



THE TAMING OF THE APE

A Case Study in Managed Print Services at Southern Nazarene University

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While necessity is the mother of invention, sometimes intervention is necessary for inventions — like copiers and printers. Such was the case at Southern Nazarene University. This private university, situated just outside Oklahoma City, in the small town of Bethany, has an undergraduate population of more than 1,600. Spread over its 200-acre campus was lots of technology — lots of printing technology. Too much, in fact.

As often technology leaves people frustrated, so did all of this overabundance of printers — a fact to which Chichi Frelander, who handles the university's information technology matters, can attest.

So, what was the issue?

"I call it the ape — which stands for anarchistic printing environment," she said, speaking of the school's 333 printers across campus. This armada of ink and toner slingers had no standard model, no standard purchasing and no standard support.

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Chichi Frelander, SNU
Network Coordinator

"My network administrators and network technicians were becoming very frustrated with IT printing support calls — like adding surprise printers to the network or finding drivers and software to install on each machine."

The university's chief financial officer, Scott Strawn, said sometimes the printing situation could make him take a bat to a printer — an act otherwise known as "going 'Office Space.'"

"It was so completely out of control and so many different people purchasing things, that it was very difficult to even get a hard figure on what we were actually spending," he said, saying how eventually printer cartridges themselves became a currency. He said university staff would buy cartridges, store multiple stacks of them, as well as cases and cases of paper. It was time for a change — so that is where R.K. Black stepped in. Frelander said the company, already having had a contract with the university for some multi-function printers, for some years had been talking with the university encouraging the school to standardize the rest of its printers and outsource its support to tame the print environment.

R.K. Black's district sales manager Gary Hackett who was the one who had been speaking with Frelander

and Strawn about implementing a managed print solution when the conversation turned to Bresee Hall, the university's administrative building. The hall had 56 printers for 54 workers.

"They were doing really one-to-one — they had pretty much one printer to one associate in every office," said Hackett.

Once SNU gave R.K. Black the permission to carry out a study, he and Chris Robertson, the company's analyst and a SNU alumnus, performed a facility walk-through during which they touched every printing device, mapping their locations and determining the best solution for the APE-like environment. Afterward, Hackett presented the university with a managed print service plan that reduced the number of the printers on campus from 333 to 118 — a two-thirds cut, something Frelander really liked.

"This was very appealing to us. This is what we wanted to do," said Frelander. It was so attractive, the university quickly accepted and implemented the plan and the changes became readily apparent

Bresee Hall saw the most improvement, the number of its printers slashed from 56 printers to 18 strategically placed printers. But not only this, with the installation of the new devices and capabilities, students and staff acquired a new capability with badge-based FollowMe printing technology to print from their laptops or computers to any printer on campus available to them — whether that was the dorm, lab, office or library.

With the technology, if students decided not to release a print job, the job would not print, saving the school money in toner and paper.

"For one month alone, there were 17 reams of print jobs that did not get released," said Frelander. "So that was quite a savings. Otherwise that paper would have wound up in the trash and in the recycle bin and would have been just a waste."

Hackett said the cost savings mentioned here were significant, those 17 reams amounting to about \$800 spared, not to mention the trees and other resources saved.

"I think at the end of the day ... you can just tell that first of all, we know where we are printing," said Strawn describing the advantages of the new managed print service. "We've already begun to track (our printing). I know who's printing what. I know where my large print areas are. I know who the large print users are. We know when things ebb and flow.

"So from a tracking perspective, even five, six months in, I feel like we can project and think about and plan for when expenses are going to happen. I know we've got a good deal in terms of the toner and the support and the devices," he continued, saying he doesn't have associates buying printers of questionable quality or having to buy printers because they are often cheaper than cartridges.

"So things are significantly better."

If your print environment is leaving you frustrated, it's time to consider managed print services.

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