

Case Study: DRT Holdings, Inc.

Diverse Global Manufacturing Company Saves Time, Money and Empowers End Users with PrinterLogic



Challenges

- IT staff was spending far too much time on print management in the company's distributed print environment
- DRT wanted to lower its infrastructure costs significantly by reducing both hardware and the cost of operation
- End users were tired of slow print speeds and wanted more self-sufficiency when it came to printer installation

Results

- Print management has been simplified and streamlined with PrinterLogic's centralized administrative console
- The company eliminated every single print server in its globally distributed print environment
- Thanks to PrinterLogic's self-service portal and direct IP printing, both routine installation and printing are faster

Spanning the aerospace, automotive, container system, manufacturing, medical, electronic and power-generation industries, DRT Holdings, Inc. is a global company with a massive field of operations. Headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, it operates around one dozen specialized sites throughout Ohio, along America's Eastern Seaboard, and in Germany. DRT's IT department supports about 600 end users and more than 4,000 devices, including everything from PCs and enormous machine tools to vending machines and tiny IP cameras.

Unfortunately, the company's print environment was unable to accommodate its size and scope. The network of localized print servers required constant oversight and maintenance, complicated print management through limited visibility and multi-step deployments, and frustrated end users with slow execution of print jobs and poor print availability.

Senior Systems Administrator Jane Updegraff joined DRT Holdings in 2016, and she immediately recognized the struggles that DRT was having with its traditional print-server-based environment. Similar struggles had led to her researching and deploying [PrinterLogic's](#) next-generation print management solution at her previous employer.

"Microsoft never does printing very well, but in Server 2003 they did it really badly," she says. "So as we were doing away with our Windows 2003 servers, it was the right time to think about something else. The first time I saw PrinterLogic, I was sold. Direct IP printers for everybody that we don't have to deploy by hand? That's the perfect solution for us."

PrinterLogic enabled that large-scale company to eliminate its print servers and streamline print management, saving countless man-hours spent on management and maintenance as well as significant outlays on new hardware.

"When I came over here to DRT, I said, 'You guys have got to try this.'"

They did more than just try it. The initial migration and deployment took just two days. By the three-month mark, DRT had eliminated its longstanding tangle of print servers completely in favor of PrinterLogic's centralized, stable, versatile and cost-effective print management solution.

Challenge #1—Saving Time for IT Staff and Support

"The amount of time that people were spending babysitting print servers—that's what I wanted to get rid of the most," Updegraff says.

She describes a print environment rife with the problems that "are typical of Microsoft printing," such as mixed drivers or corrupted print jobs causing the shared print spoolers to fail, along with convoluted print management procedures that make printer and driver deployments incredibly time-consuming.

Solution

PrinterLogic's centralized management console has transformed print management at DRT. Printers and drivers can easily be deployed or changed anywhere in the organization from a single pane of glass, saving vast amounts of time.

"Let's say a printer has a model-specific driver version that we weren't using. PrinterLogic enables me to just really quickly go

in there and change it, and as soon as I switch from the universal driver to the model-specific driver, everything works fine. It makes it a whole lot easier for me to quickly make changes from one place, something I've never been able to easily on a Microsoft print server."

Updegraff has even leveraged PrinterLogic's inherent flexibility to set up regular automated exports of Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) information from the printers to the helpdesk. Should a user call with an issue, the printer can be automatically associated with a ticket as a configuration management database (CMDB) item, making the support process even more efficient.

Challenge #2—Reducing Print Infrastructure and Related Expenses

Previously, each DRT site relied on "a little cluster of servers"—at least one of which was a print server—as its IT backbone. These servers cost money to purchase, license, operate, maintain and upgrade, and those expenses were doubled in cases where the organization had to deploy 32- and 64-bit servers in parallel to handle different driver versions.

"There's a huge capital expenditure when you're talking about having to deploy a whole extra server at every location," she says. "We could buy a much smaller, less powerful piece of machinery to act as a virtual server host if we didn't need to have four servers on it as opposed to two."

Solution

Like many PrinterLogic customers, DRT eliminated its print servers entirely following the organization-wide rollout. Because PrinterLogic's robust driver repository allows different driver versions, including 32- and 64-bit, to coexist in harmony with none of the usual incompatibility issues and labeling confusion of print servers, there's no need for multiple instances.

The massive reduction in infrastructure came with benefits beyond cost savings. PrinterLogic's direct IP printing paradigm creates local one-to-one connections between clients and printers, which means that there's no need for print jobs to travel via the WAN or take long, error-prone round trips to a server and back.

"We had one particular instance where the print server for a location was about 30 miles away," Updegraff explains. "End users would send the print job down the road to the print server, and then it would come back up the road to their printer. Sometimes that would take a really long time. Now they don't have to wait 90 seconds for the print job to start. It's immediate. Our end users love the speed."

"Probably all of our users have manually installed at least one or two printers from the printer portal. It's really nice. None of our users are administrators, so they never could do that before. Now they have lots more power. They love it."

Challenge #3—Making End Users More Empowered

To further reduce the burden on IT and enable its entire workforce to be more productive, DRT wanted to equip its end users with reliable, easy-to-understand tools to install printers themselves. With print servers, however, this often involves a complicated printer mapping procedure that could fail for any number of reasons: poor printer identification, insufficient user rights or inadequate computer skills.

Solution

One of PrinterLogic's most acclaimed features is its web-based self-service installation portal, which allows end users to easily identify and install their desired printers with a single click.

"Our end users already have the ability to print because we use PrinterLogic to auto-deploy at least one printer to everybody through Active Directory. But if an end user wants to print to one that's, say, around the corner because it prints in color or a larger format, they can pick that one and install it. It's so intuitive that they don't have any problems," she says, adding that DRT has uploaded visual floorplan maps to make it even easier for end users to spot nearby printers.

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Conclusion and Savings Summary

"I saw a couple other print solutions, but they were all based around the same idea," says Updegraff. "They were things that you put on top of Microsoft print servers."

Given that DRT had identified print servers as the core problem with its enterprise printing, those other print management solutions would not have sufficed. It took a next-generation solution like PrinterLogic—one that combines proven direct IP printing with advanced centralized management—to overcome the challenges that the company was facing.

DRT has not yet carried out any dedicated ROI analysis, but Updegraff says that "the number of hours saved for staff" and a "rough calculation" of the server upgrade costs versus the cost of migrating to PrinterLogic puts them firmly in the black.

"Centralized printing—that is, putting all the print management in one place—is power. And that equates to time and simplicity."