RETHINKING YOUR PRINT ECOSYSTEM FOR A MOBILE WORLD

An analysis of the impact of mobile printing on business and workflow.
Defining mobile printing

The use of mobile devices has changed the way we communicate, interact and work. And as the adoption of mobile devices in everyday life becomes increasingly prevalent, IT technology of all kinds in all industries is advancing to adapt. The ability to interface and work compatibly with mobile devices is essential, as mobile users desire support and integration for the technology on which they rely. Whether at the office, on the road, or even in line for your morning coffee, mobile connectivity is expected wherever there are mobile users.

The world of printing and workflow management is no different. Demand for mobile printing has risen in step with other mobile technologies, and businesses are under pressure to integrate to maintain seamless and agile working environments. This has presented a challenge, because although expectations for mobile printing have increased, existing printing solutions have so far failed to deliver.

Mobile printing is a term for a broad trend that encompasses a variety of capabilities—including but not limited to universal device connectivity, cloud access and remote printing. At its core, however, it describes the ability for a printing and workflow management process to incorporate, support and interface with the mobile devices of its users. How effectively this is achieved is solution-dependent, but ideally successful mobile integration will be intuitive, efficient and flexible for IT and end users alike.

Significant spending

BYOD and enterprise mobility spending is evidence of the movement’s impact on business, and is projected to grow dramatically.1
The demand for mobile capabilities

One of the most important reasons to understand and embrace mobile printing is the fact that it is a movement largely driven by demand. Whether personal or company provided, mobile devices are now used as much as networked PCs and laptops in organizations large and small. And as mobile devices overtake networked PCs as “the way people work,” staff have come to expect the same capabilities they take for granted on their PCs, printing and document management chief among them.

Studies show 78% of workers under the age of 33 want more mobile technology capabilities at work, such as the ability to print from their smartphones and tablets. Likewise, 60% of all office workers indicated their organizations would like to print from their mobile devices.

The numbers are significant, but shouldn’t be surprising. Staff expect the same integrated, connected and barrier-free environment for their mobile devices at work as they do everywhere else. Offices that allow them to utilize their devices fluidly also allow them to be flexible, independent and agile in the way they work. This leads to a more attractive work environment, and a more productive workforce.

The importance of tablets in workflow

Though the mobile movement can be most directly observed through the ubiquity of smartphones in workplaces, tablets are the major drivers in terms of print and scan needs.

- Compared to smartphone users, tablet users are twice as likely to indicate their device is increasing printing needs.
- 28% indicate tablets have replaced their desktop PCs or laptops.
- Tablet users are significantly more likely than non-tablet users to scan a broad range of business documents.
Examining the impact

The demand for, and subsequent adoption of, mobile printing support in the workplace is well documented, but the impact the movement has on the way we work and communicate isn’t always clear. Understanding the future of printing and workflow requires an examination of some of the shift’s underlying trends.

BYOD vs CYOD

BYOD, or Bring Your Own Device, is the work-environment trend which has been cited as “the single most radical shift in the economics of client computing for business since PCs invaded the workplace.” In fact, 74% of companies already encourage and accommodate the use of personally owned devices for business, and over 75% of IT executives believe companies without a BYOD strategy are at a competitive disadvantage. Integrating the diverse array of personal devices creates compatibility and security challenges for IT departments.

CYOD, or Choose Your Own Device, is also becoming increasingly popular and has changed the way businesses approach their device infrastructures. Though this gives IT managers more control over what kinds of devices employees can use, network and printer integration still has to keep up with the emerging mobile technologies that employees have come to expect and demand. Businesses that ignore BYOD and CYOD planning in their workflow management are compounding these potential challenges.

PC-less printing environments

A movement that has both driven, and has been driven by, the advent of mobile printing is the desire for a working environment less dependent on PC access. When a PC connection is required, it limits the flexibility and productivity of the user. Staff that must be tethered to their desks in order to share, edit and print documents will be neither as effective nor as efficient as their mobile-equipped counterparts.

Serverless, driverless, PC-free printing is becoming possible through the use of cloud-based print tools like Samsung Cloud Print or Google Cloud Print. This has allowed forward-thinking businesses to eliminate often complex driver-based, server-driven printing architectures. In a straightforward restructuring of their print ecosystem, they are simplifying their print workflow, reducing IT support demands, leveraging the ever-expanding base of cloud applications and gaining efficiency and productivity from their mobile workforce.

Mobile integration is undoubtedly a major component in a successful PC-less printing environment, but device-free printing is a growing trend that serves to streamline workflow even further. With a sufficiently advanced printing solution, printers can act as a media hub for users, allowing them to access, share and print documents and information directly from the machine. In this way, the importance of smart multifunction printers with an intuitive UX to an efficient work environment cannot be overlooked.

Ensuring mobile security

As freedom of access, diverse device integration and serverless environments surge to prominence in offices, questions of security are inherently raised. Ensuring the information and the users within a workforce are protected is integral in making mobile printing implementation successful, productive and profitable.

84% of IT executives identified the issue of device security as the most important factor influencing mobile integration policies. As such, businesses have placed an increased value on solutions with increased security measures, such as user authentication and secure pull printing. This is all done with the goal of enabling mobile workforces to print what they need, where they need it, all the while guaranteeing that only authorized workers have access to sensitive printed documents.
Mobile printing in practice: Use cases

Mobile printing is a development with a presence and impact that can be seen across a great variety of industries, sectors and businesses. The exact ramifications and applications may vary, but the core implications are universal. Here are some examples of specific categories, and how the mobile printing movement has changed them.

Healthcare
A doctor carries a lightweight tablet with her throughout the day, giving her fingertip access to medical references, e-prescribing tools and electronic patient history and medical records. Without ever leaving her patient, she uses the tablet to record notes to the patient’s EMR and send prescription information and verification to the pharmacy. She uses the tablet to access and print follow-up recovery instructions and prescription information for the patient, all remotely. With the right printing and workflow management system, she can do it all quickly and easily, without leaving the patient’s side, which adds up to a better patient experience.

Financial Services
The mortgage operation in a large bank issues tablets to its team of mortgage closers, a mobile group that manages closings at bank branches most convenient to its customers. Through effective implementation of both BYOD and CYOD programs, the department is able to support the use of both its closers’ personal devices as well as the company-issued tablets.

Now, rather than lugging thick mortgage documents from one location to the next, closers use their tablets to send the file ahead to the next branch they plan to visit. With cloud connectivity and serverless operation, they spend less time managing files at their desk and can visit more clients and locations with more agility. All outstanding print jobs are held in the cloud until the closer arrives at the branch and releases it via secure pull printing to a high-speed multifunction printer.

Education
A high school history teacher uses a classroom multifunction printer as the in-class hub for his students. He can scan and edit a map to use in a homework assignment. From the printer, he sends the photo to a Sharepoint site in the cloud.

His students can then use their smartphones and tablets to retrieve the map, embed it into a Google Docs file and begin the assignment. From his tablet, a student prints the assignment on the multifunction printer, shares it with his work group, collects notes from the group, then scans, prints and distributes the notes without ever leaving the classroom. The students use their devices to complete and submit the assignment later that night, without ever needing to manually edit or keep track of a physical document.