



Breckland

Printing Strategy

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1. Background

Many businesses have a printer strategy based on individual need that has evolved over many years with little regard for the total cost of printing across the entire organisation.

By addressing the needs of the individual ahead of the Council, it is difficult for the Council to understand how much it costs to own and run printers and how many printers and what consumables they possess.

Spending on print office management is typically uncontrolled with ancillary products such as consumables being bought from a number of suppliers for a wide range of items/equipment.

According to external sources such as Gartner, research suggests that that by evaluating the total cost of printers and other output devices, printing costs can be cut by between 10% and 30%. These savings come from reduced IT support costs, reduced costs of consumables, reduced hardware repair costs, reduced costs to install and upgrade devices, reduced energy costs, improved use of office space and reduced hard copy device equipment costs.

The ICT team has conducted an on site audit, and procured print management software on the corporate network for a number of months, all of which has contributed to development of this strategy and has assisted in identifying potential improvements in running costs and reducing wastage.

There has historically been little interest in print & output management, which is costing the Council many thousands of pounds each year, as print and output management is rarely viewed as an "important strategic concern", however there is the need for a fundamental re-education for staff on printing to raise awareness of costs, particularly when printing multiple copies, and multiple colour outputs.

The paperless office, an aiming point for many years now, seems to be still some distance away as national studies indicate that printing has increased year on year, as more staff print from the internet and other external sources – based on a view that the costs are minimal. However our print management software is helping the Council regain some control, with savings of 10%-30% that could be achieved merely by 'rightsizing' the number of faxes, printers, scanners & copiers in use. By examining the Council's usage of printers, photocopiers, scanners and fax machines, thereby assessing the running cost of each individual device, the Council can determine those that are really needed and those that aren't. By determining the true requirements for printers within the Council we can determine those devices which are either under utilised or overworked, and a better balance can be achieved for use of printers.

2. Issues/Risks/Constraints

The Council has a wide range of output devices consisting of many different makes and models. This wide range is difficult to support and is more expensive due to the diverse makes and models means wide ranges of consumables held without benefitting from economies of scale. Many of these consumables are stocked and sometimes never used – which represents a potential waste.

Thin client (Citrix) users may also experience problems in getting the wide variety of printers to work properly in that environment. Reducing range and quantity of printers would help alleviate this.

The output devices include printers, photocopiers, scanners and fax machines and whilst the majority of these have been purchased through ICT, some have been not, and could have been purchased at higher cost. There are also a number of print/copier contracts in place (some purchased outright, others leased or rented and some charged on a per print basis) – all with varying terms and conditions that ideally need to be amalgamated to make best use of efficient procurement practices.

The Council also has a corporate (reprographic) printing facility based in Dereham – which is not currently on the Corporate Network meaning that there is no direct access to these high output, low cost printing devices (however there is a job management system in place which does assist with billing and scheduling). It may also be wise to look at the whole function of the print room in light of this strategy to ensure that they are included and that best use is made of the equipment they have already invested in.

It seems likely in coming years that some of the traditional printed output from the print room will diminish as more and more Council documents such as committee papers are made available online and distributed electronically, however it will need a commitment from Members to continue to work this way, as there may be a tendency to slip back to printed output if not managed well.

NB Members and Officers may choose to review its approach regarding Members ICT provision, and may consider an 'allowance based' arrangement that would put Members in control of the spend (i.e. payment of an annual allowance that covers provision of PC/laptop/broadband/printer/consumables) – which means that Members can make a personal saving if they choose to reduce their printing.

There is currently no single corporate contract in place for the supply of printers, photocopiers or scanners, which denies the Council the opportunity to make savings from a consolidated contract, allowing economies of scale to drive down the total cost of ownership.

The current culture with regard to printed output across the Council needs to be changed and this will prove to be the most difficult challenge to the introduction of

a successful printing strategy. Staff are used to printing off emails and multiple copies of documents, most of which could be read on screen.

Print Management software can limit and manage this – however the delivery of this message and application of centralised controls need to be managed carefully to ensure staff are on board and appreciate the rationale for change.

The Council already has a policy of only purchasing duplex printers and has standardised wherever possible however the Council still has too many printing devices in place. The ICT Service has conducted a survey of printing devices across the authority and found a general ratio of 1 printer to about 6 staff, however best practice elsewhere indicate that a 1:30 ratio can work effectively, and still deliver savings, whilst also reducing our requirement for power and space, and reducing our overall carbon footprint as well.

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3. Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities available to Breckland for printing. One option is to go out to tender for a print partner to provide the Council with a range of Multi Function Devices (MFDs) and to manage the print estate.

