

## How the Desk Was Won



The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Canadian businesses to innovate and adapt to a “new normal”, with lots of information being compiled in an attempt to understand the vast and varied effects the pandemic has had on the global economy. Here is a sobering statistic:

According to Statistics Canada, a grand total of 6.8 million people are now working out of a home office... or nearly 40 per cent of Canada’s workforce!

### **Bring Home Office Printing**

Although we can’t predict the future, many people believe the work-from-home trend will continue in some form after the pandemic has ended, which indicates that the modern workplace is changing permanently.

This has both employers and employees asking difficult questions about how best we can adapt.

A cottage industry of work-from-home webinars, blogs, and self-help articles have sprung up identifying the multitude of ways to cope and manage this transition both technologically and mentally. Throughout the many surveys and discussions however, there is one aspect of work life for which there is little information.....where do I print?

Prior to the pandemic, billions of pages were printed at offices and home businesses across Canada every year. In 2019, WBM alone managed over 400 million pages; approximately 33 million pages per month. But in March of 2020, as expected, we saw a massive drop in pages printed.

So where did they go? How are we printing? Is a home printer secure? Who pays for home printing? How do we incorporate the lessons learned during the pandemic? And for many of us the question must also be asked; did we ever really need to print?

## QUESTIONS / ANSWERS / SOLUTIONS

The details will often be specific to each workplace and employee, but there's no doubt that working from home provides an opportunity for every organization to analyze a cost center that is almost certainly incurring waste, and to prevent a scenario where your employees return to unnecessary print habits.

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### Question

How are we printing now?

### Answer

The most likely answers are; on our own home printers, on a machine provided by our employer (at the office or provided at home), or on a public device (Staples, Shoppers Drug Mart, COOP, etc).

- **HOME PRINTERS** and the toner to run them, is likely being purchased directly from an office supply store. These machines were designed to print very low volumes, and they do so at a tremendously high cost per page. Also, there are no replacement parts available, so if they malfunction or break then you must purchase a new machine. Not to mention the environmental mess created by these disposable printers and their toner/ink cartridges.
- **A PUBLIC DEVICE** has a very high potential for viral contamination, and even when the pandemic is over, these machines print at an even higher cost per page than the average home printer.
- **AN EMPLOYER-PROVIDED MACHINE** is the ideal option, especially if they can provide safe onsite access to the workplace. This prevents the temptation for unnecessary print jobs at home by simply limiting access. A very good case must be made prior to providing home printing devices.

### Solution

Ideally, any critical home printing is being done on a machine brought from your office, that is managed as part of your entire office fleet, or through onsite access to a machine at the office.

- **MANY ORGANIZATIONS** have been able to provide onsite access to office printers in order to print paychecks and other critical workflows that utilize specific printers.
- This will be the lowest cost option and will prevent unnecessary printer purchases, and the subsequent expense reports.
- **SOME COMPANIES** have purchased home printers for those who need them.
- This provides convenience but can introduce an unmanaged cost.
- It leaves the company with an extra machine when it's time to return to the office. It's likely that those home printers will come back to the office after the pandemic, creating a long-term cost issue.

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### Question

Is my home printer secure?

## Answer

No, it is not secure.

- While it seems more secure to have a printer on your desk or in your home, the truth is that most of us will be connecting through our home wifi which is only as secure as your own antivirus software.
- Even a personal desktop printer in your office at work is significantly less secure than the office photocopier, which has a constantly overwriting hard drive and network security features.
- In addition, if your company has accepted the high probability of a data breach through unsecured printers/copiers, then you will also have some level of secure, or locked print added to the copier's inherent security features.
- All this makes the desktop printer a blight on any corporate print fleet. They print at 2 and 3 times the cost of a workgroup copier, destroy the environment, and contribute to unnecessary and unsecured print jobs floating around the office.

## Solution

Require employees to justify the need for home printers and look for an onsite alternative wherever possible.

- Only allow absolutely critical workflows to be printed.
  - Vette print access and printer requests through your Managed Print Provider or an organizational manager who understands how to prevent unnecessary print costs.
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## Question

Who pays for my home printing?

## Answer

Most likely you do.

- If you're printing from your own machine, then obviously you will order and pay for the toner initially.
- It's likely that a large percentage of these costs will be passed on to the employer via expense reports and personal/departmental budgets, but there is also the chance that the expenses are not approved and the cost falls back to your household.

## Solution

Employers should be closely monitoring expense reports anyway, but keeping record of the expenses issued for ink/toner during the pandemic will provide transparency into who really needs to print and how much they print.

- A good Managed Print Provider can analyze your ink/toner expense reports and provide valuable metrics around cost and volume.
  - This information can be used to communicate a new print strategy to your end users and provide insight into the cost and environmental impact of their print habits.
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## Question

Did we ever need to print?

## Answer

Probably not.

## Solution

Stop printing.

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## Question

How does an organization incorporate the lessons learned during the pandemic?

## Answer

There are many strategies for print management available. Implementing them and gaining end user adoption is often the challenge. A post-pandemic strategy meeting with your Managed Print Provider will allow you to create an effective roadmap, which should include discussions on the following:

- **ARE WE TRACKING** all levels of print workflow from the end user to the company as a whole? If you don't have the means to do this, then you need to investigate a Managed Print solution. It will open numerous opportunities for cost reduction.
- **REVIEW YOUR PRINT** volumes pre and post pandemic. Again, if you don't have the means to do this then you are leaving a huge cost centre unchecked.
- **COMPILE EXPENSE REPORTS** received for all toner, ink, and printers during the work from home period.
- **SURVEY YOUR EMPLOYEES** to find out how their print was affected while working from home.
- **ASSESS** the survey results, expense reports, and volumes and create a plan for decisive, company-wide action to reduce the opportunities for unnecessary print.
- **REMOVE DESKTOP PRINTERS.** There should be a select few cases where a desktop printer is required.
- **COMMUNICATE** the plan to end users and conduct onsite assessments with each department to determine workflow requirements and identify desktop printers for removal.
- **LOCK OUT COLOUR** printing for users who don't require it – colour printing is often 2-3 times more expensive than black and white, so even if it's a low percentage of a company's total volume, it's still the bulk of your print costs.
- **SECURE PRINT** authentication – adding secure card-tap authentication not only adds a critical level of security to corporate document handling, but by requiring the user to authenticate a card/fob at the device in order to release their print jobs, it also results in significant reductions in overall print volume.
- **RULES BASED PRINTING** adds desktop alerts that pop up when users send print jobs, instructing them to print in black and white or send to a lower cost device.

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## Bring Home Office Printing

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*Cory began with WBM in 2010 full time working in outside sales. Since then, his career has taken him into Enterprise print management, where he's very proud to currently manage and oversee the print fleets for 5 large enterprises across Canada. He also manages WBM's Community Relations initiatives, and is a proud member of the Board of Directors for Care and Share Saskatoon – which is a children's charity working with the inner city, or 'community' schools in the city.*

*Cory (and his dog Frankie!) is an avid fisherman and outdoorsman, and a huge Formula 1 racing fan, but concedes that his very favorite thing to do is spend time with his nieces, nephew, and son Josh.*