

Xerox to offer 'Ignite' software upgrade for copiers to let them grade school papers

May 9 2013, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org) —Xerox, the copy-machine giant, has announced that it will be selling a software upgrade for its copiers that will turn many of them into test grading machines. Called *Ignite*, the software not only grades papers, it analyses the results and produces reports for the teacher.

Most everyone is familiar with standardized test forms—[bubbles](#) are filled in to indicate answers and a machine grades them by reading the

bubbles. This new software from [Xerox](#) takes that concept to a whole new level by allowing a copy machine to grade non-standardized test forms. Tests and quizzes are given and students write down their answers using numbers, words, etc., all in their own [handwriting](#). Those papers are then fed into the copy machine which automatically grades them all and sends both reports and grades to the teacher via a website. The idea is to reduce the amount of time teachers spend grading tests so they can spend more time in [direct instruction](#).

Impressively, the new software can be used on virtually any kind of test: math, science, history, even essays. To do that, it works differently on different types of tasks. It can do normal grading for example, when there are clear answers, such as a single number answer to a math problem. For essays, it works more like a word processor, highlighting spelling and punctuation problems.

What's perhaps most revolutionary about the new system, however, is its ability to highlight certain types of data. If every child is having problems with a certain class of [math problems](#), for example, the software can highlight that for the teacher so he or she can review those concepts in a new way. The software can also highlight problem trends for individual students too, setting up a scenario whereby teachers can assign customized [homework](#)—an idea that has long been little more than a dream for teachers.

The system has already been extensively tested in many schools throughout the United States and Canada, and by all accounts is thus far a hit with teachers and students alike. Xerox plans to roll out the software to any interested school for the 2013-2014 school year.

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