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Business Design Centre - London - 11 Mar 2021

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PRINT IT AWARDS 2020

11th February 2021
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Steve Holmes, EMEA Regional Director, PaperCut

Comment

A new study suggests that legacy print infrastructure is a major barrier to digital transformation. The research revealed that cloud migration is the top priority when it comes to driving digital transformation, but lingering print infrastructure stands in the way. The IDC report, commissioned by Lexmark (page 20), makes the argument that it's critical to understand the role print can play in helping to enable transformation, examining integration, transformation and security challenges.

Kingswood Tech Events has just announced the launch of **TECHNOLOGY LIVE VIRTUAL**. Powered by *PrintIT Reseller* and our sister publication *Technology Reseller*, this one-of-a-kind virtual event for the print, technology and IT channel, will run from early November until January 2021 – page 28.

TECHNOLOGY LIVE VIRTUAL will feature a large exhibition, including a dedicated print hall; as well as an engaging series of seminars, and has been created to complement **TECHNOLOGY LIVE**, a brand new event for the reseller community which will take place at the Business Design Centre, London, on March 11 2021.

COVID-19 has presented a number of unprecedented challenges to organisations in every sector, however it has also opened doors of opportunity for print and IT vendors to innovate. Last issue, *PrintIT Reseller* invited a panel of industry leaders to share their thoughts on business post-pandemic, part two features on page 44.

In this issue, Cameron Mitchell, Business Unit Leader (Partner Channel) at Konica Minolta, picks the work tools he uses every day and couldn't do his job without (page 18). This month's Q&A is with Mike Rae, Managing Director, Highland Copiers and *PITR* spent 60 seconds with Steve Holmes, EMEA Regional Director, PaperCut.

If you've got any news about your business to share, would like to be included on our monthly VOX POP panel, have a compelling business success story or simply wish to comment on any industry issues, please get in touch with us at: michelle@printitreseller.co.uk

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BULLETIN

Cybersecurity talent shortage

A new report by global recruiter Robert Walters and data provider Vacancysoft – **Cybersecurity: Building Business Resilience**, revealed that half of the companies polled, do not have adequate cybersecurity provision to allow for 100% remote working. 58% of tech hiring managers list info-security as their most required

skillset right now – yet only 10% of tech professionals in the UK possess the right skills to help plug the gap.

Despite hiring freezes across the board during lockdown – including general IT roles which were down by -40% for the first half of this year – cybersecurity bucked the trend and job volumes increased by +6%.

James Chaplin, CEO of Vacancysoft, said: “The rapid pace of digital transformation bought on by COVID-19 led to a surge in recruitment at the beginning of this year. As a result, cybersecurity is becoming an ever-greater part of the technology function.”

www.robertwalters.co.uk

www.vacancysoft.com

Cyber-attacks on the rise

Tenable has published a global industry study that revealed the vast majority of UK organisations (96%) have experienced a business-impacting cyber-attack in the past 12 months, according to both business and security executives. The data is drawn from ‘The Rise of the Business-Aligned Security Executive,’ a commissioned study of more than 800 global business and cybersecurity leaders, including 103 respondents in the UK, conducted by Forrester Consulting on

behalf of Tenable.

As cybercriminals continue their relentless attacks, 63% of respondents in the UK have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of business-impacting cyber-attacks over the past two years. Unfortunately, these attacks had damaging effects, with organisations reporting loss of employee data (44%), financial loss or theft (36%) and customer attrition (34%). 65% of security leaders in the UK say these attacks also involved operational technology (OT).

Business leaders want a clear picture of how at risk they are and how that risk is changing as they plan and execute business strategies. But only four out of 10 local security leaders say they can answer the fundamental question, “How secure, or at risk, are we?” with a high level of confidence. www.tenable.com



Digital agility biggest opportunity

The latest Global Business Barometer, based on a survey and analysis conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit and supported by SAS shows that as of late June, the possibility of U-shaped economic recovery remains possible.

Tech spending is up – technology firms had a higher than average propensity than to assert spending increases, an attitude which is promising for hopes of a U-shaped recovery.

Out of all of the ways for companies to become more resilient, greater digital agility was cited by 50% of respondents as being the biggest opportunity. That was followed by better customer experience at 45% and more innovative offerings at 42%. It could be seen as worrying to find strategic planning and business continuity somewhat lower down the list. A global pandemic was not an unknown risk prior to COVID-19, yet few seemed prepared. This often resulted in a scramble for ad-hoc solutions – digital being chief among them – rather than a methodical, step-by-step response.

www.eiuperspectives.economist.com

Cybersecurity awareness has doubled

The 2020 Netwrix IT Trends report: *Reshaped Reality*, reveals the change in IT priorities for organisations for the rest of the year due to the coronavirus outbreak, based on a global survey of 937 IT pros. The top three IT priorities for the 120 IT respondents from the UK were network security (73%), data security (71%) and cybersecurity awareness among employees (69%).

Other UK-centric findings include: organisations are more focused on data privacy now than before the crisis as 60% prioritised this option compared to 30% pre-pandemic; the number of organisations that consider digital transformation as their top priority has significantly decreased from 57% to 20%; the importance of cloud migration has decreased from 52% to 22% and only 40% of respondents plan to focus on automation of IT processes. This number is down from 70% pre-pandemic. www.netwrix.com



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Softcat to deliver IT solutions to UK-wide public sector

Softcat has secured a place on the new NHS Shared Business Services (SBS) Digital Workplace Solutions procurement framework. Previously known as the Link: IT Solutions Framework, the Digital Workplace Solutions framework allows UK public sector bodies to purchase IT solutions from a select group of pre-approved suppliers at competitive rates. The framework has an estimated value of £500 million and could deliver savings of up to £75 million to the public sector.

The framework allows for Direct Award, enabling customers to go straight to a

preferred supplier without the need for a mini competition – simplifying the procurement cycle even further. It also offers a seven-year call-off period, which means customers can benefit from significantly longer contract periods; to realise a return on their solution investments.

The company has also secured a place on the all-Wales IT Products and Services (ii) procurement framework, which has an estimated value of £300 million. The Welsh National Procurement Service (NPS) runs the framework on behalf of the Welsh public sector.

www.softcat.com



(l-r) Jon Tolley, Gary Peeling and Jon Bailey

Integra to hold virtual conference

Integra will be hosting the 'Nurture & Grow Your Business' virtual conference on December 9 to support members and key partners.



Insightful business sessions will focus on topical issues such as planning for recovery, digitally transforming your teams and opportunities for growth. Speed networking sessions will be open during the day together with supplier showcases.

Integra's CEO Aidan McDonough, said:

"Throughout the pandemic we have continued to engage with members through online regional meetings and our COVID hub. This event will be another opportunity for us to support members, helping them to explore and implement new opportunities for growth. We want this to be a positive and thought-provoking experience as we move towards the new year and we look forward to bringing our members and key partners together on this virtual platform."

Integra will also be announcing the winners of its 2020 'Member and Supplier of the Year' Awards during the day.

www.integra-business.co.uk

Midwich secures global agreement with DTEN

Midwich has signed a global distribution agreement with collaboration solutions manufacturer, DTEN.

DTEN's communications technology solutions are Zoom certified and designed for 'plug and play' integration with the Zoom Video Communications platform. This global agreement expands on the Group's existing partnership with DTEN in North America through Starin Marketing, Inc. (recently acquired by Midwich Group), where there has been a rapid increase in demand for 'Zoom Rooms' and 'Zoom for Home' solutions.

Commercial Director Stuart Mizon, said: "Midwich has seen a substantial increase in demand from our channel partners for DTEN products in North America, so to be able to extend this partnership around the globe is very exciting." www.midwich.com



Print companies join forces

Three of the UK's leading print companies are merging to form one large organisation. Precision Printing which has sites in both London and Sunderland, Sheffield-based ProCo Print and Prime Group in Nottingham will become the Precision ProCo Group, a multi-million pound operation which will be at the forefront of print delivery.

The merger will also include the online upload and print portal Where The Trade Buys and North East-based digital solutions provider, Climb.

Gary Peeling of Precision Printing will become Group CEO, Jon Bailey, formerly of ProCo, will take on the role of COO, Jon Tolley of Prime will be Group CIO and Dominic Neary, will take the position of Group CFO having joined from Just Eat, bringing with him a wealth of experience of digital transformational businesses.

Also joining the new board as Chairman and Merger Advisor is former British Airways Director, Philip Osmond.

Precision and ProCo will operate as Precision Proco, while Prime will retain its name with a new brand identity.

www.precisionprocogroup.co.uk

OutSystems announces partner award winners

Everis, an NTT Data company has been named Global Partner of Year by OutSystems. The accolade recognises the exceptional success the company has had bringing the OutSystems platform into new geographies and industries. Everis boasts 350 OutSystems certifications across its teams, including more than 150 in reactive web and another 150 in traditional web development. It has also earned 16 sales certifications, ensuring its team is capable of positioning the value of the OutSystems platform to enterprise customers.

