Making Every Print Count

Getting printing costs under control starts with software

Executive Summary

Every time an employee prints a document, it hits the bottom line hard. Most companies don't even know how much they spend on printing and copying. Canon has the most complete suite of applications for output management and accounting techniques that can track who is printing what, add it all up and make corporate printing more efficient. Solutions, including NT-ware uniFLOW, imageWARE Enterprise Management Console Accounting Management Plug-in and imageRUNNER ADVANCE Tracker, can help to cut a business's printing bill by anywhere between 10 to 30 percent.

Paper Use Still Strong, Costly

Despite the optimistic scenarios during the past few decades about the paperless office, modern business seems to be as addicted to paper as ever. Look around any office today and chances are you'll see desks stacked with piles of letters, memos and reports, printers churning out documents and the ubiquitous recycling bin for all the wasted and orphan sheets.

While email, instant messaging and videoconferencing has reduced the amount of printed documents, the modern office still consumes reams and reams of paper. Studies estimate the average worker throws away about 25% of what they print.

Every time something is printed, it hits a company's bottom line. How much? The typical office employee prints roughly 60 pages a day, or 12,000 sheets a year. At between one cent and 10 cents per page, all this printing adds up quickly. For many companies, it costs between 1 and 3 percent of their annual revenues and equals tens of millions of dollars.

It seems astounding, but the truth of the matter is that most companies have no idea how much they spend on office printing or wildly underestimateits cost as a business expense.

There is good news, though. With some simple strategies, applying best practices and using the latest management software, companies can get a handle on how much they spend on printing and start to reduce it. A recent study by market analysts the Gartner Group shows

that a company can cut its printing costs by managing its fleet of printers.

The axiom that to avoid costly mistakes you should measure twice and cut once has never been truer than when it comes to reducing the costs of corporate printing. Controlling costs starts with watching who's printing what and placing limits on access to printers, and extends to things like using the right software. The challenge is to control costs by imposing order on printing and copying without stifling an organization's creativity.

Welcome to the era of managed document services: Canon's imageRUNNER ADVANCE multifunction printer-copiers and its suite of integrated management tools can actively manage a company's printer fleet to accurately measure printing costs and then cut them to the bone, without affecting the variety of documents that need to be produced. The bottom line is that the enlightened corporation can print what it needs and save money by being intelligent about printing.

Measuring and Controlling Costs: NT ware uniFLOW

Every large company has dozens if not hundreds or thousands of printers and copiers scattered throughout its facilities that are next to impossible to manage individually. The challenge is to be able to see what's going on at each device and place limits on its use.

Canon's family of imageRUNNER ADVANCE multifunction printer-copiers and NT-ware uniFLOW software can make sense of all of these devices and cut costs by watching each of them, making maintenance easier and internally charging for their use. By effectively managing all output as well as being able to secure printing by authenticating users and using intelligent routing rules to make sure the most appropriate printer is used, Canon has the most comprehensive output management software.

It gives IT managers the ability to effectively manage all output as well as provide secure printing and user authentication. The key is that uniFLOW keeps an eye on every networked printer or personal desktop printer in an organization, 24/7. Every time a document is printed or paperwork copied, uniFLOW springs into action, recording the event along with the number of pages created and who is responsible, whether it is color or B/W and even the application used to print.

With this data, an executive can know exactly how many pages were printed on every device and by every employee, and get down to controlling printing costs.

uniFLOW can also specify who uses which printer, and can restrict access based on need. For instance, the graphics department can use color and large-format printers for creating ads and brochures, while the legal department might be restricted and routed to monochrome printing for contracts and letters.

When it comes to controlling printing costs, large documents are a great place to start. For example, with uniFLOW, the company's IT manager can require permissions to print above a maximum document size. Rather than sending the job directly to the printer, it goes to a supervisor who must sign off on it before it gets put onto paper. Once the job has been approved, it is printed.

uniFLOW produces detailed reports on who is printing what, so that a company can make sense of where its printing dollar is going. These reports can not only account for the breakdown between black-and-white and color prints, but can show if documents were printed on a single side or both sides of the paper. They are instrumental in charging departmental or individual budgets for the prints they make. uniFLOW reports can include bar graphs

showing individual or group use, and pie charts on the type of documents printer and usage statistics so that month-to-month or year-to-year levels can be compared.