This will entail replacing the whole printer fleet within an agreed time span and will potentially reduce the existing large number of differing model types to between 3 and 5. However it is key that users must be kept informed of the benefits of this print strategy with provision of extra functionality, reduced costs, reduced paper and consumables usage, reduced power consumption and greater space.

An alternative option is for the Council to purchase or lease MFDs outright and manage the print estate in house. This will require a capital outlay and some negligible ICT staff resources to manage this estate.

Changing the culture of the organisation through education is critical to the success of this, this activity has already kicked off, informing users of proposed changes, and recommending removal of colour facilities.

A corporate contract for the supply of stationary already exists. A similar contract for MFDs and associated consumables will enable savings to be made across the Council, and a revised framework model for MFDs is currently being appraised, and will enable the Council to monitor usage and costs in a way not previously possible.

The new devices can also be intelligent enough to allow the automatic ordering of consumables as and when needed thus stopping the potential for overstocking and keeping consumables for printers that no longer exist.

Faults and problems can also be automatically diagnosed and raised with the ICT service desk and/or the partner's service desk and engineers and spares will be automatically sent to site to enable timely maintenance and repairs.

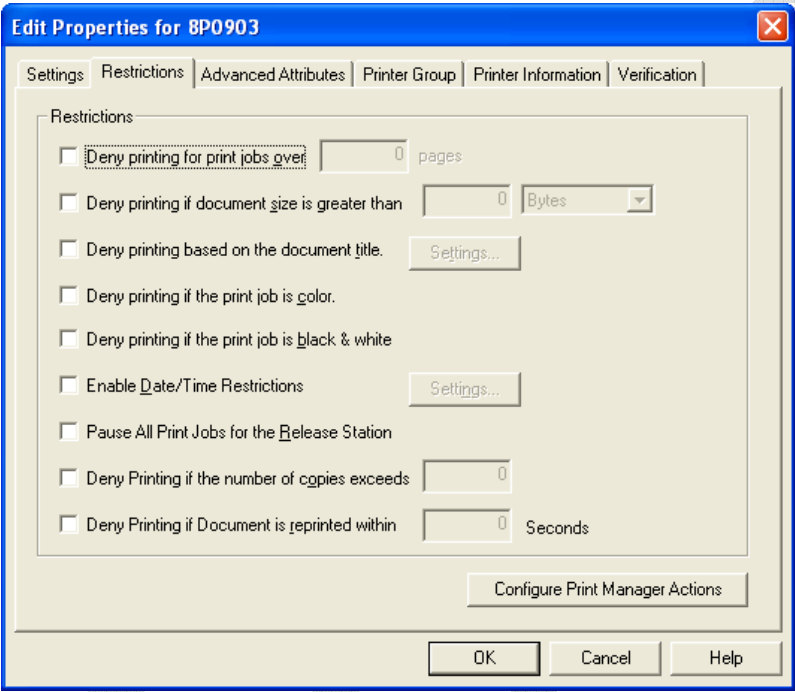
In conjunction with the new range of devices it is essential to continue to deploy print management software. This will provide complete monitoring of the printed output to identify the true costs for each department. This can also allow the automatic routing of prints to the best printer on pre set criteria (proximity, cost or quantity) – however there is a management overhead for this of approx ½ day per month.

The integration of the print room into the strategy is essential so that large volume print runs can be automatically routed there, maximising the use of the print room equipment and ensuring the most cost effective print devices are used.

