Bradley

Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP

Case Study: Bradley Arant Boult Cummings

Bradley simplifies end-user printing with intuitive floor plan maps from PrinterLogic.

Challenges

- Routine printer installation was too complex for the average user and invariably led to service desk calls.

- Use of multiple print servers across the firm's distributed environment required backend time and resources that could have been better directed elsewhere.

- Frontend printing issues were too common, and troubleshooting them was time-consuming and complicated.

Results

- PrinterLogic's interactive floorplan maps allow everyone from the paralegals to the CIO to easily locate and install printers themselves, no matter where they happen to be.

- All the firm's print servers were eliminated—along with their operating costs and the manpower needed to maintain them.

- End-user printing issues have all but ceased, saving attorneys' time and an estimated 5 to 10 hours per week in tech support.

Listed among the top three in the American Bar Association's Top 10 Health Law Firms in the South and celebrated as a "Go-To Law Firm" by American Lawyer Media, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP is a multi-award-winning law firm headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama with large sub-regional offices in Charlotte, North Carolina; Huntsville, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; Montgomery, Alabama; Tampa, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Houston, Texas; and Washington, D.C.

Bradley can trace its roots back more than 140 years. In 2009, it undertook a merger that made it one of the 250 largest law firms in America. It now employs close to 500 highly skilled attorneys who serve individuals and emerging businesses along with established regional, national and international companies. These attorneys have been cited and honored for their work with major American, Asian and European construction companies, multinational pharmaceutical companies, major insurance and financial services companies, national tire manufacturers, and many others.

Over the years, as Bradley grew in size and presence, its IT team implemented print servers to deal with the concomitant expansion of its print environment. As recently as 2014, the firm had at least one print server at each geographic location. These print servers controlled close to 500 printers—one for nearly every attorney—throughout the organization.

Ellen Kirby, Manager of Technical Operations and Senior Enterprise Architect at Bradley, was increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of these print servers. They were unreliable and required far too much oversight and intervention. Printer installation was a daily occurrence but could only be performed with confidence by the service desk and trained technicians. The servers' software was outdated, too, which raised the prospect of the long, slow process of enterprise-wide migration to a new platform that might provide additional functionality but would not address the general fundamental shortcomings of print servers.

Therefore, Kirby wanted a different enterprise print management solution that promised easy migration, seamless integration with existing environments, long-term scalability, effortless centralized management, and end-user empowerment. But she wasn't sure such a printing solution even existed. Then she visited the PrinterLogic booth at TechEd in 2014.

"I told the PrinterLogic representatives that I was looking down the road at our situation with Windows 2003 end-of-life. I didn't know how we were going to get past the craziness of our current print environment, which was almost all old 2003 servers. People had all kinds of stuff loaded onto them, and all kinds of people had access to them, so it was a security nightmare, too. We needed to get all of that cleaned up, organized and decommissioned. And it made a lot of sense to me to have a better management interface—not just for the systems team but also something we could push down to the technicians at each of the sites and enable them to easily control the printers and access to them," she says.

"I ended up spending 30 or 40 minutes talking at the PrinterLogic booth, and at the end I thought this is exactly what I was looking for. PrinterLogic was the best piece of software I came back with."

Challenge #1—Simplifying End-User Printer Installation

Bradley has a large number of end-users who require regular printer installation. Many of them are mobile and travel between the firm's eight regional sites. As in many enterprise print environments, print servers hindered rather than facilitated printer installation for these end-users—especially mobile employees. This meant that almost every single printer installation request led to a service desk call that had to be attended by a technician.

"Some of our users are pretty decent as far as dealing with desktops and printers and other things, but not all of our users are, so we needed to have a print management solution that was simple. That simplicity can't be stressed enough," says Lee Suddeath, Engineer for the Server and Desktop Services Team.

"If they wanted to add a printer, users needed to be able to just go in and do that by themselves without having to put in a call to the helpdesk. They didn't want to have to use their time calling us, and we wanted to be able to use that time on something else."

> **"PrinterLogic has been so successful. It's cut down on our footprint and just made things significantly easier for all the frontend support, the backend support, and the user infrastructure."**

Solution

Thanks to PrinterLogic's intuitive interactive floorplan maps and web-based self-service portal, users of any ability can now locate, select and install printers anywhere in the organization.

"Even with my technical background, it's easy for me to see how things have improved from a user perspective," says Kirby. "If I go to one of our other offices with my BYOD laptop, it's so easy for me to get the access I need. Because I have that map, I can just click on the printer that's closest to me based on where I'm sitting and—boom!—I'm in business."

"I know that was one of the things the helpdesk used to have to keep doing—babysitting people who were traveling to other locations and didn't know how to find their printer. I was just talking to our CIO, and he said, 'Now, any site I go to, I just pick my printer and I'm good to go in just a few seconds.' That has significantly cut down our reliance on the techs and the helpdesk."

