

AIIM E-DOC – Treating Printing and Imaging as a Corporate Asset

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According to industry estimates, it is predicted that by 2007 offices around the world will produce 4.5 trillion pages of printed information. This presents not only significant financial cost to those organisations that have yet to gain control of their printing and imaging environment, but also blemishes their environmental credentials.

Typically, ownership and management of printing and imaging devices is often fragmented across lines of businesses, workgroups and countries leading to a mix of products, supplies, software and protocols, not to mention many devices being under or over utilised. As businesses continue to try and improve productivity, increase efficiency and reduce costs it becomes increasingly important that they take action now to assess the growing complexity and cost of managing heterogeneous office print environments. This means achieving an optimum and balanced mix of printing and imaging equipment, efficient network controls as well as improving workflows to minimise the amount of paper produced.

Vendors are announcing various initiatives to help their customers get on top of these issues. The latest of these is HP's "Print 2.0" aimed at the corporate enterprise. But is this simply another attempt to follow the trend of labelling everything "2.0" or something more substantive?

Gaining control of the print and imaging infrastructure is the key premise underpinning HP's vision for printing in the enterprise. Print management is hardly a new concept - vendors such as Xerox, Canon and Ricoh all offer their own range of managed print services and tools. However, now that HP has encapsulated the challenge of enterprise printing as part of its \$300 million Print 2.0 campaign, this may lead to wider awareness of the potential benefits of achieving an optimised print environment. HP has specifically defined the key elements of its enterprise Print 2.0 offerings as "optimising the infrastructure", "managing the environment" and "improving workflow". HP is encouraging customers to develop their own Print 2.0 plan through utilising HP devices, management solutions and services.

HP is supporting its strategy of streamlining the enterprise print environment through growing its printing and imaging services organisation to add more consulting capabilities and solutions. This approach is certainly a viable one, and is part of its strategy to aggressively capture pages in the enterprise multifunction peripheral (MFP) copier market currently dominated by the likes of Canon, Xerox and Ricoh. However, HP's approach is not groundbreaking. Xerox,

for instance, has long been offering a comprehensive range of print management services from utility contracts to fully managed print services, leveraging the strength of its Global Services division. Canon, Ricoh and Konica Minolta also offer similar consulting services. Nevertheless, HP's range of Edgeline products, targeted at the corporate customer with usage-based pricing models, and the announcement of its open extensibility platform combined with its IT network management expertise certainly makes HP ideally positioned to help organisations tackle the challenge of controlling the networked print environment.

Integral to HP's enterprise "Print 2.0" approach is leveraging the multifunction peripheral (MFP) as a productivity tool, essentially an "on-ramp" and "off-ramp" device - "on ramp" to scan documents to enterprise applications and "off ramp" to retrieve and print documents as required. Indeed, printing today has evolved from a once standalone unconnected activity to becoming a central part of a company's IT network backbone, offering the scalability and flexibility to add value to an organisation's business processes. MFPs are no longer simply printing and copying devices, they also offer sophisticated scan to email or scan to file functionality enabling them to leverage the IT network and integrate with enterprise applications such as ERP, CRM and enterprise content management (ECM) systems. As such, MFPs now need to be considered a corporate asset along with any other IT asset which needs to be managed, controlled and monitored.

When considering how to achieve balanced deployment of printing and imaging equipment, Quocirca recommends the following best practices:

1. Evaluate the current environment:

Through a print audit or assessment, an organisation needs to gain an understanding of the total cost of ownership (TCO) associated with purchasing, owning and using printing and imaging technology including initial and ongoing costs such as supplies, maintenance and support. These assessments can range from basic on-line assessments through to more consultative on-site engagements with vendors or channel partners. In these instances more detailed qualitative data can be collected and analysed, such as employee to device ratios, as well as what is printed on those devices - should certain types of document be printed at all? Could these documents be produced by an internal copy centre? Or are these documents that could be outsourced all together? The aim is to "right-size" the printing and imaging

fleet, and ensure that devices are being effectively utilised. As an outcome of the assessment, organisations can develop a master blueprint for improving and working toward the ideal printing and imaging infrastructure environment.

