



# As “The Document Company” Promoting the Evolution of Communication

What type of company is Fuji Xerox? Everyone knows that Fuji Xerox manufactures copy machines, but for what purpose? And what will we do in the future? This highlight looks at the value Fuji Xerox has provided to society and where we are headed for the future.

“OOF Square”: A Document Environment for Collaborative Work

## What Does Fuji Xerox Provide Society?

In February 1991, Fuji Xerox first set forth its corporate identity as “The Document Company,” declaring its future business direction. This identity involved continually striving to be the best in both documentation itself and in the processes used to create documents. It also reflected Fuji Xerox’s corporate philosophy at the time of contributing to better understanding and harmony among human societies through documents.

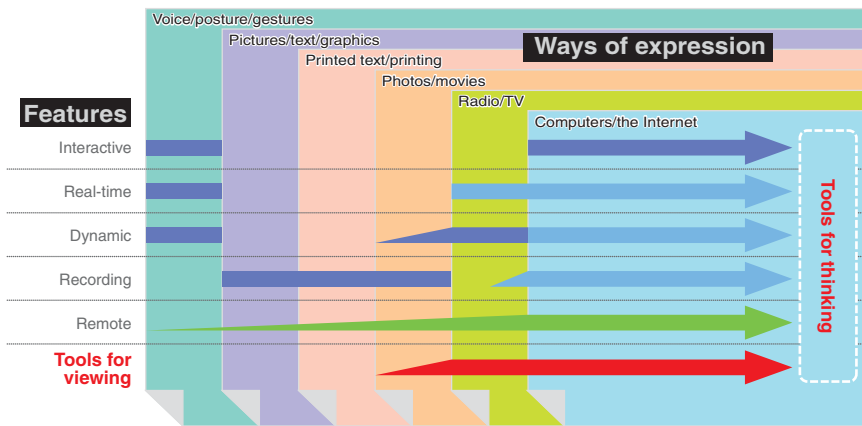
What type of value do companies provide society? There is a need to re-examine the value corporate business activities provide society from the standpoint of CSR (corporate social

responsibility). CSR is a term used to describe the responsibility that companies have toward society. So what has “The Document Company” Fuji Xerox provided to society, and what will it provide in future? This highlight examines the value Fuji Xerox provides society through documents.

## What are “Documents”?

What are documents? To Fuji Xerox, they are more than just information written on paper. Documents can include a wide range of media, such as sound or electronic text and images. In other words, a document is any physical expression that

■ Development of ways to record and transmit thoughts and information What will the future bring?



“CollaboPoster” lets individuals transmit and post knowledge in physical form.

Documents are tangible expressions of knowledge. As their formats have evolved, tools for documents have been created.

human intelligence can recognize. Humans think, communicate, decide and move using documents.

In the first place, what are documents? If a document is an expression of human knowledge, the original form documents took was communication conveyed by voices, postures and gestures. When humans wanted to convey knowledge to a wider audience and have it last longer, they carved characters into walls or wrote them on paper.

These records, which conveyed important historical facts, as well as knowledge related to natural science or medicine, to later generations, became the essence of documents. With the invention of the letterpress printing machine by Gutenberg in the 15th century, the essence of documents evolved into communication on a full-scale. As literacy progressed, more knowledge was shared, and documents started linking people.

Five hundred years later in 1949, the Haloid Company of Rochester, New York (later to become Xerox) invented and marketed a technology that enabled reproduction directly onto plain paper without a printing plate. Known as xerography, it was a reproduction technology based on static electricity. Anyone with access to a Xerox copy machine could now easily distribute documents, disseminating information whenever they wanted. This development was so revolutionary that management guru Peter F. Drucker said that Xerox succeeded in “democratizing information.” The first Xerox chairman, Joseph R. Wilson, said “the purpose of our work is to help create better understanding among people and bring harmony to the world.” These words suggest that the potential documents could have, providing an insight into the origin of Xerox’s role as “The Document Company.”

## Evolution of Documents into Tools for Thinking

In the 1980s, the information society started to develop at an ever-increasing pace. Personal computers became commonplace, and when linked through the Internet, allowed anyone to create and send out information to the world at large. But to use computers, humans had to learn computer operations and follow computer rules.

