Technical and Community Colleges Share Information... and Great Results

Xerox FlowPort and DocuShare help KCTCS leverage intellectual assets through effective collaboration and knowledge sharing.

PROCESS WORKFLOW

Creating an environment where information flows smoothly throughout an organization is a challenging and never ceasing task. Especially with large enterprises, logistical problems can become overwhelming. With 28 community colleges and 16 technical colleges, these were the problems the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) must face every day. Matt Varney, Application Specialist says that it is a continuous battle to get the right information to the right people at the right time in the right format. "Before our partnership with Xerox, there were a number of factors stacked up against us".

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There was no way for professors and administrators from different schools to collaborate conveniently on shared documents without meeting in person. Coordinating schedules was a constant struggle, and often times, individuals would work on projects alone because they couldn't find a convenient time for live work sessions.

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Redundant work processes occurred regularly because there was no effective way to build upon previously developed course materials. Each time a course was introduced, new materials, including syllabi, forms and guidelines would have to be completely recreated.

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Sharing knowledge through paper documents was an inflexible process:

- Time-consuming and expensive copying and distribution
- Cumbersome storage requirements

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The process of disseminating Information was slow and expensive. KCTCS would frequently need to distribute information to multiple members in multiple locations within all 42 schools, such as HR/Payroll reports and Monthly Detail Financial reports. Generally, KCTCS would use a courier service when the distribution list was small, and bulk mail when the distribution list was large.

To overcome these challenges, KCTCS representatives recognized they needed a solution that would facilitate all areas of knowledge sharing and document distribution.

> *"DocuShare started as a distribution tool, but has grown into an application that has helped us create a truly collaborative, knowledge sharing environment."*
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> *Matt Varney, Application Specialist*

The Xerox solution

To help streamline the flow of information throughout all the schools, KCTCS chose to implement Xerox DocuShare and FlowPort.

DocuShare is a Web-based, community-maintained knowledge sharing software that was initially used as a one-way distribution mechanism for documents that contained information pertinent to all the colleges.

With DocuShare, new files are automatically converted into HTML on the fly and uploaded to a secure Website, where authorized professors and administrators can access—no matter what application the document originated in.

The files are organized into collections, which use a familiar Windows architecture for simple retrieval.

For instance, a President's Leadership Team, that consists of each College's President/Director uses a DocuShare collection to store various documents and materials pertaining to their work of governing and furthering KCTCS. Subcollections are set up that contain all the documents and materials they will need for their next scheduled meeting. In so doing, each President/Director has immediate access to timely, relevant information for upcoming meetings, as well as an archive of documents and topics discussed in previous meetings. In this case, DocuShare also works as a real-time knowledge improvement tool, because the Presidents will often work on the documents on screen during their meetings rather than printing out multiple handouts, which also reduces paper consumption.

FlowPort is document messaging and distribution software that intelligently routes scanned documents to e-mail addresses, fax machines, or DocuShare collections—all without a PC. To distribute information, a KCTCS staff member simply has to check a box on a FlowPort cover sheet, and scan it along with the document on an office scanner or multifunction device. FlowPort then distributes the document to the checked locations. For instance, if KCTCS employees need a document printed at the Copy Center, they fill out a job request form along with a FlowPort cover sheet that has directions to send the job to the Copy Center and also to a specific DocuShare collection. The request, cover sheet, and the actual document are scanned on a Xerox Document Centre multifunction device. Both the Copy Center and the DocuShare collection receive the job in one step with push-button simplicity.

Beyond electronic file storage

Although it started as a simple digital filing cabinet where KCTCS could store information relevant to all the schools, many KCTCS staff in all areas of the College's—from the Libraries to the PR departments, to the Chancellor's Office—are beginning to find creative ways to use the software to improve work processes, work collaboratively and eliminate redundant work:

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DocuShare's "subscriptions" feature, which automatically notified prespecified KCTCS users when content has been added to a DocuShare collection, has streamlined workflow considerably in the Purchasing and Inventory/Facilities Management Group. As purchase orders come into the Systems office for processing, they are scanned and distributed via FlowPort to specific sub-collections. The proper managers are notified automatically by e-mail, so they can check the new equipment into the KCTCS system.

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Members of KCTCS teams and groups can be located on any campus, and it is uncommon for all team members to come from a single location. The challenge of enabling these geographically diverse people to securely access the documents they need is met using the web-based DocuShare. For instance, each of the 12 RSVP Peer Teams has a collection for their use. Whenever members of these teams need to access a document, they are only a point and click away.

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Donna Davis at the Systems Office and the Workforce Development team at each college have a DocuShare collection where standardized forms and guidelines are stored, as well as approved syllabi to various specialized credit courses, such as ASE Mechanical, HVAC, Blueprint Reading, and Word Processes. If any of the KCTCS colleges are approached by a company to perform specialized training or to start a new class, the College can use existing information stored on the DocuShare site, without having to recreate any information.

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DocuShare's success can be seen in the rate at which it has grown since its inception. There are currently over 750 individual collections and almost 900 active users in 272 user groups from the President's office on down. Nearly 27,000 files have been stored.

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