

Case Study: Children's Bureau, Inc.

Children's Bureau, Inc. Eliminates Print Servers and Simplifies Citrix Printing with PrinterLogic



Challenges

- A mobile workforce and distributed environment, resulting in more support tickets than the small IT team could handle
- Citrix XenApp is crucial to the organization's IT infrastructure, but driver conflicts caused issues that generated more support tickets
- Print servers complicated the management and installation of printers and related drivers

Results

- End-users now make regular use of PrinterLogic's intuitive self-service portal, especially the visual floor plan
- Printing is significantly more reliable in the Citrix environment—even when using their TIER EMR solution
- The organization has eliminated print servers in favor of efficient centralized management and direct IP printing

Children's Bureau, Inc. is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit social service agency with a noble mission. By working in partnership with the Indiana Department of Child Services and other like-minded agencies throughout the state, the organization advocates on behalf of abused and neglected children and their families.

In 2014, more than 160 years after its inception, the agency served close to 47,000 children and their families in 47 Indiana counties by providing a full range of community-based prevention, family preservation, and intervention services in conjunction with its partners. Currently Children's Bureau operates 18 offices across Indiana and generally employs anywhere between 350 and 400 workers.

Like the vast majority of social service organizations, Children's Bureau deals heavily with case files, state and local contracts, and legal paperwork in its daily business. Therefore, it requires a print environment that is as readily available to its employees as its employees are to the children and families they serve. In the past, that has proved challenging for two important reasons. One, the complex print server backbone had to be maintained by a small, but agile, team responsible for all of the organization's IT needs. And two, the organization has a large mobile workforce that moves rapidly between locations, complicating routine printer installations.

Zachariah Schrink, a systems administrator for Children's Bureau, is part of the organization's three-person help desk team. He and his colleagues first came across [PrinterLogic](#) on the trusted recommendation of their longtime printer and copier vendor.

"I was trying to figure out some kind of solution for all our printing needs," Schrink says. "We just wanted to be able to get everyone on the same page so they could do their job effectively. If that meant we would have to manually install every printer for every one of our employees, we would buckle down and do that. It just needed to work without issues. I started looking into options with our printer and copier vendor and they recommended PrinterLogic, which turned out to be the ideal solution."

"We looked into it a little more and said, 'Wait, we can use PrinterLogic and empower our employees to install printers on their own? That's fantastic!' We didn't even think about looking at any another solution. Everything we saw was exactly what we wanted, and the price point was definitely within our budget. So we went for it."

To deploy PrinterLogic, the IT team simply bundled it into a larger, system-wide upgrade designed to ensure compliance with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) guidelines.

Challenge #1—Empowering Users Within a Dynamic Workforce

A good portion of the more than 350 employees at Children's Bureau, Inc. operate across two or more of the organization's 18 locations. They have to be incredibly flexible, because they will often be called to a different location at a moment's notice.

"A lot of our employees shift between multiple buildings," says Schrink, "and they might wind up in a building they had no idea they would be going to at the start of the day."

"Back before PrinterLogic, we were getting tons of emergency tickets, which usually went something like this: 'I'm at a new location. We have to be able to print this document off for a client, and I don't have access to the printer.' Those employees would have to resort to workarounds where they e-mailed the file to someone with printer access, but sometimes the attachments were too large. So they'd be stuck—unable to print, unable to do their job. We'd have a lot of upset people, and unfortunately that happened more frequently than we would have liked."

Solution

PrinterLogic's intuitive self-service portal has transformed how both employees and the IT staff view the organization's print environment. It has streamlined the printer installation process—even for users with minimal computer skills—and lifted the day-to-day burden on the three-person help desk team.

"Because the self-service portal is a webpage, you can just e-mail the URL to users. Almost every employee has been able to go to that page, install their desired printer, and it's worked just fine. And then we don't hear from them again because they know the portal exists. That's their first stop from that point on. It's completely changed their habits and their attitude toward printing."

