

ImageSilo® Eases Enrollment for Students Displaced by Hurricane Katrina

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it has been estimated that more than 250,000 school-age children have been displaced from their homes. As these students and families struggle to return to as normal a life as possible, they are enrolling in school districts throughout the United States, wherever they have taken shelter. And, with disaster recovery experts estimating months will pass before the rebuilding can really begin in New Orleans, many of these students expect to spend at least one semester away from their home schools.

“There are lots of other reasons we like the ImageSilo® system, but this one event makes it totally worth it!”

~Michael Roppolo, Director of Health Services, Isidore Newman School

For the students of Isidore Newman private school, located in historic New Orleans, the enrollment process is somewhat simpler than for many other students from the Hurricane affected areas. Thanks to school administrators’ decision to place all student health records into electronic format on ImageSilo, Digitech Systems’ online document and content management system, Isidore Newman students are able to provide their temporary schools with the critical health records, including immunization histories, normally required by law for entry.

The Situation

The Isidore Newman School is a private school founded in 1903 by Isidore Newman in New Orleans, LA. The school was founded with the philosophy of student-centered instruction, collaborative learning and hands-on experience, and today they have grown to a student body of almost 1200, with 149 teachers.

After seeing the changes in the healthcare industry regarding electronic medical records, school administrators, including Michael Roppolo, Director of Health Services, started looking for a system that would allow them to place student health records in an electronic document management (EDM) system. They were also concerned about eliminating the double-entry format of their existing health records process, and were anxious to eliminate the risks and inefficiencies of a manual, paper-based filing system. Administrators recognized the security, ease of use and accessibility of electronic records when compared to paper files.

Located in one of the historic districts of New Orleans, the Isidore Newman School suffered from frequent blackouts and power interruptions. Although they did not anticipate anything of the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina, these power inconsistencies led school administrators to be concerned about continuity of records in case of disaster.

The Solution

APYXX Technologies, a Digitech Systems value added reseller based in Metairie, LA began scanning and uploading the health records for the school’s current student body in August 2005. The School began collecting the students’ health records over the summer and the first batch of files was uploaded to the secure ImageSilo system on August 9th.

Although the School has a very capable IT department, they chose the ImageSilo option, because it allowed them to take advantage of EDM without the capital expense of new hardware to host the system and it minimized the maintenance time required by their IT staff. The School was also attracted by the guaranteed reliability and security of the ImageSilo system. Multiple backup strategies for power and internet as well as extensive building security offered school administrators peace of mind that their data would not only be accessible, but also physically secure.

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A Digitech Systems Case Study

Recognized benefits

The Isidore Newman School estimates that they were able to collect and enter approximately 99% of the necessary student health records for their current student body before the school closed in compliance with evacuation orders. Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans August 29th, and by nightfall many parts of the City were under water. In the days that have followed, school administrators have received word that the school buildings have sustained minimal physical damage and looting. Without electricity and water, the school was officially closed on August 31st until further notice. Although the physical records (paper and files) may be intact inside the school buildings, they are completely inaccessible.

Most students and families have evacuated Louisiana to settle, at least temporarily in the Houston and Dallas areas in Texas and to Destin, FL. Some are scattered as far as New York City and Denver, CO. As disaster recovery experts begin talking about the clean up and rebuilding of New Orleans, they indicate that it will take some time for electricity and sanitation systems to return to normal. Families, who expected to be gone for just a few days, are now faced with the very real possibility that they cannot return to their homes for months, and they have begun to make arrangements for their children to attend school in their new locations.

Schools in the United States usually require health histories, including critical immunization records, when new students apply for enrollment. For the displaced children of New Orleans, this could potentially require finding a new doctor and getting a Wellness Checkup. It could also include costly re-immunizations and new student athlete physicals. There is no way to reproduce the records from individual doctor's visits and medical histories.

Despite his own interim housing situation in Houston, TX, Michael Roppolo has been able to securely access student records on ImageSilo using his laptop, an internet connection, and the proper logon credentials. He is emailing these records to Isidore Newman students around the country to provide to their new schools as they apply for enrollment.

As a parent of an Isidore Newman student, himself, Mr. Ropollo comments, "A disaster can happen to anybody, anyplace. It is a terrible tragedy, but ImageSilo is making it easier by allowing us to provide our students with critical information needed for them to continue to live life as normally as possible. They are enrolling in schools around the country without any hassle. It has worked out tremendously well."

Stoney Ware, President of Apyxx Technologies notes, "Disaster recovery is not the first reason anyone pursues electronic document and content management. In this case, it may turn out to be the biggest benefit as it will allow these students and their families to recover more quickly from the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. In the midst of uncertainty and chaos, they are able to bring some order back to their lives by enrolling in schools without interruption."

About Apyxx Technologies, Inc.

Apyxx Technologies was established in 1998 and is based on New Orleans, LA. Apyxx Technologies focuses on providing solutions to improve business efficiency and provide real impact to the bottom line. Apyxx Technologies offers a full range of services related to electronic document and content management including needs analysis, project scope, project planning, implementation and installation services, on-site user training, and continued product support. Apyxx Technologies has been an authorized Digitech Reseller since 1999, and is a member of the Digitech Systems Circle of Excellence for 2005.

To learn more about Apyxx Technologies visit their website at www.apyxx.com or call toll free at 1-504-309-1025.

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