



Output Management as a Useful

Supplement to Managed Print Services

Managed print services refers to all those measures and products which are used to ensure an optimal print and document processing, while **output management** deals with the distribution of documents. Both processes are not only useful supplements, they also help prepare for future challenges in the mobile working environment.

It's true that the subject of printing isn't really "sexy", at first glance. It's been our experience that print provisioning/optimization is often viewed as a necessary evil. The personnel responsible for this are forced to grapple with it due to the explosion of printing costs, the promotion of green IT, or just because the leasing of the fleet of printers has reached the end of its life cycle.

Optimizing Printer Fleets "Horizontally"

If an institution wants to introduce a (new) managed print services concept, this usually happens according to the principle of "plan – implement – control – improve". The analysis of the actual situation plays a major role, normally starting with the analysis of the hardware : how many and which devices are deployed at which locations, what is the users' print process, and so on. An output infrastructure resting on economic parameters is selected on the basis of the defined actual situation for adaptation. Then the selected hardware is set up with the corresponding software, and the service levels and management of supplies are defined and a continuous monitoring implemented, in order to oversee the defined goals. This process is absolutely legitimate and goal-oriented for optimizing printer fleets and managing them with the necessary services and supplies. However this only optimizes the "last mile" in regard to print. I would like to get you to see the optimizing of the printer fleet not as a "horizontal" adjustment but as a "vertical" one, and begin to look at it in a whole new way!



Optimizing Printer Fleets „vertically“

This perspective begins not with the fleet but rather in their application level, where the actual document and information process begins. Your personnel want to enter the distribution process from the application used, easily and securely. A central output management system (OMS) then acts as link between the applications and their output infrastructure. This allows for the analog and electronic distribution of documents and information. You may well be thinking that this is nothing new. But I'd like to stretch this to include MPS concepts, and show how usefully these can supplement output management systems and what typical problems we come across in our projects which can be solved with output management systems — and bring an "aha" moment to our customers.



Hardware Independence

our users want to issue forms and supporting documents from an SAP system. At the press of a button, output management takes this data, prepares the hardware neutrally and distributes to a heterogeneous print infrastructure, identically and traceably. If these documents should be enhanced with additional information (stamps, bar codes, cover sheets...) – that’s no problem, the system will generate these too. Your users want to distribute documents analog from Windows, and “can’t see the forest for the print drivers”. OMS has a certified Windows driver which covers nearly all device types and properties. Personnel can now work with just one driver which will always give them a selection of the same predefined properties. Admins no longer have to cope with driver conflicts and system incompatibilities. The entire engineering environment (CAD/PLM) is likewise integrated into the desired output processes in the same principle. This way you not only creates secure, easy and traceable document processes from all applications, but also make yourself independent of print manufacturers in the long-term, since your processes are already standardized between the application and the output management. New printers are hooked up plug & play. You no longer have to keep entering forms and documents and set these up for each printer. This means that you can easily include the machines of several providers into your planning for your MPS concept, and can go with the provider with the best service plan.



Administration and Monitoring

New printers have to be allotted at the application level, so that your personnel can also use them? Nothing could be easier! In our output management system, printers are set up once and transferred into the desired application at the press of a button. This saves you valuable time, since printers/compartments don’t have to be individually configured and set up. Thanks to constant communication, orphan files are now yesterday’s news. Your users choose the desired printer on a self-service basis, and can install it quickly and easily.



All jobs, devices and costs at a glance? The central admin cockpit gives you full transparency of all jobs and devices. Moreover, disruptions are immediately visible before they reach the user. You can also precisely reconstruct the who, what, when, how, and how much in order to strategically monitor and optimize the print infrastructure. MPS’s monitoring solutions are often limited to being only a device monitoring. Our approach expands this into job monitoring as well as process monitoring. Sometimes it’s not enough simply to know whether a printer is online or not, but rather it must be known in the application itself whether the last print order was successfully done, or a whether print order was automatically redirected to a second device in the case of printer failure.

Security in the Print Process

The subject of security in print processes is gaining in importance. What good are the best encryption technologies if the documents lie freely accessible to all in the printer’s output tray after decryption? Don’t expose yourself to these security holes — build on secure & pull printing. This takes place over the output management system, and is likewise naturally non-proprietary, letting you create a long-term, secure strategy with every change of printer fleet. Authentication can take place via PIN, employee ID, or over mobile end device. The print data streams are continuously encrypted by the application over the output management system, all the way to the printer tray and regardless from which application you use output management services.

The Mobile Working Environment

The workplace is becoming more and more mobile, as more and more people are using mobile end devices in their daily work. However, about 70% of all users can't print from these end devices, because their devices or printers don't support this and IT hasn't released a solution. There are of course proprietary single solutions; however, these don't contribute to a company-wide strategy. Over an output management system, all standard operating systems and devices (Android, iOS and Windows Phone) can be integrated company-wide, and all company printers can be controlled vendor-neutrally. This guarantees a long and standardized security of investment without working with a patchwork of single solutions. In combination with secure & pull printing, personnel can collect your desired print orders over your mobile end devices, regardless of where they might happen to be. The subject of home office is also playing an increasing role in the business world, and the print network must be accessed from there to print important documents. The integration of these devices over, say, virtual environments is made easy and secure with the help of OMS.



Our Conclusion

An output management system can do a lot more than just send documents from point A to point B. Much more, it can be a lasting and useful supplement to your document and information processes, company-wide and across locations. This readies them for your conventional distribution processes from ERP, Windows, etc., but also for the integration of mobile end devices, home office workplaces, and electronic distribution processes. You'll create independence from printer manufacturers and security of investment through hardware neutrality, because optimization already begins between the application and the output management system. Look beyond a mere printer fleet optimization to an overall business process optimization, and round out your MPS strategy sustainably with output management. Improve the output processes in your company comprehensively with an MPS strategy based on an application-neutral, print-neutral output management platform. Contact me if you have any questions.

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About SEAL Systems:

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