

Case Study

education

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Hutto Independent School District

Ricoh and Hutto ISD Partner to Help Make Information More Secure, Transparent and Agile



"Ricoh took the time to construct personalized solutions just for our culture. This was the ultimate driving factor for success."

– Travis Brown
Director of Technology
Hutto ISD
Hutto, Texas



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

The catchphrase, "Go big or go home" could have been written with Hutto Independent School District (ISD) in mind. For the last decade, this middle-sized school district north of Austin, Texas, has been turning heads—not just in Texas but also throughout the U.S.—with its unwavering focus on achieving success for all its students by creating world-class problem solvers and 21st century learners.

Just as protective of the young as its symbolic hippopotamus mascot, the "Hippo Nation" (as Hutto ISD is known), has grown from one K-12 school with just over 1,000 students to nine campuses serving 6,600. With no letup in sight, enrollment numbers continue to climb by approximately 300 additional students each year.

Hutto ISD's achievements are notable inside and outside the classroom. The district has increased student performance and scores across all academic areas—so much so that 100 percent of its graduating seniors apply to college. The district's teachers and staff have donated more than 1,800 hours of volunteer time to bettering the community. And together, district administrators, staff, teachers and students have raised more than \$40,000 and contributed thousands of pounds of food for local charities.

With so many pride points, Hutto ISD firmly believes it is the best school district in the nation. But until recently, the technology infrastructure—hardware and software—supporting the district's flow of information didn't reflect this top-tier status. No longer just a one-school district, Hutto ISD needed a partner to help make its growing volume of information work for the district. All the while factoring in the divergent work styles of its increasingly multi-generational teachers, students and staff.

CHALLENGE

- No ability to monitor and charge back for user output
- Unreliable authentication at MFPs
- Web-to-print solution not properly implemented
- Decentralized faxing and no OCR scanning
- Too many different MFP models

SOLUTION

- Device authentication and monitoring software
- "Super User" for web-to-print
- Ricoh-managed print center and production printers
- Right-sized Ricoh MFPs
- District-wide fleet management
- Centralized faxing

RESULTS

- Surging print center volumes
- Greater output visibility and insight
- Seamless scanning and faxing
- Poised for chargebacks, mobile printing, document management system improvements and sustainability gains

Case Study



CHALLENGE

With growth comes growing pains. Hutto ISD had more schools to equip with output devices and more teachers and staff that needed to print, copy, scan and fax. As the district's fleet of devices and print capabilities grew, so did its need for greater security, output monitoring and chargebacks.

Ricoh had been providing multifunctional printer (MFP) devices to Hutto ISD for eight years alongside many other providers. As time progressed, Ricoh collaborated with the district to open and manage an on-site production print center to handle the influx of color and more complex print jobs from teachers, students and staff.

Moving in the right direction, technology was installed to monitor and manage fleet output as well as enable web-to-print job submission and quoting in the print center. Yet implementation of these technologies was taking longer than expected and users were finding workarounds that were compromising productivity and driving up costs.

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"Our print center users had found a way around the web-to-print technology and were printing everything for the year in a single submission," said Travis Brown, Director of Technology at Hutto ISD. "This was slowing down everyone's productivity."

Also, the district had an unreliable authentication process for tracking output by specific users. Teachers and staff routinely entered anyone's four-digit code just to expedite output—sometimes even disabling authentication at the device altogether. Consequently, Hutto ISD could only track by department and had no idea who were the heavy users and who to charge back.

Additionally, Hutto ISD was using old legacy equipment to mimic centralized faxing, but security concerns were pervasive. The district also had no method of OCR scanning to convert documents into editable formats. Further complicating matters, Hutto ISD had too many unique MFP models along with multiple leasing partners, which consistently led to invoicing headaches.

SOLUTION

Often, great strides occur when you break from the status quo.

Like all the district's device providers through the years, Ricoh was at the mercy of Hutto ISD's purchasing department decision-makers who viewed devices as a commodity. But as the implementation of its output monitoring and web-to-print solutions lagged on, Ricoh saw the opportunity to resolve these issues and learn what else its team could do to make information work for the district.

Quickly, it became obvious that Hutto ISD's IT department would need to be involved—all existing and new technologies would touch IT. Ricoh began conducting weekly meetings with the district's IT department, building trust and learning about its project board and wish list. From there, Ricoh recommended ways to remedy the technologies that had stalled during implementation and strategically add new solutions to take the district where it wanted to go.

Case Study



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With Ricoh firmly implanted as a partner to Hutto ISD, the team worked with the IT department to implement a variety of new technologies. Ricoh started by replacing the output monitoring software with more robust technology that provides data to the district to accurately track activity by specific users, not just by departments. Key to this was adding centralized Active Directory-based authentication software to the MFPs, where users can either input their name and password or swipe their ID badge to release documents or scan and email from the device.

"It took us longer and required more work on our part, but now we have more of a data-driven solution where we make decisions based on what users are actually doing and what they need," said Brown.

Ricoh also implemented centralized faxing, enhancing the security of faxed information flowing throughout the district and the overall agility of the process. Additionally, new scanning software was added that allows users to scan-to-email, scan-to-PC or scan-to-file—and converts scanned documents into searchable PDFs or editable Word® or Excel® files.

