



CASE STUDY

Iowa City Public Library

"I would definitely recommend it. All the benefits we were looking for are still there, and all the things that drew me to this product over others are still reasons I would pick Scannx again. The trust is still there. The product is still working the way I envisioned it working."

– Jason Paulios, senior librarian, Adult Services

About Iowa City Public Library

As the largest and busiest single-building library system in the state of Iowa, the public library in Iowa City serves many purposes for a very diverse clientele. For more than a century, the library has stood in the heart of Iowa City, routinely ranked as a top place to live for both families and retirees. "Our building is right downtown in the midst of stores, shopping, bars, and restaurants, so we are a go-to destination for families planning a day downtown," said Jason Paulios, senior librarian for Adult Services. As a result, the library has a robust children's program so families can enjoy story time inside, a playground right outside, and lunch or dinner at a nearby pizza parlor. But the library also maintains services for seniors, genealogy and historical researchers, job seekers, and technology assistance.

The downtown district also serves as a "front door" to the 1,700-acre campus of University of Iowa, with over 32,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The university has libraries and study areas, "but the campus is pretty spread out over the city, and we're closer to the food," Paulios said, "so we get a lot of students during the academic year."

Comparing Scannx To Other Solutions

Paulios first saw the Scannx Book ScanCenter in action at the Computers in



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Libraries (CIL) Conference. Iowa City Public Library had flatbed scanners attached to a few of the internet-enabled PCs available for patrons to use, but Paulios heard a lot of frustration from users. The flatbed scanner software was cumbersome to use and patrons had to reserve the computers for a one- or two-hour block, even if they only wanted to scan a couple pages. "It was taking a lot of staff and patron time," he said. "We realized we needed something a lot easier."

At CIL, he tested different scanner solutions promoted by various vendors. "Scannx was the one that seemed to make the most sense for our library," he said. "The touchscreen interface was the thing that caught me the most. It was intuitive, and we were looking for something that was self-service. It's more modern. The image was clean, not cluttered. Each button was very obvious, and there weren't a lot of options to confuse people. The machine itself was high-quality, but not overly large. Also, Scannx works with TracSystems, our printing vendor, which was a big plus."

Other scanning solutions he tried seemed to be geared more toward larger university libraries, he said. "They were bigger, and some had overhead cameras." They seemed overly large and complicated when his goal was to make scanning quicker, easier, and more accessible for patrons of diverse ages and backgrounds who wanted to scan personal documents, photos, recipes, and study notes.

Book ScanCenter - Popular With Staff And Patrons Alike

Iowa City Library purchased a Scannx Book ScanCenter with both an 11"x17" book-edge flatbed and an integrated automatic document feeder. The book-edge has been particularly useful for staff fulfilling requests for scans of historical records.

"It's nice that you don't see the black gutter lines you used to get on the copy machine," said Paulios. "And we do have some pretty fragile documents from the late 1800s and early 1900s from Iowa City and Johnson County, like city directories, that weren't meant to last this long. The book-edge puts less strain on the binding."

The document feeder has proved popular with the general public, who just want to



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quickly scan their documents. “We do a lot of tax returns here, and people walk in with their stack of 60 pages, so it’s a big plus to be able to just drop it in. We call it the ‘Express Scan.’ We have a couple computers we call ‘Express Computers,’ where people can walk up and use them for 15 minutes. We put the Book ScanCenter next to them and it’s become an express kiosk area. You don’t need a log in. It’s just scan and go.”

The response from patrons has been overwhelmingly positive, especially when they find out they can create scans for free. Copy machines charge 10 cents per page for black and white, and 50 cents per page for color. But patrons can create scans in black and white or color – in a variety of formats, including PDF, searchable PDF, Word, JPEG, TIFF, and PNG – and send them to a flash drive, a smartphone or tablet, the cloud, or an email address at no charge. Sending it to a printer still costs the same as using the copy machine.

The staff has been pleased, too. Unlike with the copiers, they don't need to make change or clear jams. And while they were constantly helping patrons figure out the PC scanning software, the Scannx Book ScanCenter made scanning truly self-service. “When people say they want to scan something, they are really pleased about how easy it is to use. We used to have people coming in with two minutes to close and say they have to scan their homework and get it to their professor. It made for grumpy employees and anxious interactions. Now it’s something you can actually get done in the two minutes.”

As for Paulios, he says if he had to do it over, he would – and not just because the product is working as he hoped. “It’s not often that you get to go back to the sales people and say, ‘this is something I actually like.’ Nine times out of ten, I’m going back to badger them about something that’s not working. But I was talking to the guys at the PLA (Public Library Association) conference, and told them this is a great product.”