Children's Bureau has also made use of PrinterLogic's optional floor plan display, so end-users can install nearby printers by selecting them from a blueprint-style map.

"One of our locations has five printers, and another location has seven," Schrink says. "If we didn't have the floor plans, no one would know which printer to install regardless of what name we put to it. Having those visual floor plans is just amazing."

Challenge #2—Simplifying Citrix Printing

Children's Bureau, Inc. maintains a common Windows workstation environment augmented by Citrix virtualization. Schrink estimates that roughly three out of every ten employees have to work in Citrix sessions exclusively, since the organization's electronic medical records (EMR) solution is accessible only within the Citrix environment.

"We used to have the occasional issue where a driver would get corrupt, or more likely, a tech-minded employee (or family member) would try to put their own driver in place. This would, of course, lead to spooler crashes on our server. About once a week, I would have to log into one of our XenApp servers and restart the Print Spooler service. If the user would log out and then into another server, the spooler on that server would crash as well. This meant we could have several servers with a crashed spooler and every user on those servers would be unable to print. Big nightmare come billing time!" Schrink explains.

Solution

"PrinterLogic has helped exponentially with printing inside of Citrix," says Schrink. "The thing that I like about PrinterLogic is that it installs the printer locally, and then Citrix pulls any local printers into its own environment. And then, because TIER sits in our Citrix environment, it just uses any printer that it sees there. One install covers them all."

Nor does that single install have to be initiated by an overworked IT staffer. As noted above, end users have taken to handling printer installations themselves by using PrinterLogic's consistent self-service portal.

"Now that people can install their own printers from whichever location, when they go to print in the EMR, it sees everything that's on Citrix, which sees everything that's installed locally. It's completely seamless. PrinterLogic has become the unifying force behind our Windows, Citrix, and TIER systems."

Challenge #3—Efficient, Centralized Management

Prior to installing PrinterLogic, Children's Bureau, Inc. had print servers deployed in most of its offices. As is often the case, those print servers created a fragmented rather than a

cohesive print environment. Schrink and his team advocated for a more centralized approach where drivers could be stored in a single repository and deployed to users in a deliberate, targeted way that would reduce software conflicts and require less time invested by the IT team. That was impossible with their previous print management solution.

"We ran into regular problems with driver deployment, which is the other side of printer installation, especially because our end users are mobile and spread out across multiple locations. I've never been a fan of print servers because they confuse nontechnical users more than they help, and so I was relieved to find a solution that allowed us to eliminate them and implement direct IP printing."

Solution

PrinterLogic has enabled Children's Bureau to administer printers, drivers and queues across the organization to a single interface. With end users now able to install printers on their own and a more efficient method of administration, the print environment runs much more smoothly—all while requiring less time and hardware than before.

"Management and deployment are surprisingly easy," says Schrink. "Thanks to PrinterLogic, we've been able to eliminate the print servers from all the locations where we had them, leaving a single interface where we have all the drivers in a centralized repository. The admin panel is as intuitive for the technician as the self-service portal is for the end user, which is fantastic in and of itself. It's just wonderful for us."

Conclusion and Savings Summary

Children's Bureau, Inc. hasn't yet run any detailed return on investment (ROI) analysis, but Schrink says the anecdotal evidence alone supports the sought-after benefits, which translate to significant cost savings in the near and long term.

"We're a help desk team of just three people, so we get spread pretty thin. So when all of a sudden an emergency ticket about printing comes in, if one person is off-site taking care of something, another person is occupied, and another technician is tied up in a phone call, we might not be able to get to that ticket for an hour or more—if we could even get to it that day," he says.

"PrinterLogic has dramatically cut down on tickets. I think we only get one or two printer-related tickets per month now, and that's from new people who don't realize that we have this fantastic self-service portal. That's saved hours and hours that can actually be spent on other things. Plus we no longer need a desktop sitting at each location running as a print server."