Hutto ISD's print center also got a major refresh. Ricoh trained one of the center's staff members to be a "super user" so it could take full advantage of the existing MarcomCentral® web-to-print software job submission features. New walk-up and production devices were installed, including two cut-sheet production printers that give the district more high-end color capabilities, and third-party wide format printing. Advanced scanning and output management and monitoring software was integrated with new MFPs installed in the print center as well.

"Overall, we now have a much more stable, well thought-out environment instead of one that's been bubble-gummed together," said Brown. "Users are accepting it because they've found a way to save time. It's a very graceful experience all the way around."

Ricoh also substantially reduced the number of MFP models on site—from 12 models down to just three. Now, Ricoh is able to stock fewer parts on site and repairs, when needed, are performed quickly. The fleet was also right-sized and devices were strategically placed throughout the district.

"By right-sizing, we saved \$72,000-plus in fleet maintenance and leases over the five-year contract working with Ricoh. That savings even takes into account the additional production printer, device authentication, scanning and faxing investments we made," said Brown.

All totaled, Ricoh installed 62 new devices, added two additional full-time employees to the print center, took over district-wide management of the print fleet and will continue managing the print center. Despite being such a large-scale engagement, Hutto school board members didn't hesitate to lend their approval.

"It was an easy sell to the school board," said Brown. "Working with Ricoh, we put together a perfect solution for our environment."

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Case Study



RESULTS

With Ricoh as its partner, Hutto ISD has dramatically improved the way information flows throughout the district and is well on its way to providing anywhere, anytime access to information from any device. The fleet of MFPs have been upgraded and strategically positioned throughout the district to make printing, copying, scanning, faxing and emailing at the devices seamless while enhancing security. Its print center is now a model production facility that teachers, staff and students increasingly turn to for everyday print needs as well as high-impact color output. All in all, Hutto is able to produce a wider variety of printed collateral, more closely track its output operations, reduce waste and perhaps most importantly, better track and assign print costs to specific end users.

Print Center Volumes Surge

Almost immediately after Ricoh installed the new MFPs and production color printers in Hutto ISD's print center, volumes began to tick up. Within a short time, a second full-time Ricoh employee was brought onboard to handle volumes that had more than doubled for black and white printing and tripled for color output. With three full-time Ricoh employees now at the helm, the print center's volume has climbed to an average of 850,000 black and white impressions and 117,000 color impressions a month.

This surging volume comes from increased confidence in the capabilities of the print center throughout the district. The high school booster club descends upon the print center every Thursday night and Friday morning of football season to print the programs for their town-rallying games.

The district's elementary schools now rely on the print center to produce their high-quality yearbooks—reducing overall per-book costs and creating a revenue opportunity for the district, which used to subsidize yearbooks for students who couldn't afford one.

Greater Output Visibility and Insight

Hutto ISD's IT department now also has greater visibility into who prints what in the district and has been able to take action based on this insight. Previously, staff members were allotted 15,000 prints per six months—essentially unlimited printing—and that number has been reduced based on the intelligence uncovered by analyzing the actual user data.

"We also discovered that a couple of our users needed to print more because they were doing their job in a less efficient way," said Brown. "By identifying internal people's inefficiency, we could put new policies in place, change our structure internally and increase productivity."

Seamless Scanning and Faxing

Scanning has drastically improved at Hutto ISD. Now equipped with advanced software installed on the MFPs, Hutto's teachers, students and staff can scan to email, PCs or even specific files—and make that information more searchable and editable. Centralized faxing has been equally well received, as the software is highly intuitive so users can fax from the device with little to no training.

Bringing Mobile to the Masses

With a mix of long-time teachers and a growing contingent of younger millennial workers, Hutto ISD recognizes the need to accommodate the various work styles of these groups. With the right systems and software now in place, Hutto ISD is equipped to implement mobile/guest printing throughout the district to make its information even more accessible—anywhere, anytime, from any device.

Case Study



"We're starting to talk with Ricoh about how to implement mobile printing throughout the district," said Brown. "There may be some resistance to it among the teachers and staff that have been with us for decades. But our younger staff—and our students—expects this type of technology. We have four dedicated technology trainers to ensure that everyone uses the solutions we implement."

Looking to the Future

With such a strong relationship and partnership forged, Hutto ISD is looking to Ricoh to guide them on their next steps. Together, Ricoh and the district's IT department are working to implement chargebacks for everything that's not normal everyday printing for basic educational needs in the district.

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Next, discussions will take place to improve the workflow and user experience of its document management system. Ricoh may also help the district expand scanning to its existing line of business applications.

Having proven its stripes in producing the district's elementary school yearbooks, the print center managed by Ricoh may be poised to take over middle school yearbook production. And while the initiatives are still fresh, the newly right-sized MFP fleet could help the district improve its sustainability efforts by reducing energy consumption.

"Ricoh has been a fantastic partner to us. They have helped us find out what the right solutions are for our culture right now and put those in place," said Brown. "Once the culture catches up to the solutions, then we'll start adding the bells and whistles."



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