

Nuance Equitrac Express for Education

Peirce College Attacks Uncontrolled Printing Waste with Nuance Equitrac

Reinventing Print at Peirce College

The non-traditional student profile of Peirce College created a higher than average level of operational complexity, especially for admissions, financial aid and IT. In addition, the institution had an uncontrolled printing infrastructure, with 50 to 60 standalone printers spread throughout the institution's seven floors, along with 15 MFPs. Across this installed base of printers, there was an estimated waste factor of 30-50%, according to IT estimates based on the amount of paper left in recycling bins and on paper trays. While it was assumed that most of the waste was generated by students (who had no limits on printing), IT had no definitive way of confirming the source of the waste.

There were also significant concerns about the security of printed information with no secure printing technologies in place. The College must comply with regulations such as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and Gramm Leach Bliley that are designed to safeguard personally identifiable information. This includes the many forms that are printed with regularity by the financial aid and admissions offices, including FAFSA financial aid applications, W-2s, 1040s, transcripts, and other documents associated with enrollment or financial aid. While there had not been any issues with data breaches, Peirce wanted to limit the possibility of printed documents being a trigger for the chain of events that might cause a breach.

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— **Christopher Duffy**
CIO, Peirce College



About Peirce College: Peirce College offers bachelor's and associate degree programs in the areas of Business, Healthcare, Information Technology and Paralegal Studies. Located in the heart of Philadelphia, Peirce is the only Philadelphia-based, four-year college dedicated to career-oriented education for working adults in a personal and supportive environment. The College operates on a rolling, 7-week course schedule and supports 2,600 students, approximately 150 faculty/staff and adjuncts in 7 floors of a building that spans a city block.

Challenge: Peirce College needed to gain control of an unstructured print environment. Waste reduction, constant uptime for critical applications, and security for sensitive documents at the printer were critical objectives for enhancing its print environment.

Results:

- Annual savings of \$150,000 due to reduced printing costs
- Assured security for sensitive documents
- Convenient access to multiple printers to reduce the impact of downtime
- Remote access to printers by faculty and other authorized users
- Reduction in print-related help desk calls
- Less administrative costs associated with printer queue management



Seeking Control

As a starting point for gaining control over the printing environment, Peirce College's IT group issued an RFP for new print hardware and print accounting software. Peirce had identified the need to manage printing and had conducted research to find potential print accounting solutions, based on ease of use, granularity of print tracking, reporting, and shared administration. Shared administration was particularly important since IT wanted to empower department heads with control over their respective printing resources. Simple tasks such as changing print quotas, determining the number of pages that students/staff could print, or approving exceptions for more printed pages, were more efficiently handled at the department level, with IT providing second-level support for more complex issues.

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CIO, Pierce College

Key criteria for the selection of print hardware included service level agreements (uptime), price and response time. Within the College's existing infrastructure, printer downtime in admissions or financial aid could be catastrophic.

Key stakeholders, including Admissions, Financial Aid, the Dean and Student Support staff, reviewed responses to Peirce College's RFP and participated in demonstrations conducted by RFP finalists.

Changing the Game

Peirce College ultimately chose to replace its printing installed base with 20 strategically located MFPs equipped with Nuance's Equitrac Express print management software to provide print accounting capabilities and NuVision card readers to better manage printer access. Specific Equitrac capabilities the College found to be attractive included background processing, ease of use in terms of both users and administration, and security features such as Follow-You Printing®. Follow-You Printing with Secure Document Release supports user mobility while helping to reduce waste and protect personal information or client confidentiality, holding documents in a secure print server until users authenticate themselves at the networked printer of their choice. Also important were service levels and uptime guarantees from the MFP manufacturer and the College installed a check printer that included a locking paper drawer for check stock.

