

Soka University of America speeds up the scanning of student art images with Lexmark's X642e multifunction printer, using its unique USB port.

Soka University of America finds the Lexmark X642e is a quick study

The Organization

Soka University of America (SUA) is a new independent, co-educational comprehensive institution of higher learning located in Aliso Viejo, Calif. Opening its doors in 2001, the university offers a comparative study of Eastern and Western perspectives integrated across a traditional liberal arts curriculum. Founded on the belief that fostering a global humanistic perspective is the best way to promote peace and human rights, SUA prepares students for an increasingly diverse, global society.

The university boasts computer access in its classrooms, libraries, residence halls and outside gathering areas, including wireless access throughout its new campus.

The Challenge

In a university environment, printers located in public spaces are placed under extraordinary stress, used by hundreds of students and faculty every day to generate thousands of pages. Scanners, especially their hinged covers, are treated with equal harshness as users copy everything from single sheets to bound books. SUA needed to find solid products that could withstand constant use, yet provide top quality and performance – all without breaking the budget.

SUA also had a need for functions not usually associated with printers and scanners. In one unique application, a student scanning up to 50 fine art images a day from books and photographs needed a way to save those scans for immediate availability to a Web site, without the complexity of the university's network getting in the way.

The Solution

To control operating expenses, simplify the user experience and minimize the need for help-desk intervention, SUA brought a Lexmark X642e monochrome laser multifunction printer (MFP) in-house for evaluation.

“The Lexmark X642e is just as fast as other MFPs twice its size and its large touch-screen panel makes it easy to use without any training, regardless of the person’s technology sophistication level.”



—Mark Duffield
Senior IT Manager
Soka University of America
Aliso Viejo, Calif.
www.soka.edu

With a high-performance 45 page-per-minute monochrome laser printer at its core, the X642e seamlessly integrates a heavy-duty business-class, 50-page auto-feed legal-size color scanner, copier and fax into a single sturdy unit. The X642e was a recommendation from SUA's solution provider, Technology Integration Group.

“Set up was very quick, print quality is excellent, and we’ve not had any paper jams,” said Mark Duffield, Senior IT Manager. “We had 15 users



map to it and begin printing in just a few minutes. The Lexmark X642e is just as fast as other MFPs twice its size and its large touch-screen panel makes it easy to use without any training, regardless of the person's technology sophistication level."

For its ongoing fine-art image-scanning project, the X642e's unique front-panel USB port provided the perfect answer. Offered only by Lexmark, a user can plug in a USB thumb drive and immediately print stored image files, such as JPG or PDF documents, eliminating network traffic. For this application, information flowed in the opposite direction: the user connected a portable USB hard drive, directing the X642e to save the scans to the drive as standard image files, instead of simply printing them.

Scanning to the student's temporarily connected hard drive – an unusual and seemingly convoluted task – is easily accomplished through the X642e's large touch-sensitive LCD operator panel. Displaying graphical icons that illustrate its available features, functions such as scan to e-mail or scan to USB port are both accessible and unmistakable.

In yet another key advantage that another competing product could not provide, Duffield's IT staff discovered that outgoing faxes from the X642e could be routed successfully through the university's IP-based PBX telephony switch, eliminating the need for expensive standalone analog telephone lines. "We tested this specific capability, and found that the Lexmark product did what others could not," Duffield said.

For faculty members printing sensitive reports, the confidential print capability of the X642e provided an easy solution. Similar to a bank cash machine waiting to dispense currency, the X642e holds private print jobs, releasing them only when the correct personal identification number is physically entered on the operator panel's numeric keypad.

SUA also put the printer through its paces when it had to print a large document for departing seniors that depicted step-by-step instructions on how to remove their laptops from the university network. The document included text and graphical illustrations. As the team began printing the 400 total pages, they noticed an error and immediately stopped the print job right at the printer.

"The quality of the text and images was very crisp," said Duffield. "And, we were able to quickly stop the job and make the required change without wasting a lot of paper."

The Results

Smaller and faster than competing multifunction products, the Lexmark X642e already is providing SUA staff and students with previously unavailable capabilities. Whether it is scanning to a student's personal USB-connected hard drive, or printing from it, the X642e is opening new opportunities through its user-friendly touch-screen operator panel.

And while any printer can print, not all can easily stop, a fact Duffield says can waste paper on large print jobs. "The ability to cancel a print job directly from the X642e's operator panel is a huge advantage that has already saved a significant amount of paper and money," he said. "It is this attention to usability and details that sets the X642e apart."

For Soka University of America, the Lexmark X642e multifunction printer is earning high marks.

Lexmark X642e

