

Case Study: The Air Force Association

About The Air Force Association

The Air Force Association (AFA) is an independent, nonprofit, civilian education organization promoting public understanding of aerospace power and the pivotal role it plays in the security of the nation.

Every summer, their CyberPatriot program runs AFA CyberCamps to bring STEM camps to middle and high schoolers across the country. Before finding Mimeo, the CyberPatriot team spent 5-10 hours per week for 12 weeks per year ordering, managing, and shipping supplies to their camps. By switching to Mimeo, they saved that time, reduced their prices, and increased their revenue.

“Before Mimeo, my team wasted 5-10 hours per week managing print supplies. Switching to Mimeo saved us time, lowered prices, and increased revenue.”

Rachel Zimmerman
Senior Director, Business Operations, CyberPatriot

What the CyberPatriot Program Prints

CyberPatriot is the National Youth Cyber Education Program created by the Air Force Association to inspire K-12 students toward careers in cybersecurity or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. For the AFA CyberCamp program, camps can optionally purchase printed materials like instructor guides and student workbooks, as well as t-shirts and other supplies.

Before Mimeo

The CyberPatriot staff previously relied on a traditional, third-party printer for their printed materials and a separate vendor for their camp t-shirts. Before camp season began, they would have to estimate how many copies of each document their camps would require. All the print would then be shipped to the CyberPatriot office. Each camp could order materials from the CyberPatriot staff, who then had to manage orders, package supplies, ship them out, and oversee invoicing. In order to cover costs, CyberPatriot had to estimate shipping costs and build that into print material prices.

This process required a lot of time - about 5-10 hours per week, for 12 weeks of camp season - and placed the entire onus of labor on the CyberPatriot staff.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the process became unsustainable. While CyberPatriot staff worked remotely, the camp supplies were all stored in the offices, which meant someone had to commute to the office in order to ship out print materials to camp locations. They needed to find a simpler way.



How Mimeo Saved CyberPatriot 120 Hours Per Year

Tired of spending 120 hours per camp season on managing and shipping supplies, the CyberPatriot staff decided to find a better solution - and they landed on Mimeo.

On-Demand Print to Save Money

Their first step with Mimeo was to switch to on-demand print. Their previous printer (a traditional, off-set vendor) required them to print all materials ahead of time in order to qualify for a bulk discount. Mimeo's on-demand style is designed to do the opposite. CyberPatriot now saves money by printing fewer copies of each item at exactly the moment when they need them. CyberPatriot no longer has to guess at the beginning of the summer about how many docs they will need, meaning they pay less per year in print. Plus, they have more flexibility to update documents as cybersecurity information changes.



Branded Marketplace to Save Time and Labor

Next, CyberPatriot set up a branded Marketplace to save more time. Instead of shipping print materials to their office and managing orders for the camp locations themselves, CyberPatriot now publishes materials to a secure online Marketplace. Each camp logs in and orders materials when they need them. Mimeo prints, ships, and invoices the camps directly, without requiring any time of the CyberPatriot staff.

Plus, CyberPatriot now sources custom t-shirts through Mimeo. Those are stored in the Mimeo warehouses (co-located with the print facilities) so that when camps order them via the Marketplace, Mimeo packages the t-shirts with the print and ships it all to the camps. While CyberPatriot staff can check in on these orders anytime with online reports, they now have 5-10 hours per week to spend on more strategic tasks. Best of all, CyberPatriot earns a little bit of revenue on each camp order through Mimeo's Marketplace mark-up feature, which returns money into their program so they can keep expanding their STEM offerings.



The Results: A Better Experience for Everyone

Switching to Mimeo has resulted in a better experience for CyberPatriot and their camp customers. Since CyberPatriot no longer has to order in bulk, they can offer documents at lower prices and higher variety, such as B&W and color printing. Meanwhile, the CyberPatriot staff saves 120 hours each summer (that is equivalent to three full work weeks).

"Working with Mimeo has been so easy and successful that we are now actively looking for ways to leverage Mimeo in other Air Force Association programs."

Rachel Zimmerman
Senior Director, Business
Operations, CyberPatriot

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www.mimeo.com

CONTACT US: connect@mimeo.com
1-800-466-4636

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