



I D C M A R K E T S P O T L I G H T

Simplify IT and Maximize Resources with a One-Stop Solution to Print and PC Services

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Introduction

The growth of enterprise mobility has placed immense pressure on IT budgets and resources, as IT strategies have had to rapidly evolve in the last decade to meet the challenges of the new multi-device, multi-platform user. A growing fleet of devices attached to the company network meant a substantial leap in the number of devices IT had to secure, support, and manage. IDC asserts that this challenge will only intensify in the coming decade. However, many IT decision makers need look no further than their print strategy to find a potential solution.

For years, organizations across a broad range of business sectors have been outsourcing the ongoing management of their print and document infrastructure to third-party service providers. By adopting a managed print services (MPS) solution, these companies have realized significant cost and productivity advantages through the optimization of their imaging and printing infrastructure and document-intensive business processes.

The desire to streamline business operations and squeeze any unnecessary expenses out of the IT budget has contributed greatly to the popularity of MPS. Even so, many of these same organizations could be ignoring opportunities for further optimization by contracting with their MPS provider to outsource the procurement and ongoing management of other IT devices and services. Some MPS providers now offer Device as a Service (DaaS) solutions as part of their overall managed services portfolio.

The emergence of DaaS as an IT model for corporate PCs, smartphones, tablets, and other IT devices is beginning to take hold. IDC's research into the space shows strong interest in DaaS across industries and company sizes. Outsourcing device procurement, management, and end-of-life services has the potential to decrease complexity and cost, freeing up IT organizations to focus on other key initiatives, such as security and digital transformation.

Consistencies in Service Value

The value proposition for DaaS will be very familiar to those organizations already engaged in managed print services. Like MPS, DaaS is a one-stop solution that combines the procurement of devices — in this case, multi-OS devices, from PCs to mobiles — and accessories with device management, lifecycle services, and other value-added capabilities under a unified contract based on a monthly billing structure. In this way, businesses can rightly size and optimize IT device deployment, maintain access to state-of-the-art technology, and lower IT costs.

Businesses can realize financial benefits both in terms of equipment and labor costs. A one-size-fits-all approach to device deployments is no longer good enough in today's competitive environment. Employees expect IT to offer a range of products, from smartphones to tablets to PCs and printers, which help employees get work done when and where they want. Keeping this increasingly diverse stable of hardware secure and up-to-date is a key component of productivity, but it can require a high level of engagement from IT. A DaaS solution can streamline these processes, as well as dramatically reduce IT workloads associated with the ongoing maintenance and management of devices, giving them more opportunity to deliver strategic impact.

When IDC recently surveyed IT professionals, respondents said that on average 22% of their IT budgets went towards procurement, deployment, and management of end user devices and that they spent 14% of their time on device management alone. In the same survey, 50% of respondents believed they spent too much time procuring and managing devices and that resources tied up in device management could better serve other IT initiatives. For example, 63% said that resources drained by device management could be reallocated toward projects that could help strengthen their organization's security. For IT decision makers who share in these sentiments, DaaS can free up IT resources by streamlining and shifting the rigors of device management to an external partner. Indeed, reduction of IT workload was the leading benefit current adopters of DaaS perceived in the survey.

As is the case with MPS, a good DaaS solution can provide organizations with keen insight into operational costs to help manage total cost of ownership while moving towards a predictable monthly contract rate. Because the DaaS contract can be tailored to meet specific business requirements, overhead and labor costs can be reduced dramatically. Consequently, combining MPS and DaaS with one vendor could help organizations streamline a significant portion of their IT spend and efforts into one managed service agreement with a predictable cost model, reducing IT purchasing complexity.

Consistencies in Device Management

A good DaaS solution can also provide benefits like MPS in areas of device management. Reducing redundancies to optimize device deployment is important, but services around the ongoing management of devices can improve uptime and boost worker productivity, by identifying, predicting, and addressing issues on devices before they become a problem.

Your service provider can perform a current state assessment to better understand the existing environment and make recommendations for future optimization. Services to install devices and applications, apply labels and tags, and configure machines for specific users can save time and lead to faster employee onboarding. Other value-add services can address everything from logistics, data migration, or other professional services. With a DaaS solution, your IT devices are always current and optimized for their intended applications.

Meanwhile, the service provider can proactively collect and analyze usage data from devices deployed throughout the organization. Having a single vendor to manage both your PC and print devices provides a deeper level of integration, with the ability to provide business intelligence and actionable analytics across all peripherals. The ability to leverage data analytics to drive better business outcomes is a strategic advantage for any organization.

The concept of DaaS is relatively new, and as such there are at present no comprehensive, long-term return on investments studies to validate actual cost savings. However, during the survey, the overwhelming sentiment was that DaaS was already saving their companies money. On average, current adopters of DaaS estimated that DaaS will help them save as much as 25% on devices when factoring in procurement and contract costs, labor savings, and productivity gains.

Consistencies in Security

IT security is a top priority and every organization is actively pursuing strategies to safeguard business-critical information and avoid a major security breach. In an IDC survey of U.S. commercial IT buyers, respondents rated security as their top priority, ahead of transitioning to Windows 10 and extending hardware lifecycles. Most tech-savvy organizations have prioritized security initiatives focused on issues such as protecting the network from outside attacks, securing network devices, managing access to connected devices, and preventing the disclosure of confidential data. Still, with malicious black hat activity intensifying every day, keeping a growing fleet of end-user devices secure (including employee-owned devices), can prove challenging.

Additionally, most businesses fail to recognize the security vulnerabilities associated with their existing print and document environment. At the heart of this issue is the role of the smart MFP, which has become an intelligent business processing hub that serves as an on- and off-ramp to business information, whether it is stored in the device, on the corporate network, on paper, or in the cloud. The challenges associated with print and document security are easily identified, but developing a secure print strategy has proven difficult for many businesses.

