

Printing in Education

A White Paper

How Can Print Management Dashboards Help to Address the Print Challenges in Education?

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Talk to us today

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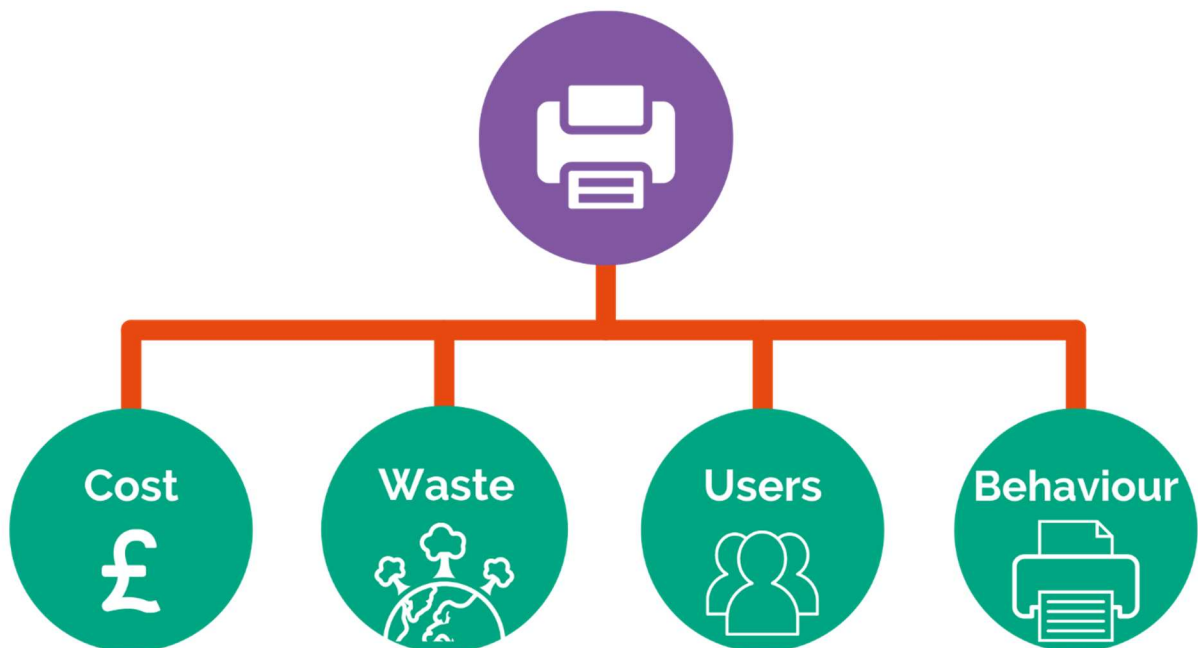
Introduction

Would you believe that education is the second most expensive public service within the UK, and printing is a legitimate service that is growing within this sector? On the 18th of August 2021, the BBC reported that 'the rate of 16–17-year-olds in full-time education had already risen to an historical high of 85% in 2020.'¹ From this information alone, we can see that printing costs for a growing number of students and staff members will have increased dramatically. More students mean more printing and more demand on precious IT budgets, with printing being one of the top 5 external spends for the IT department.

It is a well-known fact that it is 8 times more expensive to print in colour instead of black and white. What we also know, is that printing is something that can be a challenging area to monitor and track. Budget-aware schools and universities are mindful of the cost of printing, and that there can be never-ending demands for new printing supplies that can quickly break the budget. This needs to be kept in mind, especially with thousands of students attending both school and university; the costs can quickly rack up, and with many education budgets already stretched thinly, this is not ideal.

By working out what students are printing, education establishments should be able to monitor student engagement and the different ways in which they interact with the education process.

To summarise, here are the main pain points around printing that need to be targeted in education:



Cost: How can you reduce the cost of printing per student / staff member throughout school or university?

Waste: How can you help to reduce print waste and ultimately contribute towards reducing the environmental impact of printing?

¹ [Colleges need extra £570m due to rise in students - think tank - BBC News](#)

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Users: How do you gain insight into what students and staff are printing and at what volume?

Behaviour: Can we understand student printing behaviour better and link this to academic success or otherwise? Is it possible to establish if students who print more get better grades, due to the fact that they are printing information that is relevant to their chosen subject area?

The Print Management Challenge for Universities

Printing at university is something that nearly all students will do during their time studying. Berry University in Georgia, United States, say that students have to pay for their printing to 'help raise awareness of the environmental impact of paper/printing materials and associated costs which ultimately come from tuition.'²

The Popular student blog 'The Student Room', an online forum which is used by over 10 million students a month and that is primarily based within the United Kingdom, comments that some universities require both electronic and paper copies of work and many find it frustrating that whilst they pay around £9K a year in tuition fees, the cost of printing is on top of that. Due to Covid19, more students have either worked from home or become cost conscious when it comes to printing documents. This has led to some students considering bringing their own printers and has also meant that universities are under pressure to keep additional costs down.