Its customer satisfaction score is 4.7 out of 5, and in addition to Spain, it has active partnerships with OutSystems in the UK, Chile, Portugal, Belgium and Italy, with plans to further expand across Latin America before the end of the year.

In total, 21 partners were recognised as Partners of the Year for their contribution to sourcing and closing new business, building out centres of excellence, and delivering exceptional digital transformation projects.

www.outsystems.com

Exclusive Networks acquires Veracomp

Exclusive Networks has acquired Veracomp, the value-added distribution group with offices in ten central and eastern European countries, to create a new region at the heart of its EMEA operations.

Like Exclusive Networks, Veracomp shares core specialisms in cybersecurity infrastructure and many of the same established vendor relationships, while the two companies also have similar value-creating cultures and high growth track records. The new region will be able to harness these synergies to extend its

current growth trajectory and support local, regional and global partners to capitalise on new opportunities from Exclusive Networks' enhanced scale, reach, solutions portfolio and extensive value-add services.

Olivier Breittmayer, CEO at Exclusive Networks said: "Acquiring an established distribution group is the best way to accelerate our presence into this new region and we see great opportunities for our strategic vendor and GSI partners as we invest in building on Veracomp's strong foundations."

"This is a very positive step forward for

Veracomp and everyone connected to the business," said Adam Rudowski, CEO at Veracomp. "Teaming up with Exclusive Networks shows that our approach has been working and allows us to contribute our expertise to a truly global mission while continuing to target growth and create more value in the channel. There are great opportunities for existing and potential vendor and reseller partners to increase scale in the CEE region, and for our people to write a new chapter in a fantastic success story."

www.exclusive-networks.com

Marketing support programme

Integra members can now order the 2021 Initiative catalogue featuring the competitively priced range and further complemented by a free of charge digibook. A comprehensive marketing support programme is also available incorporating email, web and social media content designed to help members grow their own brand sales and achieve impressive profit margins. To further help promote the range, members receive a free of charge Initiative insert within their VOW wholesale catalogues.

With fewer own brands in the industry,

Initiative provides Integra members with an important point of differentiation. With additional pricing support and promotions planned for 2021 together with continued benchmarking, members can offer their customers a competitively priced, high quality range.

A price freeze has also been in place throughout 2020 to further support dealers in what has been an incredibly challenging year. With multiple sources, including Antalis and VOW together with Integra's EOS partner and direct availability from suppliers, Initiative is also easily accessible.

www.integra-business.co.uk



IPIA urges brands to re-look at print

In the wake of the government committing £350 million to fuel a green recovery, the Independent Print Industry Association (IPIA) is urging brands and marketers to re-look at print as they plan their sustainability strategies.

CEO Marian Stefani said: "The national outcry recently at the demise of the Argos catalogue is a good illustration of how nostalgically brands are looking at print and it little reflects either the nation's perception of sustainability or how much greener and much more effective print can be."

The IPIA claims most of its members are already investing in technology that uses less energy, more environmentally-friendly inks and FSC certified paper sources. The Green Recovery research by Essity found that 42% of consumers are already seeking out products accredited by sustainability groups and that they trust third-party certifications such as the FSC.

"All we're asking brands and marketers to do in this green recovery is to revisit their perception of print, especially direct mail. If they exclude it as a channel they could be missing a trick, not just in terms of sustainability but also in building lasting connections with customers," Stefani added.

www.ipia.org.uk

European distribution agreement

Midwich has announced a European distribution agreement with BirdDog. The full range of BirdDog video over IP products and workflows are available to channel partners exclusively through Holdan (a Midwich Group company).

www.midwich.com

Smarter Technologies approved on G-Cloud 12 framework

Smarter Technologies has been approved as a supplier on the G-Cloud 12 framework Digital Marketplace, which is managed by the Crown Commercial Services (CCS).

The framework is an innovative procurement initiative for public sector bodies that use cloud computing, including central government, local government and important sectors such as health and education and emergency services.

It is the second time that Smarter Technologies has been selected to be a part of the initiative, having previously been selected as a G-Cloud 11 supplier with the support of sister company Visionist.

"We are happy to cement our position for another year for public sector organisations to take advantage of our industry-leading cloud-based services," said Chief Technology Officer David Miller.

"We look forward to helping public organisations around the country realise greater efficiencies and cost-savings through our innovative and tailored technology solutions."

www.smartertechnologies.com



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Panasonic partners with ProGlove

Panasonic has partnered with ProGlove to further enhance its solutions for the supply chain. As two of the toughest mobile computing solutions on the market, Panasonic TOUGHBOOK and ProGlove combine seamlessly as a standalone scanning solution or as essential elements of Panasonic's voice picking solutions for the supply chain, warehouse operations, inventory checking and retail.

"In the challenging supply chain environment, where every second counts, ProGlove is an ideal partner to work with Panasonic TOUGHBOOK," said Jon Tucker, General Manager Solutions and Engineering for Panasonic TOUGHBOOK Europe. "Together we can provide solutions that shave seconds off of

every scanning task, delivering a rapid return on investment."

www.proglove.com • www.panasonic.com



ETIRA demands fast action

The European Toner and Inkjet Remanufacturers Association (ETIRA) has issued an open letter to the EU, demanding fast action to stop the devastating impact the printing industry is having on the environment.

The letter, published on ETIRA's website, responds to the EU's Circular Economy report, stating that at present, consumers and small business owners are currently tied to buy expensive, environmentally damaging ink cartridge replacements from the OEM, rather than being given the choice to buy remanufactured products.

ETIRA is calling on the European Commission to end this cycle, banning chips and firmware updates, introducing a minimum number for reuse cartridge and stopping the import of cheap single-use cartridges from outside the EU.

Javier Martinez, President of ETIRA, said: "We need fast action to stop consumers and smaller business owners being held hostage by the big OEMs. A change in legislation would give consumers the freedom to choose the type of ink cartridges they purchase, putting environmentally-friendly reuse cartridges on the table.

"With green issues so high on the agenda across Europe we need to see legislation to help us in the printing industry work to reduce, remake and recycle – creating a circular economy in printing, in line with the Circular Economy Action Plan." www.etira.org



Javier Martinez



Redstor introduces self-service portal for MSPs

Redstor has launched Redstor Marketplace, a comprehensive self-service portal for MSPs. The Redstor Marketplace revolutionises the ease and speed with which organisations can deploy back-up, recovery and archiving solutions to manage their customers' on-prem and cloud data, including Microsoft 365 and G Suite.

During these times of increased business uncertainty, the Redstor Marketplace is aggressively priced and accessible to businesses of all sizes. MSPs are placed in full control, with the ability to set up a free trial, sell and manage all Redstor data management solutions to customers anywhere in the world through a single automated portal. Furthermore, a new partner programme offers enhanced value, with discounted buy prices combined with full sales, marketing and technical support.

Promising streamlined operations, full

visibility and a shorter sales cycle, the Redstor Marketplace gives MSPs all the tools needed to better serve customers, identify new revenue possibilities and turbo charge their business. In just a few clicks it is now possible for MSPs to onboard, convert, provision and bill as well as gain access to margin-rich, repeatable revenue from a solution that is simple to deploy and manage.

"The Redstor Marketplace represents a very significant investment for the company and further emphasises our commitment to the MSP market," said James Griffin, Chief Product Officer, Redstor. "This world-class self-service capability puts MSPs in the driving seat and equips them to get customers' data management solutions up and running faster. What commonly took days, can now be achieved in just minutes."

www.redstor.com

OWA brand celebrates fifth anniversary

OWA, ARMOR Office Printing's eco-responsible brand for re-manufactured cartridges, is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

"Our OWA brand was a pioneer when it launched five years ago. At the time, the circular economy was not yet on trend, as it is today. But we stayed on course, and remained committed." said VP & Managing Director, Gerwald van der Gijp. "With this in mind, in 2020 Armor Office Printing is continuing its programme of selective international distribution by taking the degree of commitment to the circular economy of its partners as a key criterion. This is consistent with the guiding principle we set from the beginning of the brand." www.armor-owa.com



Konica Minolta wins BLI award

Konica Minolta has secured the BLI PaceSetter Award for Serviceability and Support 2020-2021 in Western Europe for the second time. The recognition awarded by Keypoint Intelligence honours the OEM that offers the best-designed tools, programs and training to enhance the serviceability of its products and services. With its 'shift left' approach, Konica Minolta provides systems to empower its clients to help themselves, such as using online training or providing support through remote tools. This year's award also reflects these company solutions that support safer office environments through remote services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. www.konicaminolta.co.uk

Stoke Reads partners with International Paper

600 families have received activity packs thanks to a partnership between Stoke Reads and the International Paper Company.

Distributed via local 15 primary schools, each pack contained writing activities, craft ideas, puzzles and a section of high quality paper and card for families. Some of the writing activities were based on Story Quest, an initiative run by Stoke Reads and funded by Sport England that encourages families to explore their local areas by following a story trail packed with local facts, history and physical challenges.