Hunter McGuire is a system administrator at the firm. "Just being able to see the floorplans and add printers themselves is huge for our end-users," he adds. "Anyone can have confidence in something that simple, regardless of how comfortable they are with technology. Since we've implemented PrinterLogic, those kinds of 'Add Printer' support tickets have just dwindled. I don't see how we could get any more tickets unless there's a problem with the hardware itself."

Challenge #2—Eliminating Print Servers

For years the dominant practice among organizations of all sizes has been to deploy additional print servers as a response to expanding print environments, and Bradley was no different in this regard. But print servers actually reduced the overall manageability and stability of the print environment. Because of the amount of support they required for day-to-day operation, they also diverted resources away from other critical areas.

"When I first arrived, we had eight different sites with one or more print servers at each of those sites," Suddeath explains. "These print servers didn't allow us to manage our users or our printers in a way that was really acceptable for our type of environment. To me, that was a big reason why we needed to have PrinterLogic—to just have one solution where we could manage all of our printers from one location, and that was as simple for us to use as for our end-users."

Solution

After rolling out PrinterLogic as part of a gradual enterprise-wide system upgrade, Bradley was able to eliminate its print servers at all sites.

"The worst machine in the company at one point was a print server," Kirby says. "It was always hung and having problems. We would always have to go in and reboot it, and meanwhile a bunch of people couldn't print. To have all of that gone is such a relief.

"I would also say that the deployment of new printers is substantially less work, too. Because of PrinterLogic's centralized interface, even things like redoing all of the DHCP settings has been simplified significantly compared to the old print server days."

Kirby recalls a conversation she once had with a peer who was responsible for administering print servers at another large company: "He talked about all the things he was doing, spending all this time and resources dealing with all these drivers, managing all the policies, doing all that stuff. And I said to him, you know, if you guys had PrinterLogic, your job would be much simpler."

Challenge #3—Reducing Time and Resources Expended on Print Issues

Kirby estimates that the technical staff was spending up to ten hours per week on frontend printing issues. Yet those ten hours actually amounted to more. They had to be multiplied by all the attorneys who were unable to print important documents as they waited for those printing issues to be resolved. That wasted time and productivity was a significant driver in their search for a new enterprise print management solution.

However, implementing PrinterLogic required migrating away from the flawed familiarity of print servers, and even the firm's most forward-thinking IT professionals were concerned about whether the new solution would live up to its promise.

"We faced that initial skepticism with some technicians in user services: How are we going to train users? How are we going to support them with something completely different? That's understandable. It's their job to look at things, to think things through and see how changes on the backend might impact the frontend," says Kirby.

"There were webinars and training," says Suddeath, "but the biggest thing that swayed most people was just seeing the product—a demonstration that showed how you can pull up a map that shows the printers, and all you've got to do is click on the printer and it installs and does everything you need it to do. Everybody immediately saw how simple it was and that, even though it was a big change, it was a good change."

Solution

PrinterLogic drastically reduced end-user printing issues, especially those that required anything more than basic technical support. At the same time, its powerful but straightforward management features have enabled higher-level support technicians like Kirby and Suddeath to safely delegate even more responsibility to lower-level techs and empower them with the ability to handle additional print management duties themselves.

"The calls from the users as well as the time it takes to resolve any printer issues went down exponentially. The number of support tickets that escalate to level two and above have gone down to nothing. I can't even think of the last time I got a call," Kirby says. Brian Renkel, an IT technician at the firm's Jackson, Mississippi office, says he sees far fewer support requests as a direct result of installing PrinterLogic. "It's been wonderful. There were a lot of times when we used to be on call late at night, and people would say, 'My printer broke.' Now, if that even happens, we can send them a weblink or point them to the PrinterLogic web-based portal and say, 'Hey, pull up the map, click on the printer, install, you're ready to go.'"

Conclusion and Savings Summary

Bradley has not yet conducted a quantitative analysis of the return on investment (ROI), largely because cost savings were not the deciding factor in the firm's implementation of PrinterLogic.

"We have an enterprise agreement with Microsoft and we're running VMware, so the costs of print server licensing didn't really impact us," Kirby explains. "We were more concerned with ROI in terms of savings in time, and I think that really applies to the attorneys. An attorney's time is important. Since implementing PrinterLogic, what we've seen is ROI relating to that—where the attorney doesn't have to call the helpdesk and get them to install a printer and wait for them to print out the brief or whatever they need. That's pretty huge right there."

"And then there's time that it used to take for a technician to actually help someone who was having problems. Plus the fact that we don't have to really escalate tickets to level two anymore, so there's the time it saves the people on my team and everything that might impact. I'm not really sure what the costs associated with that would be, but they're significant."

On the whole, it's the qualitative experience with PrinterLogic that has most impressed Kirby, Suddeath, McGuire, Renkel and all their colleagues at Bradley.

"PrinterLogic has been so successful," Kirby says. "It's cut down on our footprint and just made things significantly easier for all the frontend support, the backend support, and the user infrastructure. How can you really get better than that?"

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