A single service provider that is managing both the IT and print infrastructure is uniquely positioned to help businesses deploy an integrated security strategy aimed at protecting both devices and content. Securing the print and document infrastructure within the context of an overall IT strategy is key.

Benefits to Lifecycle Management

When surveyed regarding their companies' device life-cycle practices, >55% of respondents said that at least some improvement is needed, with the majority of survey takers saying that improvements are due across device procurement, deployment, optimization, maintenance, and disposal. DaaS vendors who offer lifecycle services can help IT managers shore up inefficiencies in their entire end-user device chain and can even help cut down device refresh cycles themselves.

In the survey, 78% of respondents said that devices were a critical part of the employee experience. Yet, extending hardware lifecycles remains a top-three priority for most organizations surveyed. A new economic reality of the changing corporate IT environment is the crowding of IT budgets and resources in lieu of new hardware, software, and services IT managers must support. Consequently, IDC maintains that, even though most IT managers understand the importance of devices, the urgency of device refreshes has been suppressed in favor of IT strategies that lengthen the useful lives of purchased assets.

Enter DaaS, which can help shorten refresh cycles in three ways. First, potential cost reductions in lieu of bundling across hardware, software, and services could free up budgets to refresh fleets at a faster cadence. Second, predictability of the DaaS cost model could offer financial flexibilities that help many IT buyers better strategize their refresh practices. Last, but perhaps most importantly, the right DaaS partner should be able to help in assessing the most prudent refresh strategy for a company while potentially baking in a more regular refresh cadence into the agreement. Businesses could also work closely with the service provider to alternate and coordinate refresh cycles for PCs and printers, to better manage IT expenses and further reduce the impact on individual IT budgets.

For IT managers that understand the importance of devices to the corporate IT design, but feel that refreshing fleets of them is becoming increasingly cumbersome, DaaS could help get overdue device refreshes back on track. In a survey of current adopters of PCaaS (a subset of DaaS centered around PCs) in the U.S., respondents on average expected PCaaS to shorten their typical refresh rate by nearly seven months.

Benefits of a Single-Source Provider

Along with those already described, there are several advantages gained from partnering with a single provider for both your print and PC services. First, compatibility issues can be dramatically reduced. The vendor's hardware platforms are designed to work together, which means there will be significantly fewer problems between computing devices and printers. This can be particularly important when it comes to issues such as device configuration, solutions support, and cross-application features.

But perhaps the greatest advantage comes in the form of improved business metrics. Working with a single provider for PC and print services means you will have a unified service delivery model, with a single point of contact for issues such as service and support. In a multi-vendor environment, time is often wasted trying to locate the necessary resources to solve even the simplest of problems. Plus, it's not uncommon to have multiple vendors providing cost-saving measures in just their area of expertise, whereas a single provider can help identify and prioritize business process/fleet improvements across both platforms. Finally, having one vendor that can service both the device and print infrastructures potentially leverages a wider array of onsite resources that can address technical issues as they arise.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The rising complexities of the new IT environment means a new normative economics for IT managers. Device strategies that have lingered from the traditional PC-server era could prove untenable with the continued growth of the multi-modal, multi-device, multi-platform employee. IT managers already spend too much time on device management alone – resources that could be diverted towards other more strategic initiatives.

An integrated DaaS-MPS approach could also deliver strong non-pecuniary benefits as well by accelerating the refresh cadences of devices and printers. Deploying newer and better devices into your employees' hands faster could lead to higher levels of user satisfaction and gains in aggregate productivity. Additionally, churning out older devices for newer technologies at a faster pace can help shore up security where external threats seek even the smallest of vulnerabilities in a company's data chain of command. As such, IT managers should look towards MPS and DaaS and assess if they could tap into the following benefits:

- Cost reductions in lieu of bundling hardware, software, and services
- Optimization of device and print operations
- Improvement to lifecycle management practices of devices and printers
- Accelerated refresh cadence for devices and printers
- Strengthened security of data chain of command

Organizations already under a managed print services engagement should consider whether their current service provider is equipped to offer IT outsourcing or other Device as a Service programs. Engage your current provider in conversations around extending the value proposition of MPS into other areas of the IT infrastructure.

Meanwhile, those businesses considering MPS for the first time should seek out service providers with core competencies for delivering both print and IT outsourcing services. Even among those who do, it's important to look closely at what is on offer.

For IT managers looking for the right DaaS and MPS partner, we suggest assessing the following:

- Does the company have the capabilities to provide full offerings across DaaS and MPS?
- What tools does the company offer to accurately assess the current print and document infrastructure?
- Does the company offer cost accounting and measurement tools to provide deep visibility into print spend?
- Is the provider equipped with the necessary solutions and professional services expertise to address a broad range of business-critical issues around print and device management, including the ability to manage multi-brand environments?
- Does the company offer solutions and services to address broader print infrastructure issues, including content management, workflow automation, mobile integration, print and document security, regulatory compliance, and sustainability?
- How well can the provider integrate within your existing print and device infrastructure?
- Does the company provide a wide range of hardware including smartphones, tablets and PCs?
- Does it offer DaaS services on existing hardware, even if that hardware is from another vendor?
- Can it support multiple operating systems?
- What are the contract lengths and terms?
- How seriously does the vendor take security, especially when it comes time to replace aging hardware?
- Does the company take a holistic view of security, with an integrated offering that considers vulnerabilities in both PC and print infrastructure?

Consolidating print and PC services under a single vendor can reduce IT costs, drive significant operational benefits, and provide the business intelligence needed to produce real workforce transformation.

A B O U T T H I S P U B L I C A T I O N

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