From Mainframe to Client Server Architecture

Moving up to new technology without compromising productivity

Challenge: Manage the Move from a Mainframe to Client Server Environment without Disrupting Ongoing Operations

When your organization’s responsibilities include producing time-sensitive property tax bills, critical correspondence and internal reporting documents, compromising your printing services procedures in any way while moving from a mainframe to client server environment is not an option. Meeting deadlines and continuing traditional mainframe printing applications is a critical success factor.

These were among the issues the staff of the Multnomah County, Oregon, Information Technology Division faced as they began the transition from a mainframe to client server platform. With print volumes averaging 800,000 pages a month and exceeding a million pages in peak months, the department had to find a way to ensure continual support for important mainframe print jobs as they updated the IT infrastructure.

“We were looking for a solution that would let us continue to use our existing print resources without having to go through the systems conversion effort typically necessary when changing print platforms. In addition,” he continues, “it was important for us to get systems and hardware support from the same vendor. This eliminated the possibility of being caught up in finger pointing among workflow, server and printer providers.”

Solution: Océ PRISMA Workflow and Océ Printers with Channel-Connect Capabilities and Multiple Data Stream Support

According to Henderson, the department considered workflow solutions and printers from Canon, IBM, Océ, Solimar and Xerox. When the evaluation was completed, Océ was the clear winner. “Of the solutions we evaluated, Océ PRISMA™ workflow management software and the Océ printers best met our needs and did what we asked,” says Henderson. “We have the channel-connect capabilities we need, we are processing the same Xerox DJDE and Metacode data streams we were processing previously without having to go through any conversion, Océ is providing 7x24 support for everything, and the entire solution came in below our budget.”

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Multnomah County initially purchased Océ PRISMAproduction™ LCDS and POD and one Océ 750 cut-sheet printer. They recently added a second Océ 750. Henderson says that Océ PRISMAproduction software and the Océ printers have exceeded their expectations, providing benefits beyond the critical mainframe channel-connect capability.

“One requirement high on our list was an open workflow architecture that would allow any type of file from any source to be processed. Océ PRISMA meets this objective and makes it possible for us to take a distributed approach to our printing as we move forward,” says Henderson. “With PRISMA, we can drive multiple printers—even non-Océ printers—within the same workflow, even if they’re in different locations. We also like knowing that we are not locked into one specific vendor’s printing products to meet our needs as we were with our previous vendor.”

**The Multnomah County Data Center Today**

Both mainframe and client server print jobs are now coming into the data center via the Océ PRISMA workflow. “Since all of our mainframe and primary client server print applications are routed through PRISMA, we have been able to maintain all of our previous mainframe functionality such as queue management control, checkpoint job restarting, accounting logs for charge-back and resource utilization,” he says. “When the mainframe eventually goes away, we will still be able to enjoy all these capabilities because Océ has designed this functionality, and more, into PRISMA.”

Before implementing the Océ PRISMA workflow, most of the data center’s print management was handled with manual processes: handwritten job tickets, materials hand-carried to the data center for production and routed manually. Now, automated processes have freed staff for other work, improved accuracy and made the flow of work through the center more efficient.

“Jobs come into the data center via network and channel-connect feeds—together with their job tickets—and are automatically routed to the Océ printers in the data center,” Henderson explains. “We have better control of our processes than we did prior to implementing PRISMA, and we are able to handle our work more efficiently with minimal operator intervention.”

**Business Benefits**

The Océ PRISMA workflow management solution and Océ 750 printers deliver reliable, cost-effective, high-quality printing to meet Multnomah County’s tight deadlines. “We are definitely saving money with the Océ solutions,” Henderson says. “The automated workflow means less time spent getting jobs from originator to finished product. We rarely have paper jams, so we spend less time clearing them and doing routine maintenance than we used to, and our Océ maintenance costs are only about one third of what they were with our previous vendor.”

Eventually, Henderson plans to be able to connect remotely located printers through the Océ PRISMA workflow. This will allow the data center to maintain centralized control of printing functions, allocate charges while adding convenience and efficiency for clients, and reduce the current expenses associated with manual distribution.