



**A 'NEW'
SERVICE
MODEL
FOR
OFFICE
PRINTING**

Are you just following the MPS crowd?



Office printing is one of those things that everyone takes for granted, until it goes wrong.

- Users just want to print when they want to;
- IT see it as a drain on resources and not the most interesting subject;
- Finance want to reduce costs;
- and Procurement just want to replace print contracts like for like at a lower cost

But for many organisations printing is still key to the way they work.

In this post, I will discuss how the approach to delivering office printing hasn't fundamentally changed since the introduction of Managed Print Services (MPS) over 15 years ago plus introduce a new service delivery model.

Most organisations still deliver office print via a 4 or 5 year contract with a supplier that provides the full service i.e. printers, operational services and print software. Every 5 years the whole service is replaced, new devices, new software and new services. Out with the old, in with the new.

The question I have is whether this is the best approach to delivering an efficient print service that can meet customer's needs in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing business environment?

To help understand the challenge, let's start by looking at the typical approach from print hardware manufacturers (manufacturers dominate the MPS market). Manufacturers are always trying to do two things, differentiate their product offer and lock-in customers (and hopefully be profitable).

The big selling point for MPS was the 'value' of a one stop shop. Manufacturers state that they can be responsible for designing and providing a print service to meet the customers need; they are the so called 'experts'. But what is their motivation and is this aligned to the customer's needs? They will sell the benefits but are they really just trying to lock customer in to get you to buy everything from one source?

They can always reduce costs because they simply reduce the numbers of devices, but will they deliver on their promise of on-going service optimisation and cost saving? Are they designing the service to meet your requirements or maximise their profit? As an analogy, you wouldn't go into a supermarket and let them tell you what to buy?

Manufactures will sell the benefits of MPS but are they really just trying to lock the customer in?

To aggregate or disaggregate, that is the question?



The promise of MPS was based on the concept of aggregating individual print purchases and contracts into a single managed service from a single supplier. Significant value has been delivered through MPS contracts but is aggregation of all elements of the print service into a single contract the optimal option?

In most other areas of IT organisations don't tend to aggregate hardware and software contracts. Just think what it would be like if every laptop/PC/server manufacturer had their own OS and the devices could only run that manufacturer's software (it would be like going back to proprietary mainframe computers).

Coupling hardware and software in a single contract means both need to be replaced at the end of that contract.

Many printer and multi-functional device (MFD) manufacturers are now promoting proprietary software that only works with their hardware. The sound of 'proprietary hardware and software' should ring alarm bells. Many are also now offering app market places where you can download apps to the device just like a mobile, but again these are often proprietary apps that only work on their printers and MFDs. The focus of this approach is not just customer productivity it is also customer lock-in.

Coupling hardware and software in a single contract means both need to be replaced at the end of the contract. Imagine if you had to replace software each time you changed laptop or server supplier? Anyone who has rolled out a new 'follow me' print software solution will be aware of the pain it can cause. Replacing all elements of the print infrastructure every 4 or 5 years is unlikely to be the most cost effective option.

Organisations should consider what is the optimal level of aggregation to meet their needs and a key question they should consider is whether to split the printer fleet from the print software.

What's with this cloud thing?

Everyone has done it, doing it or thinking about it but what is it? Moving to 'The Cloud' can deliver significant benefits such as reducing the cost of on-premise hardware, leveraging skills and experience from large suppliers to manage complex IT, enabling the organisation to focus on core deliverables etc. etc.

These benefits also apply to printing and two specific benefits spring to mind.



Firstly, it can enable the removal of all internal print infrastructure i.e. no print servers (which are costly to maintain).

Secondly, it enables an organisation to move to a subscription model for their print infrastructure and software, delivering this via a Software as a Service (SaaS) delivery model (no more capital cost of infrastructure).

One of the main benefits of cloud software is the fact that the service is constantly updated with new features added on a regular basis, no need to wait 6 months for upgrades. If you use Office 365 or Google you will be aware that new features are constantly being added.

Disaggregating the device fleet from the print infrastructure enables an organisation to get all the benefits of MPS for the fleet and all the benefits of cloud for the infrastructure, it's a win win

If the print infrastructure and software is constantly evolving to meet your needs and offer greater benefits why would you want to change it just because the printers and MFDs have come to the end of their contract (or serviceable) life?

Moving print infrastructure and software to the cloud is a great way to support disaggregating print hardware from print software as discussed previously.

Disaggregating the device fleet (and services) from the print infrastructure / software and moving these to the cloud enables an organisation to get all the benefits of MPS for the fleet of print devices and the benefits of the cloud for the print infrastructure and software, it's a win win.

In summary

Think about:

- Is MPS the optimal solution for your organisation?
- What is the right level of aggregation for your print service?
- The benefits of moving your print infrastructure and software to the cloud

We would suggest that for many organisations an optimal approach would be:

- Managed Print Fleet, plus;
- Managed Software using Public Cloud Software as a Service (SaaS)

About transcend360

transcend360 provide independent and unbiased consultancy specialising in Managed Print Services (MPS). We provide services that support end user customers in the definition, procurement, delivery and management of an MPS, providing support throughout the complete contract lifecycle.

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