Printing in Government

A White Paper

How Can Print Management Dashboards Help to Address the Print Challenges in Government?

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Introduction

In 2022 the UK Government published its Digital Strategy [1] for digital transformation within central government across different departments.
The aim of the strategy is to achieve digital transformation in 6 key areas [2]:

1. Transformed public services.
2. One login for access e.g. UK Government Gateway to access all services with a single login.
3. Better Data to Power Decision Making – using the right data to build more efficient and effective services.
4. Efficient, secure and sustainable technology – using technology that runs more efficiently and at a lower cost.
5. Digital Skills at Scale
6. A system that unlocks digital transformation

Millions of citizens interact with the government every week, for example, to register a birth or death, set up a business, or access a benefit they're entitled to such as Universal Credit. In local government too, citizens interact regularly with different departments with respect to issues such as council tax, waste collection, housing and planning.

Just as in other parts of life, those interactions are increasingly happening online but in many cases printed documents are still used extensively. Digital transformation is already recognised in the private sector as a key driver of efficiency, but the public sector has not yet fully harnessed its potential across all government departments.

Private companies have reduced costs, sped up delivery times and improved user experience by focusing on the end-to-end digital transformation of services, using agile, product-centric ways of working and investing in modern technology and systems.

How Does Printing Fit into a Digital Strategy?

The printing of paper documents is still prevalent in many government departments. Consider simple examples such as the number of Council Tax bills that are sent out to residents each year across the country, or the Electoral Roll forms that every household receives.

However, with the adoption of new digital technologies, many departments should start to see a reduction in print volumes. As this transformation takes place, there is a need to better understand printing costs and volumes to ensure the correct print infrastructure is in place, and that print and records management are properly in place.

Printing in Government - The Challenges

According to the Office for National Statistics, in March 2022 there was an 'estimated 5.74 million employees in the public sector, a rise of 20,000 compared with December 2021.' [3] This is a substantial increase in employees, which undoubtedly puts a strain on printing services and related IT budgets. Government IT department budgets have always been under pressure, but even more so in the current economic climate.

However, when we look into the finer details of printing costs, we can identify some areas for cost savings, along with delivering a more streamlined and efficient service to citizens.

To summarise, here are the main pain points around print within Government departments:

1. High Costs - how can you see who are expensive users and reduce the cost of printing per employee?

2. Environment - how can you help to reduce print waste and understand the environmental impact of printing?

3. User Volume - how can you gain insight into what employees are printing and at what volume?

4. Behaviour - how can we identify certain printing patterns in employees?
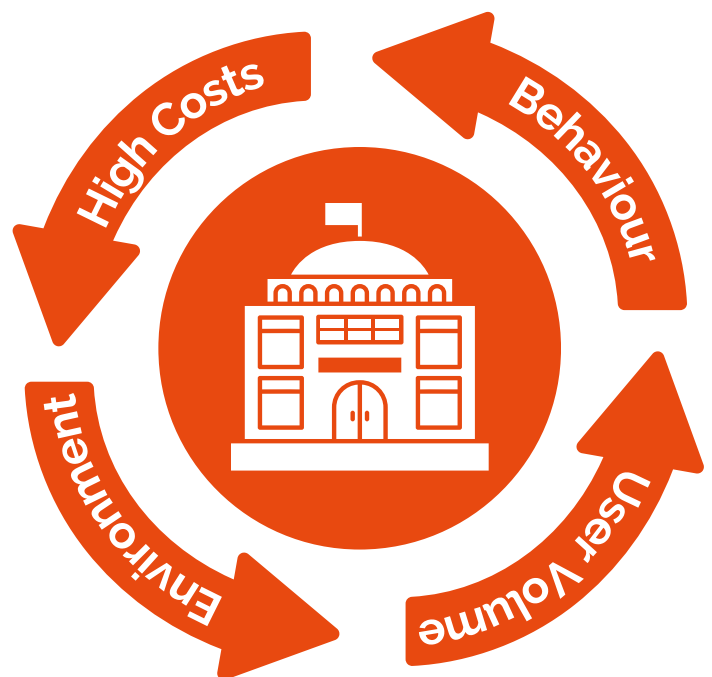
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By working out what employees are printing, government and public sector establishments should be able to monitor employee print behaviour and their printing cycles.

