



Public Advocates

“(The Scannx translation service) directly ties with our mission. It helps us further our work to serve low-income people and provide information to the community. I just see it as a tool for a common understanding between different people. I would definitely recommend it.”

– Fabiola Martinez, Legal Administrative Coordinator

About Public Advocates

Public Advocates, a nonprofit law firm and advocacy organization, has been on the front lines of the struggle for social justice for 48 years, focusing on public policy, litigation, and community building to raise the voices of those most affected by injustice. And if there is one thing those four decades have made clear, it’s that the people they serve and the voices they want to raise do not necessarily speak English.

That’s why Public Advocates was thrilled when Scannx donated a Book ScanCenter scanning system, with its revolutionary document translation services, so they could scan and translate documents for their clients and partners whose native tongue is not English.

“We thought it was awesome,” said Fabiola Martinez, legal administrative coordinator at Public Advocates in San Francisco. “It’s a great tool for us to continue to bridge our information with local communities and statewide audiences. For now, we use it primarily for our Spanish-speaking audience but, as we continue to grow our organization, it will continue to touch other communities and populations as well. In fact, one of the things we used it for recently was to translate a fact sheet into Tagalog.”



CASE STUDY

Expanding Success Through Translation

For years, the intuitive touch screen interface of the Scannx Book ScanCenter has guided users through the scan process from choosing file formats, to scan quality, color depth, file naming, and destinations. It has been a game-changer for libraries and institutions around the country. Then, in November 2018, Scannx debuted its new cutting-edge Scan to Translate service, which enables users to instantly translate printed documents into another language without having to manually retype the text into a separate document or online conversion tool. The new service integrates both Microsoft Translator, which supports 65 languages, and Google Translate, which offers translation capabilities for 103 languages.

Now, organizations like Public Advocates can use the Scannx Book ScanCenter to scan documents and get both an English version and a translated version in just seconds, then email the scans or save them to either USB or to cloud-based destinations such as Dropbox or Google Drive.

“We work in partnership with community organizations, and we make a lot of materials for them – such as fact sheets and press releases,” said Martinez. “Most of the people our partners serve are Spanish speakers, though sometimes they speak other languages. (The Scan-to-Translate feature) saves us a lot of time, and that’s important, especially in the legal community where things often have a really quick turnaround.”

Automating And Expanding Inclusivity

In the past, documents that needed to be translated from English into another language would be handed off to a bilingual staff member, adding to their workload. “We are committed to providing information to the community,” she said, “and it’s incredibly helpful to not have to rely on one specific person to translate manually.”

The translation tool has proved useful for Public Advocates projects that are pushing for policy change at the state level. A good example is Public Advocacy’s



CASE STUDY

work with local organizations to support a package of legislation pending in Sacramento to address housing affordability. “We created a sheet with information about what each specific bill would do,” said Martinez. “That information is really important to the people who are impacted, but it’s not going to help them if they don’t speak English. We were able to do a quick translation (of the fact sheet) and I just had to go in and check the punctuation. It was super quick and easy.”

In fact, Martinez said, she was pleased at how accurate the translations were. “I’m pretty skeptical of technology, and my experience is that a period or apostrophe or special character doesn’t always come out right. I was pretty surprised that the (Scannx) translation and the characters actually translate very well.”

Translating Transparency For School Funding

The Scannx translation tool also had an impact on efforts to promote equitable school funding. In May 2018, Long Beach Unified School Board settled a complaint filed by parents and community groups – including Public Advocates – regarding the underfunding of high needs students. That agreement promised to provide improved services for low-income students, English language learners, and foster youth, and to promote greater community engagement.

“We produced a fact sheet to let our partners in Long Beach know what services they’d be getting from the settlement,” said Martinez. “That fact sheet was in English, but we were able to use the scanner to quickly translate it.”

In a district where 20 percent of the students are classified as English Language Learners – most of them from Spanish-speaking families – that is an important step toward inclusion and empowerment. And, with the California Department of Education reporting that more than 65 different languages are spoken in schools across the state, the potential impact is even greater.