

Case Study: Georgia System Operations Corporation

Large, highly distributed utility cooperative deploys PrinterLogic to modernize its print infrastructure and empower end users.



Challenges

- Users had to be migrated away from aging print infrastructure as seamlessly and cost-effectively as possible.
- Direct IP printing in remote locations lacked oversight and manageability.
- Printer installation was a multi-step process that almost always required help-desk support.

Formed in 1997, [Georgia System Operations Corporation](#) (GSOC) is a not-for-profit utility cooperative that controls and monitors electric generation, transmission and distribution assets for 38 of Georgia's electric membership corporations, or EMCs, including Oglethorpe Power Corporation (OPC) and Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC). The three affiliated companies—GSOC, OPC and GTC—have approximately 800 employees throughout Georgia, and the IT department serving all three organizations is housed within GSOC. The EMCs they serve cover approximately 70 percent of the state's land mass and deliver power to roughly half its businesses and households.

As a system-operations company, GSOC understands the importance of efficient management and optimum infrastructure. When it came time for the organization to replace its aging 32-bit print server, its IT professionals began wondering if the update might provide an opportunity to migrate to a new print management paradigm altogether—one that would eliminate its print servers and make its direct IP printing more manageable.

Arcelious Elliott is a help-desk supervisor at GSOC who was tasked with overseeing the migration for the enterprise, comprising GSOC, OPC, GTC and the statewide industry organization, Georgia EMC, whose headquarters are on the same campus.

"I went into my manager's office and asked if he knew of anything we could use to speed up the [migration] process. He had heard about [PrinterLogic](#) and suggested it to me, so I took it from there," says Elliott.

Results

- Several print servers were eliminated in exchange for a highly scalable, future-proof print management solution.
- The unique combination of direct IP printing and centralized administration has made remote print management almost effortless.
- End users now enjoy easy self-service printer installation without help-desk assistance.

After testing PrinterLogic for several months, Elliott rolled it out to all 12 locations across the project area in one week in early November 2017.

"It was a good experience. From a project manager standpoint, I came in under budget and didn't encounter any real problems. Even during the testing, everything went fine, so it was a smooth process from start to finish."

Challenge #1—Modernizing Aging Infrastructure

The primary impetus for using PrinterLogic was to replace an aging 32-bit print server that GSOC operated at its headquarters in Tucker, Georgia.

"Our 32-bit print server was getting quite old, and we still had people on a 32-bit operating system, so we couldn't just shut it down," Elliott explains. The organization also operated a 64-bit print server at its headquarters and another print server at a remote location.

"If we needed to update a driver, we had to remove the printer and reinstall the printer to get the updated driver, which was inconvenient and laborious."

Solution

PrinterLogic enabled Elliott to seamlessly migrate his 32-bit users away from the legacy print server to a next-generation print management solution. Today, the lightweight Printer Installer client operates almost invisibly on their machines, giving them full-featured direct IP printing functionality.

"On the user side, you don't really know that you're using something new. Once PrinterLogic is installed, you just print as normal. It's no different from what you've been doing," Elliott says.

A bonus was that PrinterLogic also enabled the project locations to eliminate their 64-bit print servers as well, thereby reducing infrastructure and removing the need for future server migrations.

Challenge #2—Restoring Manageability to Direct IP Printing

Along with its print servers, GSOC's print environment used direct IP printing at about 12 remote locations. Although the administrators valued the stability and reliability of direct IP printing, print management was far from easy.

"When someone new arrived and needed to add a printer, we made the drivers available for them," says Elliott. "It was a headache if users didn't know how to install a driver. We had to walk them through it, or log in remotely and help them do it."

Solution

PrinterLogic uniquely combines direct IP printing with a centralized management console, which meant that GSOC could keep its preferred printing method while gaining the ability to add, monitor and manage printers anywhere in the organization from a single pane of glass.

"As we adopt new printers, they're fairly easy to install no matter what location it is. We have about 12 locations around the state, and PrinterLogic makes it easy for me to maintain those printers as well."

Elliott has also found that PrinterLogic's intuitive interface and real-time changes make it much easier to perform routine print management tasks.

"It's easy to get into PrinterLogic when I have to change a driver on the fly. For instance, I had a user call yesterday to say that a printer was missed somehow. It took only a couple of minutes to add the printer and for the user to get it installed."

Challenge #3—Enabling Self-Service Printer Installation

With a fleet of around 250 printers, spread across a highly distributed environment, it was important to Elliott and the rest of his IT team that end users be given the autonomy to install printers themselves.

Prior to implementing PrinterLogic, this was no small task in the organization's direct IP print environment. Every user had to be given suitable drivers, and most had to be walked through the time-consuming installation process by help-desk personnel.

Solution

PrinterLogic removes the need for a call to the help desk for each new printer installation, Elliott says. That's because PrinterLogic features a convenient self-service portal that enables users to easily identify and install nearby printers with a single click. GSOC is also using the portal's optional floor plan maps, which allow users to visually pinpoint their location and install printers on their own.

"Our users seem to love it because they no longer have a long process to get a printer installed. It really doesn't get any easier than using the PrinterLogic process. It's so easy, a nine-year-old could do it."

"You don't have to worry about where it is or if there's someone who needs to print in another building or on another floor. They just pick the building they're in, the floor they're on and all the printers are listed there. It doesn't get any easier than that," he says.

"If someone goes to a remote location and needs to print, they can pull up the website and everything's taken care of. It's one less headache."

Conclusion and Savings Summary

GSOC and its project partners are still only a few months into their PrinterLogic deployment as of this writing, so no ROI calculation has yet taken place. For now, Elliott and his team are measuring its success in qualitative terms.

"Everything has been positive," he says. "I haven't had any negative feedback on it thus far. Our users seem to love it because they no longer have a long process to get a printer installed. It really doesn't get any easier than using the PrinterLogic process. It's so easy, a nine-year-old could do it."

The next step for GSOC will be enabling PrinterLogic's Mobile Printing functionality and conducting real-world cost analysis using the comprehensive Print Auditing feature.