

Lexmark increases security at headquarters with color laser printing solution for visitor badges.

Visiting Lexmark? The company's own products create photo ID badges for visitors

The Challenge

At any business, hospital or government building, knowing who is visiting the premises, when they arrived, and whom they are seeing is essential. After all, confidential corporate information, patient health and classified government secrets must be protected.

How this is done varies widely. Here at Lexmark, we've leveraged our own hardware and software products to create a cost-effective, yet leading-edge solution that can be a model for any of our thousands of customers.

With our old manual system, visitors arriving at Lexmark's security headquarters or at the main lobby simply signed a logbook and wrote their name on a paper badge. The problem with this solution was that the badges were often illegible, making it impossible to know just who walked past you in a hallway.

Administratively, generating a report of who was on the premises at any given moment, or figuring out how often particular people visited, simply couldn't be done from these handwritten logbooks.

The Solution

As a developer of world-class output technology products, it's crucial that Lexmark maintains tight control over our entire operation. To meet our security needs – and as a practical demonstration of our own technology – we developed a visitor-identification application that captures data, snaps a digital photograph, prints photo ID badges and generates detailed reports on demand.

First, we created a simple database to store and maintain a history of visitor information. In the security headquarters and in the main lobby, we installed a computer with a simple HTML form on the screen that captures visitor information. Attached to a USB port on each computer

is an inexpensive webcam. Finally, at each location, we installed a C510 color laser printer to print the badges.

When a visitor arrives, the security officer types the visitor's information into the on-screen form. We know who they are, what company they represent and whom they are here to see. The computer timestamps the transaction and saves it to the database.



Lexmark prints colorful visitor badges at its headquarters to increase security.

Once we've captured that information, the visitor stands in front of the camera to have a photograph taken. Since we're not doing formal portraits, the webcam resolution is all that's needed.

This solution was developed in-house and deployed quickly and inexpensively. And it works. Rolled out in February 2005 in two locations, we've since printed about 3,100 badges.

With the information recorded and photograph captured, the C510 prints the ID badge in full color. The media is a die-cut badge inlaid onto a standard letter-size sheet of paper. Once printed, the badge is peeled from the backer sheet and ready for the visitor to attach to their clothing. On the badge is the current date, ensuring that a badge is valid only on its day of issue.

With the database reporting capabilities, it's now possible to know how many visitors we have, which Lexmark department receives the most visitors and which companies – or individuals – visit most often.

The Results

This solution was developed in-house and deployed quickly and inexpensively. And it works. Rolled out in February 2005 in two locations, we've since printed about 3,100 badges. In 2006, we may install touch-screen kiosks in many of our other building lobbies, allowing visitors to perform the process themselves.

We've also extended the solution allowing departments within the company to customize the badges for specific group events, such as customer meetings, media events or community relations visits.

By capturing visitor information and printing full-color photo ID badges, Lexmark's corporate premises are more secure. But it's more than that: we believe in our own technology and we can demonstrate to our customers that we use our products to run our business every day.