for any of our customers to experience manual delay around job ticketing or receiving print quotations. We have also seen consistency of print quality improve as we rarely have hard-copy scans to deal with."

Reordering is now much simpler and so much faster, with reduced print staff intervention. "Just-In-Time printing is being driven by our customers, with academics able to access repeat print jobs on demand via the online ordering history 24/7," said Doran.

FreeFlow Web Services has also given greater print budget control to the individual university departments. "Simply, if an academic logging in does not have the budget authorisation to order print, FreeFlow Web Services does not accept the job and instantly redirects the specific print requisition to an authorised user for approval prior to commencement of the printing process. It has empowered the different University school administrators and provided them with greater control over their own academic print budget in real-time."

With the variable data printing capabilities of the Xerox DocuColor 5000 digital colour press, UWS Print Services is also seeing a steady increase in personalised print jobs. "Initially we were seeing spreadsheet-based personalisation - such as varying text for invites - but it is becoming more sophisticated as awareness of our greater print capabilities and expertise grows," said Doran.

Academics are also utilising UWS Print Services to print their own personal jobs, such as new books or submissions. "It's not unusual to see jobs logged at 2am from

certain academics,” smiles Doran. “It’s great to see we’re giving our clients the flexibility to work when and how they want, with easy access to print quotations and efficient production services.”

Within UWS Print Services, the switch to Fuji Xerox as a sole supplier has also simplified operations. “We now have a strategic business relationship with a vendor invested in our success. Fuji Xerox Australia totally supported our efforts to completely transform the university’s in-house digital printing services and workflow processes,” said Doran.

According to Simon Lane, National Manager, Production Services Business at Fuji Xerox Australia, the transformation at UWS Print Services is indicative of the strength of strategic partnering.

“Our mission is to help our customers achieve significant efficiencies in their production print environments and UWS Print Services is a shining example of how Fuji Xerox Australia achieves this. UWS Print Services now enjoys industry best practice because they embraced better ways to operate, pioneering opportunities and realising cost efficiencies through a strategic partnership.”



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