




CASE STUDY – Secured ID card Consolidation at New York University

CAMPUS SECURITY SUCCESS - When an IT project goes really well

At the beginning of the 2004 academic year, New York University’s Department of Public Safety was required to modernize their ID card production system in order to reissue new ID cards for all employees, students and affiliates at NYU. This project was initiated by the recent adoption of new federal laws which requires the replacement of the Social Security Number (SSN) previously used for cardholder identification, with a new unique University ID number (UID). After a careful study, the Department of Public safety realized that the current systems in place to exchange data between the Registrar, Alumni, Human Resources, Bursar, Library, Information Technology, Campus Cash and Access Control systems were inefficient and required to be updated. In fact, as part of a larger Security Assessment, the University wanted to review all ID-related procedures and ways to improve security by directly imbedding Business Rules in an ID card production application.

 **NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

Founded in 1831, New York University (NYU) is the largest private university in the United States. With over 50,000 enrolled students, the University, which is composed of 14 schools, colleges, and divisions, occupies five major centers in Manhattan. It operates branch campus and research programs in other parts of the United States and abroad, as well as study abroad programs in more than 25 countries. New York University is also one of the largest employers in New York City, with over 16,000 employees.

The Challenge

NYU Department of Public Safety was tasked with the improvement of the overall security of the NYU ID card for all stake holders throughout its multiple facilities located in Manhattan and abroad:

- ⦿ Replace the SSN used as a primary identifier with a unique University ID number (UID).
- ⦿ Redesign the ID card with enhanced features for different groups in over 8 campuses worldwide.
- ⦿ Re-badge over 70,000 students, employees and affiliates over a period of six months.
- ⦿ Control printing eligibility, supply, charges and reprinting.
- ⦿ Manage a central data repository of security-related information.
- ⦿ Develop an Easy to use and foolproof interface.
- ⦿ Create productivity, audit and reconciliation reports.

The Solution

As a solution provider, SPECSid was initially contacted to conduct a re-engineering assessment of the current ID card production situation based on the identified problems and to assist NYU teams to achieve their goals. SPECSid’s first challenge was to fully understand the current environment and infrastructures and then to propose a plan taking into consideration numerous aspects such as past and future requirements, business rules, security concerns, IT limitations, budget and timeframes.

Teamwork

One of SPECSid's strengths is its ability to facilitate team building of very skilled individuals within organizations. For NYU, SPECSid's experience and technical skills helped to consolidate all inputs and to bring all involved players to adopt a single plan. The fact that the SPECSid proposed plan considered NYU skills sets, methodologies and know-how was the corner stone to the project's success.

“We started out with a plain piece of paper and SPECSid put together the perfect plan. Everyone on our team was very enthusiastic with his approach to the project”.

Charles A. Surendranath, Department of Public Safety, New York University

The Plan

The biggest challenge was to minimize the impact on ID card holders, the ID card center and staff workloads. SPECSid proposed a multi-phased approach with manageable deliverables.

Phase 1 – Consolidate data and business rules

During the initial assessment, we found that the IT department was maintaining an Oracle database for managing email accounts. A proposal was submitted to NYU senior management to use this IT database as the new data repository and for generating the new UID identifier. With good planning and excellent teamwork, the conversion was completed on time and with minimal investment on this infrastructure.

Phase 2 – Re-badging 70,000 NYU staffs, students and affiliates.

In parallel to the consolidation effort, SPECSid had to prepare the new ID card production infrastructure. The challenge was to formalize the design of a new ID card (*Fig. 1*) to meet all requirements imposed by the NYU Security Services:

- ⊙ One card design for all staff, students, affiliates and alumni's.
- ⊙ Essential elements on the ID card like the photograph, name, expiration date and group must be clearly visible by a security agent from a reasonable distance.
- ⊙ IDs will be clearly differentiable between distinct groups.
- ⊙ The new card shall maintain compatibility with existing systems such as library, access control and-Campus Cash.
- ⊙ The ID card must include other distinctive security elements.
- ⊙ The design should be flexible and adaptable for future use.



Figure 1 - New NYU ID card with portrait/landscape design

Four months after the project initiation, the system created the first production ID card which was tested on various campus locations to confirm that the information was propagated to all University systems.



Figure 2 - Frank Gallagher (OneCard Support Administrator) purchasing Pretzels using the new ID card

