

Nor have students groused about the new payment system. "They realise that printing is now one of those things you have to pay for at Uni. And, since they are now paying for printing, they are more careful to print just what they need, which has led to a significant reduction in wasted pages," she added.

In addition, by outputting documents rapidly at speeds that are four to five times faster than the other printers, the Document Centre 350s and the DocuPrint C621 prevent bottlenecks and enable students to pick up documents without having to contend with long waiting periods, even during peak assignment and exam times.

The DocuShare online repository has also proven to be successful with both staff and the overseas students. Students no longer have to wait for the post to obtain their specialised reading materials; access to information 24 hours a day, seven days a week through DocuShare is making "anytime, anywhere" learning possible. For the Faculty, a spin-off bonus has been the thousands of dollars saved in printing and mailing costs.

"The DocuShare system has assisted our students in accessing materials and readings that would not otherwise be available to them – either through other websites or on our online library catalogues," said Tsembras.

Another plus is that DocuShare ensures that only the most current document is available to users. "This is how we address the challenge of online learning environments and overseas markets – they can offer the most up-to-date content. As a result, we needed to ensure our readings are up to date and current for our students, which DocuShare helps to make possible."

My vision included an online document repository where the students in Singapore could, by using a password, tap into specialised reading materials not available online from the library.



DocuPrint C621

"What we have found is that DocuShare allows us to link the technology to our teaching and learning needs. It is definitely not about having technology for the sake of it," she added.

Now Tsembras is focusing on the staff component to DocuShare. She says that key documents are still scattered around the Faculty, in both paper and electronic formats, and DocuShare is able to eliminate that problem by centralising the material in one easy-to-access location. "DocuShare will allow all documentation to eventually be stored and easily found. This is still not fully in place, but slowly we are getting there."

At this time, Tsembras is looking to extend the Faculty's use of DocuShare by permitting administration and academic staff from each of the departments to post calendar information for internal projects to help in the Faculty's day-to-day workflow. From there, she wants to extend the system to students in Australia so they can tap into relevant information or keep track of when their assignments are due, etc. "We want to use DocuShare more widely as we really appreciate its versatility," explained Tsembras.

In general, the new printers, the printer cost recovery program and the installation of DocuShare have turned the Faculty into a technological role model for academia in the 21st century. "Thanks to Fuji Xerox, we are providing better service to both our staff and students. We're truly revitalised," concluded Tsembras.

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RMIT University awards Fuji Xerox high marks for revamping Faculty technology

New multifunction devices, cost recovery program and online course repository help to serve students and staff better in Faculty of Education, Languages and Community Services

The Client

Melbourne's RMIT University is a 105-year-old educational institution with seven faculties dedicated to the education of more than 50,000 students in Australia and overseas. With campuses in the City and in the suburbs of Bundoora and Brunswick, the University is renowned for its quality education, practical training programs, innovative consultancy/research and its close links with industry employers.

The Faculty of Education, Languages and Community Services is highly regarded for its programs in translation, youth and development, early childhood education and primary/secondary teaching among other disciplines. The Faculty also provides strong leadership in the areas of learner-centered education and training. For example, it offers an innovative, web-based, Masters in Leadership and Management that is a partnership between RMIT University and a private educational institution in Singapore.

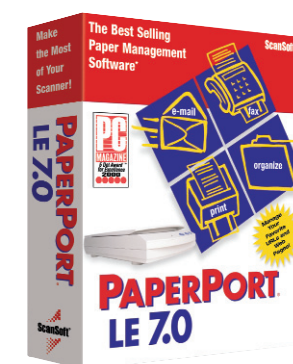
The Challenges

While the Faculty may have been streets ahead when it came to teaching, it was less so in the technology department. When Stavroula Tsembras, the Director of Information Technology joined the Faculty in 1999, she found the Faculty was not "up to speed" with the latest advances in digital printing/copying solutions. Nor were staff utilising the networking functions available to them.

DocuShare®

The Faculty had a mixed fleet of outdated printers and copiers scattered around its various departments – machines that were not coping with student/staff demands. For example, the printers in the student laboratories at Bundoora and the City campuses didn't offer enough memory and were too slow to print. Nor did they offer duplexing options to conserve paper costs. On the staff front, many had low-end inkjet printers that were not networked and often were not able to print out all documentation required due to lack of memory. In addition, replacement cartridges and maintenance costs were too expensive.