Print Management software systems have been designed to encourage users to print in a cost-effective way, for example by using print rules to manage duplex and mono/colour choices, and by ensuring printed documents are only released when the user requests them to avoid print wastage.

Over recent years, printing has grown in volume and has become a focus for Heads of IT, as they seek to keep costs down. The scale of the industry is illustrateed by the fact that in 2017, it was reported that the UK print sector had a turnover of £13.8 billion, and was the world's fifth-largest producer of printed products. [4]

In 2019, it was recorded by Wokingham Borough Council that around 12,000 pages were printed each month, meaning that there was an average of 140,000 pages being printed a year. In addition to this, £180,000 was spent on printers and consumables, with a further £80,000 spent on their MFDs and consumables. [5] With all these costs, this brought their total to £260,000 a year (spent on devices, paper and ink.)

Then in 2020 we saw the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the country in lockdown, were we right to assume that printing volumes would decrease? Despit this, even throughout the pandemic, it was reported that authorities across the UK spent £41,610,366 on printing costs between April 2020 and February 2021.[6]

Furthermore, in 2021, it was reported that Nottingham County Council had spent more than £850,000 in 10 months on printing costs.[7] This equates to an average of nearly 3000 pages being printed every day.

If we look at the country as a whole, with 24 county councils, 36 metropolitan boroughs, 59 Unitary Councils and 33 London Boroughs – that's 152 local government bodies – if each one spent around £1m on printing each year – that equates to a £152m spend on print alone. Then consider the costs of printing from Central Government departments too and we can see that printing costs are a considerable spend from the public purse.

What is the Solution?

Government bodies need to really understand their print / copy/scan activity otherwise they run the risk of unmanaged volumes and mounting costs.

IT leaders in Government face the following challenges around print management:

» There are printing related cost savings and environmental targets to hit but no effective way to identify key issues.

» Too much manpower is being spent exporting reports when this valuable time can be better spent elsewhere – manually distributing reports to key departments on their print behaviour is both time consuming and inefficient.

» They have access to a wealth of print management information, but critical Information is only available in static reports which are difficult to analyse and identifying key trends of what applications people are printing from is difficult.

» They wish to rationalise their print estate, but it is difficult to analyse the use patterns for different users and departments, in particular high-volume users.

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Where Do Intuitive Print Management Dashboards Add Value?

There is obviously a need to have a Management Information (Business Intelligence) solution that sits over the top of traditional Print Management software.

However, many traditional Business Intelligence toolsets take months or years to deliver, with traditional Business Intelligence implementations being lengthy projects, requiring the specialist skills of BI knowledge workers.

Intuitive Business Intelligence's approach of providing embedded Data Analytics and Dashboards which are pre-integrated with leading Print Management solutions means that government bodies can quickly increase the value of the data held in their systems without needing specialist technical resources in-house.

Digital Transformation Challenges

Paper exists because information needs to be shared, and until organisations have all their data sources linked, the printed document will still be an API between systems and people. Aiming to go paperless will not solve the problem organisations have with handling documents. Documents are critical and hold vast amounts of useful information.

One of the key challenges for organisations is to identify areas for digital transformation. It might seem obvious, but we consider that having a better understanding of current print/scan/copy activity can be a helpful guide.

Intuitive for PaperCut has already been successfully implemented in a number of Government organisations. As Ian Walker, Account Lead, Central Government at Konica Minolta UK explains:

> What we find is a lack of visibility around print analytics within the Government Sector, and Intuitive Business Intelligence helps to overcome this. Intuitive BI highlights where documents are being printed and scanned, allowing for a reduction in costs and making more effective use of existing print infrastructure.

