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Case Study: City of Garland

City of Garland eliminates print servers and decreases help desk calls by 75% with PrinterLogic.

Challenges

- A modestly sized IT staff was spending inordinate amounts of time on routine print management in a diverse IT environment.
- The organization's five print servers were unreliable, resource-intensive "constant pain points."
- Print-related calls to the helpdesk were overtaxing the support staff, compounding the print management woes.

Results

- PrinterLogic's robust options and intuitive admin console have reduced the City's time spent on print management by an estimated 75%.
- The City of Garland was able to eliminate all five of its print servers, rapidly and seamlessly replacing them with feature-rich PrinterLogic.
- The number of print-related calls to the helpdesk has been slashed by as much as three-quarters.

Consistently ranked among the country's best places to live and praised in recent years as one of the best-run cities in America, Garland, Texas is a popular and vibrant suburb of Dallas with a population of approximately 230,000.

Like many municipal bodies, the City of Garland's government is unified in terms of its network infrastructure but organizationally split into dozens of different and geographically distributed departments.

"We have 48 buildings with 42 different departments across the city," explains Stefanie Thompson, lead systems administrator at the City of Garland. In that role, she manages the server and storage teams in the City's IT department.

"The departments function almost like their own independent businesses, since we have animal services over on one side, utility billing over on another side, and parks on another side. These departments all operate under the same umbrella, but in terms of daily operations they don't really have anything to do with each other."

This fragmentation and distribution has typically made print management challenging for the City, especially when using traditional solutions such as print servers. For a number of years the City of Garland maintained two remote print servers—one for the police department, one for the library—in addition to three centralized print servers for its core departments.

These print servers were meant to support a fleet of around 400 printers and close to 2,000 users, but Thompson and her co-worker Dean Kenyon, a systems admin for the City of Garland, found that inordinate amounts of time and resources were being lost to juggling

different driver versions to accommodate multiple versions of Windows as well as ensuring that printer updates continued to work with the organization's mix of cutting-edge and legacy equipment.

And so they began an informal search for a new print management solution that, ideally, would enable them to eliminate their print servers.

"Discovering [PrinterLogic](#) was really one of those chance meetings. We saw it being demoed at a vendor fair and I said, 'I wonder if it works like it says?' Because we had looked at a couple of other products and tested them, and they didn't do what they said they would do and they didn't work like they said they would work. And, of course, they wanted us to put in stuff we didn't even need," Thompson recalls.

"It turned out that PrinterLogic worked exactly like it said it would. There was a low-risk trial, so I could run it by my management team, and I was able to show them the high value versus the relatively low cost. They were like, 'This is a no-brainer. Bring it in.'"

After implementing PrinterLogic across the City of Garland's print environment with the ease, speed and functionality and at the attractive price point they had anticipated, Thompson and Kenyon were able to eliminate all of the organization's non-essential print servers.

Challenge #1—Reducing Time Spent on Print Management

With the old print management infrastructure in place, Thompson says that print servers made it "difficult to manage the different versions of Windows that we needed drivers for, and the print servers didn't deal well when we had multiple printers installed with different drivers for the same physical printer."

This would lead to situations where the wrong driver was paired with the wrong client machine or the wrong printer, which in turn led to printing issues and spooler crashes. And that driver management headache was just one of many persistent print management issues, including printer deployments.

Solution

Kenyon estimates that PrinterLogic has decreased the time required for print management by close to 75%.

“Dean singlehandedly handles print management for our entire organization,” Thompson says.

“He’s able to do all the driver maintenance and all the software upgrade by himself. He used to have to deal with print servers every day, and now he just does it when somebody needs to input or change something, which is maybe a couple times a week. Now he can concentrate on other parts of his job instead of dealing with printers all the time.”

Furthermore, Kenyon has even made use of integrated print reporting, a unique PrinterLogic feature, to identify rogue machines that were sending anonymous print jobs.

“It came in handy when troubleshooting why these jobs were being printed when they weren’t really sent by anybody,” he says. “We were quickly able to narrow down where they were coming from and put a stop to it.”

Challenge #2—Eliminating Print Servers While Gaining Functionality

For the City of Garland, like many organizations, one of the biggest “selling points” of PrinterLogic was its ability to eliminate print servers without sacrificing stability, ease of use or print functionality. The hassle of continually maintaining those print servers and working around their inherent limitations they made them “a pain point” for the city’s staff.

“Being able to show that we could get rid of those servers that were constant pain points and that it wasn’t going to cost a fortune was a big reason why my management team gave me the okay to migrate to PrinterLogic,” says Thompson.

Solution

PrinterLogic’s ability to seamlessly integrate into a wide variety of print environments, even those that use virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) solutions, meant that the City of Garland could rapidly deploy its new print management solution and take its old print servers offline almost immediately without skipping a beat.

“We loved the extreme integration with Active Directory. We didn’t have to import our Active Directory into some other server or do anything weird, like some other solutions wanted. We were able to use the Active Directory objects we already had. It was so easy to move everything over. And we liked being able to associate multiple drivers to one printer object in PrinterLogic,” Thompson says, noting that those multiple drivers were the source of spooler crashes and other ongoing printing problems.

With PrinterLogic, the city’s print environment hasn’t only eliminated its troublesome print servers, either. It’s also gained valuable functionality along with unprecedented ease of use for admins as well as end users.

Challenge #3—Decreasing the Number of Print-Related IT Calls

End users didn’t experience the administrative problems that Thompson and Kenyon did. They saw another side of print management—one in which printer installation was unpredictable and confusing, and clicking “Print” was never quite as straightforward and trouble-free as it should have been.

“They always had to go through a big long list of printers and figure out which one was the one they needed,” says Kenyon. If the end user installed the wrong printer or the print job failed, they would then call the helpdesk—a situation that was far more common than the IT staff cared for.

“I constantly had to manage calls about this printer not working again or the fact that we upgraded a driver and now all the printers on this or that printer server were gone,” Thompson says. “We got to a point where we just wanted anything to decrease the number of calls from end users with issues and questions.”

Solution

On account of PrinterLogic’s tight Active Directory integration, the IT staff was able to dynamically deploy specific printers to end users based on their IP segment.

“By isolating the number of printers a user sees based on their physical location, they’re able to identify the printers in their area more easily and install them. PrinterLogic’s self-service portal provides our users with an easy, understandable interface to do what they need to do for their printing,” says Kenyon.

Here, too, Thompson estimates that the number of print-related calls to the helpdesk has dropped by as much as 75%.

“Based on what I’ve seen, call volume has been substantially reduced—much more than half, possibly three-quarters,” she says. “I don’t have to get bogged down with printers and calls on a day-to-day basis anymore. So these days it’s more about print management, not issue management.”

Conclusion and Savings Summary

With estimated 75% reductions in both time spent on print management and print-related helpdesk calls, the City of Garland is already seeing ROI from PrinterLogic—which, as they note, was more affordably priced than less capable competing solutions from the outset.

“It’s a very friendly product—user friendly, printer friendly,” says Kenyon. “And it’s incredibly cost effective.”

“PrinterLogic has saved a lot of time,” adds Thompson. “I have IT staff from other cities that call me for references. They say, ‘I heard you have PrinterLogic. How’s it working out?’ I just tell them, ‘Buy it! It will make your printing life so much easier.’ The ease of administration has really won me over. In all our future projects, PrinterLogic is definitely coming along for the ride.”

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