Canon's software can use rules-based routing so that the most appropriate and least expensive printing method is used. For example, a black and white letter would be sent to a monochrome printer while a color brochure would go to a color laser printer. Intelligent rules present printing options to the user based on what's being printed and how many pages it is.

uniFLOW also keeps printers up and running: uniFLOW eliminates the need to physically verify that each printer is working or follow a trail of complaints. The software constantly polls individual devices looking for problems, such as low toner levels or paper jams.

When it finds a fault—such as a printer on the third floor with an error message—a warning email can be sent to an administrator that action is required. When a printer stops working, uniFLOW software reroutes incoming print jobs to alternate devices, so workflow continues without interruption.

uniFLOW is IT-friendly, with a single universal driver for the Canon imageRUNNER family of products. The uniFLOW Universal Driver even support HP Single Function printers and many non-Canon devices. This is a huge advantage over the competition because this universal driver makes installation of new systems quicker, simpler and easier. It's also a snap for a roving executive to print at any of the company's far-flung facilities without hassle. Users can print anywhere on any company printer without worrying about whether they have the right software.

It's a given that security is a major concern at corporations today, and uniFLOW delivers here as well. Its Secure Printing and Accounting software can be set up to hold a print job in the uniFLOW Server until the recipient arrives at the printer and punches in a security code or uses his/her employee badge. At that point, the server releases the job and it is printed. Holding a job this way can reduce waste by eliminating orphan print jobs that sit in the printer's output tray and are never picked up.

It all adds up to savings for those who use the uniFLOW solution. A case in point is the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, an internationally recognized health facility. The organization's mixed fleet of printers made printing costs hard to quantify and reduce. After updating its fleet with 118 ImageRunner MFP printers and uniFLOW software, the organization got a handle on its printing budget. The group now spends $53,000 a month less on printing.[1]

One Program to Rule Them All: ImageWARE Enterprise Management Console

Because printer manufacturers offer a variety of options, the challenge is to be able to connect all of them and control their use effectively.

Canon's imageWARE Enterprise Management Console (iWEMC) provides a single management-console screen, connecting all printers and controlling costs. While imageWARE Enterprise Management Console works well with Canon's family of ImageRunner Advance multifunction printer-copiers, it also gets along with just about every networked business printer on the market.

The software lets you identify a variety of printers, regardless of the manufacturer, and check their status. They can be assigned asset tags, service contract numbers, and assigned logical names like "LA floor 3 northeast corner."

Once they are identified, iWEMC can group the printers on the screen in any manner the IT staff wants. In fact, it's just as easy to look at, for instance, all color laser printers in an organization as it is to see all the printers based at one of the company's facilities.

All devices are monitored in real time, so that maintenance issues, such as a drum replacement, don't bring an office's productivity to a grinding halt. Canon's iWEMC software can send IT alerts via email for just about every printer fault it can detect, so the response is rapid.

A big bonus for an IT department already stretched thin on manpower is that iWEMC can automate many of the tedious tasks that go with keeping hundreds of printers up and running. On top of its ability to restart any or all printers, the software can retrieve IP addresses and troubleshoot a problem remotely.

Canon's iWEMC software takes document management to a new level with its series of plug-in software modules that let a company personalize the program for their needs. These plug-ins can customize a company's printing infrastructure to suit its exact requirements—because one size does not fit all corporations.

Printer Driver Management plug-in: With this software, EMC users can not only maintain a bank of drivers so everyone uses the same printing software throughout the company, it also allows IT staff to remotely install or upgrade printer drivers on any employee's desktop and notebook computer, regardless if that worker is in Des Moines or Dubai. Address Book Management plug-in: With this plug-in, users can centralize the address books on a company's printers and distribute them remotely to any printer in the organization. This way, the address book on the printer in the human resources department will be exactly the same as the one in the accounting department.

Meter Capture plug-in: This plug-in automatically gathers, consolidates and delivers usage information from all of the company's printers. It not only puts all of this data in one place so comparisons are quick and easy, it does away with the tedious and error-prone task of manually recording a printer's usage meter.

