Industries:
Education

Offering Groups:
Scanners

Solution Areas:
Imaging Solutions

Regions:
UK

Challenges:
- Delays in photographing artwork for electronic portfolios

- Photocopier with scanning function lacked the features of a document scanner

- Students wanted to incorporate scanned designs directly into their project work

Benefits:
- Less work lost, more hours gained

- Intuitive and easy to use document scanning solutions

- Flexible solution allowing to scan to email, printer, home folder and Microsoft Word and creating different formats

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Wakefield Girls' High School

A new angle on scanning performance

There's only so much a school can achieve with top-class technology when demand for access – sometimes unexpected – outpaces supply. For Wakefield Girls' High School, West Yorkshire, technology had moved so fast that what was once an adequate arrangement for student use was now turning into a bottleneck. The problem was scanners.

Founded in 1878, at a time when social and educational emancipation of women gathered pace, Wakefield Girls' High School (WGHS) is a selective school for girls. Whilst it is a fee-paying school, WGHS also offers a number of bursaries and scholarships. Autonomous, and yet one of the family of schools that comprise the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation, WGHS delivers all the benefits of a single-sex education whilst also providing academic social and cultural links with its brother school, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School (QEGS).

In the past few years, the school had installed a state-of-the-art laser cutter and 3D printer. Demand began to rocket as students queued up to use the new technology. They also began to realise the software would now let them incorporate scanned designs direct into their project work, creating a new need.

Previous arrangements had allowed for pupils to scan in design & technology and IT ideas, so they could work on them before sending them to be laser-cut or 3D-printed. But now change was needed.

The school's existing two flatbed scanners were hard to access – they had long been set up in classrooms regularly used for teaching, thus forcing increasing numbers of students to use them outside lessons and squeeze all their scanning work into lunch hours or at specially arranged times. Not ideal, says IT manager Gavin Townsend: "Students being students don't always think that far in advance."

The impact on teaching and learning was "awkward", "inconvenient", even "hellish", according to teachers, even though in 2013 the school had installed a photocopier in a public place to give students easier access to scan direct to their home folders on the school's computer network. But it lacked the features of an optical scanner. So the school decided to evaluate two new Fujitsu scanners and their impact on teaching and learning.

The key challenge was providing students with easy access to scan their work directly into their home folders.

"We wanted more flexibility in more areas and sought a solution that did not mean spending thousands of pounds on another photocopier."

The two Fujitsu scanners certainly met that need. Students were now able not only to scan their work to email, direct to a printer or to a home folder and but could also, thanks to the Fujitsu software, scan direct into a Microsoft Word document or scan and save work in jpeg or pdf format. Given past access problems, both scanners were placed in open areas where they would get maximum use. The overhead vertical scanner ScanSnap SV600 went to the science and technology centre; it scans up to A3 size, takes objects up to 30mm in height and will accept 3D items, documents, open books, in fact almost any object of the right size. "It scans very fast," says Gavin. "An A3-size page takes just seconds." The other smaller model (a more conventionally-shaped ScanSnap iX500) was installed in the design and technology centre; again it operates fast at 25 A4 pages a minute. And wireless connectivity means students with the right app can scan a document into their smartphones. It can scan doubled-sided and can also scan batches of mixed documents at one go.

"Building on our proven scanning and image processing heritage via our ScanSnap concept, the SV600 brings a unique take on capture to market and is designed to make scanning fast, easy and intuitive," says Klaus Schulz, Manager Product Marketing EMEA at PFU (EMEA) Ltd.

Intuitive and easy to use

The ScanSnap iX500 was installed in the design and technology centre. It operates very fast at 25 A4 pages a minute. And wireless connectivity means students with the right app can scan a document into their smartphones. "It can scan double-sided and even handles batches of mixed documents at one go," says Klaus.

"The Fujitsu brand is reliable and does exactly what it says on the tin," says Gavin. "The software has been very intuitive for us and easy to use - students need just minutes to understand how it works. It can even work out if you are scanning two pages; it can create two separate documents.

"All students can access the scanners but they are mostly used by those studying design & technology (D&T) and IT. Apart from ad hoc scanning, the biggest use is by D&T students wanting to design and manufacture something by computer."

In fact, the school's 3D printer and laser cutter are so versatile that a student only needs to scan in their conceptual hand-drawing as a jpeg, and then incorporate it into either machine's software. This "assesses" the drawing and turns it into plans that are then modelled or laser-cut as a finished product."

Should every school have a scanner? "Absolutely," says Gavin. "They may not have a 3D printer or laser cutter but they will be doing similar types of activity where they'll have to manage document flow."

Another aspect schools might consider is a scanner's impact on students' document management skills. Wakefield's open access has encouraged greater use of scanning by students who previously found lack of easy-access scanners "inconvenient" and preferred to write out project work on paper. Result: less work lost, more hours gained.