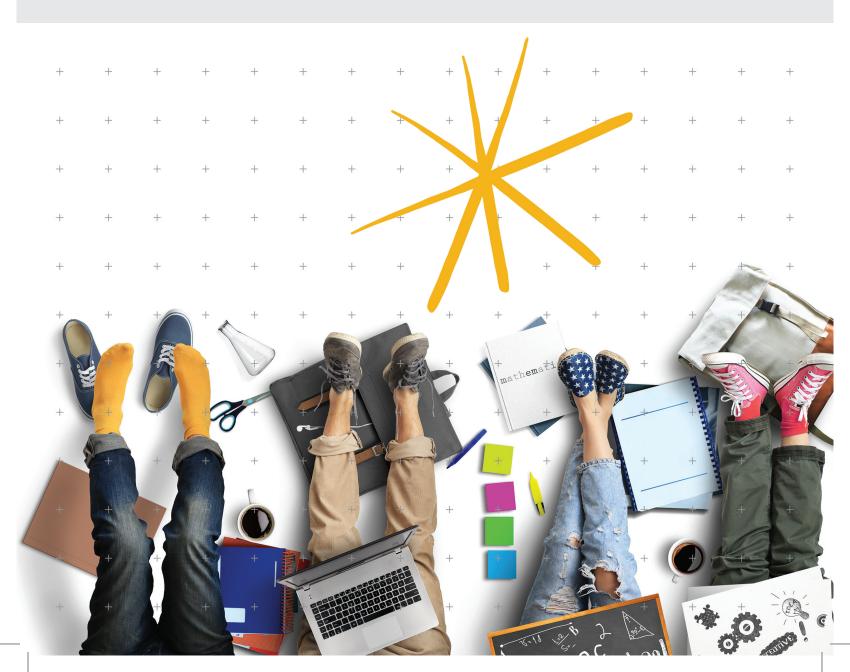# Alleviating printing pains in educational institutions

Reducing costs, simplifying IT admin and empowering users to print on demand with print management software.

Benefits of a robust print management solution for educational institutions.

Print visibility

An institution's first step towards taking control over print costs is understanding who is printing, what they are printing, which devices they are using to print and when they are printing.

A good print management solution will track printing activity across multiple servers and locally attached desktop printers. It will enable administrators or controllers to generate reports about how many colour pages are printed from the MFP in the computer lab each week, for example, or report on which user printed the 300 page document yesterday.

The software can also alert administrators via automatic email alerts about problems, like low toner levels or a paper jam. This can help to reduce IT support costs and minimise the disruption a broken printer or copier can cause for staff, students or learners.

Print policies

An educational institution can put in place, and enforce, rules and policies to reduce costs, cut down on users clogging devices with large print jobs, discourage frivolous printing and improve its carbon footprint. These rules can shape user behaviour for the better and optimise usage of devices and resources.

Some options print management software offers, include:

+ Routing big jobs to dedicated, high-volume printers.
+ Prompting users to use duplexing for their print jobs, rather than using the single side printing, which saves paper.
+ Automatic deletion of duplicated jobs or those with incorrect paper sizes.
+ Discouraging users from printing emails via popup warnings.
+ Suggesting that users print greyscale when printing from a web page.

Mobile and BYOD printing

Most educational institutions have students and staff printing from a range of personally- and organisation-owned devices, as well as from a selection of cloud services. Print management software should make it simple for users to print from any device or platform, without burdening IT administrators at the institution.

No matter what device students and staff have, be it tablets, laptops or smartphones, an institution can apply network policies while delivering easy access to print. Good print management platforms will even enable seamless guest printing for visitors.

Document and device security

Every educational institution stores and processes sensitive employee and student information such as payrolls, school reports, academic results, standardised test scores, disciplinary records and more. Print management software offers tools to protect and manage private documents. One example is follow-me printing - the user prints to a global virtual queue and releases the job at the device.

Organisations can also use watermarking and digital signatures to tie the owner to every document.

Cost control

Print management software makes it easy to track costs by student/learner, department, subject or custom shared accounts. This enables the institution to bill costs back to the correct department or student for reimbursement. Institutions can also allocate quotas to users to prevent them from abusing their printer privileges. The ideal solution will enable the institution to allocate print job costs for each user to different departments or subjects.

User tools

Print management software should offer the institution the option of tailoring the end-user web interface to look like part of the intranet. It may also enable the user to see details of print job costs, account balances, account recharge terminals, print policies and cost allocations. Users could have the option of releasing a job at any device using any modern smartphone or an ID badge. Users also have the option to recharge their own printing accounts at easy self-help terminals, allowing them to load credits onto their accounts.

Simple deployment and administration

Rather than creating a burden for administrators, a print management solution should make it simple to launch any client software from a server. It should support automatic synchronisation of user and group information from a source, such as Windows Active Directory.

Budget-friendly licence costs

Print management software should meet the educational institution's need for a scalable, budget-friendly solution with no hidden costs or complex pricing models. For example, many institutions prefer simple per-user licensing costs with no limits on the number of servers, workstations, printers, operating systems or domains.

Conclusion

Educational institutions can achieve significant cost savings by putting an end to wasteful use of their printing and copying resources. Today's print management software makes it easy to account for every page printed and stop any careless utilisation with some simple tools. What's more, the software enables institutions a better end-user experience and takes the pain out of printing, even as they save money and boost efficiency.

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