



Zeroing in on printer waste and document security

Act on your assessment by employing print management software solutions

SafeCom Decision Support Document # 3

More and more companies are seeking maximum-impact-methods to improve their printing environments. The strategies employed will vary, and largely depend on solving problems identified through a preceding assessment. Wasteful printing and low document security are common yet critical and costly evils in unmanaged printing environments - however, they are also relatively easy to dispel. Efficient print software solutions will directly address waste and security concerns while providing up to 20% savings on printing costs.

After the assessment - looking at solutions

Depending on the depth of the printer environment assessment carried out, companies will be armed with information that, when analyzed correctly, should spotlight a number of areas with potential for high cost-saving and improvement. The next natural step is to identify and implement solutions that will assure maximum impact (see decision document #2 “assessments”). Your choice of solutions will depend largely on factors such as your company’s size and business, key goals (efficiency or cost saving), your budget, and infrastructure. In this paper, we will shine a light on some common methods known for their high impact. A company can employ any number or combination of methods in their solution. Many start with one or two initiatives and add new methods later on.

Targeting maintenance and service costs

Many companies start with optimizing services related to maintenance and consumables. One effective way to do this is by outsourcing parts or all print services to experts through various managed-printing care-packs. Care-packs can be provided by print-service companies or the printer device vendor. Services can come with different contract models such as cost-per-page, and they can cover consumable supply, printer maintenance, help-desk support - and all these efficiently backed by systems that monitor print-activity.

Standardization and consolidation of the company’s printer devices is another common and effective solution towards reducing maintenance and service costs. Over time, many companies will have accumulated assorted laser printers, fax machines, copiers, and desktops. Replacing these with a balanced number of efficient MFPs is usually a solution with high ROI.

But, what about wasteful printing and security?

While optimizing print-services and the printer park are wise and effective cost-saving steps, these methods will not tackle two of the most common IT nightmares -wasteful printing and lack of document security.

Reports show that approximately 20% of all print-outs are forgotten, lost or trashed unread. 40% of all prints consist of on-line content, and 80% of all print jobs are for in-house use. In traditional environments, all documents are per default printed in color, with text on only one side of each sheet. For most mid-sized or large companies, this amounts to vast amounts of wasted paper and expensive toner.

Confidentiality is essential for just about any type of business, and traditional printing is usually a latent security gap. Printed documents left in the vicinity of printers are potential data leaks. MFP devices send out FAX and email in the company name while storing information in memory. If unprotected, these machines can be accessed and used by anyone.

What causes waste and security problems?

Wasteful and insecure printing is a consequence of common user workflows as practiced in traditional print environments. In most cases wasteful and insecure printing endure because companies have no way to monitor or influence user print behavior. Even important initiatives, such as printer park optimization and improved IT services, do not directly touch on user behavior and, therefore, these cannot effectively reduce waste or improve document security.

To influence user print behavior, companies need to introduce new and better ways to print. Luckily, this is not done by hanging a list of strict directives and warnings on the wall. Specialized printing software lets companies get in-between users and printers in order to streamline the way they interact.

Software solutions that reduce waste and recover costs

Software tools can track print activity and provide a reliable picture of printing behavior. This gives companies the knowledge they need to improve wasteful workflows. The best print software systems provide detailed reports, often broken down to individual departments and functions. Based on this data, the software can be set to optimize the use of duplex and color printing in compliance with company waste-saving and environment-friendly policies.

Print software can also include accounting and billing systems, enabling companies to allocate print costs accurately, create budget awareness within departments, or even bill clients to recover print-related outlay.

Pull printing - for print security and additional waste reduction

Pull-printing with authentication is probably one of the most powerful features provided by any print software solution, and is definitely one to consider when looking for the right system. Users swipe key cards or punch in codes to authenticate themselves at the printer in order to collect their print(s). Immediate advantages are:

- Security - authentication ensures document confidentiality while protecting access to MFPs.
- Cost saving - waste is reduced because forgotten or regretted print jobs are deleted from the system before being output as wasted ink and paper.
- Pull printing with authentication turns MFPs into personal printers, allowing companies to rid themselves of assorted desktop devices and achieve savings in relation to maintenance and services.

The right print software solution

When evaluating print software solutions companies should look to their assessment, but some main aspects to consider when comparing print software solutions are:

- Technologies, features and flexibility for your specific environment and problems
- Detail level of print activity tracking and the quality of output reports
- Ability to influence all aspects of printing, including user workflows
- Reputation as established print software provider with a positive track-record and on-going support

Summary - solutions enabled by advanced print software

For reducing costs -

- Tracking and reporting tools to help optimize printing, support and procurement
- Accounting and billing tools to allocate costs
- Enforced duplex and B/W printing for certain document types to change print behavior

For ensuring security and saving even more -

- Pull-print with user authentication at the device
- Confidentiality - documents delivered into the right hands
- Protect access to MFPs and their network functionalities
- Making MFPs personal to allow device consolidation with high service and support savings
- Assuring that forgotten/regretted jobs are never output - reducing ink and paper waste.

Sources and additional information:

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