# Cost recovery

How analyzing your printing device use can uncover security breaches and save costs    **Interviewed by Sue Ostrowski**

Every day, your employees print out documents as part of their jobs. But how many of those are printed in color or when they really only need black and white? How many are left on the printer until they are thrown away? And how many don't really need to be printed at all?

By completing a security and cost recovery analysis of use of your printing devices, you may find ways to save significant amounts of money and increase your company's security, says John Szabo, applications specialist at Blue Technologies.

"Most companies don't have any idea how much they are truly spending on printing, copying, scanning and faxing," says Szabo. "However, with cost recovery systems, you can get the information to determine if you have a problem and/or if there are areas that should be investigated further. It's worth investing a couple hours to have someone tell you you're doing things correctly, and if you're not, to explore what opportunities are available and the costs associated with them."

*Smart Business* spoke with Szabo about how analyzing the use of your print devices can help you recover costs and improve security.

## Where can a company start with cost recovery?

First, determine your goals in implementing a cost recovery system. Is it to determine if you have issues with the environment? To look at where money is being spent irresponsibly from a user standpoint? To make sure you are you tracking everything done for a specific client to ensure that billing is 100 percent accurate?

Then, you can begin to figure out what cost recovery solution may be the best fit.

## What are some cost recovery solution options?

One solution uses swipe cards that employees use to enter the building that integrate directly with the machines. That allows you to track exactly who is doing what. In this scenario, you are looking at solutions that sit on the network and that require zero interaction from individual users. The system simply monitors individual printing and scanning. There are also client billing applications in which users type in individual codes to track to whom the work is being billed.



**John Szabo**
Applications specialist
Blue Technologies

The majority of companies have no idea who is doing what. With cost recovery solutions, you can look at use by users, how much they are doing, what application they're doing it from, and whether it's in black and white or color. This allows you to figure out who is doing what and why are they doing it. Is it actually appropriate for their environment, should they be printing what they are printing, or do you have an issue?

## How can you address misuse or abuse of devices?

Systemic changes can be put into place. It can be as simple as changing how drivers are deployed for users, and educating users about what jobs are appropriate to send to local printers versus network printers.

You may have small pockets of real abuse from a personal standpoint, but it may be mainly a matter of education. When printing a document, does it really need to be in color? Or do you really need to print it at all? And if you do, are you remembering to pick it up after you print? To minimize that waste, you can print to the cloud, then at the printer, pull it down from the cloud and print.

How often do you pick up a print job, get back to your desk and find you have other people's jobs in your stack? You may try to find the person, but there may be no identifying information. And even if you take it back to the printer, the other person has already printed it out again. Often, those documents will sit on the printer for days, and may contain sensitive information.

## Once you've gathered this data, how do you act on it?

Partner with a company with the resources to manage and maintain it. From an ownership standpoint, all you have to do is have brief meetings to go through findings to give feedback and direction. The goal is not for the managing company to make decisions; it's to inform you, as the business owner, of the potential or actual areas of concern. Then from that information, you have the ability to make decisions or give the managing company guidance to make decisions and implement changes.

## How can a cost recovery solution go beyond saving money?

For example, you may have people scanning sensitive materials to someone who shouldn't have that information. There are solutions that will capture information if someone is sending something to someone who shouldn't have it.

It could be a price book or an invoice. Or perhaps you're a medical office and are worried about compliance issues. There are a lot of pieces that fold together from a liability standpoint, so it's not only the hard costs of what is being printed. There are also soft costs, such as potential jobs lost and potential revenue lost. It's very difficult to put dollars and cents to that.

Isn't it worth a couple of hours from a time investment to have someone tell you whether you're doing things correctly? It makes no sense not to do it.

Whether it's recovering costs to be able to properly bill clients, compliance issues or concern about making sure people are printing what they're supposed to and not printing what they're not supposed to, a cost recovery solution can be customized for your specific needs. **<<**

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