Use Case Example

Local Government Authority

Business Issue:

- Had implemented print management dashboards, to display data by department
- Data was manually converted to cost centre codes
- Manual upload into finance system for accurate cross-charging

Solution:

- Use PaperCut Shared Accounts, transferring data automatically to finance system, ready for cross charging
- Further engagement with the digital transformation team to look at opportunities within print.

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How Can Print Analytics Help?

Here are some of the initial key questions that Print Management dashboards can answer:

1. Which devices are being over and underutilised across the entire organisation?

2. How is print demand being generated across the office – and can we analyse by staff members, department and application to enable cross-charging to be implemented?

3. How can we manage our print costs down by using more efficient devices?

4. Can we see some early insight into volume trends for different parts of the organisation?

5. How are different departments/teams using our print estate?

6. Where are the print hotspots across the entire organisation?

7. How do volumes compare for colour/mono, simplex/duplex, print/scan?

8. Are we achieving our environmental targets for reducing print usage?

9. Are there peak scanning months/departments/users that would help us to identify processes that could be digitised?

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Critical Success Factors

In our experience, the critical success factors for print management dashboards are:

Personalisation:
Is the data presented relevant to that user and quickly shows them what they need to know, without having to plough through pages of irrelevant content?

Data Enhancement:
is the user provided with more than "raw" data – for example rather than just reporting actual numbers, are these compared against targets, forecasts or historic trends?
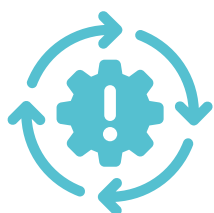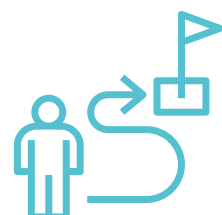
Actionable Information:
does the data presented allow the user to take action to correct issues quickly?

Seamless:
Is the user able to access the information wherever they are (for example on a tablet or phone in a departmental or budgetary review meeting?)

Fit for Purpose:
Does the data answer the business questions relevant to that user?

The Benefits of Print Analytics

Print analytics should deliver the following key benefits:

✓ **Simple to Use:** to encourage user adoption across the organisation

✓ **Designed:** to make data interaction easy for end users without any technical input required

✓ **Navigation:** provide new ways of navigating through the data, simplifying the user journey for more powerful analytics

✓ **Fit for Purpose:** the dashboards should be pre-designed to answer specific questions - in this case, focused on print usage/patterns and costs across different users and departments

✓ **Powerful:** the dashboards should be able to bring in external data from a range of systems for more powerful analysis e.g., costs against budget and trends over time

✓ **Quick:** all dashboards should be fast to build and deploy. Getting rid of the endless user waits for new reports to be developed by overstretched in-house IT teams

✓ **Customisable:** provide complete control over the look and feel of the user interface with colours and formats that match the organisation branding and style

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About Intuitive Dashboards

Through our global network of Partners and Authorised Solution Centres, we deliver a suite of pre-built dashboard solutions across key business areas – print, finance, human resources and many more process areas. Intuitive dashboards can be used to visualise data that is held in any business application such as:

Intuitive for Print Management

Dashboards that work with leading print management systems (such as PaperCut MF and SafeQ) to help answer key questions and manage print costs whilst educating users about the environmental impact of their printing.

Intuitive for Accounts Payable

Dashboards to help visualise the Accounts Payable Automation process:
- Visualise Invoices in Process and spot bottlenecks
- Analyse Supplier Performance in order to remove invoice issues
- Evaluate Staff Performance and identify any training needs or issues

Bespoke Dashboards

We work with a number of specialist software partners who are leaders in their fields to deliver tailored, relevant dashboards that provide real added value.

Expert data management dashboards answer common business questions and are pre-integrated with our partners' software solutions. These are often delivered as out-of-the-box solutions, with the option for them to be customised and enhanced for individual clients.

