



# The Benefits Of Print Management In Healthcare

*Intelligent print management software can help today's healthcare facility secure documents, mobilize workers, and reduce costs.*

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**H**ealthcare providers and their IT departments are facing pressure from several different areas today. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 changed the way technology needed to be integrated into the healthcare IT infrastructure and put a new emphasis on patient rights and confidentiality. Now, with the passing of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) Act, there are even more incentives for healthcare providers to conform to, and penalties for not. In addition, the current economic environment and the mandate for universal healthcare coverage is pushing providers to find ways to reduce waste, cut costs and find innovative, sustainable, green practices. With these big issues facing healthcare providers today, the question becomes: Is there a way to address regulatory compliance, patient record security, and cost savings with a single solution? The answer is yes, and the solution is intelligent print management software.

There has been much media attention lately about printers, copiers, and MFP (multifunction peripheral) devices being a liability to companies. Recently, I addressed this topic with a group of healthcare providers at the CIO Healthcare Summit in Phoenix Arizona. What was evident to the industry is that unless organizations implement a document output security strategy that helps ensure the privacy of patient Protected Health Information (PHI) across their entire network, they are putting critical information at risk. Without controls in place, printers and copiers can be conduits into a system's protected environment. It's vital to know who printed what and when, and just as important to ensure PHI is never left in output trays.

The risk is real. According to Health and Human Services (HHS), 23 hospitals, 13 health plans, 13 physician offices, and four clinics have failed to secure patient PHI as of June 1st, 2010. The average physician's office breach affected 4,496 individuals, and the average hospital breach involved 6,251 people. 19% of breaches were as a result of stolen paper records.

Print management software can help healthcare providers secure the output of their printing and copying devices, as well as cut administrative costs, reduce the proliferation of personal desktop

printers, and support sustainability initiatives. Utilizing features of print management software, such as secure document release, hospital staff can be required to log in or swipe their ID card at an MFP in order to release a document from the print queue when they need it — eliminating the possibility of PHI being left in print trays. Additionally, detailed reports provide an audit trail of the printing process showing administrators what was printed who printed it and where it was printed. These reports can also be used to track printing habits, enforce printing rules and empower staff to take responsibility for what they print.

Healthcare providers today are required to deliver higher quality care with smaller budgets; this is driving them to integrate technologies that empower their facilities to take control of their administrative overhead. Printing costs can equal up to 3% of an organization's gross revenue and represent a huge opportunity for savings. Through print management software, administrators can enact rules and routing functions that dictate how and where information is printed. Rules such as forced monochrome and two-sided printing can reduce paper output in a typical organization by almost half in a short period of time. Administrators can also automatically route print jobs to the most cost efficient printer or copier based on the job characteristics like number of pages, color or black & white, or even the application source of the document. Secure document release features keep the document in a protected print queue until the user authenticates at the device for output.

Whether a healthcare provider is actively working to reduce environmental impact or is looking to streamline workflow, print management is a solution that decreases waste. These solutions can provide secure and convenient access to document output devices, wherever they are needed, across the organization's entire network increasing the flexibility and mobility of nurses, doctors, clinicians, and laboratory technicians. This secure access to any printing device helps eliminate the need for personal desktop printers without sacrificing convenience, security or productivity. A comprehensive tracking, auditing and reporting system allows administrators to view usage and cost by user or group, and by device or device type. This information can be used to modify print rules to help reduce waste.

Healthcare providers trying to address and overcome today's regulatory, economic, workflow, and environmental challenges should consider a print management system as an essential part of their solution. Solution providers, like Equitrac, partner with healthcare institutions to facilitate their compliance with HIPAA and HITECH, empower them to manage costs and increase prof-

itability, and help them decrease waste by streamlining workflow and decreasing the institution's environmental impact. Print management is a best practice solution for document security, increased mobility, cost management, and environmental sustainability that can help take healthcare providers into the next generation of efficient care.

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