

EBOOK

Pull Printing Solutions: A Step-by-Step Playbook For Selecting The Right Solution



Process Fusion

Introduction

Pull printing technology has become a must have solution for enterprises seeking an additional layer of security to protect their print infrastructure. In today's complex technological landscape, other factors like the cloud and print security are disrupting the market, and resulting a new emergence of pull printing solutions. With the surge of solutions now available and offered by so many vendors, it becomes hard to navigate and overwhelming to select the best solution.

Pull printing is when a user's print job is held on a server (server-based printing) or on a user's workstation (serverless printing) and can be released by the user from any printing device. To be released, the user needs to authenticate themselves at the printer, either using embedded software or external network print appliances. Once authenticated, the user may select print jobs they wish to be released.

Key Challenges

When it comes to choosing a pull printing vendor and solution, enterprises often face the following key challenges:

- ✓ It is difficult to understand the differentiation and value propositions of different pull-print solutions, as many have a lot of features all aimed at solving different problems.
- ✓ Enterprises find it difficult to shortlist vendors as there are many midsize and small vendors in additions to OEM's and managed print services providers
- ✓ While many vendors offer hybrid and cloud solutions, the most well-known solutions are all on premise.

By 2021, 70% of management print services in the enterprise market will include pull-printing solutions.

Gartner, 2018

Recommendations

To take advantage of the print solutions market, enterprise decision makers should:

- ✓ Establish a shortlist of features and benefits the company needs. Work with business divisions across the organization to understand the what the most critical business needs are.
- ✓ Explore your options by speaking with MPS providers and independent print software vendors.
- ✓ Choose a vendor that meets your long-term goals, not just short-term. Keep in mind that if you're looking for a cloud-based solution, you may not have all your requirements met immediately.

Pull-printing technology has been around throughout the past two decades but were mainly offered by MPS vendors as a part of their services. Pull printing technology has become a must have solution for enterprises seeking an additional layer of security to protect their print infrastructure, and improve accountability. Factors like the cloud and print security are disrupting the market, and resulting in an emergence of new pull printing solutions. New solutions vary from architecture, features, technical specs, problems they target, pricing models, and market channels.

With so many solutions available, and many vendors offering solutions, it can be difficult to make the best selection. The follow demonstrates the 3 step process for identifying and choosing pull print vendors.



Figure 1: Three steps for identifying suitable pull print vendors.

Step 1: Set Long-Term Printing Goals & Set Business Case

Before looking for vendors, you should have a clear picture of the future of your printing infrastructure, and goals you would like to achieve. Doing this can help frame vendor's solutions within 3-5 year, long-term goals for the business and technology strategy. How the organization envisions the future state of printing architecture, and security, are factors that need to be considered.

Examples of print goals that can benefit from pull printing include:

- ✓ Reduce infrastructure costs through print server consolidation or implementing serverless printing
- ✓ Increase print cost savings with reporting and monitoring on user activity
- ✓ Improve mobility to accommodate user printing behaviours
- ✓ Enhance print security at a device and network level

Now that you have set your goals, you need to establish a business case that states the value proposition and ROI that a pull print solution will offer.

Step 2: Establish Your Requirements

While there is no "one solution fits all" it is important to create a requirements list which differentiates between solution features, and technical and architectural requirements. When creating this list keep in mind that these requirements should support the long-term printing strategy identified in the previous step.

[Download our free checklist with 25 questions you should ask when comparing pull printing vendors.](#)

Most vendors offer four types of pull print architectures: on-premise, pure-play private cloud, pure-play public cloud, and redesign as cloud architecture.

The most common architecture is on-premise, where a central server manages the print queue supported by distributed infrastructure of devices and print clients. On-premise print servers support integrations with directories, enterprise software, back end systems, and mobile workflows. Vendors can offer a redesigned architecture where they relocate the functionality of central on-premise servers to the cloud, which is the most efficient path to achieve pure cloud. If you have a long-term cloud strategy, this is a good starting point.

Pure play private cloud architecture solutions rely on a cloud based server that manages print job data, drivers, and infrastructure. Print jobs remain behind a firewall and use direct IP printing to sent and release jobs. Pure play public cloud is entirely hosted in the public cloud and only requires an internet connection. This solution is geared for public printing where no IT support is available such as cafes and hotels.

Step 3: Research Vendors That Fit Your Needs

If you already have an existing MPS contract or are in negotiations, request to see their full pull print solution portfolio. OEM MPS providers usually have a proprietary pull print solution that can easily integrate within their devices.

If you don't currently have an MPS contract or would rather take ownership of the selection and implementation, a good way to narrow down available solutions is to go through a list of pull print providers and shortlist 5 or 6 that best match your requirements and goals. When contacting your shortlist for RFI and RFP's, it is always important to request references and uses cases from organizations in similar industries and regions. This will help you understand how the vendor has addressed other companies problems, the implementation process, and the end results. It will also help you set some expectations for the services.

**Try UniPrint InfinityCloud for FREE
and see how easy cloud print management can be**

About Process Fusion

Process Fusion is a software company and a cloud solution provider. We help organizations transform inefficient, paper (labor) intensive business processes into a secure, automated, mobile ready Digital First experience for all participants.

Contact:

3250 Bloor Street West
Suite 1000, East Tower
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M8X 2X9

uniprint.net
processfusion.com

© 2020 Process Fusion Inc. All rights reserved. All company names, product names, and trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Universal. Unified. Unique.

 **Process Fusion**