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Information Bulletin



Why Your Organisation Should Be Moving Their Print Management to the Cloud

With organisations increasingly moving their IT Services and Server functions to the cloud, now is the time for them to also change their print infrastructure to allow them to take advantage of some of the unique aspects of being cloud based.

Whilst not every aspect of a business can be easily and effectively moved into the cloud, moving print management may be as simple as eliminating a current physical print server. By following the trend and adopting SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) and moving the printer administration and support tasks to cloud-based productivity applications efficiency can be increased and savings made with payment geared directly to the services used.

Today, the office printing environment is constituted by three main elements – print infrastructure, printing features and print management tools. Together these parts represent the major capital investment costs and human resource expenditures including IT, procurement, service, support and maintenance.

Print infrastructure; On Premise vs. Cloud

Print infrastructure consists of the physical printer/MFDs together with their print servers (incl. print drivers, print queues) and the network these devices are operating on. These elements all represent major hardware and software investment, and require substantial skilled IT staff to administrate ensuring ongoing costs for support and maintenance. At the same time, they represent the three critical points for print infrastructure failure: printer failure, print server failure and network failure (meaning no printer access).

The key difference between on premise and cloud-based print infrastructure is that cloud-based solutions are software in the cloud.

- Traditional print servers cost money and require humans and hours—if not days—to implement; Cloud-based software launches automatically and on demand and can be available for use within minutes.
- Traditional print servers require manual installation and deployment of individual print drivers and print queues; Cloud software can automatically install and deploy print drivers and print queues with minimal intervention.
- Traditional print servers are physically limited i.e. companies have a finite number and capacity available to them; Software, as a Cloud resource, has no such physical limitation and is virtually infinitely scalable (Printix is scalable up to 374,400 printer/MFDs).
- To prevent single point of failure with on premise solutions, the best practice is to deploy more than one print server together with software (redundancy); Reliability through redundancy is inherently built into the structure of cloud computing technology.

Printing features; on Premise vs Cloud



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Printing features and functionalities were designed to support various differing workplace scenarios and workflow processes. Many of us now take for granted today features like mobile printing, secure pull printing, rules-based printing etc. which have developed as print requirements change. Differences between on premise and cloud-based software can be summarised as a combination of implementation, access and business model.

- Many printer software solutions are printer vendor specific and some may even require dedicated software to be installed on each device; cloud software can enable printer agnostic solutions, has no initial setup costs and caters for the mixed printer/MFD requirements of today.
- To enable printing, in-house print servers must be active and users must be connected to the network in many cases limiting the time period print is available. Cloud-based applications run 24 x 7 and allow access to printing anytime and anywhere using a simple browser interface.
- Traditional software is conventionally an upfront purchase with annual renewal and maintenance fees. The software is often priced per device and per user; should your organisation expand you will either have wasted investment (contraction) or require additional expenditure (expansion). Few organisations can be confident over the impact of Brexit on their growth. Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) provides far greater security and flexibility. With a per user monthly subscription-based payment model, there is no initial cost and complete flexibility with an organisation paying only for what it has used..

Print management; on Premise vs. Cloud

Print management software solutions conventionally include monitoring, assessment, auditing, and accounting with tools for management to help control, measure and optimize printing resources. These are traditionally enterprise solutions that can provide a significant return on investment (industry figures average 30 %+) if you have many users and many printers.

- Like any legacy application traditional print management software is released when new versions are made available. A significant annual maintenance fee is required to access updates, fixes and new features and IT has to find the resources for its implementation. Cloud-based software is automatically updated with fixes and new features – available immediately and with no impact on internal IT.
- Should an organisation with traditional on-site systems need to expand even if the application is scalable an organisation is usually faced by the need to invest in additional print servers (to avoid failure due to capacity issues). One of the greatest advantages of cloud based technology is the capability to immediately scale on demand. The solution is limited only by the ability of the application to scale with it, with Printix scalable up to 374,400 printers and MFDs.
- The Implementation and deployment of a print management solution on site can become a significant project. It may take many hours if not days and require many infrastructural changes. By comparison a cloud solution and services are quick to create and to deploy, and require no changes to the existing print environment.



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- The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to replace the current Data Protection Act necessitates a fresh approach to document security and potentially the enforcement of secure or Pull/Follow print and the need for user authentication. This is by tradition achieved by any combination of user name login/password, pin code or investing in hardware card readers to swipe ID cards. Cloud solutions could use any of these methods and/or provide secure user authentication. However in these days of smartphones, tablets and portable devices the process can be simplified and costs reduced by using a simple app from a smartphone or other device.
- In traditional print server architecture, documents remain secure on the network. Likewise, when using a cloud solution based on peer-to-peer architecture, an identical level of security is available at a similar performance level, as all print data stays on the local network.

Many companies spend a significant amount of time installing printers on client computers, updating print drivers and print queues and managing an on premise print environment. This cost is part of your “True Cost of Print” and suppliers will hide these costs which can be significant especially when costly experienced IT staff is the only resource available. When moving to a Managed Service in the Cloud, you should consider these costs and the impact on your IT staffing and the demand on your resources

It is indisputable that the cloud provides small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) greater access to enterprise quality technology. It allows smaller companies to achieve all the advantages of print management solutions, previously unattainable due to the excessive cost and complexity - especially compared to the necessary investment and technical skills required.

With Brexit and a time of great uncertainty for commerce over the next 2-3 years an increasing number of businesses are moving to the Cloud and SaaS driven by the need to increase their efficiency and capability whilst reducing their costs. GeDaP and Printix provide an opportunity for organisations to enjoy all the benefits from a Managed Service and a move to the Cloud.



Printix Is Certified By Microsoft For Azure

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