Antony Mackie, International Paper Country Manager United Kingdom & Ireland, said: "Literacy is a signature cause for International Paper, and we are very happy to support and contribute to the Stoke Reads campaign. We relocated our UK office to Stoke-on-Trent in 2019 and want to make a positive impact to the surrounding communities. This campaign makes a difference to families in the local area, and I'd like to thank National Literacy Trust for letting us be part of it."

www.internationalpaper.com



Vestel launches digital partner programme

Vestel Visual Solutions has launched VIP, its digital partner programme. Available via a mobile app and web page, the portal provides channel partners with quick and easy access to the necessary sales tools and support required to grow their business.

The portal, designed in collaboration with partners, features sales information such as stock availability and pricing of the latest Vestel AV products, after-sales support, product and training videos, content and case studies. It also comprises a Vestel communications guide, marketing assets and sales incentives, with prizes including Love2shop vouchers or a FHD or UHD TV - all of which are available through a tiered incentive system. Partners still have access to the personal relationships they need in a digital way, providing direct access to a dedicated account manager, as well as the option of face-to-face or online training.

In addition to the necessary tools required for business growth, Vestel partners will gain access to the latest industry trends and information across the education, retail, hospitality and corporate sectors, helping them to plan their business strategies accordingly.

www.vestelvisualsolutions.com

Konica Minolta recognised by IDC

Konica Minolta has been named a 'Leader' in the IDC MarketScape: 'Worldwide Print Transformation 2020 Vendor Assessment' August 2020.

The company has pursued an approach to significantly grow its product portfolio and capabilities in IT services. The report notes that "...customers seeking more than just a refresh of their printer/MFP portfolio and more of a vision of the workplace's evolution into the future may want to consider Konica Minolta."

Olaf Lorenz, Senior General Manager, Digital Transformation Division at Konica Minolta Business Solutions Europe, said: "The new normal of hybrid offices will accelerate the need for a more connected and intelligent digital workplace – one that enables remote access to business critical workflows and data at all times. Our mission is to help our customers reach the next level in the digital maturity of their organisation."

www.konicaminolta.co.uk



Olaf Lorenz

Paessler and Flowmon Networks team up

IT monitoring specialist Paessler and Flowmon Networks have integrated their solutions to bring together comprehensive IT monitoring capabilities with AI-powered analysis and advanced security features. The integration ensures availability, performance and security for IT environments.

For IT specialists using Flowmon together with PRTG, the new integration offers significant benefits: extensive IT monitoring, combined with in-depth flow analysis, joined to deliver maximum transparency; detection of unusual behaviour, insider threats and DDoS attacks, monitor firewalls, virus scanners, and back-ups; monitoring Flowmon with PRTG assures availability based on PRTG's included failover.

www.paessler.com

Zscaler extends VMware partnership

Cloud security company Zscaler, has announced an expanded partnership with VMware to help organisations simplify security in the new, dynamic workplace.

By more closely aligning the next-generation networking and security capabilities from both companies, Zscaler will work with VMware to help large global enterprises simplify the adoption of a complete secure access service edge (SASE) architecture and more effectively implement zero trust security. www.zscaler.com/vmware

Interactive tech summit

Cybersecurity expert, Kaspersky hosted tech experts from its partner community all across Europe, in an interactive Tech Summit around the evolving threat landscape.

The event provided a platform for lively debate and a chance for partners to engage in deep conversation around some of the biggest discussions dictating the industry, including:

cloud adoption in cybersecurity, industrial security, Kaspersky roadmap, threat intelligence insights/outlook and tech news in managed services.

Gianfranco Vinucci, Head of Global Pre-Sales, said: "We are committed to continually updating and enhancing the products and services we offer to our partners and customers. Open engagement and interactive channels

are central to facilitate information sharing and healthy discussion to further the success of our partnerships and future evolution of the company. The first Tech Summit event in Europe has given us a valuable forum for exchange to gain vital feedback from our partner community on how we can further strengthen relationships and enhance ongoing support and success with Kaspersky." www.kaspersky.co.uk

GPMA calls on government

The Graphics and Print Media Alliance (GPMA) has written to Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, calling for a means-tested disaster relief grant fund for the UK print industry.

The statement has been backed unanimously by all 15 members of the GPMA and calls on the government to provide sector-specific support for print as the COVID crisis continues.

The GPMA, a body of trade associations supporting commercial print, warned Ministers that more than 3,000 businesses will go into insolvency by Christmas if the sector does not receive a specific support package, with a further 3,000 under threat in the next six months.

IPIA Chairman Graeme Smith, BPIF CEO Charles Jarrold, PICON CEO Bettine Pellant and BAPC Chairman Brendan Perring, said in a joint statement: "The UK graphics and print media industry is facing its greatest challenge. In particular, the commercial and retail print sectors



are facing a breakdown of supply chain integrity and the loss of thousands of businesses if they do not receive targeted assistance.

"We are supportive of, and grateful for, all the work HM Treasury and BEIS have done over the last six months to protect livelihoods and jobs in our industry. Our focus now is to secure a means-tested disaster relief fund for the sector, so all that good work is not undone.

"We are working closely with BEIS to provide its print industry support team with the data and analysis needed to assist policy development and we are hopeful that this support will be forthcoming." www.gpma.org.uk

WatchGuard enables partners to expand

WatchGuard has added endpoint security specialisation option to its channel programme, and made combined product portfolio available to partners just four months after its acquisition of Panda Security.

Panda products are now available individually and through Passport, WatchGuard's bundle of user-centric security services. Combining WatchGuard's Total Security Suite and Passport bundle allows partners to provide complete security from network to endpoint for their customers.

www.watchguard.com



Mike Barron

Digital security and data protection

SYNAXON has formed a new partnership with Layer 8, the specialist practitioner in security behaviour change.

The agreement gives SYNAXON UK members access to a specialist set of services that will enable them to deepen and enhance knowledge and awareness of the issues around digital security and data protection, and encourage best practice – amongst their own staff and their customers.

Managing Director Mike Barron, said that the partnership is part of a longer-term plan to equip members with the capabilities they need to give the best advice to customers and set themselves apart in a busy market.

The Layer 8 Toolkit, available as an app on Android and iOS, or via the web, provides information in the way most people consume it today, in small, bite-sized chunks. It enables people to understand all aspects of secure behaviour, from compliance, to ransomware, social engineering and more. To get them started, Layer 8 is offering to provide SYNAXON UK members with ten licences for its toolkit, free of charge, for 60 days. This will enable them to trial the product themselves and with their prospects. www.synaxon.co.uk

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www.printitawards.co.uk

BOSS Future Focus

The BOSS Federation has said its Future Focus conference which was held virtually on September 16 in conjunction with the BPIF and VMC, was one of the most flexible and wide-ranging events that the Federation has held.

A day of wide-ranging input from an array of speakers was kicked off by Jonathan Geldart, the Director of the Institute of Directors, who used his personal experience of walking to the North Pole to both challenge and assure. Explaining



that "people are at their best when their backs are to the wall", Geldart noted that the response that was needed right now from UK business leaders was: leadership, communication, responsibility and agility.

Other keynote speeches were delivered by: Felicity Burch, Director Innovation and Digital, CBI – COVID-19's impact on the acceleration of technology adoption; James Sommerville, Founder, Known Unknown (former VP Global Design The Coca-Cola Company) – How brands and companies can differentiate themselves in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; and Adrian Odds, Director of Strategy & Market Propositions, Communis – How to use Artificial Intelligence to cut through the noise.

Amy Hutchinson, BOSS CEO, said: "The last six months have been challenging for many businesses. We wanted to provide a day of insight and look ahead to the future with leading figures in and outside of our sector."

www.bossfederation.com

Panasonic appoints Talex

Panasonic has appointed Talex, IT specialist based in Poland, as its technological partner for its Eastern European telecommunications business. Talex will support the existing Panasonic Communication Solutions channel partners in the region with expert technical support, IT technical training, solutions integration and logistics.



Talex will complement the existing channel network with IT consulting and support in the areas of cyber security, data centre infrastructure support, IT systems administration, service monitoring and user support; cloud services and software development.

<https://business.panasonic.co.uk/communication-solutions>

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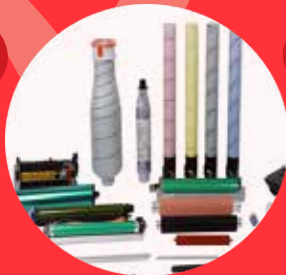
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HP launches new global partner programme

HP says HP Amplify is a first of its kind global channel partner programme, optimised to drive dynamic partner growth and deliver consistent end customer experiences. By consolidating HP's best partner products, tools and trainings into one intuitive program, HP Amplify removes complexity, making it easier for partners to take advantage of its benefits and engage customers on a deeper level.

