

## Technology to the Rescue—Public Service Improved Sue Marsh

When I was hired at NFPA two years ago, the desire to deliver good public service was there, but the ability was lacking. The library was primarily a manually-driven library. Of the 1500+ requests we received each year, nearly all were of photocopies of our historical codes, our ROPs and ROCs, or journal articles. There was someone standing at the photocopier nearly all day. When the end product was a photocopy of a photocopy, the results were nothing to be proud of. There was no electronic access to the content of our codes, so each research request for a particular phrase or idea was potentially a lengthy search. The web interface to our library catalog was broken—when it did work, it neglected to display the last year's cataloging. We were working as hard as we could, as fast as we could, and we were still not proud of our output. We turned to technology to help us rethink what we did, how we did it, and how we could do it better and faster.

Over the past two years, we have improved both the quality and speed of customer service by introducing technological methods to our work. We have:

- Scanned all of our Historical Code Collection and the NFPA Journal and put searchable PDFs stored on a server, accessible to all NFPA staff
- Installed a multi-tasking photocopier that allows us to print from our desktops, scans documents, and sends faxes
- Added Adobe software to our workstations to allow us to produce PDFs and fax from our PCs
- Replaced a broken library system with a new one that allows us to highlight collections that had never-before been cataloged.
- Built a library site on NFPA's intranet for staff access
- Revised the public Library website
- Organized and built a database of NFPA's photograph archives
- Reduced our fill time for orders by 75%