



Case In Point

INTEGRATED EFI SOLUTIONS



Olathe Unified School District: Raising the Bar

Company Profile

Olathe Unified School District is the third largest school district in Kansas. With more than 60 locations over 75 square miles, the District is comprised of elementary, junior high and senior high schools and serves approximately 25,000 students with over 3,600 employees.

Challenge

The District was facing a costly, unproductive environment relative to its distributed and centralized printing and copying capability, a critical function for both business and academic success. The District had 120 standalone copiers and numerous, costly inkjet printers throughout its locations, and a centralized print shop that depended on intra-District mail to receive and distribute print jobs. District officials were seeking a more efficient printing and copying infrastructure that could take advantage of digital technologies for increased productivity and cost-effectiveness.

Solution

After sending out a Request for Proposal to 14 different companies, the District chose to partner with EFI and Ricoh. The print shop was updated with an EFI Fiery®-driven Ricoh color printer and high-speed black & white copier/printers, and the District installed 80 networked black & white Multifunction Printers (MFPs), 54 networked color MFPs and more than 300 color laser printers. The District also launched EFI's Digital StoreFront™ for streamlined electronic job submission and better job management, and EFI MicroPress software to better manage production printing in the print shop. And, to manage its deluge of paper documents, the District installed EFI SendMe™, which readily converts paper documents to digital files, in five elementary schools as a pilot project.

Results

In its first year of operation with the new configuration, the District has been able to make substantial progress toward its goal of all work coming into the centralized print shop in electronic format. Additionally, with its new solution from EFI and Ricoh, the district is saving more than \$250,000 per year over its previous configuration of standalone copiers.



“The heart of everything we do is EFI’s Digital StoreFront. All of our users know how to scan jobs to email, and from their desktops, they can enter their jobs into Digital StoreFront within a few seconds without spending unnecessary time outside their classrooms.”

— Scott Carpenter, document solutions manager, Olathe Unified School District

Olathe Unified School District: Going Digital

In 1965, five districts unified to create Olathe Unified School District. Since that time, the District has worked hard to achieve the highest standards. Today, the District serves approximately 25,000 students with over 3,600 employees and its students have achieved test scores in the nation’s top 10 percent. Part of this success can be attributed to the District’s establishment of high technology standards and its focus on ensuring that its students have access to an appropriate level of technology. This includes a minimum of one networked computer in each classroom, and the availability of various types of computer labs and other technology resources across its elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

At the same time, the District understood it needed to support its teachers and staff with an adequate technology infrastructure. One area that needed improvement was its printing and copying services, including both distributed printers and copiers in the schools as well as the centralized print shop. According to Scott Carpenter, document solutions manager, “We were increasingly unhappy with the cost and functionality of our 120 standalone copiers as well as the declining level of service and support we were receiving from the incumbent vendor. We knew we could do better and set about finding a way to do so.” He also points out that the incumbent vendor submitted

multiple invoices to the District every month, causing significant work for the administrative staff that had to process and pay them.

Carpenter states that teachers would often produce work on the distributed copiers that would have been better suited for the centralized production facility. This process was due in large part to the long lead times for work produced in the print shop, which received hardcopy work via intra-District mail that often took as much as three weeks to produce, especially in the peak August/September timeframe. “In fact,” he says, “we were deluged with so much work at the beginning of the school year that it could take us up to three months to get caught up, during which time our users continued to experience long lead times.”

Out to Bid

The District prepared a Request for Proposal (RFP), describing its need for a new printing and copying infrastructure. This included a goal of having all work submitted to the print shop electronically, managing to a 24-hour turnaround for jobs produced in the print shop, color in both distributed and centralized installations, and networking all distributed copiers and printers. He adds, “We also specified high standards for customer service. We wanted to be treated like the most important customer.”

Fourteen companies responded to the RFP. After careful consideration, the District

chose to work with EFI and Ricoh to develop its new system. The District also created a new position for Carpenter, dedicating him as a full-time resource to ensure maximum return on investment and achievement of performance goals.

The print shop update features an EFI Fiery-driven Ricoh color printer. The Fiery controller includes professional tools for “extreme” users like the District, including: the fastest, most open VDP solution for customized mailings to teachers and students, such as WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) imposition; and the Production Printing Package, a set of advanced production management tools that optimize the Fiery’s power to deliver the fastest output in extreme print production. Because EFI solutions comply with JDF, PDF, PPML and other open standards, Fiery seamlessly integrates into the District’s overall print operations. The District’s print shop significantly increased its quality and capacity. Carpenter also reports that the District now only has to manage two monthly invoices—instead of the previous much larger number.

Making Services More Accessible

With the printing and copying equipment in place, the District launched EFI’s Digital StoreFront for streamlined electronic job submission and better job management. Carpenter says, “The heart of everything we do is EFI’s Digital StoreFront. All of our users know how to scan jobs to email, and



“I managed this department for 10 years prior to this year, and at the end of every budget year our print/copy account was approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 in the red. This year with Digital StoreFront, for the first time, we ended up balanced! It is quite an achievement.”