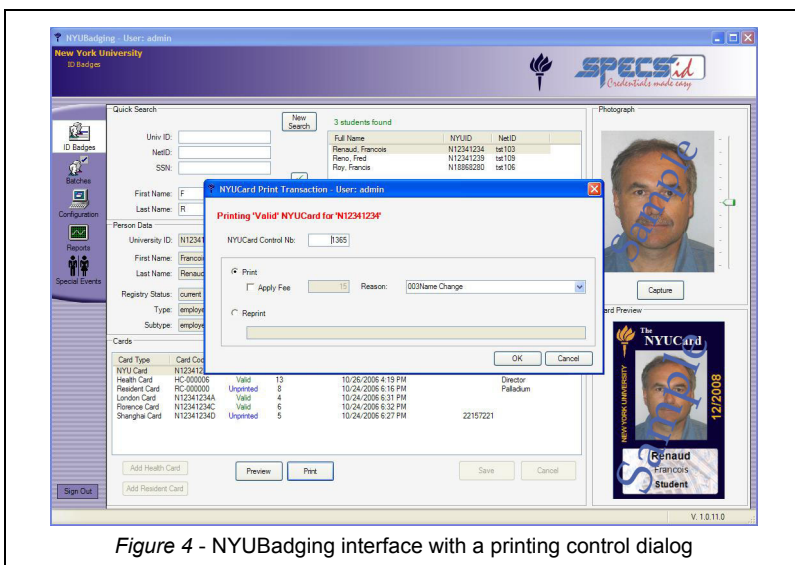
The last challenge for this phase was to set up the production environment capable of producing over 1,000 ID cards per day. NYU successfully completed the re-badging within the six month timeframe mandated by NYU senior management.



Phase 3 – Design a custom badging application meeting new operational requirements.

By early 2006, NYU was getting ready for the last project phase. All procedures, lessons learned and especially input from the ID card center was put to contribution in the design of a new custom ID application.

Following the approval of a prototype interface, SPECSid implemented a custom solution based on the SPECSid™ Framework.



- Key features**
- ⦿ Compatible with the current infrastructure.
 - ⦿ Limit user actions based on business rules and login privileges.
 - ⦿ Maintain NYU cards, Health cards, Residence cards and newly implemented Global cards from over 15 campuses worldwide.
 - ⦿ Prevent printing of “Disabled” ID cards.
 - ⦿ Force operators to enter a unique control number, fee and reason for all printing operations
 - ⦿ Produce audit, reconciliation and productivity reports.
 - ⦿ Batch import Photograph and batch printing of all imported records.
 - ⦿ Custom Special Event card design and data management.

A simple Card Designer was added to help create Special Event cards and import participant data through CSV text files. All templates and data are managed outside of the central database to maintain data integrity.

The new NYUBadging application was successfully placed into production in October 2006.

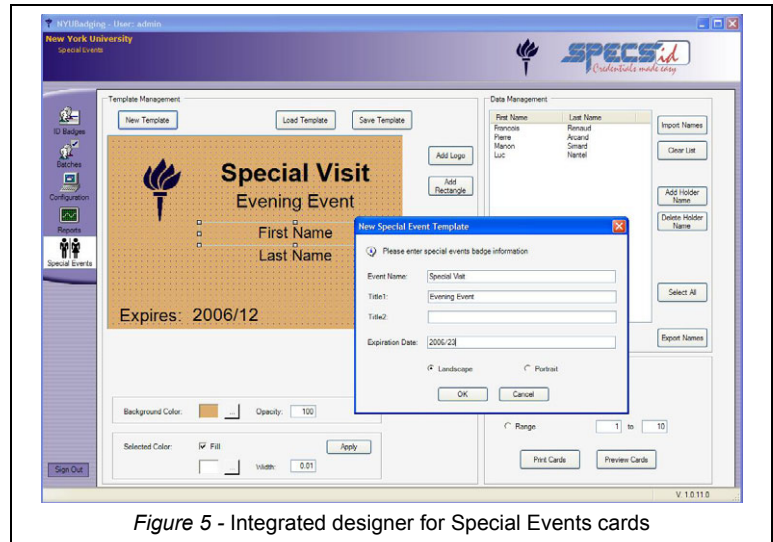


Figure 5 - Integrated designer for Special Events cards

Benefits / Return on Investment

- ⊙ University-wide recognition on the importance of the ID card for security and visibility. The NYU branding for the new application had a significant impact on upper management endorsement.
- ⊙ Overall cost reduction due to fewer cards reprinting, reduced training time and improved productivity tracking.
- ⊙ Revenue increase by enforcing reprinting charges and tracking transactions.
- ⊙ Automation of time-consuming tasks such as reports, Special Event cards, importing photographs and batch printing.
- ⊙ Better trend analysis and reporting tools.
- ⊙ Better control on stock and activities based on periods and users.
- ⊙ Easily expandable NYUBadging application.

Conclusion

The identity management system is an essential component of the infrastructure necessary to provide students with a single, easy to use, digital identity. NYU's management is already planning future expansions and improvements to the services offered both on-campus and offshore.

“SPECSid has made possible what many thought was impossible”

Charles A. Surendranath, Office of Public Safety, New York University

For more information about the **Secured ID card Consolidation at New York University** project, please contact:

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With over a decade of experience in providing solutions to the security and identification community, SPECSid's highly skilled technical staff offers a wide range of services to ensure successful implementation of complex ID/credential projects. For more information about SPECSid and SPECSid products and services, please visit <http://www.specsid.com>.

Charles A. Surendranath has recently moved to CAS Security Consulting (<http://www.cassc.net>) and offers a wide range of professional services to help clients secure their business from potential threats.

SPECSid was first introduced to NYU by Idesco Corporation (<http://www.idesco.com>), a New York based security partner/supplier providing ID equipment and services.