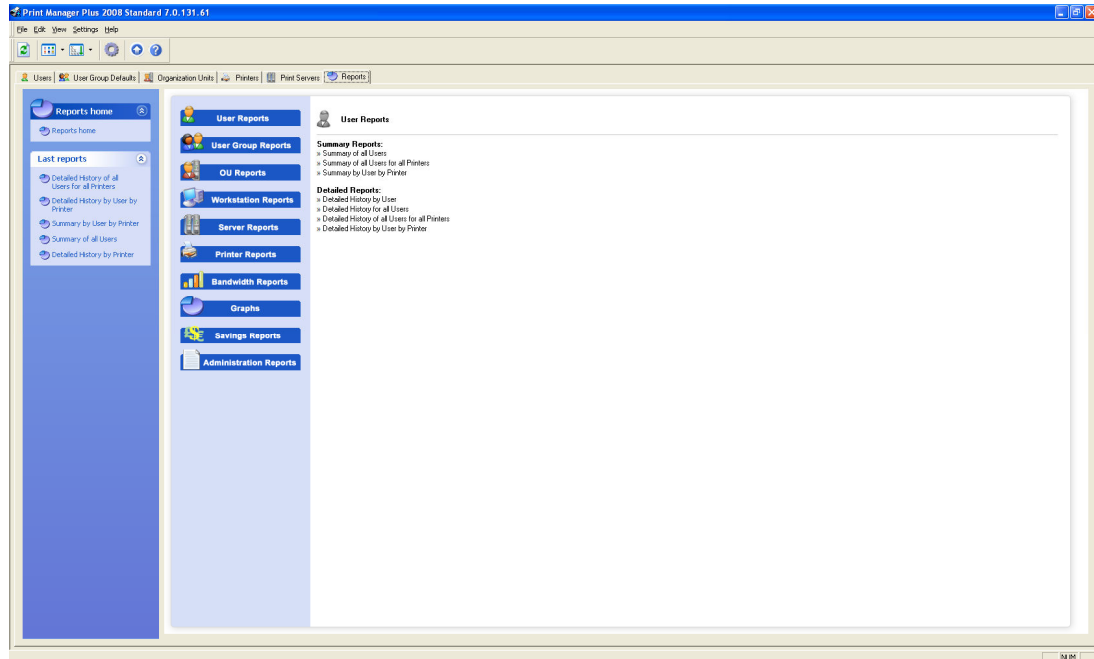
The cost of printing can then be reported in detail and charged on a usage basis, which, with education, should reduce much of the casual and often unnecessary printing that currently takes place.

Access to the improved functionality of these devices can be controlled centrally and set per user or per group – see below for further info. New MFDs can also have the option of either card entry or code entry to release print jobs, which removes issues of security and confidentiality that have already been raised by some users.

See below a screen shot of the software management tool and the controls that can be applied per printer (costs user definable on separate pages)



See below screenshot of reports available from the Print Manager software



Due to the fact we will possibly have only 5 or 6 models of printers available, training for the users on these devices will also be much simpler.

All users will be able to have the full functionality of the MFDs from any location on the network or from remote locations where applicable.

It is also recognised that there is a growing drive to scan to disk rather than keep printed output, therefore devices will still have scanning capabilities, however the ICT team are reviewing the need for faxing capabilities given the wide range of email based faxing solutions already in the marketplace. This would support any future drive towards Document Image Processing/Electronic Document Management.

4. Potential Savings

Financial

Through discussions with suppliers, through involvement with external consultants and by examining case studies of similar implementations, potential savings in the region of £20-30k p.a are expected, based on supplier changes and standardisation of hardware, however this excludes benefits gained from re-education of users and cultural change as regards use and impact of changes in usage.

However the savings will only be maximised if this strategy is made compulsory across the Council and once the existing print output estate is replaced.

Environmental

The power, light and carbon reduction benefits have yet to be calculated, however changes to the printing strategy will benefit the Council's Green and Environmental strategies.

5. Recommendations/Action Plan

1) Initiate a staff education process to alert staff of the costs of printing, and ensuring that printing is only done when absolutely necessary.

TARGET – End March 2010 (underway)

2) Continue to roll out Print Management software to add greater controls, and provide improved management reporting. This will be key to the identification of benefits.

TARGET – End Dec 2009

3) Removal of less efficient high 'cost per copy' printers (where cost efficient to do so)

TARGET – End July 2010

4) Leverage our print contracts with current suppliers to ensure we are getting best value for money

TARGET – End June 2010

5) Consider connecting print room to the corporate network, but ensure this is managed and controlled by Print Room Manager (consider colour only to print room and B/W to office based printers.) To discuss with Print Room

TARGET – End April 2010

6) Continue to raise awareness of the strategy and its benefits through a number of workshops and communications

TARGET – Ongoing (underway)

7) Roll out Print Management software to Thetford – also helping to reduce volumes of colour printing

TARGET – End June 2010 – subject to funding availability

8) Review current charging mechanisms for prints/copies used

TARGET – End March 2010 – based on Print Management reports

9) Consider introducing Performance Management targets for Service Areas to achieve

TARGET – End Aug 2010

10) Continue to investigate potential collaboration with other Local Authorities as regards bulk printing

TARGET – End Aug 2010

11) Review 'pre printed' paper contracts, to see if this is still more effective than printing via a printer

TARGET – End June 2010

12) Review DIP/EDRM as potential means in which to access paper info online.

TARGET – To determine for inclusion within ICT Strategy

13) Review committee paper processes to reduce need for hardcopy output

TARGET – End Feb 2010 (underway)

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