The mixed fleet also posed a headache for administration staff, as they had to contend with multiple vendors, service contracts and consumables. "There was also no cohesion with who was ordering what," recalled Tsembras.



Not surprisingly, students, professors and administration staff were keen for an equipment update. Tsembras envisioned a scenario of faster, networked devices with scanning and faxing capabilities. She also wanted to introduce more colour machines around the Faculty so staff and students could have more options when it came to printing course materials and assignments.

There was also another factor: until recently, students in the Faculty of Education, Languages and Community Services didn't have to pay for printing. The student laboratories only had high-cost laser printers that didn't provide the means to recover printing costs from users.

Five years ago, this would not have been such a drama for the Faculty because the printing of educational materials was not as copious as it is today. Nowadays, more students are surfing the Internet and its wealth of websites to get the information they want. As a result, the number of pages sent to the laboratories' printers had skyrocketed with students going through 5,000 sheets a week during normal periods and 10,000 a week during peak exam and assignment times. This was costing the Faculty thousands of dollars per academic year and, as a result, the staff were now finding it too expensive to subsidise this printing.

xerox software solutions

Traditionally, we would mail the reading materials to our overseas students. But now, with a few clicks of a button, we can get information to them instantaneously.



Additionally, since the service was free, students were not overly inclined to be budget-minded about their printing decisions. They would often print documents, make changes, and then print over and over again, until satisfied with their work. They would also download and print entire Web documents – sometimes dozens of pages at a time – instead of just the pages they needed for their research. The Faculty estimated that at least 200 pages a day – about 25 percent of all pages printed by the students – were wasted.

To compound the situation, the outdated printers in the student laboratories struggled to handle the increased workload.

The situation was resolved through the installation of much more productive and less expensive multifunction devices, together with a student cost recovery system. In addition, Tsembras wanted to put in place an online document repository system to help the Faculty with growing knowledge management issues. Key Faculty documents were – and many still are – scattered across various staff computers or filing cabinets instead of being located in one central spot, which is something the Faculty wanted to address. Tsembras wanted a web-based system put in place that would allow documentation to be stored, easily accessed and managed by version and draft controls.

With this she wanted to incorporate aspects of the Faculty's web-based Masters of Leadership and Management program into the repository. "My vision included an online document repository where the students in Singapore could, by using a password, tap into specialised reading materials not available online from the library," she explained.

Clearly, it was time for the Faculty to make some changes.

Tsembras decided to work with just one vendor in the changeover. "I felt working with one company could simplify issues for us considerably," she explained.

But she was not interested in working with a team that would come in, drop some technology and run. She wanted a partnership with a vendor who would take the time to understand the challenges of the academic culture, offering a total solution package, as well as a proper service agreement.

"A decent level of service is important to me as I've had some less than satisfactory experiences over the years and I like the consistency that comes with working with one supplier," she said.

Tsembras interviewed three vendors and eventually decided to entrust Fuji Xerox Australia with the Faculty's technology needs. The Fuji Xerox team, lead by Account Manager Rob Webb, offered a three-fold solution.



DocuColor 1250

The Staff Solution

The team began by installing new multifunction devices at the Bundoora and City campuses, including several Xerox Document Centre 350s and the new Xerox Document Centre C400 for the Faculty office. These fast, black-and-white multifunction machines allow staff to print or copy quickly and offered scanning and faxing capabilities – helping to make staff more productive. In the City, staff also received a Xerox DocuColor 1250, which allows 12-page-per-minute colour printing and 50-page-a-minute monochrome printing over computer networks. It also allows for walk-up colour copying.

The Document Centre 1250 enables staff to produce top-quality colour work including brochures, newsletters and course materials. It means the Faculty no longer has to send out most colour jobs to outside firms as the multifunction 1250 has the speed and quality to handle most jobs in house.

The City installation also included Xerox multifunction devices for the Faculty office and the various school offices. Most of these printer/copier stations were also provided with PaperPort and Textbridge software which helps users quickly integrate hard-copy documents into digital format.

In addition, Pharos unipriNT software was installed on the printers and scanners to track print volume so staff would know if they were under or over-utilising the various devices.

"This multifunction solution has been designed to meet the needs of staff, with faster machines installed in the busier areas around the Faculty to help avoid bottlenecks with workflow," explained Webb.

