

# UNIVERSITY CUTS STUDENT PRINT WASTE WITH EQUITRAC CAMPUS PRINT QUOTA SOLUTION



**W**hen students themselves voiced concerns over excessive and wasteful printing in computer labs, administrators at The University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, knew it was finally time to do something about out-of-control print volumes. With the help of the higher education print management solution known as Equitrac Express®, St. Thomas reduced campus printing nearly 50% in just one semester.

St. Thomas had established a network of 19 on-campus computer labs providing students the ability to print course related materials and make use of the ever expanding resources available on the World Wide Web. Over 150 PCs and 55 printers were distributed among a main computer lab, 12 departmental labs, and 6 student residence labs. With no systems in place to track or manage output, printing was free. And because copiers were coin-operated, the result was an explosion of print volumes.

“But cost was not the primary issue” according to Paul Kozak, Director of Budgets, Acquisitions, and Inventory at St. Thomas. “The issue was environmental. Students would print a 50-page PDF, when they really only needed a page or two. And the majority of the printed output would be unused and wasted.”

It was students — seeing waste paper piling up near printers and unclaimed pages in output trays — who first brought the issue to the school’s attention. A student leadership group voiced their concern to the school’s CIO who challenged his staff to end print waste and make St. Thomas more environmentally friendly.

**Organization:** University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota. Founded in 1885, serving nearly 11,000 graduate and undergraduate students with programs on three campuses in the Twin Cities area, off-campus sites throughout Minnesota, a facility in Rome, Italy, and study-abroad opportunities worldwide.

**Challenge:** Respond to student concerns over the environmental impact of wasteful printing encouraged by non-tracked free use of computer lab printers.

**Solution:** Equitrac Express for Education with Page Counter terminals and new computer lab controls.

**Result:** 50% reduction in total print volume in the first semester, decrease in wasteful document output while meeting student environmental concerns.

The University chose Equitrac as a solution. The Equitrac solution called for two major operational changes. First, install Equitrac software to track all printing and allocate costs. Second, set — and let Equitrac software automatically enforce — a quota on student printing. St. Thomas decided on a print quota of 400 pages per semester, with output over that charged to the student at 10¢ per page.

The result was an immediate reduction of total output in the computer labs. Total print dropped from 2.5 million pages to 1.3 million pages in the first semester.

Having solved the initial issue of waste, St. Thomas has moved on to other areas for improvement. For example, about half of the university’s nearly 1,000 faculty and staff printers are on the network. Now St. Thomas uses the Equitrac system to track and allocate their output to departmental budgets. And, working with their local dealer, Eric Casteel from Marco, St. Thomas has made additional operational changes, such as moving print from higher cost devices to newly deployed low-cost-per-page multi-function printers, to further reduce overall output costs.

The school already uses Equitrac system reports to analyze printer usage and costs. Having this data is the second major benefit of the Equitrac system — because now that St. Thomas knows its printing costs, it can take steps to address and control them. That will involve investigating how best to use the Equitrac solution’s additional campus print management and administration features.

“Our CFO and Controller are now interested in the potential cost savings” adds Kozak. “With an average print cost per page of at least 6¢, we hope to save the school \$100,000 per year.”

