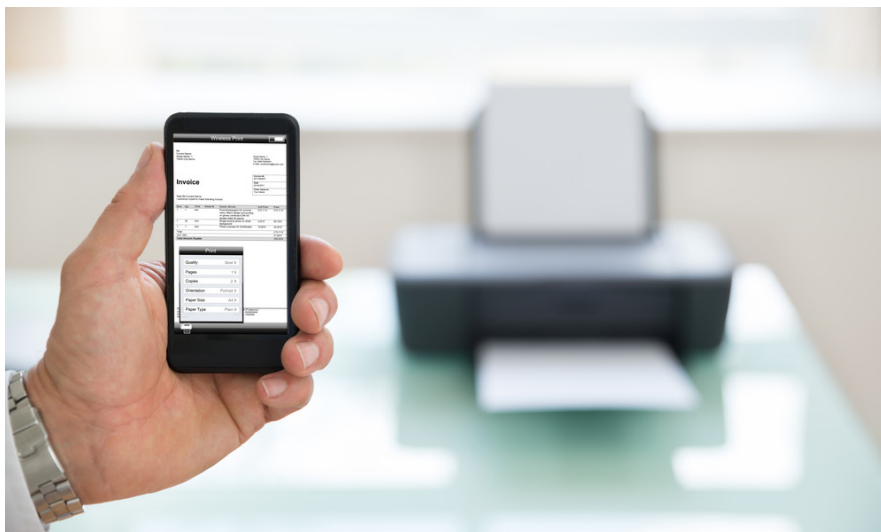Highlights from a recent webcast on Print Management

MASTERING PRINT MANAGEMENT IN THE MODERN ERA

Techvangelism's Nick Cavalancia and PrinterLogic's Devin Anderson discuss the challenges IT professionals face with print server sprawl and driver issues as end users on desktop and mobile devices demand anytime/anywhere/any device printing generating high levels of help desk calls.

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Today, printing as we know it is vastly different than it was in the past. Some IT pros may remember a printing environment with Netware 311 where they had to load a P server Netware module and there were a couple of printer queues and a couple of printers. That was a pretty simple setup. But today's printing environments are a much wider mix of technology. IT pros have to think about the different printer manufacturers they have as well as, copiers, scanners, and various mixes of network printers and print servers.

The challenge for IT pros increases because there is a wider range of user needs as traditional desktop cubicle

workers are joined by an expanding workforce of roaming users, mobile users, and bring-your-own-device (BYOD) users with a wide variety of printing needs. This has created what Techvangelism's Nick Cavalancia calls: "a very convoluted set of environmental requirements."

IT pros are faced with a question that becomes: What's the right way to setup and configure printing that accomplishes multiple goals? This includes finding ways to:

- Lower IT support costs
- Enhance user productivity
- Simplify printing environments
- Eliminate print servers

All of these goals need to be accomplished in a way that benefits both IT and the end user. To do this printers need to be easier to use as well as easier to manage.

Meeting 'Triple A' User Needs

The first challenge in the modern printing age comes from the users. IT departments are being tasked with providing what Cavalancia terms "anytime/anywhere/any device or Triple A printing." Mobile era workers are demanding printer availability anytime they want. They want printer access from anywhere they might be – inside the company's walls, outside the company's walls, sitting in a cafe, connected to the VPN or not. They may be using their own device, including a notebook PC, a tablet or a smart phone, all accessing an unknown media network. To master this challenge, IT pros need a solution that makes it simple for the users and also simple for you to implement and manage.

Helping the Help Desk

Besides meeting the user printing needs directly, IT pros need to find a solution that meets the challenges of the IT department itself. First and foremost, is reducing the volume of help desk calls for printer problems. Various

surveys of IT departments, mentioned by Cavalancia, indicate that printer-related problems generate as much as 50 percent of all help desk calls.

Devin Anderson of PrinterLogic noted that when he talks to IT pros they tell him printer related help desk calls are at least in the top 10 of call generators.

"But for the majority it's in the top five," Anderson said. "I remember talking to one customer lately who told me that $30,000 a month is how much they're spending in IT costs just trying to resolve printing related issues. Just handling all those help desk calls."

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When the Server Doesn't Serve

No matter how sophisticated printer technology is, things do not always work properly. When a print server isn't working right, it causes a single point of failure that becomes a major headache for IT. This can even be a problem in a straightforward Microsoft centric printing environment, where the configuration is something as simple as using print services and setting up a couple of printer queues and printing out to a few printers. If that server goes down nobody prints. That is why a print management solution that eliminates printer servers is so important in mastering the environment.

Trouble with Drivers

The final thing that needs to be mastered is printer driver management. Driver management includes issues such as going from 32 to 64 bit and going to universal drivers, and trying to make sure the settings are all compatible. When IT pros are doing any kind of printer migrations, printer consolidations or print server consolidations or eliminations, they have to be concerned about those same driver issues. On a daily basis, they need to make sure users can utilize the settings they want on a given printer. Driver trouble can arise with something as simple as a printer in a particular part of the office that can be used as a printer and a scanner. If users don't have the right driver, it's only a printer and they are not being productive because they can't scan. These driver issues need to be mastered.

PrinterLogic Provides the Answers

There is no work-around for these common printer problems. IT pros can focus on identifying user types, doing an evaluation of actual printer needs, and addressing some issues with scripting. But at the end of the day, Techvangelism's Nick Cavalancia recommends looking to a third-party solution.

PrinterLogic's Devin Anderson demonstrated his company's solution for mastering printer management. PrinterLogic offers an on-premise web application that simplifies the management, migration, and provisioning of printers and eliminates print servers.

The Enterprise Printer Management solution enables IT pros to eliminate print servers without losing the benefits traditional print servers provide. From a customizable Web interface, IT pros can simply copy printers from existing print servers, silently convert end users already installed printers, and centrally manage direct IP printers with the PrinterLogic Administrator. It also makes it possible to empower end users to install printers via a self-service web portal with optional floor plan maps that graphically show the location of printers. This minimizes help desk calls.

The Printer Logic management platform provides centralized management of every printer in an entire organization—regardless of whether there is one physical location or a hundred sites distributed across many countries. From a single Web interface, IT pros can manage any printer using an intuitive web-based console; create new printers and deploy them to end users automatically; effortlessly modify printer settings (e.g., driver, port, name, duplexing) and push those changes out to end-user workstations; delete printers from workstations automatically and much more.

This is a solution for mastering print management in the modern era.