The Solution for Students

During the equipment installation, Fuji Xerox also implemented a network print management cost recovery program at the Bundoora campus. The solution consists of a rechargeable swipe card, Pharos unipriNT software, two Document Centre 350 Liberators for monochrome work and a DocuPrint C621 printer for printing in colour.

The printers are designed to offer students improved print quality as well as convenience. They offer double-sided printing as well as A3 and A4 print sizes, providing versatility for assignments.

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The cost recovery solution works like this: students send specified pages for printing to either the networked Document Centre 350s or the DocuPrint C621. They enter their names, along with a password, to differentiate their jobs from others that have already been sent to print. A central server picks up the request and determines the cost of the job based on page count. The job is then sent to the appropriate print station without administrative interference. For payment, students simply run their swipe card at the print station and obtain their jobs at the nearby printer.

Students can print 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and have their cards recharged overnight. They are billed 10 cents per page for black and white printing. For colour work, they are charged \$1.50 per A4 page and \$3 per A3 page, with the money taken directly from their swipe card account.

The Solution for Overseas Students – DocuShare

While the printers were being installed, the Fuji Xerox team also worked with Tsembras to get the online document repository established. Here, Tsembras decided to focus on the needs of Singaporean students studying the Masters of Leadership and Management program, with a staff strategy to follow. To do this, the team incorporated a Xerox Document Centre 350, PaperPort software and the Xerox DocuShare software – a web-based repository system into the Faculty's operations.

The Document Centre 350 is a monochrome, 35-page-per-minute, multifunction device that allows scanning of paper documents into digital format. It uses the PaperPort software to upload the information to DocuShare, Fuji Xerox's easy-to-use, secure, web-based solution which lets authorised users manage, post and share information. DocuShare is particularly convenient for storing vast amounts of scanned and electronic information, maintaining any style of file in its native format, which makes it ideal as an "electronic library" for students.

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In addition, DocuShare has the added bonus of only allowing the most current version of a document to be viewed by users, which the Faculty found attractive. It meant students wouldn't be reading an older, outdated document.

Fuji Xerox trained Faculty staff on DocuShare and they have since uploaded many articles written by the Faculty's academics as well as those that have had copyright clearance through the appropriate channels and are currently not available online from libraries. Currently, a 500-user license of DocuShare sits on the Faculty's web as their local Intranet and staff use this to deliver the reading materials plus assignment information and other items of interest to the students.

"Traditionally, we would mail the reading materials to our overseas students. But now, with a few clicks of a button, we can get information to them instantaneously," said Tsembras.

The Results

The installation of the multifunction devices has been an unqualified success. Staff and students are happy with the quality, speed and reliability of the new machines and are delighted to have access to quality colour machines for the first time.

A dedicated staff of Fuji Xerox technicians support the campus solution to help reduce the risk of machine downtime and technology problems are responded to as quickly as possible.



Document Centre 350

Staff are also pleased to work with a single vendor instead of multiple companies, as it has made life less complex. A consolidated billing service has also been set up to reduce the number of invoices the Faculty receives, to minimise the administration of the RMIT account for both parties.

Additionally, Tsembras has access to "fabulous" report information. The solution enables her team to generate reports and track printing by user, time of day and document type, so she can see at a glance if a machine is being over or under-utilised and make modifications, as necessary. The report information is also helping the Faculty administration staff to get a better grasp on toner, paper, cartridge and service call costs.

To Tsembras' relief, the student cost recovery program has also been well received. When it was first mooted, her intention was not to make money from the students, but to rein in the burgeoning costs associated with free printing and, at the same time, provide a better service to students through higher quality equipment. But she was worried about staff and student reaction to the project, she admits.

It was a challenge because Tsembras first had to obtain approval from the Faculty Management Team. The Faculty also prepared documentation about the new system's advantages to give to students during Orientation Week.

Fortunately, the student representatives on the Faculty Board supported Tsembras, stating the cost recovery program would reduce wastage and cut back on the queue problem that arose when students took too much time to download printed materials from the Internet.

"This level of support surprised some of the academics who were not initially in favour of the scheme," said Tsembras. "They were concerned about students who couldn't afford to pay for printing. We put a contingency plan in place to help such students. But to date, no one has taken it up."