Powerful printer management increasingly important in hospitals

steadyPRINT is the solution

Printing in hospitals is often related to considerable problems and a high expenditure of time. Staff memebers who often change their location in the course of the day have to log off the system and log in again in order to be able to use the printer on the respective ward. Moreover, the administrators have to change the UNC path and store it for all users each time the printers themselves are modified.
With steadyPRINT, hospital employees can use the nearest printer, no matter where they are, while IT administrators can manage the IT environment via a single console.
Krankenhaus-IT Journal spoke with the Senior Account Manager and the Head of Development at the Siegen based manufacturer K-iS Systemhaus about a powerful printer management.

What is the significance of printer management solutions for the healthcare sector, particulary hospitals?

Marcus Bangert: The subject of printer management is a central part of the IT infrastructure and plays an important role particularly in the hospital environment, whereby grown structures, hospital mergers, heterogenous infrastructures and the large number of applications must be taken into consideration. Unfortunately, printing has moved more and more into the background due to different reasons. Without a functioning print environment, however, many wards - from patient admission to surgery - would not be able to work at all and would have to cope with an enormous amount of work combined with high costs.

Marcus Bangert: Senior Account Manager, working at the Dortmund location

With steadyPRINT you have developed a software for the administration of printers. How do you deal with the special requirements regarding printing in hospitals?

Christoph Dräger: The special requirements you mention are primarily related to the printing process from hospital information systems (HIS) - a very complex area that can only be implemented with many individual special solutions. With steadyPRINT, however, we have found a way to meet those requirements. Particularly with regard to changing users and computers, the printer assignments can easily and quickly be managed and adjusted.

Marcus Bangert: Scripts and group policies aside, the mentioned printer assignments are considerably expanded and simplified. Moreover, our own printer driver steadyPRINT VPD enables us to facilitate the printer management even for special applications. In this context, another important issue is our manufacturer independence which is especially significant in very large and heterogeneous print environments. Although many hospitals are in the process of homogenizing their print environment, our experiences have shown that only in combination with steadyPRINT a real „printing strategy" can be developed. Currently we are practically implementing exactly this approach - in cooperation with our strategic partner Triumph Adler - in many projects.

It is our goal to provide the responsible administrators with a central and intuitive GUI in order to considerably reduce the administrative effort. The fact that we somehow „refine" the Windows print servers with further functionalities and possibilities, we first enable the administrator to become the master of the print environment.

As you correctly mentioned before, the printer management within HIS is relatively complex. What added value does steadyPRINT offer here?

Marcus Bangert: An important point is the issue of reliability. Many hospital information systems cannot compensate for a print server failure. Cluster solutions are expensive and require extensive maintenance. With our vName technology, we are able to guarantee trouble-free printing without any system downtime. The end user will not even notice the failure. Even print server migrations can easily be performed with steadyPRINT and only take one or two days instead of several weeks.

Christoph Dräger: Head of Development working at the Siegen headquarter

Christoph Dräger: Moreover, the complex printer management is shifted from the HIS to the clearly structured steadyPRINT Center guarant eeing a much more flexible handling. Logical printers are created in the background and can be freely named. These printers conceal user-, group or device-specific assignments with the respective routing to the correct physical printer. The actual printer management is no longer one within the HIS but in steadyPRINT. Location based assignments to IP areas are also of crucial importance for hospitals. In this way, the staff – no matter where the employees are located – is able to print without any problems and without a new login.

It seems as if steadyPRINT is a very powerful solution. How complex is the implementation of the software?

Christoph Dräger: In general, the configuration of steadyPRINT only takes a few hours. Due to the very intuitive handling, even end users will get started quickly. A clear advantage is that no software or hardware needs to be acquired. Normally, the infrastructure offers everything that is needed for the implementation. We are close to the release of the new version 7.5, which provides several new features: from print templates and cost centers to rule-based printing and multi-admin management.

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