

Better, faster communications thanks to eCopy

The amount of paper required to manage an electronic media operation is surprisingly staggering. From multi-page contracts for television and radio programming rights to letters of agreements with affiliates, these behind the scenes documents ensure the proper functioning of a multi-station network as well as significantly increase the paper volume.

Ohio Educational Telecommunications (OET), a state agency, links Ohio's 12 educational television stations, 34 educational radio stations, and nine radio reading services in a statewide system. As OET found out, managing and communicating paper documentation can easily take up valuable time and money resources that could be better used to advance the agency's mission.

"We were spending up to \$3,000 per month on postage and probably a similar amount on fax telephone charges, just for our basic communications with program suppliers and our 43 statewide affiliates," said Derek Villaloboz, OET's Network Administrator. "We were also devoting many staff hours to re-keying important documents to customize them for each station's requirements. We knew there had to be a better way."

Moving from analog to the future

That better way became obvious when OET began evaluating solutions to replace its analog copiers. The agency decided to look at digital copiers offering OET scanning functionality and a networked solution.

"We already had a T1 line," said Villaloboz. "With scan to e-mail, we saw that we could leverage our investment in the line, plus reduce or eliminate the cost of postage and faxing by e-mailing the majority of documents."

OET evaluated a Ricoh solution and the Canon imageRUNNER 5000 with the eCopy Suite. The ease-of-use of the Canon/eCopy solution combined with OET's high comfort level with Canon made this solution a clear choice that immediately began delivering results.

"Unlike what typically happens with new technologies, our staff hit the ground running with the Canon/eCopy solution," said Villaloboz. "Its ease-of-use and functionality immediately began streamlining our workflow, and the solution was soon being highly utilized by all the staff."

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eCopy gets high ratings

Fast adoption of the Canon/eCopy solution led to fast results for OET. In fact, the agency's entire workflow was enhanced. The need for re-keying, with its inevitable errors, was eliminated. All documents including contracts, agreements, and other legal documents were immediately scanned upon receipt.

Using the annotation and editing functions in the agency's word processing software and eCopy Desktop, staff members could easily change all documents as appropriate for each of the affiliates. For example, eCopy Desktop made it easy to electronically “whiteout” a particular affiliate's call letters and insert another's in seconds without having to retype the entire document.

The agency also immediately began to save on postage, overnight, and fax charges.

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The Canon/eCopy solution has also provided an additional benefit. All of the legal documents that OET receives must be stored and made available for fast retrieval. This was becoming problematic with documents taking up more and more physical space and becoming harder and harder to efficiently store and retrieve. With the Canon/eCopy solution, they can now store all documents electronically and can easily archive them on CD-ROM.

A profile of Ohio Educational Telecommunications

The nation's first licensed, non-commercial television station was Ohio's WCET, Cincinnati, which went on the air in 1954. By 1960 three more public television stations had been licensed in Ohio. To ensure orderly continued growth of public TV in Ohio and to provide funding and services to the stations, the Ohio General Assembly created the Ohio Educational Television Network Commission in 1961. The agency's name was changed to Ohio Educational Telecommunications in 1995 to reflect its expanding role.

Over its 40+ years of existence, OET has established a long tradition of serving Ohio citizens through educational initiatives and putting new technology to use for its affiliates. This remains a primary objective and OET is involved in a wide variety of activities to use the newest technologies to advance its mission. OET is a network hub delivering public TV and public radio programming, in addition to instructional and professional development materials, throughout Ohio with a mix of satellite, fiber, and broadcast technologies.

