Case Study: Large Diabetes Research, Education and Training Center

PrinterLogic helps a large diabetes research, education and training center eliminate their print servers in a Citrix environment.

Challenges

- End-users were unable to install their own printers, requiring helpdesk staff to be physically present at the client workstation to perform manual printer installations.

- Visibility and control over essential aspects of the print server-based print environment were severely limited.

- The print servers were single points of failure, prone to crashes that would halt printing across the organization until they could be brought back online.

Results

- With PrinterLogic's intuitive self-service portal, end-users can easily locate and install their own printers. Helpdesk install tickets have dropped to zero.

- The organization now has detailed views of its print environment, providing vastly improved management and new opportunities for further efficiency measures.

- PrinterLogic's stability—even in the organization's expanding Citrix environment—ensures unprecedented uptime.

Several years ago, a large diabetes research, education and training center deployed a standard print server solution in an attempt to manage this printer fleet in its expanding Citrix environment. When that proved inadequate, the center deployed a second.

"Our environment was maintained pretty sparingly," says a systems administrator at the research center. "We had an old 2003, 32-bit print server, and later when we ran into issues with 64-bit PCs, we had to update to a 2012 print server to handle the 64-bit print drivers. The older print server only handled the 32-bit PCs on the network, and the newer one only handled the 64-bit drivers.

In theory, each print server filling a single discrete role should have led to fewer complications. But the inherent limitations of print servers actually left the center's IT staff struggling to stay in control of its print environment. Routine server crashes and queue problems led to frequent printing downtime, and end-users were wholly dependent on technical support staff to install printers.

"We were maintaining two print servers and print queues, which meant we had double the work," the systems administrator says.

Instead of updating the print servers and risking the same ongoing issues, the IT team began researching next-generation print management solutions like PrinterLogic. They became convinced of the benefits of migrating after two separate trial runs with PrinterLogic's software.

Challenge #1—Ease of Use for End-Users, Less Strain on IT

In the old print server environment, end-users were rarely—if ever—able to install printers on their own. This proved particularly troubling during the regular influx of students each semester.

"Our helpdesk used to have to go and walk over and help end-users find and install a printer," says an IT operations manager. "If you were a new user, you wouldn't know how to search for a network printer on one of our print servers. The old naming convention with the Microsoft print server wasn't easy, either. The queues were named 'HP4100' and 'HP4100(1),' so imagine an end-user trying to find that.

"If you did try to map it yourself, you could end up pointing to the 32-bit server instead of the 64-bit one. And you'd run into serious problems then."

Solution

Thanks to PrinterLogic's self-service portal, end-users throughout the organization can now locate, identify and install the printers they need—easily and intuitively. The added benefit is that print-related calls to the service desk have dropped, too, freeing support staff to focus on other areas of the network.

"It's a lot less hassle with the printers now," says the systems administrator. "Users can add their own printer without any outside

help. It's really straightforward. And the helpdesk isn't getting any calls for any printers. At all. In fact, I got an e-mail from a user who actually thanked us for making the process of adding a printer so easy."

"It's not often that you get those," the IT operations manager adds, "so you know it made a positive impression."

Challenge #2—Visibility and Control Over the Print Environment

Despite having two dedicated print servers, basic print management was sorely missing from the center's former print environment. It was difficult for admins to obtain a system-wide or device-level picture, and deploying printers was a protracted, multi-step process.

"We had no overview, no control over our printers," says the systems administrator. "We had the two print servers, yet we couldn't tell what was active, what was being used, what was in the queue. Nothing. We have quite a lot of USB printers here, too, and we wanted to be able to see those."

> " **I got an e-mail from a user who actually thanked us for making the process of adding a printer so easy.** "

Solution

"PrinterLogic has given us better visibility into what's going on in the network," the IT operations manager says. "We can pull reports and see all our active printers. We're quite impressed with that. It's also much easier when we purchase new printers and we have to provision them in our environment."

"We have a new helpdesk person here," the systems administrator adds. "I just gave him one run-through and he picked up everything. He was adding printers in PrinterLogic on his own in no time. He agreed that it's much more work on the Microsoft print servers. You're doing more clicks. Here we're using drop-down menus to choose drivers and profiles. It's much easier."

"Control and management went from zero to 100 with PrinterLogic," says an IT operations manager. "And going forward it will help on other projects like printer consolidation. I know which devices to eliminate because I know the traffic that's coming into each printer now—even on USB and local printers. In some cases, we've seen the USB printers getting much more volume than the network printer that's right next to the person."

Challenge #3—Eliminating Single Points of Failure

Operating two print servers did not equate to redundancy, as the research center staff knew all too well. Each print server had a key vulnerability as a single point of failure, which meant that common crashes due to 32- and 64-bit driver conflicts or the simple inability to accommodate the center's high printing volume resulted in organization-wide loss of printing.

"Unfortunately, all the clinical workstations were pointing to the older print server that was always crashing," the systems administrator explains. "We had a problem with a lot of downtime—people running around whenever printing was down. We had plenty of bad scenarios."

Solution

Because PrinterLogic is immune to the driver conflicts and incompatibilities that can bring print servers to their knees, the center has been able to cut printing downtime dramatically. Even in the rare event of a primary server outage, PrinterLogic's proven direct IP backbone allows end-users to print as usual with no loss to core printing functionality.

Furthermore, PrinterLogic's seamless integration with the organization's growing Citrix environment has brought improved print management along with stability.

Conclusion and Savings Summary

The center has not yet conducted strict financial analyses of its return on investment (ROI), but both the IT operations manager and the systems administrator maintain that implementation of PrinterLogic has resulted in dramatic efficiencies across the board. These stem from:

- Full solution deployment and setup in under one week (conducted entirely by a single admin)
- Increased end-user empowerment and reduced burden on the service desk
- Comprehensive multi-level device and activity reports leading to consolidation guidance
- Massive reductions in printing downtime

"You need to see it working for yourself," says the systems administrator. "Just one look at the portal and how easy it is to find a printer will show you that PrinterLogic can save you time, frustration and costs."