2. **Streamline document intensive workflows:**

Paper is still the reality in many business processes due to its versatility as a reference medium, its portability and personalisation. Adopting a document lifecycle approach examines each step in the document workflow process, assessing where paper documents can be integrated with electronic processes. Organisations should assess the capability of MFP integration with enterprise applications as many vendors now offer open APIs for their MFP platforms. For instance, HP's new Open Extensibility Platform enables its MFPs to be integrated with document workflow applications, and Canon, Xerox and Ricoh all offer similar APIs for their MFPs.

3. **Manage the optimised environment:**

Once the ideal resource model and document workflow has been established, the next stage aims to get the printing infrastructure under control. Utilising device agnostic print management tools such as HP Web Jetadmin or Xerox Centroware enables proactive device and supplies management including installation/configuration, problem resolution, security capabilities, colour access control as well as sophisticated reporting to monitor and analyse the ongoing costs. These tools are typically free of charge and are fundamental in ensuring the print infrastructure is well managed.

4. **Continuous improvement through monitoring and measurement:**

The key to sustaining cost savings and improved productivity as an organisation grows is through continuous monitoring and measurement. This can be achieved through utilising print management tools, either from printer/copier suppliers or independent vendors such as Equitrac and Print Audit. As this activity is not a trivial task, organisations may wish to consider a fully managed print services approach, allowing the organisation to focus on core competencies. Managed services not only offer pro-active monitoring and recommendations, but also can provide pre-emptive break-fix management, such as Ricoh's @Remote service. This not only drives device uptime but also output quality, and increased user productivity.

An optimised printing and imaging infrastructure can positively contribute to an organisation's workflow and ultimately its bottom line. Most printing and imaging vendors now offer a range of print management capabilities which address the best practices framework mentioned above, either directly or through channel partners. However, there is no "one size fits all" approach. Organisations should now work with their supplier or an independent managed service provider to determine the most appropriate strategy for optimising their print environment. What is fundamental to this process is obtaining the buy-in from the relevant business groups – including facilities management and IT. It is then a matter of acting quickly, establishing a baseline for one department, location or office and extrapolating this to develop a holistic approach across the enterprise.

About Quocirca

Quocirca is a primary research and analysis company specialising in the business impact of information technology and communications (ITC). With world-wide, native language reach, Quocirca provides in-depth insights into the views of buyers and influencers in large, mid-sized and small organisations. Its analyst team is made up of real-world practitioners with first hand experience of ITC delivery who continuously research and track the industry and its real usage in the markets.

Through researching perceptions, Quocirca uncovers the real hurdles to technology adoption – the personal and political aspects of an organisation’s environment and the pressures of the need for demonstrable business value in any implementation. This capability to uncover and report back on the end-user perceptions in the market enables Quocirca to advise on the realities of technology adoption, not the promises.

Quocirca research is always pragmatic, business orientated and conducted in the context of the bigger picture. ITC has the ability to transform businesses and the processes that drive them, but often fails to do so. Quocirca’s mission is to help organisations improve their success rate in process enablement through better levels of understanding and the adoption of the correct technologies at the correct time.

Quocirca has a pro-active primary research programme, regularly surveying users, purchasers and resellers of ITC products and services on emerging, evolving and maturing technologies. Over time, Quocirca has built a picture of long term investment trends, providing invaluable information for the whole of the ITC community.

Quocirca works with global and local providers of ITC products and services to help them deliver on the promise that ITC holds for business. Quocirca’s clients include Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, Dell, T-Mobile, Vodafone, EMC, Symantec and Cisco, along with other large and medium sized vendors, service providers and more specialist firms.

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