For more details visit: https://www.weareintuitive.com/bespoke-solutions/

About Intuitive

Intuitive is a global provider of Data Visualisation Tools for Application Developers and Software Resellers. Formed by a team of highly experienced entrepreneurs and software developers the aim of Intuitive BI from the outset was to create a different type of BI solution. The team recognised that for Business Intelligence to deliver, companies needed easy to use tools that could be deployed to all employees and beyond organisational boundaries to customers and suppliers.
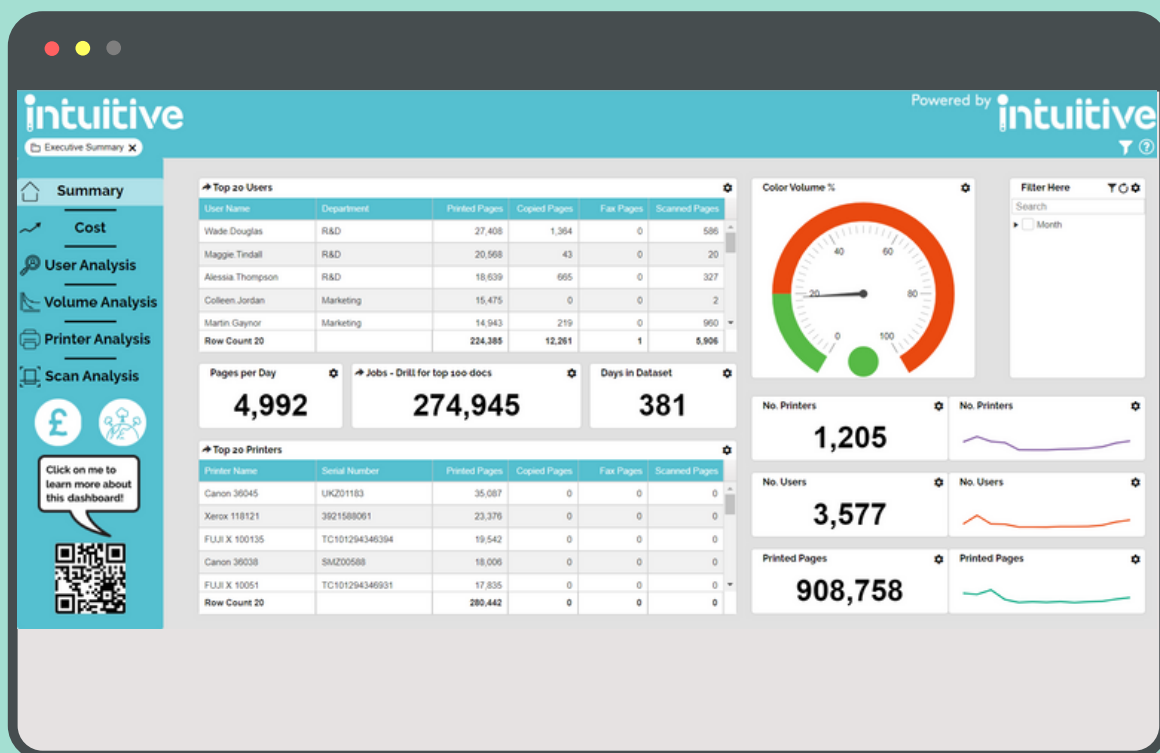
Intuitive for PaperCut MF (V3.0) Executive Summary Dashboard

Intuitive BI sells exclusively through its network of value-added partners. We work closely with our partners in specific application areas such as Print and Process Management so that data held within their applications can be made more valuable to customers.

To find a local Authorised Solution Centre or partner please get in touch, using the contact details below or visit our website: www.weareintuitive.com

Sources

- [1] UK's Digital Strategy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- [2] https://youtu.be/J9YrX7q81qU
- [3] Public sector employment, UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
- [4] BPIF | Industry News (britishprint.com)
- [5] REVEALED: How much councils spent on printing last year | Bracknell News
- [6] Nottinghamshire County Council printing costs exceed £850k in less than a year - Nottinghamshire Live (nottinghampost.com)
- [7] Nottinghamshire County Council printing costs exceed £850k in less than a year - Nottinghamshire Live (nottinghampost.com)