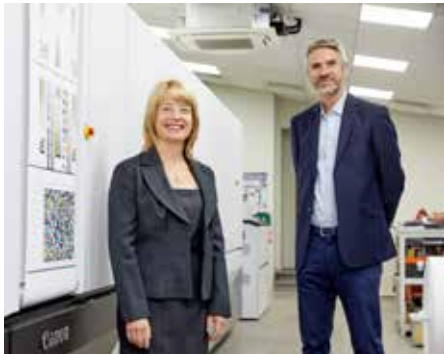
Comprised of just two distinct tracks – Synergy and Power – with clear compensation levels, HP Amplify provides partners with the flexibility to invest in value-added services and capabilities. The more a partner invests, the higher the rewards.

Designed to enable progressive go-to-market strategies that cater to a combination of transactional, contractual and hybrid selling models, HP Amplify focuses on three core pillars:

performance, capabilities and collaboration.

The OEM is also introducing HP Amplify Impact, inviting all partners to join HP in its pledge to address environmental impact. For partners who choose to join, HP will provide training and support, and help identify potential gaps in the goals partners wish to set and provide guidance on how to achieve those goals.

www.hp.com



A first for Henry Ling

Henry Ling, a book and journal print company based in Dorset, is the first UK business to install the Canon ProStream 1000. The installation is the company's third Canon device and will help it to further expand into the digital book printing market.

The new high speed inkjet ProStream 1000 enables it to extend its printing services across the full lifecycle of a title, delivering quality printing and binding of both limp and case bound books, whilst offering its existing customers higher quality output.

Managing Director Helen Kennett, said: "The ProStream 1000 will allow us to continue providing our existing publishers with superior quality products, while extending our excellent service to the trade book market. We have confirmed our commitment to this new market by hiring a new sales professional who brings a wealth of experience to best serve these publishers." www.henryling.co.uk

Global recognition for Konica Minolta

Konica Minolta has been named to all of the four responsible investment (RI) indexes adopted by Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF). These four indexes are the FTSE Blossom Japan Index, the MSCI Japan ESG Select Leaders Index, the MSCI Japan Empowering Women Index and the S&P/JPX Carbon Efficient Index.

The company has also been included in the FTSE4Good Index Series, which is one of the most well-known RI indexes in the world, for 17 consecutive years. www.konicaminolta.co.uk

EveryonePrint achieves ISO 27001

EveryonePrint has achieved ISO/IEC 27001 certification, the internationally recognised standard for information security management systems. The award recognises the company's systematic approach to managing its and its customers' sensitive information. It also demonstrates that robust processes are in place to build resilience and help avoid potential data security issues.

"This certification is a significant achievement and clearly demonstrates our commitment to the highest standards of data security," said CEO Tavs Dalaa. "Compliance proves the completeness and strength of our security controls, providing our partners and clients with independently verified assurance that we take the protection of their data extremely seriously. Customers and partners can be confident in our ability to meet and exceed their expectations in terms of secure information handling." www.everyoneprint.com

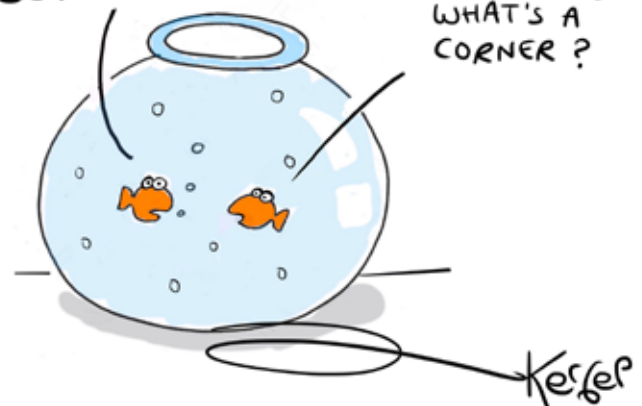
Great supply chain partner

Label design and management software provider, NiceLabel has been named in Supply Chain Brain's 100 Great Supply Chain Partners. This is the second time the company has been listed as one of the top 100 supply chain vendors whose solutions have made a significant impact on the efficiency, customer service and overall supply chain performance of their customers.

"We're delighted to once again find ourselves among the 100 Great Supply Chain Partners," said Ken Moir, Vice President of Marketing at NiceLabel. "This recognition reflects NiceLabel's focus on enabling digital transformation in the supply chain through the digitisation of labelling processes. We are grateful to have been included because of feedback from our customers who have reduced their costs and grown their businesses using our solutions." www.nicelabel.com

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New SVP for NEC

NEC Display Solutions Europe has appointed Stefanie Corinth as Senior Vice President of Sales EMEA, as the company reinforces its customer-centric, vertically-aligned sales approach.

In her new executive role, Corinth will head up NEC's existing teams for EMEA regional sales including channel and corporate sales and she will oversee the new strategically defined key business segments.

Corinth has spent 18 years at NEC and has been promoted from the position of SVP Marketing and Business Development. She will also manage the D/A/CH region as acting General Manager D/A/CH.

www.nec-display-solutions.com



Stefanie Corinth

Thomas International appoints new CEO

Global talent assessment platform provider Thomas International, has announced the appointment of Sabby Gill as its new CEO.

Sabby joins Thomas from Sage, where he held the position of Executive Vice President and General Manager for UK & Ireland. He is a member of the UK&I Digital Economy Council and was a board member of TechUK, as well the North East Regional Vice Chair of the CBI.

www.thomas.co

Soffos announces board appointment

AI platform Soffos has appointed Ken Hubbell to its board of advisors.

Soffos is disrupting the EdTech market by providing a sophisticated learning and development solution for corporates. Delivered as a SaaS platform, Soffos will provide high quality, hyper-personalised training to businesses' employees globally. Using spoken and onscreen questions, Soffos uncovers gaps in employees' knowledge, then provides learning resources to fill those gaps.

In his new role, Hubbell will support Soffos' product development, as well as taking a leading role in the pilot program and upcoming launch in Q1 2021.

www.soffos.ai

Mark Ash joins Konica Minolta

Mark Ash has joined Konica Minolta as Director, Professional Print and Industrial Print in the UK. This is a key growth area for Konica Minolta globally.

CEO Rob Ferris, said: "Mark is extremely experienced in the markets in which we operate



Mark Ash

and has the qualities that we need to continue growing and transforming our business. He has held senior leadership roles in our industry, both directly with manufacturers and partners, and is an invaluable addition to our UK team. What is equally important, is that we share the same values and sense of purpose, which is critical to ensure that we grow this business area in alignment with the rest of the UK operation."

Ash began his career in CRD operations, before holding numerous sales/sales management roles, he held overall responsibility for the UK print business at Samsung (before its acquisition by HP), and most recently held the role of Chief Sales & Marketing Officer at Altodigital (now part of Xerox).

www.konicaminolta.co.uk

Sidetrade adds to senior leadership team

In its drive to provide businesses with digital technology to revolutionise their order-to-cash processes, AI company Sidetrade, has appointed Rob Harvey as its new Chief Product Officer and a member of the firm's executive committee.

Harvey will oversee Sidetrade's product lifecycle, from strategy and development, through to launch. He will work hand-in-hand with Chief Technology Officer Mark Sheldon to align development and business teams on innovative products. www.sidetrade.com

Channel chief joins Exclusive Networks

Exclusive Networks has hired Jesper Trolle as CEO. Trolle joins from ECS Arrow Electronics, where he is currently President of the Americas, and will be responsible for driving the next phase of growth at the company and upscaling the business.

Trolle takes over from Olivier Breittmayer who becomes a non-executive board member of Exclusive. The move is part of a planned succession strategy and Trolle will work alongside Breittmayer for the next three months to ensure a smooth transition.

www.exclusive-networks.com



Jesper Trolle

Exertis continues to recruit senior talent

Exertis has announced the key appointments of several members of senior talent across its international division.

The business welcomes Christer Svård as the new Managing Director for Exertis Nordics. Svård was previously the CEO of Higab AB, a company that builds, manages and cares for properties in Gothenburg and before that, he served as CEO of Volvo Parts, a global spare parts distributor. "Being able to take charge of Exertis operations in the Nordics, in an exciting industry with a really strong owner, was an attractive prospect that I could not refuse. I have extensive

experience in the supply chain and leading businesses with great growth potential which I hope fits very well in to Exertis Nordics," he said.

Exertis Nordics also welcomes Helena Byström as Supply Chain Director. This is a new role and includes responsibility for the entire supply chain, the flow from suppliers to the end customer.

Exertis France has appointed Nadine Bloch as Team Director of Purchasing and Procurement, and Noel Shannon has been promoted to Financial Controller at Exertis Middle East.

www.exertis.com



Christer Svård



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I couldn't do my job without...