Accounting Management plug-in: This powerful plug-in tracks output costs, enforces printing restrictions and generates usage reports. It allows billing to departments or individuals for their printing, so those who print the most pay the most out of their budgets.

Access Management System Plug-in: This plug-in allows distribution of security roles to imageRUNNER devices and is used in combination of Access Management System kit.

Put it all together and you have a complete way to remotely manage and manipulate printers, and you can start to chip away at the cost of printing.

Law firms are heavy document creators and some operate much as their predecessors did in the 19th century. With Canon ImageRunner multi-functional devices and the company's imageWARE Enterprise Management Console, a law firm's workflow was brought into the 21st century. Meanwhile, iWEMC monitors printing use and automates maintenance tasks. Costs are down, workflow is smoothed out, and the IT staff is free from performing tedious manual tasks.[2]

imageRUNNER ADVANCE Essentials Tracker: Keeping an Eye on Printing

For even the smallest business, creating and enforcing a coherent printing policy that can be applied across-the-board can be daunting. For the global multinational with scattered facilities, it might seem like an impossible task. Canon's imageRUNNER ADVANCE Tracker application can help make it possible by digging deeply into Multifunctional Embedded Application Platform (MEAP) data to monitor and track all output and cut costs, from document printing to copying.

A breakthrough in software technology, Tracker installs on any of Canon's imageRUNNER advance MFP printer-copiers, and doesn't require a server to operate. This not only simplifies its operation but eliminates the need for dedicated hardware to support the software.

Essentially, every time a printer is used, Tracker records the action and tabulates the device's use. On top of departments and individual users keeping track of their own printing, IT administrators and company executives can look at a firm's aggregate printing.

Along with the printer's logs, usage results can be organized in a variety of ways, such as by department and user, or by color vs. black and white. The results can periodically be sent to the IT staff for analysis via email, an FTP server or a Server Message Block (SMB) note. This lets them look for trends, like increased color or duplex printing. It also opens up avenues for cutting costs by looking at how each device is used.

The Tracker software can help reorganize printers for greater efficiency. It can show, for instance, that the printer on the third floor is used only a few times a day, while the one on floor seven is in nearly continuous operation.

The software includes the ability to show which users are printing in color versus black and white as well as the costs involved to reduce the use of color in the enterprise. It can even provide the ability for company executives to send messages directly to the screen on every Canon imageRUNNER ADVANCE multi-functional device in a firm's fleet. This allows a business to quickly and efficiently communicate a new printing policy or to encourage employees to print on both sides of paper or only use color when they need to.

By using Tracker and other Canon software, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency not only got by with fewer printers at its 27 offices and lowered its power bill, but was able to simplify how it prints documents. The real payoff is the environmental agency's office is now greener, using one million fewer sheets of paper a year for a 20 percent savings.[3]

Conclusion: Controlling Printing Costs is Not an Option

In a tight economy where margins are razor-thin and every penny counts, any corporation that ignores how much it spends on printing is literally throwing money away—and risks being overtaken by a more nimble competitor. It's actually easy and straightforward for a large corporation to measure and then chip away at how much it spends on office printing.

Canon's imageRUNNER ADVANCE multifunction devices and its suite of integrated software are a smart start. NTware uniFLOW, and Canon imageWARE Enterprise Management Console Accounting Management Plug-in and imageRUNNER ADVANCE Essentials Tracker can monitor activity, charge departments for use and generally reduce the cost of putting what's on-screen onto paper.

In the final analysis, any company that isn't closely watching its office printing budget will be overtaken by those that do. ■

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Endnotes

1 "Saving Lives and Eliminating Human Suffering,"
  http://www.usa.canon.com/app/isgrun/casestudies/intsol_uniFLOW_Case_Study_high_res.pdf

2 "Improving Legal Workflow Efficiency,"
  http://www.usa.canon.com/app/isgrun/casestudies/intsol_uni   FLOW_Case_Study_high_res.pdf

3 "Environmental regulator shrinks their digital imaging costs and carbon footprint with Canon,"
  http://www.canon.co.uk/Images/SEPA%20case%20study_tcm14-628129.pdf

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