Struck by the unnaturalness of this arrangement, Xerox’s Mark Weiser created the concept of “ubiquitous computing” in 1988. Weiser indicated an idea that did not pertain solely to technological advances, and involved putting in place an environment where computers would not be visible to the eye so that human beings would be able to easily display their creativity. Takemi Yamazaki, a Fellow at the Corporate Research Group, says that “making humans unaware of the computer is an important factor when linking human thought to electronic documents.” Yamazaki predicts that the computers of the future will be objects that sit quietly alongside humans, improving not only productivity, but also helping creativity — becoming “tools for thinking.”

“Tools for creating documents,” such as paper, pencils and printers, were the first technologies created in the evolution of documents. In turn, these items gave rise to the need for “tools for viewing documents,” such as projectors, TVs and computers. From here, the next step is “tools for thinking.”

## Documents that Create the Setting for Collaboration

Fuji Xerox predicts that in the future, documents will evolve into “tools for thinking,” but precisely what form will they take? Major



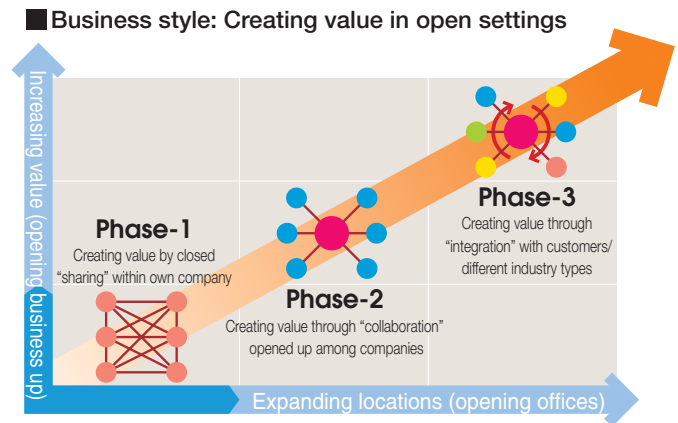
“InteractiveWall” lets users share documents across locations, and store data or handwritten text during discussions in electronic form.

developments taking place today at Fuji Xerox are already shaping the evolution of these “tools for thinking.” In fall 2002, the company created a new business vision called the “Open Office Frontier” (OOF). OOF proposes ways of working for a new generation by combining two concepts: the “Open Office” and the “Office Frontier.”

The Open Office concept is an office paradigm in which offices are opened up to link workers in different companies or organizations. It was founded on the conviction that outstanding ideas are born from “give-and-grow” relationships that grow as knowledge is shared laterally across discrete job responsibilities and chains of command. Creating new value beyond the power of an organization requires the joint efforts of a multitude of individual identities that surpass the organization as a whole. It is an achievement not possible with just the single identity of a closed organization. However, when companies with complex interests join together, some parts of organizations can be open and others must be kept closed. Creating and managing rules for information sharing and information protection is an extremely demanding issue. Fuji Xerox has started providing services using information technologies it has researched to make its Open Office concept a reality.

One pharmaceutical company is using Fuji Xerox’s Collaboration Service to create an R&D system enabling external collaboration, something they had previously never been able to manage. Amid today’s intensifying international competition, companies that rely only on their own ability to raise capital or develop products will find themselves unable to compete with the massive capital of global corporations.

Sharing data that had been traditionally kept top-secret, to en-



OOF proposes ways of working for a new generation.

able clinical trial outsourcing and sharing of clinical data with collaborator companies enables shorter development times and reduced costs. Faster and more advanced development is possible, and the added value of results is increased. Fuji Xerox’s Collaboration Service allows companies to share collaborative project information with outsourcing companies and development partners, as freely as within a single company. At the same time, companies can set detailed security, such as restriction of information access by job function, and prevent all access to non-project-related information. The Open Office concept provides a setting for “opening up business” among companies pooling their know-how in collaborative projects.

One housing equipment wholesaler is working on improving its service to customers by using Fuji Xerox’s Net Print Service (allowing data to be printed out at any Seven-Eleven convenience store in Japan). The wholesaler’s sales representatives at sales outlets throughout Japan can take photos of a customer’s kitchen or other room, and send the job instructions and photos to their design company in China, over the Internet.

