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Capilano University

Serving Students Better With Feature-Rich Document Management

Ricoh's award-winning Laserfiche document management solution saves the Registrar's Office time and money scanning, searching and storing student records.

"Our older student records, once stored in two large filing cabinets filled with thousands of microfiche films, are now being inputted into the document management system. This is significant risk mitigation for us, and having all of our records centralized is a huge bonus."

Karen McCredie,
Registrar,
Capiliano University

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Capilano University is a teaching-focused institution providing high quality education to over 7,000 students at two campuses across the Sunshine Coast and Metro Vancouver. With 12 degrees in fields including Fine Arts, Business, Tourism and Liberal Studies, Capilano University has earned an international reputation for quality teaching, programs and services.

CHALLENGE

For eight years, Capilano University's Registrar's Office had relied on a homegrown system to manage student files. And while this system worked in the past, the department's needs had outgrown its current technology. "Most of the people who built the old system were no longer with us to support it," explains Karen McCredie, Registrar at Capilano University. "We also had increasing concerns about its longevity, compatibility with new software and hardware, and its ability to handle the quantity of documents we were building up over time."

Staff in the Registrar's Office also worried that the system was not storing scanned documents properly – the scan quality was lacking, which resulted in thousands of physical documents being stored as backups in an offsite secure location. "Because of the lack of confidence in the old system, we were unable to move to the paper-free environment that we were aiming for," says McCredie.

Another drawback of the outdated system was its reliance on a complex and expensive barcode labeling system. Barcode printers, typically replaced every two years, were installed on every employee's desk. The process of printing, peeling, sticking and verifying barcodes on every scanned document was costly, noisy and time-consuming. And, due to the low number of scanning stations at the office, bottlenecks would occur and documents would be temporarily unavailable while barcoded documents sat in the queue to be scanned.

Once documents were successfully scanned into the system, the staff faced additional roadblocks: the search function was limited to just the student number, there was no document type filter to narrow search results, and scan quality resulted in missing data or illegible scans.

CHALLENGE

- Homegrown document management system unable to keep up with changing and growing needs.
- Lack of quality control resulted in physical back-ups stored offsite.
- Expensive and complex barcoding system resulted in bottlenecks and unavailable documents.
- Search functionality was limited to the student number only.

SOLUTION

- Custom document management solution integrated into current student information system,
- OCR-enabled records are fully searchable.
- Barcode system eliminated.
- Digitizing of older records adds redundancy and speed of access to information.

RESULTS

- Streamlined process and additional hardware increased scan quality and efficient retrieval of documents electronically.
- Significant time and cost savings seen with improved document search for employees in Registrar's Office.
- New quality control process ensures images are legible and reduce the need for physical storage as back-up.

SOLUTION

Through an RFP process in February 2015, Ricoh was selected as the vendor most able to meet the needs of a new document management system for the Registrar's Office.

"The level of previous post-secondary experience that Ricoh had was very reassuring to us," says McCredie. "And, having worked with Ricoh in the past, I had a high degree of confidence that they would meet and exceed our expectations."

Ricoh conducted discovery interviews with Capilano University and learned that they would prefer to integrate with the current student information system, which was being used as their student registration backend. Ricoh built a document management solution that connected to the school's student information system for scanning, searching and storing student records.

The new solution included several significant upgraded features that the homegrown system lacked. Student records scanned into the system are now optical character recognition (OCR) enabled, allowing full-text search for any keyword. Each scanned image must also be quality checked by the employee before being saved to the database, which prevents distorted or improperly scanned images from being saved. Ricoh's solution eliminated the need for the entire barcode system, and has paved the way for the office to reduce or eliminate physical record storage.

In addition to building the software component of the solution, Ricoh installed a new batch of Kodak scanners on employees' desks, reducing document bottlenecks as each employee can now scan his or her documents immediately.

Ricoh is also helping Capilano University digitize older student records by scanning them offsite at one of Ricoh's five Business Information Services Centres, which are used to facilitate business process outsourcing. "Our older student records, once stored in two large filing cabinets filled with thousands of microfiche films, are now being inputted into the document management system," explains McCredie. "This is significant risk mitigation for us, and having all of our records centralized is a huge bonus."

RESULTS

Ricoh's document management solution, coupled with additional scanners, is improving the daily workflow of Registrar staff, and saving both time and money for Capilano University. Employees now save approximately 30 seconds per scanned page, and hardware and supply costs have dropped dramatically. "We don't have to purchase any new stickers, or fix barcode printers as they break down," says McCredie. "These were significant expenses, now completely gone. We also see immediate savings when new staff joins us, in that we don't have to set them up with an expensive barcode system."

With the barcoding system removed, there is no risk of losing a document mid-way through the scanning process. Employees can scan documents at their desk, or at any Ricoh multifunctional device in the office.

All documents are now searchable, which is a great benefit for employees looking for specific student record. When accessing the documents through software directly, staff can search by student name, number, and filter by document type without having to scroll through a long tedious list. Additionally, Ricoh built a web portal to enable employees who do not have access to the current student information system or the full software solution to easily search for and find the documents they need.

The quality assurance of the new system is also a valuable new feature. Now, every employee must visually verify that the scanned image is error-free before it can be saved to the system. And McCredie says that this confidence in the new system has far reaching benefits: "We are saving time and money in that we no longer need physical documents stored in an offsite location. Ricoh has given us the confidence to destroy our documents in a more timely manner."

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh Canada Inc. is a leading provider of sustainable document solutions for Canadian businesses. Ricoh's fully integrated solutions (services, people, software and hardware) enable our customers to effectively and efficiently control the input, output and management of their information as they move towards a digital and environmentally-friendly workplace.

Working with award-winning enterprise software from Laserfiche, Ricoh delivers document management solutions to businesses in the public and private sectors. Ricoh helps companies transform the way they work and harness the collective imagination of their employees.

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