Cameron Mitchell, Business Unit Leader (Partner Channel) at Konica Minolta Business Systems UK picks the tools he uses every day and couldn't do his job without



Cameron Mitchell

We have been working with Westcoast since early this year and this has been game-changing for Konica Minolta

1 Video conferencing tools

Nothing can beat the social aspects of meeting face-to-face; however, video conferencing tools like Microsoft Teams or Zoom have become invaluable for me this year. Being able to connect using these tools has helped us to build and maintain the excellent working relationship we have with our partners.

What's more, not being able to travel has made us all more productive, speaking to more partners more often. Prior to the lockdown, a typical week would involve spending three hours per day commuting to the office and a lot of time on the road travelling to meetings. That is precious time we have all reclaimed, reducing our carbon footprint in the process.

2 Webinars

Many of our partners and their customers are focused on print, whether professional, industrial or office. However, Konica Minolta has an expansive solutions portfolio that encompasses a wide range of IT services. A big part of our role is helping to educate our partners about how they can take advantage of these, and webinars are vital to achieving this.

Throughout the summer we hosted a wide-ranging series of webinars, giving our partners a 'behind the curtain' look at what we can offer them and ultimately their customer base today. Topics and technologies include how to manage documents remotely, effective customer contact and improving content workflow through intelligent capture, and cloud-based print management. These were understandably very popular given the current circumstances.

The print industry needs to adapt and evolve at a pace far quicker than anyone would have predicted. Being able to help our partners to diversify and grow their offering, to better support their print customers and introduce profitable new revenue streams, is a very exciting prospect. In fact, a number of partners have asked us to continue the series to help educate their sales teams. COVID-19 has accelerated the need for change.

3 E-Biz 2 online ordering portal

I am particularly proud of the new online ordering portal (E-Biz 2) that we have recently launched, that makes it quicker and easier for all of our channel partners to place orders, from the entire range of Konica Minolta's hardware and consumables. The new system is fully automated and much slicker than



Zoom

our previous email-based ordering system. The response from our channel partners has been extremely positive, as they are able to get products out to their customers faster. It is great for us as we are spending less time fulfilling orders and more time working on other initiatives to support our partners. Self-service reduces errors and makes us easier to do business with.

4 Distribution partnership

In addition to the new portal, we have also partnered with Westcoast, who ship products directly to our partners' customers. This new partnership has been transformative for us as a business, as we have been able to grow our consumables business substantially within our partner base. It has also added a lot of value to our partners as overnight we have eliminated the burden of logistics for them. We have been working with Westcoast since early this year and this has been game-changing for Konica Minolta.

5 Our entrepreneurial partner community

Konica Minolta is transforming as an IT services business and our product portfolio continues to develop. Today print continues to be core and is in many ways a barometer of the wider economy and right now the signals are that there is a real revival with industry coming back strongly. This is thanks in no small part to the entrepreneurial spirit of our channel partners.

I have had the pleasure of working in the print world for many years and it is an industry that has always made its own luck. I am constantly humbled, but never surprised, by how versatile and agile our partners are in the face of adversity and opportunity. My role is to develop and facilitate Konica Minolta's indirect strategy, something I could not do without the close relationships we have with all our partners, small and large, old and new.

www.konicaminolta.co.uk

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The problem with print

A new study conducted by IDC and commissioned by Lexmark, suggests that legacy print infrastructure is a major barrier to digital transformation. The report makes the argument that it's critical to understand the role print can play in helping to enable transformation, examining integration, transformation and security challenges



Matt Dollus

The research, which was carried out between March and April 2020 surveyed 1,511 respondents across three key regions and seven countries – Canada, USA, Brazil, Mexico, UK, France and Germany.

According to Robert Palmer, Research Vice President, Imaging, Printing and Document Solutions at IDC Research, organisations of all sizes have prioritised IT initiatives around digital transformation (DX) strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified these efforts, as businesses search for ways to enable a more efficient and productive distributed workforce.

Driving digital transformation

The research revealed that cloud migration is the top priority when it

More than half of essential workflow processes require print, yet DX projects often overlook moving print infrastructure to the cloud

comes to driving digital transformation but lingering print infrastructure stands in the way. "The future of business is digital-first, which means businesses must modernise IT infrastructure to take advantage of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and data analytics," Palmer said.

Despite three in five enterprises recognising that lingering print infrastructures are a significant barrier to success, fewer than half are prioritising investment in this space, hampering the progress of strategic IT initiatives.

Four in five (79 per cent) companies are investing in cloud infrastructure as part of their digital transformation initiatives, but 57 per cent say legacy print infrastructure is negatively impacting their cloud migration strategy.

"This research highlights the importance of considering cloud-based print infrastructure as a key strategic IT initiative," said Matt Dollus, Lexmark Vice President of Global Marketing and IoT Portfolio. "Established companies in every sector are under pressure to transform into digital-first organisations. With the Covid-19 pandemic exposing gaps and weaknesses in IT infrastructure, many are struggling by failing to take print with them on their digital transformation journey."

Transformation challenges

Nearly half of survey respondents reported challenges integrating existing IT into new infrastructure and updating or replacing legacy business processes. 60 per cent have seen digital transformation budgets exceeded, and 54 per cent faced delays and prolonged project timelines.

The study demonstrates a profound difference between countries. In the UK, USA and Germany, 67 per cent have integration challenges, compared to just 20 per cent in Brazil. This is likely due to business complexity in the more developed markets.

While print volumes have decreased as some organisations have pursued a digital-first approach to document management, just over half of all essential workflow processes still have significant printing requirements. Most functional areas still report significant integrated printing requirements; 52 per cent in operations, 52 per cent in supply chain, 49 per cent distribution, 52 per cent sales, 53 per cent finance, 54 per cent marketing and 54 per cent HR. As such, organisations will need to provide the ability to print as an essential IT service for the foreseeable future.

The problem with print

Across the board, managing IT infrastructure remains a challenge, with the majority expressing similar concerns when it comes to legacy print including:

- Ensuring the security of print infrastructure and devices (81 per cent)
- The IT burden associated with managing print and print servers (81 per cent)
- Inventory management (81 per cent), alongside a lack of visibility into spending (80 per cent)
- Technology obsolescence and difficulty in updating or replacing legacy print hardware (79 per cent)

"IDC believes that it is time for organisations to start thinking about print more strategically - to elevate the conversation around print and include it within the broader context of their DX discussions related to cloud migration and document process strategies," said Palmer.

IT leaders appear to be united on a preference for as-a-service consumption models over financing (70 per cent vs 22 per cent), and a recognition (94 per cent agree) that IoT has the potential to improve printer fleet management.

"IT leaders recognise the benefits of cloud and IoT," Dollus added. "Delivering print as an IoT product-as-a-service will accelerate business agility and simplify IT management and acquisition, while improving the user experience for customers. Cloud print infrastructure as-a-service provides access to a modern and secure print infrastructure that can provide a basis for future digital transformation initiatives," he concluded. www.lexmark.co.uk

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Focus On: What's New

Sharp expands A4 MFP and printer range



Sharp Business Systems UK has added 12 A4 devices, both colour and mono, to its line-up. The new additions – seven MFPs and five printers – offer print speeds ranging from 33 ppm to 66 ppm.

These new models build on the previous extension of the Sharp A3 and A4 range earlier this year, when the company announced two new devices in its A4 mono portfolio and eleven to its A3 mono range. This latest launch comprises five colour and two mono MFPs, along with

three colour and two mono printers.

The range of new colour and mono MFPs and workgroup printers are specifically designed to suit a variety of office layouts and easily integrate with today's connected workplace, enabling easy and quick access to an expanded list of cloud services including Box and Dropbox. Simple integration to existing network applications and public cloud services means information can be securely shared and accessed anywhere, at any time, helping to increase productivity and flexibility in the post-COVID working world.

The new models are also equipped with enhanced productivity features, such as the ability to feed multiple envelopes from the standard or bypass paper drawer. www.sharp.co.uk

Lexmark extends GO Line series

Lexmark has expanded its SMB offering with the launch of two colour and three mono printers and MFPs that provide full business-class capabilities in a smaller footprint.



Designed for small spaces and workgroups, the C3426dw printer and MC3426adw MFP offer Lexmark partners and enterprise customers impressive productivity, high capacity and

durability to ensure minimal interruptions. The new devices offer a time to first page as fast as 5.9 seconds, colour print at 24 ppm and mono at 40 ppm. The two models also come with duplex printing as standard, 2.8-inch touch screens and a front USB port to print from or scan documents to a USB drive.

Light, compact and fast, the B3340dw, B3442dw and MB3442adw mono printers and MFP support output up to 42 ppm, Wi-Fi and network connectivity, and the option of adding a 550-sheet paper tray for longer print runs. www.lexmark.co.uk

Cloud computer

Alibaba Cloud has unveiled a series of innovative products at its 12th annual Apsara Conference, highlighting its commitment in helping people adapt to the more digitised world and accelerate customers' digital transformation during and after the pandemic.

