IDC VIEWPOINT

Redefining the Role of Print in a Transformed Education Landscape

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Knowledge is power and education unlocks the door to new possibilities and opportunities. As custodians for the future generation, educational institutions in Asia/Pacific have to be at the forefront of change and technological innovations to deliver on this promise. This IDC Viewpoint takes a closer look at the shifting education landscape, the role of print within it and what educational institutions need to look out for when investing in print devices.

The rise of digital native students, internationalization of education, which puts pressure on educational institutions to be world class, and reforms to traditional teaching models that used to be teacher-centered and aided by mostly flat/text-based learning materials, are some of the changing education paradigms that educational institutions need to contend with in today's hyper-digital age. Driving the transformation in the education industry are goals around:

■ **Personalized learning** which includes new modes of learning through the use of student data and engaging content in digital and printed media. Based on IDC research, education sector CXOs are investing in solutions like student lifecycle, curriculum, admissions and assessment management systems for a complete view of individual students and to reduce unstructured paperwork.

■ **Efficient delivery** which includes seamless, on-demand and cost-efficient access to content for students and staff. IDC research found that the top business concern for education sector CXOs is improving staff efficiency. This was followed by improving teaching outcome and financial results.

■ **Collaborative education** where educators and students work together in peer-to-peer or group activities. The focus is on student experience, keeping learners involved through interaction, connected devices and engaging materials.

Cloud, mobility, big data and analytics, and social – or what IDC calls the 3rd Platform technologies – are instrumental in powering the transformations taking shape in education. Cloud was ranked as the top technology to enhance competitive positioning of educational institutions in 2016–2017, according to IDC's Asia/Pacific C-Suite Barometer Research 2016. Cloud's application is seen in management systems that will aid in personalization and streamlining backend processes. When it comes to mobility, the top 3 reasons for its adoption are: improving student satisfaction, increasing staff productivity and enhancing collaboration. However, educational institutions have to grapple with the security aspect which can be a hindrance to the adoption of mobility.

Educational institutions also typically leverage big data and analytics for service innovation, for example, to monitor staff teaching performance and identifying students at risk of failing. Finally, social media tools are used to manage communication lines and flow within the educational institutions, such as responding to students' queries/complaints, knowledge/idea sharing and gathering feedback.

Despite the increasing digitization of educational institutions, print remains important among staff and students alike. Newsletters, test sheets, lecture handouts and student papers, among others, continue to be used in schools and complement digital content, rather than replace it, ultimately creating a more well-rounded learning experience through multiple touch points.

However, printers have to be more than fast to stay relevant amid the transformations. Below are the key considerations for educational institutions when investing in print devices:

- **Connected to cloud with document solutions.** As an entry and exit point of data, printers must be connected to the cloud and enabled with document solutions, in line with CIOs' push to leverage cloud to improve competitive positioning and IT strategy involving document lifecycle solutions.

- **Mobile printing enabled with security features.** Digital native students expect no less than seamless access to information, and together with bring your own device (BYOD), printing through mobile devices is seen as an unavoidable trend moving forward. Nonetheless, secured mobile printing is needed as sensitive student information sits in the network of educational institutions.

- **Affordable color printing for different sizes.** Printed materials should be engaging and complement digital media. Printing in color is no longer an option but a necessity. As printed materials can come in different formats, printing devices must be able to accommodate different paper sizes (e.g., A3, A4, A5) and textures.

- **Best-in-class technology.** With a drive to be world class, educational institutions often leverage technology to enhance competitive differentiation. In fact, IDC research found that Asia/Pacific educational institutions' top considerations when investing in technology are an established brand reputation and best-in-class technology.

- **Low total cost of energy.** High priority on productivity and cost savings through new technology adoption reflects a very tight budgetary environment. Print must be aligned with these priorities especially since printing cost is often underestimated and overlooked.