



More than just a print shop – Leeds University invests in customised food & label printing

How the Print and Mail Service of the University of Leeds offers great value for students and university members by offering new products with a desktop label and a direct-to-food printer

When you think about an established and historic university like the University of Leeds you don't necessarily think of all the things that happen in the background. All the people and services that makes a student's life easier on campus. The Print and Mail Service is one of those important cogwheels that supports students and university staff likewise. Established in 1904, the University of Leeds is one of the largest universities in the UK. It is renowned globally for the quality of their research and teaching, ranking Leeds as one of the world's top 100 universities according to QS World University Rankings of 2023.

The Print and Mail Service is more than just a simply campus print shop. *"We offer a full range of printing services to our current and future students and all staff across the whole university,"* introduces Oliver Renshaw, Business and Systems Manager of the department, its core business. The work produced at the Print and Mail Service is mostly split into three areas: the traditional document printing, graphic arts printing especially for marketing purposes, and transactional work such as the soon coming print and

post service that allows everyone at the university to print and post single letters or mail merge documents with variable data directly from the desktop PC. Staff as well as students can order anything from staff IDs, postcards, posters, dissertation and thesis printing to signage and labels through the department's online store.

To offer all those products the department is equipped with a heavy load of different professional printing hardware and software. One of the recent additions to their print portfolio is the LX610e Pro Color Label Printer. This full-colour, desktop label printer/plotter combines colour inkjet label printing with a built-in digital die-cutting mechanism, producing any shape and customised labels in seconds. Prior to the LX610e Pro they used either standard A4 sheets of labels through a page printer or mono thermal printers. That came with a couple of drawbacks. Printing on sheets of labels was slow and had more wastage as many sheet-printed labels weren't needed or used. The LX610e Pro uses labels on rolls, which is much easier and

allows for an on-demand production. If more than standard sized labels were required Renshaw and his twelve colleagues used a large format (LF) printer and separate cutter. If the LF printers were running other jobs like banners and posters, swapping over was a pinch point and also required two processes (printing and then cutting separately). As the LX610e not only prints but also cuts any shape or size it allows for a more productive workflow and also reduces the operator intervention considerably. Renshaw adds: *"It also opens up new markets for stickers and shorter run labels due to its flexibility of substrates and ease of use."*

When looking for a new printer they researched online and visited trade shows, but nothing jumped out or fitted their needs as well as the range of products supplied by DTM Print. The LX610e Pro was then purchased in late 2022 through Labelling Solutions, an authorised partner of DTM Print in the UK. As an international OEM and solution provider for label printing systems DTM Print not only offers its own printing solutions, but also works closely with well-known manufacturers like Primera Technology and OKI. The company then sells these products and services in the entire EMEA region through authorised resellers and distributors.

Since they added the LX610e Pro to their printing equipment, the Print and Mail Service produces several thousand labels at peak times, allowing them to provide more impressive colour labels of any shape than before. Order quantities can be anything from just one label to a few hundred at a time.



"We only print what we need," Renshaw points out one of the many advantages that comes with this desktop inkjet colour label printer. Others are ease of use, the small footprint, low running costs and the great print quality. It's used daily as their main customer for labels at the moment is the university's own catering department for food labelling. The label printer is already showing great returns as the department could add new products and services. They also shifted some jobs from other devices to the LX610e Pro allowing for greater profitability. Renshaw elaborates: *"Not only were we able to diversify our product range, we also expect a full return on investment in the first year."*



The Print and Mail Service aims to be a constant throughout a student's time at the university, starting with the offer letter and ending with the graduation certificate. They want to add value to the education the university is offering their current 39,800 students. That includes 'nice to have' extras that make the students' academic experience special. The wish to create printed memories led the department to another product offered by DTM Print.



Personalisation is the main reason Leeds University uses Eddie. The team around Oliver Renshaw impressed both staff and students with personalised biscuits for open days and other university events. *"Eddie is more of a self-promotion tool to highlight we are not just a department that prints on paper,"* explains Renshaw their decision to invest in a direct-to-food printer. *"The printer makes a great talking point as people love to see it work. That said, we have plans for doing something a bit special with the Eddie around graduation times - just to enhance the experience."*



Together with the LX610e Pro they also bought Eddie, the edible ink printer that prints logos, photos and text directly onto biscuits, sweets, marshmallows, white chocolate and a wide range of baked goods. As Eddie prints directly onto the surface of food, there is no need for using icing sheets; no aftertaste and no added texture which would decrease the quality of the food. The edible ink meets all EU and FDA standards for use as a food additive, while the ink cartridge itself meets cGMP standards and the entire manufacturing and cartridge filling processes are FDA-compliant and cGMP certified. In addition, the edible ink is Kosher and Halal certified and suitable for vegans.

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