



ALT Alternatives

Printing & Imaging News for ALT Customers

The New “Print Area Network” How MFPs Are Transforming Business Processes

In many of today’s business environments, multifunctional devices (MFPs) are the new norm. The decade-long transition to digital technology is essentially complete; analog devices are quickly becoming things of the past. And fully two-thirds of new monochrome and most all color copiers in today’s offices are networked MFPs, according to consultant Brian Bissett, publisher of The MFP Report.

With the ability to print, copy, scan and fax via an integrated MFP, Bissett says knowledge workers are producing more page and network volumes than ever before. Networked MFPs output 25% more pages than similar standalone copiers, and with the increasing use of color in documents and installs of color MFPs, those page volumes are expected to increase.

But there’s another side to multifunctionality at work in the office. The convergence of multiple technologies into single devices means that MFPs are now becoming the new “print area network” for workgroups in all types of vertical markets. As a networked peripheral that can also be accessed as a walk-up device for all types of document applications, the MFP is again changing the way people work with documents and share knowledge in the office.

Central to this transition is the increasing level of technology available “on the box,” especially an MFP’s scanning capabili-

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ties. With an MFP and a simple software application, end users can turn paper documents into electronic formats and send them to multiple destinations—email, document repositories, network folders, even remote printers—all with a single scan. According to IDC’s 2007 scan-enabled MFP forecast and analysis, “scan-enabled MFPs have increased from 61% of MFP shipments in 2004 to 80% in 2007.” And their 2008 hardcopy usage end-user survey shows, “Small, medium and large businesses are consistently almost 1.5 times more likely to say they mostly scan using scan-enabled MFPs than to say they mostly use scanners.”

The advent of MFP scanning capabilities has also created a variety of concerns—chief among them, how much traffic is created on the network, and how the information stored and generated on an MFP is protected and secured.

Clearly, however, MFPs offer new technologies and capabilities that can help speed workflows and boost productivity in the office. Scanning is key to integrating MFPs into office workflows, and complex jobs are now as simple as pushing a few buttons on the user interface or clicking a couple choices via a desktop client. For those in IT, the issues that matter most are how much scanning capability can be accommodated without slowdowns on the network, how well the actual scanning functions perform to enable new levels of performance and reliability, and how to protect information and maintain the security of documents, based on specific users within the enterprise.

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20
YEARS

ALT Celebrates 20 Years!

Come join us for a 20th Anniversary celebration on **Friday, June 18, 2010 from 1-5pm** at our Cleveland location. We’d like to thank you, our customer, for trusting ALT with all your printing and imaging needs. (See page 2 for details.)

CHANGING the BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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20 YEARS

Please join us as we celebrate ALT's 20th Anniversary on Friday, June 18, 2010 from one to five in the afternoon at ALT's Cleveland location, 4560 Johnston Parkway, Cleveland, OH 44128.

Get the latest on...

- ★ Going green in today's office environment
- ★ "Right-sizing" your printer fleet
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- ★ Implementing real-time supply management solutions

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RSVP by Friday, June 11, 2010 to Cheryl Harris at 216.663.8181 x46 or by email—charris@altconnect.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!

(New Print Area network continued)

With the open, Web-based software platforms of some MFPs, companies are able to customize the functionality of their MFPs through the help of independent software developers. Page volumes notwithstanding, the increased use of scanning could mean a large strain on the bandwidth of a company's network. It is important for IT managers to note what types of compression an MFP's scanner uses in order to minimize the load on the network—without compromising image quality and the accuracy of scanned text. Without reliably accurate OCR, scanning isn't the time-saver and work-process booster in the office. For industries that rely on meticulous reproduction of valuable information, superlative scanning capability is a must.

For more information about how to select the right MFP for your office, visit www.altconnect.com/equip.asp or contact ALT at 1.800.888.9752.

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