

DTP's managed print service graduates with honours



Managing and accounting for student and staff printing and copying, especially at peak times, is a challenge for any university or college.

Imperial College London's recent installation of a DTP Managed Print & Copy Solution for its ICT department is bringing capital cost savings and greatly simplified day-to-day management of the library and cluster printing facilities.

About Imperial College London

Imperial College London is an independent, constituent part of the University of London. The College was established in 1907 in London's scientific and cultural heartland in South Kensington, as a merger of the Royal College of Science, the City & Guilds College and the Royal School of Mines.

The College ranks in the top tier of scientific, engineering, medical research and teaching institutions in the world, and is associated with an enviable list of famous names including T H Huxley, one of the greatest scientists of the 19th century; Sir Alexander Fleming and Sir Ernst Chain, discoverers of penicillin; and the author H G Wells.

Solving IT together



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Charles Page
Campus Support Manager, IT Services

Ageing print infrastructure

With more than 45 ageing printing devices, Imperial College London had been evaluating options to simplify management of printing in the teaching and public cluster areas. The disparate print infrastructure, combined with value card readers using different codes in different departments, had become unnecessarily complicated and difficult to service and use. For example, students needed separate cards in the library from those in their department, and students working in more than one department had even more devices, methods and payment structures to contend with.

The old printing infrastructure was controlled by a combination of internally-written applications based on MS-DOS®, Microsoft® Windows NT® and Windows® 2000, and running on directly connected PCs. The print release stations were increasingly unable to cope with more sophisticated printers and their larger internal print buffers. Interfacing newer printers to the various payment mechanisms had also become a problem.

Fully integrated solution

After reviewing the marketplace, Imperial College London selected DTP Group to provide a fully integrated hardware, software and service package over an initial three-year period. Key in the choice of DTP was the reseller's expertise in implementing, managing and supporting complex cost-per-page programmes and DTP's ability to offer an innovative 'pull' printing solution using multifunction devices with print, copy and 'scan to email' functionality.

Charles Page, Campus Support Manager, IT Services said: "DTP were able to provide a fleet of modern multifunction HP printers together with all associated maintenance, a scalable and flexible accounting system and networked money loaders."

The solution proposed included a carefully planned mix of 35 HP mono and colour multifunction print/copy/scan machines, combined with SafeCom print management software, swipe card readers and money loaders, all fully integrated with the College's network. The managed contract ensures Imperial College London has comprehensive support for its new fleet of output devices, and is easily accounted for on a simple, cost-per-page arrangement. Phase two of the programme has seen the integration of a further 12 devices, and the solution is gradually being extended to allow staff use.

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The managed solution offers Imperial College London a number of important benefits including significant capital cost savings, a single point of contact for maintenance issues, and simplified day-to-day management of library and departmental teaching cluster printing by the College's ICT department.

The solution has met with a warm reception from its thousands of student users too. Charles continues: “Students like the system as it authenticates using College ID cards and fully integrates with the printer touch screens, making the system versatile, convenient, self-contained and easy to use.”

Simplified print management, reporting and accounting

Imperial College London now has a centrally managed and spooled 'pull' printing system which delivers quota printing and comprehensive accounting using magnetic swipe cards for user validation. The system provides detailed management reporting on device usage across the South Kensington and other remote campuses, and the ability to cross-charge departments for their use of the print and copy fleet. In comparison with traditional print management solutions, 'pull' printing has the advantage of allowing users to store documents and then print them from their choice of workgroup printer, without compromising document integrity or security.

Device management is greatly simplified for the ICT department with the installation of just two Microsoft® Windows® printer drivers - one mono, one colour - throughout the College. This also makes it possible for students to spool and review their work on a cheaper mono printer in their own department, printing the final version on a colour device in the library.

Functionality and compatibility

The College has also been able to add extra functionality to its printing clusters without taking up valuable floor space with separate devices. Photocopying and scanning to email are extremely popular and are easily performed through a common user interface, and colour is now available in some departments. Large capacity 1,000 and 2,000-sheet paper bins also ensure that heavy demand is catered for.

The solution also interfaces with a range of operating systems including Microsoft® Windows®, UNIX®, Linux® and Apple® Mac®, an important consideration in a major research institution.

“ The DTP solution has met Imperial College's need for an affordable system which is easy to use for our students, wherever they are on campus, and provides full cost recovery. ”

Arthur Spirling
Deputy Director of ICT and Head of IT Services

High availability

Through an extended three-year warranty the contract guarantees Imperial College London a very high level of availability, with the reassurance of a loan unit if faulty equipment cannot be fixed within the four-hour Service Level Agreement. DTP Project Team manages all implementation and training, and provides ongoing support including automatic consumables replacement via HP's Webjet Admin software.

Arthur Spirling, Deputy Director of ICT and Head of IT Services, sums up: “The DTP solution has met Imperial College's need for an affordable system which is easy to use for our students, wherever they are on campus, and provides full cost recovery.”

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