A highlight is Alibaba Cloud's first cloud computer, a palm-sized personal computer which, despite being just about 60 grams and as light as an egg, offers high-performance computing, thanks to robust back-end cloud resources. By simply connecting the cloud computer with a normal computer screen, a user can access almost unlimited computing

resources anytime, anywhere, while paying on a subscription model for the actual cloud consumption.

With robust computing power, the cloud computer can reduce the rendering time of one frame high-resolution



Label printer with enhanced functionality

Star Micronics has launched a new direct thermal linerless label printer. The TSP654IISK is designed for use in quick service and fast-food restaurants, cafés and takeaway outlets to print repositionable labels, food orders and bag labels, as well as product labels for retail and logistics.

Featuring a 180mm/second print speed and compact design, the TSP654IISK prints high resolution text and graphics on linerless MAXStick media of 40mm, 58mm or 80mm roll widths. It also includes a high quality anti-jam guillotine cutter and paper taken sensor for efficient order management at busy times when multiple orders are being processed. The paper taken sensor can be enabled to hold each new label/order until the previous one has been taken, allowing the host software to identify the time at which the ticket was taken and how long after printing or before delivery the print job was started. An optional buzzer can be connected to alert the operator either once or at repeated intervals that the label is waiting to be taken. www.Star-EMEA.com

animation from 90 minutes using a traditional PC, down to only 10 minutes. In addition, the cloud computer's system upgrades are conducted online, saving a big chunk of the normally heavy cost of PC machine upgrades and maintenance in traditional office settings.

Through Alibaba Cloud's self-developed app-streaming protocol, which is designed for synergy between the cloud and the device, users can also purchase and access licensed apps and programs such as Linux and Windows as well as various office applications. All user data will be stored on cloud for datacentre-grade security and protection measures. www.alibabacloud.com

Ideagen launches first cloud version

Ideagen has announced the first cloud version of its quality, health & safety and environmental (QHSE) product, Q-Pulse. Q-Pulse is already used by more than 2,000 companies around the world to effectively manage and mitigate their QHSE risks. This update ensures existing and future customers will have access to one fast, simple system, backed by 25 years of innovation, from an established and trusted vendor.

www.ideagen.com

Setting new standards

Canon's new imagePRESS C10010VP is a high performance cut-sheet digital print solution that offers automated printing on-demand at a new level, resulting in far less manual intervention and far greater production efficiency.

Advanced features include Ultrasonic Multi-Sheet Feed Detection, active front-to-back registration and Inline Spectrometric Sensor (ILS) for simple colour pre-adjustment on every page.

Canon's Dual Fixing Unit ensures that full productivity is maintained even if different media, of mixed weights and textures, are used for the same job. And the optional High Capacity Stacker can be unloaded and loaded during print run for a 24/7 operation.

www.canon.co.uk



High capacity storage solution

The new OWC Mercury Elite Pro Dual with 3-Port Hub offers up to 32TB of storage capacity plus a built-in high-powered USB hub for accessory connectivity and device charging.

Universally compatible, it works with any USB-equipped Mac, PC, or mobile device and features three USB ports for audio

or video mixers, cameras, card readers, tablets, keyboards or mice. The Mercury Elite Pro Dual is plug and play – no drivers are needed, it includes USB connecting cables and comes with an up to three-year OWC Limited Warranty with one-year Level 1 data recovery and lifetime US-based support. www.owc.com

Kodak Alaris updates INfuse solution

Kodak Alaris has enhanced its INfuse Smart Connected Scanning Solution, adding Windows Server 2019 support to the INfuse infrastructure, introducing three new flatbed accessories, and a card reader accessory in response to customer demand for access control and user authentication. The updates are designed to drive further adoption of 'edge capture', which involves scanning at the edge of a business process where documents enter an organisation.

INfuse combines software and scanners from Kodak Alaris with a channel partner's application to enable end-users to easily onboard content directly into a business process. Kodak Alaris has added Windows Server 2019 support to its partner-centric, cloud-connected scanning platform which also works with Amazon, Alibaba and Microsoft Azure. Expanding the INfuse infrastructure to support non-public cloud environments allows partners to create customised solutions that enable customers to move capture to the edge, regardless of where they are in their cloud adoption journey.

The new Integrated Passport, A4 Legal and A3 Flatbed Scanners further expand the scanners' capability, giving end-users more flexibility to capture a wider variety of document types such as folders, books,

bound materials or fragile and larger items that cannot be fed through the scanner.

The new Card Reader Accessory, including support for select third-party readers, provides a simple process for authenticating users requesting access to the scanners. This new functionality addresses customers' data privacy, chain of custody and security concerns. Users can authenticate at the scanner using their employee ID badge, and once authenticated, can perform tasks according to their assigned permissions.

Launched in September of last year, INfuse is now firmly established as a disruptive technology with the potential to profoundly impact the information management market. According to IDC: "One of the most intriguing models released during 2019 was Kodak Alaris' INfuse AX scanner . . . This is an extremely unique offering and may indicate the future of the scanning market . . ."

www.alarisworld.com



Next generation telecoms solution

Panasonic says its next generation single cell SIP DECT telecoms solution – the Panasonic KX-TGP700 – is a game changer for organisations that want a wireless telecoms solution for both office-based and mobile employees.

Traditionally, single cell DECT solutions were only suitable for businesses at smaller site locations. Larger businesses required multicell solutions that offered a wider coverage area but were much more expensive and complex to install and maintain. The next generation Panasonic TGP700 breaks that mould, doubling the number of handsets and concurrent calls that it can handle over the popular Panasonic TGP600.

The TGP700 DECT base station operates with 16 registered handsets and 16 SIP lines for public numbers that are able to handle 16 concurrent calls, making it an ideal solution for logistics operations with warehouses, medical offices, restaurants and retail stores.

This latest generation single cell DECT system is also the first to include Busy Lamp Field functionality for handsets registered to the base station, allowing users to see which handsets are available or in use.

To ensure that every type of worker has the appropriate communications tools, the TGP700 has a comprehensive ecosystem of DECT handsets and DECT-based desk phones available. This includes the latest Panasonic KX-TPA70 and KX-TPA73 handsets launched earlier this year and designed to take the user experience to the next level with a clear colour interface and streamlined and intuitive functionality.

<https://business.panasonic.co.uk>

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Focus On: What's New

Ultra-compact, network-connected scanner

The new Canon imageFORMULA DR-S130 desktop scanner offers both Wi-Fi and USB connectivity alongside the native CaptureOnTouch Pro software, which boasts a user-friendly interface with a simple icon-based operation. Effective shortcuts can be configured for frequently performed tasks to save and send documents to different destinations, including cloud services, such as OneDrive and Dropbox.

The DR-S130 works out-of-the-box, without the need for additional resources

or an IT team. Its robust design ensures reliable, productive performance for busy workloads of up to 3,500 scans a day and scanning 60 images per minute. PUSH scan functionality means scanned files can be sent directly from the device to an output destination and avoid rerouting via a PC, saving resources and time.

Users can scan a variety of documents including plastic ID cards, embossed cards and passports. Its heavy-duty feed and separation rollers make batch scanning of mixed documents simple and intuitive,



while ultrasonic double-feed detection, ensures all documents are scanned and no information goes missing.

www.canon.co.uk

MPS Monitor integrates with Asolvi ERP platforms

MPS Monitor has released three new connectors that allow dealers using Asolvi ERP solutions to benefit from full integration of the monitoring platform into their systems.

The three new connectors enable MPS Monitor 2.0 to establish and maintain a seamless machine-to-machine communication with Evatic, Purpose Software 2serv and Vantage Online systems. This integration allows the three ERP systems to get timely and updated information on device status, meter readings, consumable alerts and levels, support and maintenance requests, and much more information, coming directly from MPS Monitor's DCA.

Dealers using Evatic, 2serv or Vantage Online have now the ability to activate the connection between their ERP instance and the monitoring platform by simply switching it on in the MPS Monitor 2.0 Portal. The data flow between the ERP and MPS Monitor is completely transparent to the user, and it allows the ERP to obtain all the needed information from devices through a fully automated, backend process. There is no need for manual import and export of data or manual checks on data, as all the information is kept in sync between the ERP and the monitoring platform by a fully unattended process

www.mpsmonitor.com

Dashboard powered by Cognitics analytics platform

ECI Software Solutions has launched the Strategic Business Review Dashboard for e-automate.

Powered by ECI's Cognitics analytics platform, this dashboard will leverage data from e-automate to help executives and sales professionals better understand their customers, spot mission-critical trends, reduce churn, win new business and increase revenue while improving customer relationships.

Based on data collected by e-automate, the integrated Strategic Business Review Dashboard dynamically analyses and visually presents customer information to users in a consistent, branded format. The dashboard is reliable, integrating seamlessly with e-automate software, reducing the need to sort through records or improve statistical quality, at any time and from anywhere.

