Real Talk With  Cleveland Public Library

Our Challenge
“We’re an urban library. Providing access to technology is a big issue. We needed to offer the best new technologies to our patrons, including color, wireless and mobile printing. We also wanted to streamline fee collection and maintenance for our public printers. And we needed some form of cost recovery.”

Our Solution
“We now have a network of self-serve multifunction devices. Our patron database is integrated with our print management system so patrons can print, copy, scan and fax with a swipe of their library card. We’re also generating new revenue with wireless and mobile printing. Instead of collecting fees and troubleshooting printers, our staff is serving patrons.”

Our Results
• Streamlined print infrastructure and processes with a customized, fully integrated solution
• Provided patrons with printing, scanning, copying, faxing and mobile printing using their library card
• Freed staff from managing usage payments and maintenance
• Created new revenue streams for the library via color, mobile print and scanning
• Replaced 180 single-function, multi-vendor devices with 55 Xerox multifunction devices

“1.4 million patrons now have access to printing, copying, scanning, faxing and mobile printing using their library card. It’s better service and one-stop shopping.”
—Larry Finnegan, Director of Information Technology, Cleveland Public Library
“We were having patron issues and our Xerox rep came in and worked with the public to find out what they were experiencing. We were amazed. We’d never seen that kind of service before.”

—Larry Finnegan, Director of Information Technology, Cleveland Public Library

**Printing innovations are in the cards for library patrons.**

With 28 branches, the Cleveland Public Library is a critical resource for the citizens of northeastern Ohio. For many residents, technology access is a challenge. Therefore, they rely heavily on the library’s computers, printers and copiers.

However, as demand for faxing, scanning and color printing grew, the library’s black-and-white devices became outdated. Realizing an upgrade was in order, the library teamed up with Xerox.

**Challenges That No Off-the-Shelf Solution Could Meet**

The Cleveland Public Library is not only a major urban library, but also the country’s third largest research library. What’s more, it manages the data and back-end catalog for 38 library systems. Its new print solution had to be sophisticated. According to Larry Finnegan, the library’s Director of IT:

“The devices had to be multifunction, with printing, scanning, copying and faxing. Plus wireless and mobile access. That was what our patrons needed.”

“The solution also had to be integrated with our existing patron database and able to work throughout CLEVNET, our library consortium that serves 1.4 million patrons. We also had to migrate away from the coin boxes so our branch personnel could focus on customer service.”

**Wireless, Mobile and Other Novel Printing Features**

The library streamlined its print infrastructure with a customized Xerox solution. 100 printers, 40 copiers and 40 faxes were replaced with 55 Xerox multifunction devices (MFDs). The MFDs provide new capabilities such as color, wireless printing and scanning, and are fully integrated with the patron database.

“Patrons swipe their library card and use the same password to print as they do to reserve books,” says Finnegan. “They add value to the card at a pay station. They don’t need a separate debit or charge card.”

“It’s self-serve, so the library staff can respond to patrons’ needs instead of making change and tracking money.”

The upgraded print technology offers traditional, wireless and mobile functions. Patrons print from smartphones, tablet PCs, personal laptops and soon even their home PCs—a truly innovative approach.

**Book Value: Increased Savings, Decreased Maintenance**

The consistency of the Xerox devices has also eliminated maintenance variables.

“Our IT staff spent so much time running around with all the different tabletop printers,” explains C. J. Lynce, the library’s tech central manager.

“We're eliminating a lot of staff problems with troubleshooting, replacing printers and so on.”

“In the past, we’d have one printer assigned to 30 computers. If the printer was down, the computers couldn’t print. That’s a public service nightmare. Now we can send patrons to other MFDs.”

Adds Finnegan: “We’re saving on maintenance and we’re able to retrieve more monies from patrons. We also intend to bring more customers in the door because we serve more needs than before.”

**A Team for the Record Books**

In helping develop the library’s unique solution, Xerox spearheaded the efforts of four other third-party vendors. According to George Lenzer, the library’s computer and networking manager:

“It was the best of both worlds. I had somebody from Xerox as my single point of contact and I was also able to work directly with the people who represented specific technologies.”

“We were thoroughly impressed and not just because everyone said, ‘Let’s play nicely together,’” Finnegan says. “It’s because when the bombs exploded, they kept working nicely together.”

“This was a solution we couldn’t find anywhere so we had to develop it ourselves. It’s comprehensive. It’s flexible. And Xerox has been a very good partner.”

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