SymQuest, a Konica Minolta company, explains that whilst the issue of paying to print is a 'hot-topic', it leads back to the cost of printing necessities: paper, ink, toner and maintenance. As SymQuest rightly comment 'Cost savings, reduced environmental impact, and more responsible printing practices are all important outcomes that can't be ignored.'³

And Schools Face Similar Print Management Challenges

The print challenge we see in schools and Multi- Academy Trusts (MATs) is similar to that in the university sector. Whilst in schools printing is free to both students and staff, the initial problems still remain; printer, cartridge and paper costs are still high and can make a significant impact on the IT budget. A study in America in 2020 found that a 'single teacher typically uses between 25-75 pages every day for handing out tests, homework and resources to students and that the average amount of paper used in an entire school per day is 2,000 pages.'⁴ The study also comments that if the research was nationwide then the number would project up to 34 billion papers being used in schools per year.

There is also the added predicament of the likelihood of abandoned printing, with unauthorized and confidential school documents being printed out. This is a printing concern that most schools find inevitable.

² [StudentPrintingFAQ.pdf \(berry.edu\)](#)

³ [Should Colleges Charge Students and Staff for Printing? \(symquest.com\)](#)

⁴ [How Much Do Schools Spend on Paper Per Year | Record Nations](#)

Where printing is seen as essential to provide relevant coursework and support materials for students, print usage data could also be used to monitor student engagement with the resources provided by teaching staff.

Is Print Management software the Solution?

Many schools and universities have begun to realise these concerns and have already invested in print management software. These software packages, such as PaperCut, effectively allow both schools and universities to cut down on waste, track printing and ultimately save money. This, in turn, encourages better user behaviour when it comes to printing and copying and also help towards saving the environment. Software such as PaperCut MF also implements security, by the use of unique printer ID cards, allowing students to walk up to the printer, scan their card and collect their documents, without running the risk of abandoned paper and prying eyes seeing private documents. It can be said that print management software and services are revolutionary. As Kelvin Morgan, Cambridge's Computer Officer commented in PaperCut's 2021 case study "The managed print service had to evolve to support multi-function devices and meet the challenges at the time. After a few years, it really started to gain traction, it was clear Colleges and departments valued it."⁵

-  **Environmental Contribution**
-  **Low Security Risks**
-  **Cutting Costs**
-  **Better User Behaviour**

Where do Print Management Dashboards add value?

Having invested in software tools like PaperCut, many schools, academies and universities still face challenges around data visibility:

- In terms of reporting on print usage, Universities and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) have found that the standard style of reporting from print management software can be 'clunky' and simplistic with specific reports needing to be run and emailed to individual users each month.
- Schools (MATs) and Universities need dashboards which will allow them to: understand the data, establish where the demand is coming from, understand printing trends and determine what is being printed across all of the schools / departments.
- What they find is that students are able to use a particular device, but administration are not able to see what they are copying, printing and also who is taking advantage of the printers that are available. All education establishments are looking to understand where print cost trends are going and why. Once this information is visible, they can then create or adjust printing policies.

⁵ [Cambridge University manages print for more than 20,000 students with PaperCut | PaperCut Blog](#)



Dashboards that show the environmental impact of their printing (and any print reduction strategies) provide valuable information for them as this can be key information for attracting new students.

And this is where Intuitive for PaperCut comes in. There are many different ways in which Intuitive Business Intelligence can help schools and universities understand these issues and can help to show the way that the education sector can achieve their goals. Intuitive has worked with a number of education establishments, including a leading UK university and a number of schools and MATs to implement the Intuitive for PaperCut dashboards.

The University in question had identified issues within the cost and the quantity of printing and wanted to be able to dive deeper into the data at both a user level as well as device level. The university currently houses 32,000 students and 7,400 members of staff, which means that the amount of printing, copying and scanning is massive. Because of this, the university installed Intuitive for PaperCut software across their 437 MFDs (multi-function devices). Having access to the dashboard information that is presented visually helps them understand what printing is going on from both students and staff members within the university. This will allow them to make the best use of their print estate to meet student and staff demands for printing. This visibility of print demands has been made even more critical as students return to campus for the new academic year and return to in-person teaching. By having this simple to access information from the Intuitive for PaperCut dashboards, schools and universities can make informed decisions around the printing requirements for the future and be armed with the data that will allow them to reduce the overall cost of printing.