The dashboard can be easily exported into consistently branded PowerPoint presentations, Excel files or PDFs – saving hours of prep time.

www.ecisolutions.com

Optoma expands line of premium IFPs

Expanding upon its line of Creative Touch Interactive Flat Panels (IFPs), Optoma's new 5-Series models are available in 65", 75" and 86" formats; offer 4K UHD resolution, multiple easy-to-use annotation tools and extensive connectivity features for enhanced learning, sharing and collaboration in classrooms, lecture halls, boardrooms and other professional environments.

The 5-Series IFPs feature a bright, finger print resistant panel with an ultra-slim bezel, anti-glare glass, a 178-degree wide-viewing angle and cTUVus Eye Comfort Certification for Low Blue Light and Flicker

Free operation, allowing audiences to comfortably view content from every seat in the room. With up to 20-point multi-touch capabilities and lightning fast response times, as well as a built-in whiteboard with a floating toolbar and annotation tools to work with any video input, the 5-Series IFPs bring collaborative thinking and idea sharing to life.

Compatible with all major platforms, software and peripheral hardware, Optoma's 5-Series IFPs are the perfect cornerstones of hybrid or distance learning environments. With easy connectivity to popular USB webcams and Google ChromeBox, the Creative Touch 5-Series Interactive Flat Panels are easy to deploy, intuitive to use and an affordable solution to the modern challenges facing educators and schools.

www.optoma.co.uk




PRINT IT RESELLER
EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD
 HID: HID ELEMENT

Desktop card printer

HID Global has introduced the new HID ELEMENT product line, a heavy duty, fully modular desktop-based card personalisation portfolio that establishes a new category for mid-range and high-volume market segments.

The portfolio's enhanced card production capabilities, flexible system architecture and cost-effective deployment model enable organisations to create custom secure ID and financial card production solutions for a variety of use cases and applications.

The HID ELEMENT portfolio delivers optimal card personalisation and accommodates projects that require high-resolution UV ink printing, laser engraving or both. Designed to serve government and financial institutions, medium-to-large enterprise corporations and service bureaus, its best-in-class features address the demand for greater print speed, higher resolution, larger card output and better cost-per-card economy. www.hidglobal.com

New advanced MFP

Sharp has added a new advanced compact colour multifunction printer to its line-up of the smallest A3 colour MFPs on the market. The BP-30C25 offers a host of productivity functions, best-in-class security enhancements and the same powerful workflow features and user interface common across the Sharp A3 range. The compact and stylish cubic design offers a versatile range of deployment options.

Security features include firmware attack prevention and self-recovery capability, which can identify a malicious intrusion and restore the machine firmware to its original state. A new whitelisting feature helps protect the machines' file system from unauthorised access.

The new model easily integrates with today's connected workplace, enabling easy access to an expanded list of cloud services that include Box and Dropbox. Optional features for the BP-30C25

include wireless connectivity, enabling easy printing from mobile devices, tablets and laptops without making physical contact with the device. Easy integration to existing network applications and public cloud services means information can be

securely shared and accessed anywhere, anytime, helping to increase productivity.

The BP-30C25 prints at speeds of up to 25 ppm and offers scanning speeds of up to 52 ipm. The printer supports a maximum 1,850-sheet paper capacity that can be fed from separate trays on the MFP, allowing users to select different paper styles dependent on the type of printing required, including labels, envelope, A6, glossy or heavy paper.

www.sharp.co.uk


PRINT IT RESELLER
EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD

Sharp BP-30C25 A3 Colour MFP

Flexible business packages and AWS support

Panasonic has enhanced the KX-NSV300 software business communication system by offering a variety of easy installation and cost-effective options for organisations and adding support for Amazon Web Services (AWS), as its first public cloud integration.

The KX-NSV300 provides businesses with next generation telephony functionality and flexibility in a software communication system that removes the need for up-front hardware investment. The latest enhancements allow companies to choose and migrate between three versions of the system depending on their user requirements.

Panasonic KX-NSV300 Small is ideal for organisations with up to 60 users and allows 32 simultaneous calls. Medium is for organisations with up to 120 users and allows 64 simultaneous calls. Large provides services for up to 300 users and 126 simultaneous calls. The latest versions of the KX-NSV300 system can also be installed on a single virtual machine with a smaller memory footprint – shrinking capacity requirements and rental charges.

In addition to on-premise and private cloud installations, such as data centres, the solution can now also be hosted on Amazon Web Services.

<https://business.panasonic.co.uk>

Electronic data protection

Kingston Digital Europe, the flash memory affiliate of Kingston Technology Company has announced the availability of the 128GB DataTraveler 2000 encrypted USB flash drive.

DataTraveler 2000 features an alphanumeric keypad that allows users to lock the drive with a word or number combination for an easy-to-use PIN providing an extra layer of protection. For additional security, an auto-lock feature is activated when the drive is removed from the host device if not properly shut down before ejection.

Designed with global security IT professionals, small-to-medium businesses and corporate end-users in mind, DT2000 is ideal for those who require electronic data protection. Encryption is done on the drive with no trace of the PIN left on the system. The drive is OS independent, making it easily deployable in work environments where multiple devices and operating systems are in use. DataTraveler 2000 is available in capacities 4GB to 128GB and is backed by a three-year warranty with free technical support.

www.kingston.com



THE i-SENSYS RANGE

ULTRA-FAST, FEATURE-PACKED LASER PRINTERS

The i-SENSYS range consists of a portfolio of productive and efficient desktop devices offering a wide range of features and functionality. Compact in profile but feature packed, keep your business running efficiently without the hassle of ongoing maintenance.

These laser printers provide a total portfolio of flexible desktop printers that can offer SOHO self-managed solutions, as well as

being part of a larger enterprise solution.

As well as providing the simplicity and hassle-free benefits that modern workers need, the products tick the boxes for IT managers and support staff to be able to manage the devices in a cost effective manor. Remote management and simple installation ensure productivity isn't compromised with a reliable device always by your side.

A portfolio of productive and efficient desktop devices offering a wide range of features and functionality.



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TAKE **PRODUCTIVITY** TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The **i-SENSYS** application library is designed to enhance print, scan and copy productivity and give you greater control over your print applications.

We understand that minimal disruption and maintenance is key, and that is why the range of i-SENSYS printers come with a host of features to keep you productive.

Keep control of your toner levels through monitoring on your device display, remote user interface and smartphone & tablets. Wherever you are, you can easily check when toner levels are running low and manage more efficiently.

The high-capacity paper trays ensure that you're topped up for longer and consequently reducing down time. Fast print speeds, double sided printing and single-pass double sided scanning keep you equipped for any job at hand. Supporting multiple paper weights, the i-SENSYS range can support you with a range of print types.

Gone are the days when you needed specialist help to manage and replace toner cartridges. These smart toner cartridges are compact, high in yield and easy to install.



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Find out more at: canon.co.uk/business-printer-cashback



Canon

See the bigger picture

** Terms and Conditions Apply.*

Technology Live Virtual

Kingswood Tech Events has just announced the launch of Technology Live Virtual. Powered by *PrintIT Reseller* and our sister publication *Technology Reseller*, this one-of-a-kind virtual event for the print, technology and IT channel, will run from early November until January 2021

Technology Live Virtual will feature a large exhibition, including a dedicated print hall; as well as an engaging series of seminars, and has been created to complement Technology Live, a brand new event for the reseller community which will take place at the Business Design Centre, London, on March 11 2021.

Kingswood Tech Events Director Ethan White, said: "We had to make the difficult but right decision to reschedule our inaugural Technology Live event and move the date from October this year to March 2021. However, we know from talking to many of our customers, partners, channel vendors and manufacturers, that now more than ever, as an industry we still need to meet, connect, learn and keep up-to-date with the latest developments.

"We're providing that platform. Technology Live Virtual is a first-of-its kind virtual event for UK-based technology vendors. While the physical event is designed to bring together IT vendors, technology resellers and managed service providers in an informal direct environment, Technology Live Virtual will provide an online link to potential new customers."



With large gatherings and physical meet-ups curtailed for now, this unique event will give everyone in the ICT community – resellers/MSPs, distributors and vendors – the opportunity to virtually meet, exchange ideas and to build mutually beneficial relationships. This is especially valuable at a time when technology convergence is opening up new opportunities for diversification whether through organic portfolio expansion, acquisitions or partnerships with other channel companies.

"With technology playing such a crucial part in all our lives at the moment whatever people's age, situation or profession, we're thrilled to launch Technology Live Virtual - our new interactive event platform for key technology integrators, suppliers and service providers. This unique event will provide an unparalleled opportunity for the industry to interact and collaborate, especially at this time when normal working patterns have been disrupted," Event Director Neil Trim added.

Reasons to get involved

- **Boost brand visibility:** You can populate your exhibition stand with video, web details, account manager contacts, email form for direct contact, document downloads, product information and more.
- **Showcase new products and services:** via a branded stand in the Technology Live Virtual Hall of your choice.

- **Generate new leads:** as an exhibitor you'll receive a full three months of data capture and new sales leads. Each visitor that clicks on your stand will have data captured as if they had been scanned in the traditional way.

