



March 15, 2005

## **Case Study:**

### **Truckee Meadows Community College Uses ViewWise as a Multi-departmental Application**

Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) is the fastest growing college in northern Nevada. The college serves over 12,000 students with programs leading to associate degrees and certificates in more than 40 academic and occupational areas.

TMCC's Financial Aid Department (FA) stores about 14,000 hardcopy files, and processes approximately 7,000 new applications a year. FA workers were running out of space to house all of the files when they were told their office might be moved, resulting in the loss of their file room altogether. Since they are required by the U.S. Department of Education to keep files for four years (sometimes longer depending on a specific regulation) they knew converting to an electronic file system would save both time and money while serving their students better. The question was which electronic file system to choose.

#### **Same Problem...Times Two**

While FA was researching electronic alternatives to paper, another department was already using a document imaging system. The expectation was that FA would adopt the same system. "We found the other department's system to be, 'clunky,'" says Sharon Wurm, Assistant Director, Financial Aid Department.

Wurm continues, "Our Director of Information Technology Operations (ITO) found ViewWise from Computhink at a tradeshow. ITO set-up ViewWise on our server to Computhink's specs and everything worked fine. After some trial and error, we were able to adjust the security controls to match our needs. Both departments now use ViewWise"

#### **The New Workflow Process**

With 22 licensed users, ViewWise is now an integral part of FA's record keeping procedures. The ViewWise integrated document management system is utilized as an ongoing work-in-process system, where files are built electronically; capturing scanned documents such as copies of tax forms.

To begin the Financial Aid application process, students go online to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and complete an eight-page application. TMCC then imports the application information from the DOE system once a week into the TMCC mainframe system.

Next, the student goes online to the TMCC website to fill out an Activation Form. The Activation Form is then delivered to the FA Dept in the form of an email. FA imports the email Activation Form into ViewWise. This begins the lifecycle of an applicant's file. All E-files are stored according to academic year, exactly like their old paper-based filing system. Files are indexed by name, Social Security number, and award year for efficient retrieval.

## **Braving the Back-file**

In 2004-2005, FA has decided to go completely paperless. Every file from this current year forward will be stored and available for electronic retrieval. TMCC has also initiated the scanning of old paper files into ViewWise, for archival purposes, because as Wurm puts it, "It's frustrating to have to look for a paper file".

## **ViewWise Benefits**

FA personnel like the ease and intuitive appeal of the ViewWise secured archival retrieval system. The learning curve is short and the time to retrieve a file as well as the number of misplaced files has been dramatically reduced. Stephanie Costigan, FA Administrative Assistant, took the initiative to delve deeper into ViewWise and customize it to make it match FA's needs even better.

Says Costigan, "When we moved from paper files to electronic files, people were concerned that they would actually lose paperwork. However, since installing ViewWise, nothing has ever happened that couldn't be resolved quickly."

Costigan says she relies heavily on some of the standard features of ViewWise. "We do some double-sided scanning, some batch scanning and some individual scanning," she explains, "Features like despeckle, deskew (both automatic and manual) and anything that makes a scanned file legible is critical to us." The feature Costigan uses most is the Sticky Note tool for when things need further explanation. She likes this tool, because the note floats above the image, allowing complete viewing of the underlying document.

ViewWise also enables FA to cut/copy pages from a file in one year and paste them into next year's file. That way, a student file exists in every year and selective paperwork can be advanced to the current year's file.

## **Return on Investment (ROI)**

When calculating hard ROI, Wurm points directly to savings on supplies — specifically the three-part file folder they previously had to purchase to store a student's information. "Those files average around \$7 each. We do re-use files, but we spent (and now save) almost \$6,000 per year. Further, we use about one-tenth of the file space we used to use."

In calculating soft ROI, Wurm points out, "The time to retrieve a file has been reduced to a fraction of what it used to be." Cost savings are quite apparent."

Wurm refers to the time it takes to search for files as the "time of hunt." Before ViewWise, an FA staffer might spend 15 minutes hunting for a hard-to-find file before relegating the task to a student worker who might spend another 30-45 minutes. This might happen as often as once a day using the old paper system. Now, hard-to-find files occur less than once a month and take a fraction of the time to find.

## **ViewWise Supports a Multi-departmental Model**

TMCC uses ViewWise 5.5 now and an upgrade to version 5.6 is due shortly. Says Wurm, "We always upgrade as soon as new versions are available. We want to make sure we take advantage of new features that help us serve our students better."

In the process, Wurm is realizing her vision of ViewWise as the centerpiece of a complete electronic solution. "Computhink is very willing to help with that," says Wurm.

Recently, TMCC hired a representative from Computhink to provide refresher training, including version 5.6 enhancements. The training was attended by Financial Aid, but also in attendance were representatives from Admissions and Records, and the Controller's Department. Their participation was part of a plan to extend the scope and utilization of ViewWise across a broader range of Student Services.

In fact, the Admissions and Records Office at TMCC is proactively exploring how best to implement ViewWise scanning into its daily procedures. They will begin this project by outsourcing the scanning and indexing of their entire file room - a \$45,000 project - that will then be imported into ViewWise. Unlike Financial Aid, the Admissions Office must maintain student documents indefinitely, creating a substantial strain on their file room resources.

The Controller's Office at TMCC is also exploring how best to incorporate ViewWise scanning into its daily procedures. Their workflow involves maintaining thousands of documents, yearly, pertaining to purchasing and fiscal procedures for the College.

## **Conclusion**

For single-department or multi-department implementations, ViewWise provides software that is responsive to the different needs for each of TMCC's specific departments. Combine that with fast, expert service and support and TMCC has a document management system that pays for itself and a company that stands solidly behind it.

"The great thing about Computhink is any time you need to get in touch with someone you get an immediate response," Wurm continues. "This was true from the first day and remains true now. Recently, we participated in a Computhink Webinar. We submitted questions and they tracked the questions and responded immediately. They have been very proactive."

#####

## **About Computhink, Inc.**

Computhink provides best-in-class Integrated Document Management (IDM) and image-enabling software for secure enterprise information sharing. Computhink's products best benefit Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) class companies operating on Windows, LINUX, or Novell platforms.

Computhink has over 4,000 worldwide customers in government, financial services, education, healthcare, industrial and utility organizations. Information about Computhink and its products can be found at [www.computhink.com](http://www.computhink.com).