— Scott Carpenter, document solutions manager, Olathe Unified School District

from their desktops, they can enter their jobs into Digital StoreFront within a few seconds without spending unnecessary time outside their classrooms. This has significantly increased the percentage of electronic jobs we receive in the shop and made us much more productive.”

Carpenter also indicates that the District has placed all of its forms in Digital StoreFront’s online catalog. He adds, “There is not a form we have that can’t be ordered quickly and easily using Digital StoreFront. We have them categorized by type—Health, Business, general District forms, etc.—and alphabetized so the right form is easy to locate. And we are very excited about other ways to leverage this e-commerce tool to make materials more accessible to our teachers and staff.” One item that is already in the catalog is paper. Carpenter states that teachers are able to order paper online, choosing from some 50 different types and colors. The end caps, or ream labels, from each different type of paper have been scanned in and placed in Digital StoreFront to make ordering easier and more accurate. “Teachers can even see the color they are ordering, right online,” he says.

A More Productive Print Shop

The print shop uses Digital StoreFront to preview the jobs that come into the shop electronically, and also uses the system to enter all hardcopy jobs offline. “This is important,” says Carpenter, “because we are now using Digital StoreFront to track

every single job we produce in the shop, and it is our tool for billing our schools for services rendered.” Using Digital StoreFront’s reporting functionality, the shop prints detailed monthly reports, reflecting each user’s exact usage broken down by account number. He adds, “I managed this department for 10 years prior to this year, and at the end of every budget year our print/copy account was approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 in the red. This year with Digital StoreFront, for the first time, we ended up balanced! It is quite an achievement.”

The District also implemented EFI MicroPress to manage its black & white production equipment. With its raster-based workflow, MicroPress is designed to increase productivity in digital production environments. MicroPress delivers an intuitive user interface that simplifies job management; an integrated array of expert, make-ready tools; cluster printing capability; maximized engine speed; and sophisticated engine recovery. Carpenter says, “We do a lot of saddle stitched booklets, replacing the old tape binding we used to do. Our users love the booklets. And with MicroPress, imposing those booklets is a snap. MicroPress also allows us to manage the work across our four production devices. We know that we have not yet tapped the full potential of the blend of Digital StoreFront and MicroPress, but that will come with this upcoming school year as we continue to increase the number of jobs coming in from the end

users through Digital StoreFront with an electronic job ticket.”

Carpenter also praises the ease of use and capabilities of EFI’s CommandWorkStation, which sets the standard in centralized print job management with an intuitive interface and a variety of productivity-enhancing tools. He says, “We love the Command WorkStation software as far as tracking what has been done. It makes it especially easy to reprint jobs.”

As a result of all of these improvements, the print shop can easily meet its goal of turning around work in 24 hours, except during the peak August/September timeframe. “Even then,” says Carpenter, “instead of being backlogged for three months, we should be back to our 24-hour target within a month or less.”

Looking Toward the Future

During the 2005/2006 school year, the District implemented a pilot project with EFI’s SendMe in five of its elementary schools. Carpenter says, “Two of the five schools have jumped on the bandwagon with SendMe and what we have learned from their experiences will help us in educating the remainder of the schools on its benefits. With the SendMe touch screen, users control the scanning of documents on the attached MFP. It actually opens an instance of Digital StoreFront at the touch screen, logs them on, and it populates their shopping cart.

“We love the Command WorkStation software as far as tracking what has been done. It makes it especially easy to reprint jobs. MicroPress also allows us to manage the work across our four production devices.”

— Scott Carpenter, document solutions manager, Olathe Unified School District

They can fill out the job ticket right at the SendMe screen, and when they hit ‘Place Order,’ that job shows up in our Order View on Digital StoreFront. Once an incoming job is marked as approved, we can send it to the Operator View for production. We think SendMe will be another important element in our quest to get all of our work submitted electronically.”

In addition to establishing a workflow that takes more advantage of the synergies between Digital StoreFront and MicroPress, Carpenter is looking forward to adding many more items to the Digital StoreFront online catalog. He says, “Our Business Manager is even interested in having the schools purchase furniture through Digital StoreFront. We could post pictures of all of the available furniture so that users can quickly and easily select what they need when, for example, a new teacher or new classroom is added, or they need chairs, desks, file cabinets and so on.”

Carpenter concludes, “With our new EFI and Ricoh configuration, we have balanced our budget, improved our workflow, and reduced our turnaround time, which were the main targets for the system. It is performing just as we hoped and the support from both EFI and Ricoh has been outstanding. We have a lot more training to do, but we made great progress this year and expect that by the end of next school year, we will only be accepting jobs via hardcopy if there are unusual circumstances. Everything should be coming in electronically between Digital StoreFront and SendMe, managed efficiently with MicroPress, and that will be a benefit for the entire District.”