



North Mersey Health Informatics Service

# Print green and save

Health Service Procurement Review looks at how TLS (Team Logic Systems Ltd) and a number of Trusts in Merseyside have drastically reduced the environmental and financial costs of their office printing by an initial 25%-30% with potential for greater savings in the future.

Fewer than 20 per cent of businesses in Britain believe that they manage and control the cost of printing – a situation that is reflected throughout the NHS. Ian Hogan (a Project Manager with **North Mersey Health Informatics Service**) explains how the introduction of a unique software product has delivered considerable cost savings to North Mersey NHS Trusts. The software is PretonSaver™ (creator Preton Ltd), and is distributed by Team Logic in Great Britain and Ireland. North Mersey HIS has been recently **short listed for a Government Computing Green IT Award (sponsored by HP)**, a measure of the projects' success.

Consumables represent a significant item in NHS budgets. Although Trusts have made efforts to reduce costs by entering into larger purchasing agreements or using recycled cartridges. Before the introduction of PretonSaver™, there was no real drive to reduce consumption of resources. Gartner forecast that "document imaging spending is likely to increase in and after 2007 as price inducements entice users to print more and more colour pages". Organisations that fail to take control now may see their costs climb in coming years.

The North Mersey HIS wasn't actively looking for a solution, but like most organisations have long recognised the adverse impact printing volumes have on the environment and budgets. Environmental Risk/Impact Analysis undertaken by the North East Universities Purchasing Consortium gives



office consumables a risk element exceeded only by utilities – gas, electricity, oil and water. An analysis undertaken by NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency (PASA) also identifies IT in a similar manner.

Both toner and ink cartridges contain consumables and plastics based on oil. Producing cartridges creates a significant amount of carbon dioxide and many cartridges contain up to six carcinogenic chemicals. There is a limit to the number of times a cartridge can be refilled and Scottish Friends of the Earth estimates

that 75 million cartridges each year go to landfill in the UK, only beginning to degrade after 450 years, and creating a risk to water supplies.

Colour printing creates further environmental problems – up to 157 pounds of noxious waste are produced for landfill for every 100,000 pages printed. The environmental impact of office printing is therefore significant. As the largest employer in the UK, the NHS is under intense pressure to set an example on environmental and sustainability issues.

John McDonald (Sales Director for TLS) introduced PretonSaver™ to Justin Griffiths (North Mersey HIS Relationship Manager), who quickly realised that the software would be able to reduce the trusts' carbon footprint and the use of resources. PretonSaver™ provided the opportunity to better manage printer volumes, meet environmental targets and receive information regarding future purchases.

A trial was conducted in July 2007 at the Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery NHS Trust, the only specialist Neurosciences Trust in the UK. Since that successful trial, two other Trusts are fully live with the software: Mersey Care NHS Trust and Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust. The software is currently being piloted at Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust prior to full deployment, and plans are being developed for deployment at the Cardiothoracic Centre, Liverpool.

As part of the initial trial at Walton, the North Mersey HIS independently undertook a series of laboratory tests to validate the level of savings which the software claimed. The findings established that PretonSaver™ is conservative in its estimates and that the consumable savings are slightly higher than claimed.

With PretonSaver™ being completely manufacturer independent, it optimises the consumables used in printing whilst providing a fully featured print management system. A Trust can have a wealth of information on exactly who printed which document, when it was printed, to which printer, the toner coverage, the consumable cost and the savings the software has made. This information is available either in graphical dashboard summary format or more detailed configurable reports.

**PretonSaver™ has been designed for ease of installation and minimal IT resources. It requires no end-user training as the printing process remains totally transparent.**

This management information allows the existing printer fleet to be optimised, providing a potential saving of at least 10 per cent, eliminating units which are costly to run or are under utilised. The information helps to minimise hidden costs and ensure printers are located conveniently for users. In addition, the introduction of active print management and paper optimisation can decrease costs by a further 20-30 per cent by reducing the output and the paper used. PretonSaver™'s settings can be constantly tuned in order to improve higher savings.

In this first year, PretonSaver™ has been used with default settings. North Mersey HIS has constantly monitored the results and is using these figures to plan the next steps. As the computer systems at each Trust evolve, PretonSaver™ will be altered to gain the greatest savings, which will increase each year. Savings differ between Trusts due to a number of factors, for example, the balance of mono to colour printers, and the applications in use. Mersey Care NHS Trust, for example, has savings of 30 per cent because it has a higher number of mono printers than colour. The Walton Centre NHS trust has a 50/50 split of mono to colour, so has saved 25 per cent. These numbers will change as the system is optimized to increase savings still further.

Other benefits are that the figures generated by PretonSaver™ can be used to convince other Trusts of the Return on Investment for the software. At the moment, savings are calculated in percentage terms. The new version of the software shows real cash savings – the cost of consumables can be input into the system and cost savings calculated in real monetary terms – which will be of huge benefit when Trusts are considering budgets.

TLS Managing Director Ian Young stressed that PretonSaver™ has a programme of continual improvement and that the level of savings achieved by Trusts will continue to increase each year. As an example, the latest version of the software can enforce paper as well as consumable savings in excess of 50% on internal applications such as Outlook. A new filtering facility can intelligently sense on content and enforce maximum savings on internal and draft documents.

Management information is available in graphic format providing a 'dashboard' view which can be assimilated in a glance. It has the ability to drill down in detail to see exactly who has printed from which application to



what printer, together with the date and time detail. The greatest cost in office printing is recognised as the human interaction. This detail is invaluable when evaluating the optimum printing resources required if the demand on personnel is to be minimised.

PretonSaver™ has been designed for ease of installation and minimal IT resources. It requires no end-user training as the printing process remains totally transparent. Team Logic believe that the installation can comfortably fit within a Trust's purchasing procedures without a need to go to tender.

The potential savings across the NHS are enormous and in the words of one Purchasing Director the installation of PretonSaver™ was a 'no brainer'. Preton is unique and innovative, it offers an opportunity to meet purchasing targets by reducing consumption and achieve a high level of financial savings, in short it is truly a 'quick win'. ■

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