The China design company uses the received photos to create a design showing the room after renovations, and registers the design in Net Print Service, where it is protected by high-level security.

When the design is ready, the sales representative in Japan goes to the nearest Seven-Eleven convenience store, prints the design as a proposal, and sends it to the customer. Open Office provides a setting for collaboration between “office-opening” organizations and individuals.

OOF’s second driving concept is the Office Frontier—created from a passionate desire to work with customers

in order to remain at the forefront of the Open Office. The Office Frontier involves continually facing new challenges to be at the frontier of proposing better ways of working. Looking back on the company's history, Fuji Xerox has constantly created new working style proposals from the front-line office environment, such as “Rent Xerox, Buy Efficiency,” “From Moretsu (intensive) to Beautiful,” “Always Human-centered,” and “Start Over With a New Work Way.”

Fuji Xerox does more than just provide technology. The company is constantly proposing human-centered reforms for ways of working. The goal of the Open Office Frontier is not just to improve efficiency, but also to free human abilities through new ways of working.

### Making Open Ways of Working a Reality—OOF Square

“OOF Square” is a concept office proposed by Fuji Xerox that was opened in January 2004 to illustrate the OOF concept. The office houses the staff of the Open Office Initiative, led by General Manager Yoshihisa Aoki, as well as researchers and development staff who normally do not work in a sales frontline. In addition, employees of other companies also work in the office on collaborative projects, and visits from customers accompanied by headquarters staff or sales representatives make it a truly open environment. Except for the meeting room, the office is separated by low partitions, and the space has an open design. Parts hidden from view are covered by rigorous security measures. The office is equipped with service tools such as “InteractiveWall” and “CollaboPoster” that let users get the most out of computers without having to be conscious of any interface. These tools link multiple bases to enable exchanges of ideas or creation of effective presentations.

One of the features of this office is that its computers are not assertive. Describing what makes OOF attractive, Aoki says: “Using a pen instead of a keyboard is more conducive to human creativity. Ideally, you should be able to focus on the subject of a discussion in a natural posture and have tasks like security management or recording of the discussion process handled reliably by a computer behind the scenes. This arrangement creates a space where employees can inspire each other, increasing individual and group productivity and even improving the mobility of the organization.” But OOF Square does not represent OOF's final form. There is still future potential, as Aoki describes. “OOF Square is a test-tube—an experiment to verify the types of benefits we can create by making “open ways of working” a reality. The next step we need is to create

value. That process itself is what OOF is all about. We are going to keep our concept open, and share our ideas with partners to get it into a more ideal form.”

### Documents as Tools for Thinking

With OOF steadily taking shape, what form will the document services of the future take?

One goal of the company's current research is to find ways of sharing human knowledge to solve problems faster. Once a problem to solve has been defined, rarely is the key to solving it or the information to investigate immediately apparent. What is needed therefore, is a service that gathers information for the user, with an understanding of the type of work the user does and the user's interests (a system automatically sends information to the user).

In other words, the service will extract information that is appropriate to the user (retrieve high-quality information in quantities the user can process) and provide it when needed. Computers will be used for the skills they do well, such as recording and searching, leaving humans to concentrate on expressing their creative abilities. This concept is the framework in which documents can be provided as “tools for thinking.”

Yamazaki stresses that judgments will always be made by human beings. “Computers will not be allowed to reach conclusions. When a person requires information, the computer will already be a fraction of a second ahead in the process, and quietly display a list of options. This setup will be used to assist the thought process.” The document services provided by Fuji Xerox have evolved on the basis of the concept of “always being human-centered.”

Let us consider again the value that Fuji Xerox provides society. While the tools and services the company has provided—such as copy machines, workstations, and document solutions—have varied with the times, what has remained is the consistent focus in its work on bringing devices closer to people. This work has enabled people to take part more naturally in evolving communication processes.

Communication is an indispensable aspect of human society. By facilitating communication, the company can improve understanding among people, creating a better society and a sustainable world. Fuji Xerox is entrusted with a large responsibility, and will continue to face the challenges that this responsibility brings. ■