

Case Study: EPIC Management, L.P.

PrinterLogic Centralizes and Simplifies Printing for Trusted Managed Service Provider (MSP) and Its Regional Healthcare Clients



Challenges

- Management of the organization's diverse print environment was fragmented, which affected its responsiveness to clients
- Visibility into the print environment was poor and usage could not be tracked effectively
- Secure printing was a must for the company's healthcare clients, but there was no seamless, cost-effective way to implement it

Results

- Print management has been consolidated and simplified across the entire organization
- PrinterLogic provides useful and comprehensive reporting data, allowing the organization to move to a cost-plus model
- Integrated features like Pull Printing give nurses and physicians the ability to print sensitive patient information (PHI) securely

EPIC Management, L.P. is headquartered in Redlands, California and has provided healthcare management and consulting services to multi-specialty physician groups and independent practice associations across Southern California since 1995. The organization itself employs close to 1,500 people, and its services support 19 independent sites that are home to more than 200 physicians and 150,000 patients throughout the Inland Empire region.

Across all of these sites, printing is vital for patient records and prescriptions, which makes print availability, ease of use and security a top priority for EPIC Management.

Chris Patten, a Senior Server Engineer at EPIC Management, says that the company's ability to continue delivering outstanding service to its clients became hamstrung by print servers and their limitations.

"We use universal print drivers in our environment because they work well with our Citrix environment and they're easy to deploy and manage—for the most part," he says.

"But let's say that a manufacturer comes out with a new universal print driver that breaks functionality in one of your applications, and you don't find out about that for two weeks after you've already updated almost 200 print drivers on your print server. And it's also sealed up in your Citrix image. And then once this starts breaking, it breaks printing for the entire print server."

For Patten, that incident was the final straw. It took him a week to isolate the problem, engineer a solution and then implement a reliable rollback strategy. All the while the helpdesk was barraged with print-related calls from end users. He briefly considered upgrading the print server but concluded that any

print server, however cutting-edge, would still leave the company with the limited insight, minimal reporting and poor driver management that it needed to eliminate.

At the Citrix Synergy tradeshow, he saw a live demo of [PrinterLogic's](#) next-generation print management solution. His initial reaction? "Wow, this is amazing."

"I didn't know that I wanted PrinterLogic until I saw it. I asked, 'Can it do this, this, this and this?' And the representative said, 'Yep, here's how we do it.' Does it work with Linux? Yes. Can I do BYOD? Yes. What's the reporting look like? This is the best reporting suite on the planet," Patten recalls.

He immediately approached his CIO and department director, who agreed to an in-house trial period.

"They all loved the software," he says. "We didn't know how bad we had it until we saw how good it could be."

In early 2017, EPIC Management began a company-wide rollout of PrinterLogic across its entire distributed print environment, which comprises as many as 300 printers and spans several client-specific sub-environments, including Citrix.

Challenge #1—Consolidating and Simplifying Print Management

Patten describes several print management headaches that stemmed from print servers' fragmentation and complexity. One of them was the basic process of adding a new printer.

"Whenever someone said that they needed a new type of printer, that was me in a broom closet for a week doing stress tests, coming up with the deployment rules, making sure it was going to work in every type of environment—my 2003 servers, my 2008 servers, my Windows 7 clients, my Citrix client," he says.

"Once it passed that, I would be cautiously optimistic that I could test it in production."

The time and effort involved was multiplied when an entire site was added to the environment. That meant EPIC Management was unable to respond to and fulfill its clients' print requests as quickly as it wanted to.

Solution

"Depending on the site, before PrinterLogic, [adding printers] would be either an all-day thing or an all-week thing, and now it's something like, do I want to do it in the 10 seconds before lunch or in the 10 seconds after lunch? It's that quick," Patten says.

For this he credits PrinterLogic's centralized admin console, which allows IT staff to manage printers anywhere in the organization—even in geographically distributed environments—from a single pane of glass. Tasks like driver updates can be executed individually or en masse with ease, and printers can be deployed to users automatically and dynamically based on criteria such as workstation names.

"Wherever nurses go logically in the organization, their nearest printers are always available to them. That's whether they're using Citrix or whether they're using their workstations," he says. "Now that print management is all in one place, you set it up once and it's done."

Challenge #2—Acquiring Useful and Comprehensive Reporting Data

With its traditional print-server-based environment, EPIC Management struggled to get sufficient insight into printer usage as well as the macro- and micro-level status of its hardware. Furthermore, without expensive third-party add-ins, the print server software was unable to provide the comprehensive reporting data and analysis that the company needed to identify cost-saving initiatives.

Solution

PrinterLogic effortlessly leverages printers' SNMP support to provide essential status updates as soon as any alerts or changes are triggered. This alone has given EPIC Management a much better real-time fix on the state of its infrastructure. But PrinterLogic also has powerful built-in reporting features that can keep admins as well as departmental managers informed about printing behavior.

"It gives you a great window into who's costing what and when things are down," says Patten. "It gives you immense insight into both the status of the printer, the status of the print jobs and the status of the backend."

He even has reports automatically emailed to certain clients so they can stay on top of consumable usage and other cost-related activity. This is helping to lay the groundwork for EPIC Management's move to a cost-plus model.

"Once we can move printing to a service instead of a product

format, we can start sending this department bills for how much toner they used or this employee who printed this document or this email."

Challenge #3—Implementing Secure Printing

Given the tight regulations surrounding electronic medical records (EMR) and protected healthcare information (PHI) and the expectation of doctor-patient confidentiality, secure printing is an absolute must for EPIC Management and its clients.

The most logical step seemed to be secure pull printing (also known as release printing), but there was no way to implement that feature in a print-server-based architecture without resorting to additional solutions that would add cost and complexity to the environment—with no guarantee of seamless functionality.

Solution

Patten cites prescriptions as an example of a secure printing scenario.

"They have to be printed on a special kind of paper, and you have to follow a protected health information (PHI) chain of custody for those print jobs. You can't just print a prescription and then walk over to the printer and get it," he explains.

PrinterLogic's integrated Pull Printing feature complies with these requirements by making printing into a deliberate—and consequently more secure—two-step process. First the end user prints the document as usual on the workstation where it is held. Then the end user releases, or executes, that job at the printer through an authentication mechanism such as a badge or card reader.

"It's going to enable us to do some stuff that we always wanted and are actually mandated to do for certain levels of printing. That's going to revolutionize the patient care procedures for the doctors and the nurses."

Conclusion and Savings Summary

EPIC Management continues to roll out PrinterLogic on a client-by-client basis and has not yet conducted a dedicated ROI analysis for the organization.

However, Patten says that the clear and near-instant advantages of PrinterLogic's print management solution have made the migration more than worth it.

"We gain the ability to charge back departments on printing. We gain centralized management for printing for workstations and for Citrix, whereby we make a change once and it affects both situations. We gain centralized reporting, the ability to set up alerts for every situation, the ability to do release printing for secure printing. All of these things," he says.

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