Intuitive for PaperCut has also been implemented in a number of MATs. As Peter Trede, Public Sector Pre-Sales Consultant from Konica Minolta explains:

“The Intuitive dashboards allow us to deliver an enhanced level of reporting. The key benefit of the Intuitive for PaperCut dashboards is that they provide visualisations of print data that are suited to different users, such as the Head of IT, Board of Governors, Head Teachers and the MAT management teams. The data that can be extracted from the dashboards allows the academies to benchmark and compare schools within the trust when looking at printing and cost differences. From using the dashboards, they are finding that they are obtaining granular data easier with quicker, than they would have been able to do with standard reporting.”

Print Management Dashboard requirements

Here are some of the initial key questions for education that dashboards should be able to answer:

1. Which devices are being over and underutilised across the entire organisation?
2. How is print demand being generated across the university/school/MAT – and can we analyse by staff members, students, department/faculty and application.
3. How can we manage our print costs down by using more efficient devices?

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4. Can we see some early insight into volume trends for different parts of the organisation as students and staff return to in person learning?
5. How are different departments/students/staff using our print estate?
6. Where are the print hotspots across the entire organisation?
7. How do volumes compare for colour/mono, simplex/duplex, print/scan?
8. Are we achieving our environmental targets for reducing print usage?

However, many traditional Business Intelligence toolsets can take months or years to deliver, with traditional Business Intelligence implementations often very lengthy projects, requiring the specialist skills of BI knowledge workers.

Intuitive's approach of providing embedded Data Analytics and Dashboards which are pre-integrated with leading Print Management solutions means that educational organisations can quickly increase the value of the data held in their systems without needing specialist technical resources in-house. And the Intuitive dashboards are designed to be up and running in hours, instead of the days or months usually required for Business Intelligence projects.

In our experience, the critical success factors for print management dashboards are:

- **Personalisation** – is the data presented relevant to that user and quickly shows them what they need to know, without having to plough through pages of irrelevant content?
- **Data Enhancement** – is the user provided with more than “raw” data – for example rather than just reporting actual numbers, are these compared against targets, forecasts or historic trends?
- **Actionable Information** – does the data presented allow the user to take action to correct issues quickly?
- **Seamless** – is the user able to access the information wherever they are (for example on a tablet or phone in a departmental or budgetary review meeting?)
- **Fit for Purpose** – does the data answer the business questions relevant to that user?

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The 7 Benefits of Print Management Dashboards

Modern Print Analytics should deliver the following key benefits:

1. Simple to use – to encourage user adoption across the organisation.
2. Designed to make data interaction easy for end users without any technical input required
3. Provide new ways of navigating through the data, simplifying the user journey for more powerful analytics.
4. Dashboards should be pre-designed to answer specific queries – in this case focused on print usage / patterns and costs across different users and departments.
5. The dashboards should be able to bring in external data from a range of systems for more powerful analysis e.g., costs against budget, and trends over time.
6. All dashboards should be fast to build and deploy – getting rid of the endless user waits for new reports to be developed by overstretched in-house IT teams.
7. Provide complete control over the look and feel of the user interface with colours and formats that match the organisation branding and style.

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About Intuitive Dashboards

Through our global network of Partners and Authorised Solution Centres, we deliver a suite of pre-built dashboard solutions across key business areas – print, finance, human resources and many more process areas. Intuitive dashboards can be used to visualise data that is held in any business application such as:

Intuitive for Print Management

Dashboards that work with leading print management systems (such as PaperCut MF and SafeQ) to help answer key questions and manage print costs whilst educating users about the environmental impact of their printing.

Intuitive for Budget Management

Dashboards to help improve the financial information for stakeholders whilst reducing costs, compared with traditional finance reporting.

- Spot budgeting issues early and put plans in place to mitigate.
- Identify where you need to take corrective action with suppliers.
- Encourage ownership of financial issues within the organisation.

Bespoke Dashboards

We work with a number of specialist software partners who are leaders in their fields to deliver tailored, relevant dashboards that provide real added value.

Expert data management dashboards answer common business questions and are pre-integrated with our partners' software solutions. These are often delivered as out-of-the-box solutions, with the option for them to be customised and enhanced for individual clients.

For more details visit: <https://www.weareintuitive.com/bespoke-solutions/>

About Intuitive

Intuitive is a global provider of Data Visualisation Tools for Application Developers and Software Resellers. Formed by a team of highly experienced entrepreneurs and software developers the aim of Intuitive BI from the outset was to create a different type of BI solution. The team recognised that for Business Intelligence to deliver, companies needed easy to use tools that could be deployed to all employees and beyond organisational boundaries to customers and suppliers.

Intuitive BI sells exclusively through its network of value-added partners. We work closely with our partners in specific application areas such as Print and Process Management so that data held within their applications can be made more valuable to customers.

To find a local Authorised Solution Centre or partner please get in touch, using the contact details below or visit our website: www.weareintuitive.com

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