



Meeting the 21st Century Learning Ideal with x2VOL

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Catholic Schools, Shining Examples

Ubiquitous Technology

Catholic and independent private schools have more freedom in how they operate and the curriculum they teach. They can also create the forward-thinking educational environment advocated by 21st Century Learning experts who say technology should be integrated into every educational and administrative component of school. Ubiquitous technology better reflects the environment students will encounter upon entering the work world. Technology cannot be relegated to an add-on or a periodic enhancement to a lesson, nor should it be limited to streamlining some administrative tasks while others remain stuck in 20th Century processes.

Despite its importance, creating the ideal technology-immersed educational environment isn't easy even for private schools. Lack of funds, reluctance to break from tradition, restrictions on time, insufficient training, and other hard-to-pin-down reasons complicate the transition. Even schools embracing 21st Century ideals struggle to implement top-to-bottom digital integration. There are shining stars, however, many of them are private, faith-based schools.

Ursuline Academy in Dallas, J Serra High School on the California coast, and St. Agnes Academy of Memphis are on varying rungs on the ladder toward 21st Century Learning. Each is committed to instructing the whole child and in using technology in every practicable way. Each school has a sophisticated community service program where students help charitable organizations while gaining valuable life skills. Each relies on x2VOL to manage their service programs.

Much like timesheets and electronic work logs adults use, x2VOL keeps administrators and students in sync by centralizing data. Students record hours they have worked, location, and reflections about their efforts. Administrators review data, approve hours, track progress toward goals, analyze trends, and produce reports. Nonprofit organizations verify hours online.

Students and administrators alike tend to put-off their record-keeping tasks when forms must be signed and notes read and filed by hand. The old paper-chasing system didn't encourage students to volunteer or be good time managers. Plus, today's tech-native youth intuitively know there is an easier way to track their service time besides filling out a form.



Life Learned Through Service

Serving others provides a chance to extend the mission of the school and transform the hearts of students while practicing life skills like time-management and decision making.



One Million Hours!

Students using x2VOL have given 1,000,000 hours to local organizations like animal shelters, food banks, and elementary schools. The list is endless, the possibilities infinite.

Time Saved

J Serra High School

Dan Everett, Christian service director at [J Serra High School](#) turned to x2VOL a few years ago to manage the school's service program. The existing program was cumbersome and time-consuming because it was managed with papers and binders.

"Before using x2VOL, we required that the students fill out a form, take the form to their service location, get a supervisor to sign off and then return it to school where our administrative process began," explained Mr. Everett. "Once we got the form, we approved the hours by hand, entered it into a paper log or database and then filed the paper which we kept forever."

Mr. Everett means *forever*. "I have students come back to me asking for proof of service hours after they have left the school. Even if I could simply print a report from the database, sometimes they need proof of service or notes on what they did for the non-profit. That can take hunting through files that are 10 years old." x2VOL changed the entire process and completely eliminated the need to dig through binders and boxes.

J Serra High School administrators noticed that procrastination decreased and service hours increased when the school migrated to x2VOL. "In an instant, paper was gone, data entry was gone," says Mr. Everett. The students noticed the difference too. They had a powerful system, accessed via computer or mobile device to simply click and confirm their hours. With record-keeping and reporting in a digital form students understand, they did a better job keeping track of their work. And as the process eased, total number of hours students gave to local charities increased.

Ursuline Academy

[Ursuline Academy](#) director of campus ministry, Maria Redford, points out another way x2VOL meets 21st Century ideals. With a database tracking their service program, Ursuline Academy administrators can use data more effectively to motivate and reward. "Our goal is to start recognizing students for meeting service goals," says Ms. Redford. "With x2VOL, we can develop an incentive program because we have a reliable, up-to-date system tracking hours."

Ms. Redford says x2VOL makes it much easier to complete college applications, too. "[x2VOL] is good for students because it

gives them an online document, which quickly and clearly shows where they did their service including how many hours of service they completed," adds Ms. Redford. "This report is especially helpful when students apply to colleges, as admissions committees are increasingly requiring such a report of service experience." Putting the decision-making responsibility back onto the student is part of the 21st Century Learning mission: teaching students to apply their efforts and knowledge into critical thinking and life skills.

St Agnes Academy

Teacher Mary Miller from [St. Agnes Academy](#) in Memphis reinforces the point of student responsibility in time management; however, she explains why it is so easy to get off track. "Before x2VOL, paper submission and management was a nightmare!" Students had to get a form at school and sometimes they would forget to take it to the charitable organization. That simple misstep meant students couldn't recall everything they had done and couldn't adequately write about their efforts. Once the form was submitted (either on time or late), teachers had to approve each form by hand and record it on the log sheet. Ms. Miller said, "The sheer busy-ness of this task put it pretty low on the 'need to do list'. We teachers would put off our recording duties and then scramble at the end of the year."

Each of these schools, including [St. Agnes Academy](#) which is often recognized as a model for 21st Century Learning, have embraced technology for its ability to free staff and students from busy work and turn their experiences into training for life skills.

Gretchen Kirk, the director of religious education at [St. Agnes](#) sums up what technology tools should do for administrators and students. "I don't want our students to just check off the box saying 'service done'. It isn't about the hours, it is about the [transformation of spirit](#) to be open and aware of the community around them. [Students] can be a participant in the betterment of their community." x2VOL makes reaching that ideal easier because it frees up everyone to focus on the purpose of service while gaining experiences in life and digital technologies demanded in the adult world.

More success stories: intelliVOL.com



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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