"The high level of involvement from stakeholders in developing the new printer strategy was critical," said Christopher Duffy, CIO. "We also spent time educating users about the advantages of this transition, especially the convenience of Follow-You Printing, to ensure that the transition went smoothly, with as little disruption as possible for users. We also removed the ability for users to purchase printer supplies and stopped approving purchase requests for new printers. Because of these efforts and the robustness of the solutions we chose, the transition was seamless."

Duffy explains that the key thrust of educational efforts focused on additional benefits users would have included: access to color printing, 11x17, duplex, and the security associated with ensuring that sensitive documents are not left lying on the printers. He adds, "Even though there was some initial resistance to giving up desktop printers, the College community supported the value this transition brought to the institution. Evangelizing the cost savings and compliance aspects of the change was an important element of our implementation strategy, helping overcome the false perception that users were losing something."

According to Duffy, users were particularly pleased with the ability to release a job from any device. "Not only has this increased security around the printing of sensitive documents," he added, "but users can now easily move their printing to

another printer if their usual printer is down, eliminating any inconvenience or delays in getting their work done.”

“If the old printer went down, we were faced with a Library of unhappy students. Now, if our printer goes offline for whatever reason, students can retrieve their print jobs from any printer on campus, and for that I am extremely grateful,” said John Powell, Librarian. “The ability for students to accumulate print jobs while working and release them when they are ready is a huge improvement over the earlier, less organized method. During periods of heavy student printing, one student’s documents would frequently get intermingled with another’s necessitating duplicate printings,” said Ann Marie Daly, Paralegal student. “Now students are able to release all of their print jobs at once, while standing at the printer, and be confident that the documents they retrieve are all their own work.”

Faculty, many of whom work from home, have also benefited by being able to send a print job to a Peirce printer from home using the College’s VPN, picking up the printed items when they arrive at the College.

“The financial impact of the consolidation is impressive,” Duffy remarked. “In our previous configuration, we had no color capability. Even with the addition of color printing, we are saving a minimum of \$150,000 despite the 1.5 million pages we print annually.”

These cost savings, while impressive, were not the College’s only concern. In order to better control printing, IT needed to understand where the waste was coming from to make improvements that would result in less waste. Equitrac’s reporting capabilities were used extensively to achieve this goal. Helpful Equitrac reports that are generated and shared with Peirce management and department heads include: Top 10 Users, Top 10 savers, Departmental Usage, Color Usage, etc. This allows stakeholders to have conversations with students or staff that are printing too much in an attempt to create awareness and drive behavioral change. Duffy says, “The data we get from Equitrac really opened our eyes. It confirmed our instincts and provides us data to help change behavior. The bottom line is the institution has taken ownership in controlling printing costs and can now project accurate expenses. That’s huge for the College.”

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Peirce converted Excel-based reporting to a web-based reporting system that will allow management and department heads to customize reports to meet their specific needs. Another waste-reduction advantage of the new solution is a 6-hour expiration on jobs sent to the Equitrac print queue. If a job is not picked up within 6 hours, it is deleted. Automation of print queue management and a reduction in print-related help desk calls have also contributed to overall cost savings.

What’s Next?

In addition to adding web-based reporting, Peirce College is using the reports and data generated from Equitrac Express to design the next phases of its printing infrastructure. Among the initiatives planned are setting a print quota limit for each student with the ability to pay for print for overages and guest usage via a PayStation.

A final initiative for Peirce will be to move its print server to the cloud. By combining a cloud-based print server and Follow-You Printing, Peirce will be able to provide print services from student-owned laptops that are not on the Peirce network. Duffy concludes, “For a project like this to be a success, it needs to be a true institution-wide initiative with senior management support, not an IT project. The driving factors need to be fiscal responsibility and compliance and it needs to be deployed quickly. The initial phase of the project was accomplished within a week—installing the new MFPs and removing the old printers. Placement of the MFPs was planned so that no one has to walk more than 25 or 30 feet to get to the nearest printer. In student areas, MFPs are placed at the end of hallways rather than inside classrooms, but are still conveniently located.



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