

AAA Carolinas Optimizes Print Management and Gains Insight with PrinterLogic



Challenges

- The organization wanted a streamlined print management solution that would derive additional value from its fleet standardization
- Detailed print reporting and auditing was needed to gain insight and cut printing costs
- The four-person helpdesk team was regularly fielding print-related support calls, preventing them from addressing more pressing IT issues

Results

- The company eliminated all of its print servers by implementing PrinterLogic, further optimizing its print infrastructure
- Enhanced oversight plus the effortless creation of economical default settings in PrinterLogic's management console minimized printing waste
- Print-related support calls have dropped by up to 50 per week because printer installation is now simple and reliable

Operating close to 60 separate locations of varying sizes across two states, AAA Carolinas is an organization which two million members trust to handle all aspects of their lives on the road—including Travel, Car Care, Emergency Roadside Assistance, Insurance and Driver Safety. From its headquarters in Charlotte, NC, the organization oversees more than 2,000 employees.

Printing is a vital part of their workflow and the services they provide. Until early 2016, the organization's enterprise print infrastructure consisted of aging 2003 print servers at its primary as well as its branch locations. Those print servers provided the backbone for what Richard Sheehan, IT Operations Manager at AAA Carolinas, describes as an oversized "grab bag" fleet of various brands printers that were also beginning to grow long in the tooth.

By 2015, it was clear that the outdated servers and printers could no longer meet the level of security, flexibility and cost-effectiveness that the organization needed. A forthcoming company-wide Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance initiative provided the perfect time to migrate to a new enterprise printing solution. But which one?

"Our big goal was that we wanted to get out of the printing business," says Sheehan, by which he means that the organization was looking for a way to radically shrink both its print infrastructure

and the resources it was pouring into print management. They ultimately decided on a managed printing arrangement with Ricoh coupled with [PrinterLogic](#) as their software solution.

It was PrinterLogic's next-generation software that enabled AAA Carolinas to eliminate its print servers completely while streamlining, standardizing and centralizing print management across the enterprise.

"The implementation was easy," he says. "Basically, we pushed out the PrinterLogic client to all the IP addresses at the locations. One day our users were printing on the print servers, and the next morning when they came in and logged in, they had PrinterLogic on their machine. They didn't have to do anything."

Challenge #1—Deriving Even More Value from Fleet Standardization

AAA Carolinas had found its preferred solution to an outdated printer fleet: a fully managed printing arrangement with Ricoh. That would replace the old heterogeneous fleet of printers with a smaller, more capable pool of printing devices and shift some of the operational responsibility to an outside specialist. However, that still left the problem of the print servers, which were not only inefficient and expensive to maintain but stood in the way of their progress toward PCI compliance.

"We had minimized the amount of devices drastically. We reduced the amount of money we were spending on consumables drastically. But the challenge was: How do we get the print servers out of the branches?" asks Sheehan.

Solution

PrinterLogic combines the power and simplicity of direct IP printing with enterprise-wide centralized management from a single pane of glass. This gives organizations the ability to eliminate their print servers altogether while enjoying more robust printing, effortless administration and a greater number of print-related features.

"PrinterLogic provided a very simple solution to that challenge—for us to say, you know what, the print server now holds zero value. We can just power it off. We were able to do a very easy transition away from those old servers to PrinterLogic's centralized solution. With PrinterLogic, heck, we could lose data connections in the branch and still have our users print locally."

Challenge #2—Cost Savings through Reporting and Better Administration

"Color printing is more expensive than black and white per page," says Sheehan, "and every click equals a charge—especially now that we're on the managed Ricoh solution. If people are printing in color and the only color on that document happens to be the AAA logo, multiply that by thousands over the course of the year. Those pennies add up to a pretty good stack of dollars."

To reclaim that stack of dollars, Sheehan and his team needed to analyze those clicks both at the departmental and user level.

Solution

PrinterLogic's comprehensive and granular reporting gives administrators valuable macro- and micro-level insight into their print environment. "We can get down to the user level, so I can look at a branch and evaluate the printing habits of the business to look for additional efficiencies for future savings."

What's more, PrinterLogic's powerful management tools allow admins to respond to those printing habits by altering and enforcing profile settings that prevent waste, such as duplexing, grayscale and pulling from the economy paper tray.

"We found out quickly—and here is the strength of the reporting—that if users left their default at color, they were still printing color when they didn't need to," he says. "So we purposely made the user have to go through a couple steps to say, yes, I absolutely want this print job in color. If you've got someone that's really print heavy and they're doing a ton of pages, those cost savings add up very quickly."

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Challenge #3—Simplifying Printer Installation for Greater Ease of Use

"We have 2,000 people that work for this company, and my helpdesk team is four," says Sheehan. Because of the convoluted and

unreliable printer installation processes associated with traditional print management solutions, that small team was regularly fielding print-related support calls.

"Someone would say, 'Hey, I'm in the building. I'm downstairs in the board room and I need to print.' Then we'd have to load the printer and, as you can imagine, it was a laborious process."

As the organization migrated toward laptops with docking stations and wireless networking,

particularly on the campus of its Charlotte headquarters, the installation process became even fuzzier, leaving end users confused and unable to print.

Solution

"PrinterLogic really provided us with the ability to enhance that mobile experience for the employees—not only at headquarters but when people go to our branch locations and print there as well. I could go to any branch right now, log into any of the PCs, and PrinterLogic is going to recognize the hostname of the PC, and it's going to automatically load the four printers that are onsite."

In the rare cases that local printers aren't automatically deployed to users through IP or Active Directory criteria, both the IT support staff and the end users have found PrinterLogic's Self-Service Installation Portal with floorplan maps to be a time-saver.

"If someone from, let's say, the building across the street from us comes to our main headquarters for a meeting and they need to print, they can just go to our intranet site, click on the printer, boom, it loads all the drivers, and they're done in less than 60 seconds," Sheehan explains.

Conclusion and Savings Summary

Sheehan estimates that PrinterLogic has slashed the number of print-related helpdesk calls by as many as 50 per week. That has enabled the support staff to "focus on calls that were a higher priority, and it enables our end users to be self-sufficient," saving time and increasing productivity in the process.

"Our data center here at headquarters is probably 60-70% empty compared to what it was two years ago," he says. "We're going with cloud solutions, we're getting rid of infrastructure. In the push forward, the dollars are important, because at the end of the day, we only have a fixed amount to work with. PrinterLogic is a solution that has worked for us. It's easy to implement. It's almost invisible to the end user. And it saves us money."