- **Speak directly to your target market:** Take advantage of the opportunity to join a round-table or one-on-one live seminar, which will be recorded and posted to all social media and websites to drive visitors.

- **Place yourself in front of visitors looking for opportunities.** Connect with prospective customers and expand your database of sales leads.

- **Expand your offering:** Learn about innovative new products, potential new revenue streams and build partnerships that will help you to diversify into new technology areas.

"Technology is renowned for its fast pace and it's important that IT resellers, managed print providers and technology vendors from all areas stay ahead of the information curve. We're excited to work with many of the technology, print and IT channel's biggest brands to provide virtual visitors with a unique opportunity to view an unparalleled breadth of products and innovations, across a three-month long period. We look forward to meeting you all virtually at Technology Live Virtual," White concluded.

<https://virtual.technologylive.co.uk>



Honey Bee
[Sterna paradisaea]

On returning to the hive, Honey Bees communicate the distance, direction, and quality of nectar-rich flowers to their fellow workers

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from 50p per SIM
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IoT is rapidly evolving and by definition requires Things to be connected, from device, to IoT platform, to user. All from any location. The diversity of IoT deployments therefore need an equally diverse range of connectivity solutions, especially Mobile Data.

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Asolvi bets on Vantage Online to support further expansion

Asolvi prepares Vantage Online for internationalisation and begins to ramp up availability for the European MPS sector



Four acquisitions in a three-year period, including Purpose Software, Vantage Computing, Tesseract and WS Software; formed a key part of Asolvi's strategy to become the leading provider of field service management systems for SMEs in Europe. With the acquisition of Purpose Software, Asolvi added 2Serv and CBS solutions to its product suite, while the purchase of Vantage brought the cloud-based service management and billing platform Vantage Online, which was designed and developed as a completely rewritten replacement for its legacy on-premises solution Service Accent, underneath the Asolvi umbrella.

Fast forward a couple of years and the firm is positioning Vantage Online as its flagship solution, and is further developing it to reach more customers. Asolvi's Evatic solution is widely used across mainland Europe and typically supports large users. The firm is also continuing to support existing customers utilising 2Serv and CBS as well as the small number of dealers who have yet to migrate from Service Accent to Vantage Online.

Vantage Online was designed to meet the specific needs of the MPS, managed service and office technology markets. Key features include:

- **Visibility and transparency:** Call control is highly flexible, with a suite of adaptive bespoke reports and dashboards delivering instant visibility and transparency at the click of a button.
- **Mapping:** Visibility over where jobs and engineers are at any time on an interactive map allows for better allocation of resources.

- **Contract administration:** Whether billing in advance or arrears, for a fixed term or on an open-ended basis, Vantage Online makes billing simpler.

- **Maintain tighter control over costs:** Stock control manages all stock carried by field-based engineers, to achieve improved first call fix rates and exceed service levels.

- **Meter billing functionality:** The process of obtaining readings becomes fully automated, increasing profitability whilst enhancing customer service levels.

- **Reporting and dashboards:** User-definable dashboards and advanced reporting capabilities ensure a comprehensive range of reports that can also run automatically for ease of use.

- **App:** Fully offline capable App allows field-based staff to complete and update jobs, capture signatures and photos, and provides access to complete service history. Near real-time synchronisation between the back office and service team saves time, ensures accurate recording of critical information and improves service delivery.

- **Integration:** Integration is available for most leading accounting applications, almost all Device Collection Agents (DCAs) and for many of the leading supplies and consumables distributors.

Deeper integration

Asolvi's large team of developers enable new capabilities to be brought to market much faster. UK Sales Director, Kevin McNally said that plans include adding more distributor links, which will enable clients to push orders directly from Vantage Online (which manages their billing, contract administration, service and helpdesk, stock, consumables and reporting), into the distributor of their choice's back-office system, and in return receive updates on the progress of those orders, (from picking through to end-user delivery). "This functionality will provide our customers with complete end-to-end visibility over their order processing," he said. Other developments include enhancing the meter reading and billing functionality through automation, as

well as building deeper integrations with other partners.

Recent examples of partnerships that have come to recent fruition include the launch of three new connectors that enable MPS Monitor 2.0 to establish and maintain a seamless machine-to-machine communication with Evatic, 2serv and Vantage Online systems. This integration allows the three ERP systems to get timely and updated information on device status, meter readings, consumable alerts and levels, support and maintenance requests, and much more information, coming directly from MPS Monitor's DCA.

Also just announced is the news of a strengthened technology partnership with print fleet management and MPS software JetAdvice. The evolving partnership demonstrates the commitment of both companies to the MPS sector while preparing the foundations for further European expansion.

Asolvi and EuroForm, the company behind the JetAdvice brand, have worked together for eight years to integrate their software and support MPS dealers and distributors in a rapidly evolving industry and have a combined customer base that spans 30 countries.

JetAdvice's software is already integrated with many of Asolvi's solutions including Winserv, Evatic, CBS and 2Serv. Email and CSV integration are possible right now with Asolvi's Vantage Online software, and the company has plans for even tighter integration in the future.

Ramp up availability

Asolvi is preparing Vantage Online for internationalisation and beginning to ramp up availability for the European MPS sector. Its plans include opening up the solution to a much wider audience, making it accessible to smaller customers. "We're looking at creating an entry-level product to enable dealers to onboard sooner," McNally explained. "Historically, customers would be managing 1,500+ devices, now we are looking to offer the benefits of this cloud-based platform to dealer with MIFs of 200-300."

www.asolvi.com

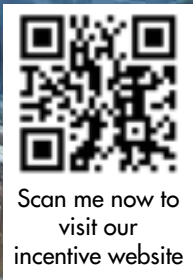


Kevin McNally



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Increase productivity, with fast print speeds, high quality black and white documents

Print

Speed: up to 40 ppm⁴

Size: 15x14.06x8.5

Cartridge: 58A/58X

Care Pack SKU: UB9U1E



LaserJet Pro MFP M428fdw

Enable office-class workflows in the home with scanning, copying and faxing

Print, scan, copy, fax

Speed: up to 40 ppm⁴

Size: 16.54x15.35x12.72

Cartridge: 58A/58X

Care Pack SKU: UB9S0E



Color LaserJet Pro M454dw

Increase productivity, fast print speeds, high quality color charts, graphics and more

Print

Speed: up to 28 ppm black/color⁴

Size: 16.2x18.5x11.6

Cartridge: 414A/414X

Care Pack SKU: UB9V0E



Color LaserJet Pro MFP M479fdw

Obtain office-class workflows in the home with multifunction, high quality color

Print, scan, copy, fax

Speed: up to 28 ppm black/color⁴

Size: 16.4x18.6x15.7

Cartridge: 58A/58X

Care Pack SKU: UB9T2E

For more information contact our
Ingram Micro HP Print Product manager Hugo Olloman
Hugo.Ollaman@ingrammicro.com



Ethos Group invests for growth

Just prior to lockdown, Ethos Group acquired Pinnacle Document Solutions Group, a move that provides a solid platform for expansion in South Wales and the South West of England. Michelle Ryder spoke to Chief Executive Officer Barry Matthews, to find out more about the business' plans and goals



Michelle Ryder (MR): You completed the Pinnacle deal just before lockdown, how's business been over the past six months, and how does that compare to last year?

Barry Matthews (BM): I don't think anyone could have predicted the advent and impact of COVID-19 12 months ago. It's fair to say the past six months have been challenging for organisations in every sector.

Our services and solutions offering is pretty broad, and continuing to expand our product and service portfolio across digitisation, cloud, mobile, cyber and security services to address changing market needs, is a top priority for the leadership team.

So whilst the print side has been impacted, we have continued to trade throughout. In particular we have seen much greater demand for telecoms and software solutions. Across the group, our sales team are sitting at around 75 per cent of target.

We've taken time over the past few months making sure we cut our cloth accordingly and keep business moving as we look to the future. We're cautiously optimistic as we enter Q4 and hopefully more offices begin to re-open.

MR: You said you're experiencing stronger demand in other technology sectors, can you please expand?

BM: The massive surge of people

working from home meant a huge uptick in demand for technology that would enable them to be as productive as when in the office. That spanned telecoms, video conferencing and IT services and solutions that enabled people to work from home securely. We have a strong team who supported our clients throughout, delivering the solutions and support they needed to continue business as usual.

As a group we continue to develop partnerships in emerging technology, a strategy that allows us to evolve and better support our customers as the business landscape changes. One example of this is recent investment in document digitisation and workflow transformation tools – areas where demand has accelerated due to the pandemic.

Print volumes are also slowly picking up again as people return to the office albeit many are adopting a hybrid working model.

MR: How have you changed/are you changing business operations?

BM: One of the key focus areas has been on 'cutting our cloth' accordingly, by that I mean reducing non-people costs to ensure there's no wastage. We're looking at our geographical spread and physical office set-up, considering what we have got and what do we need going forward.

There are lots of new opportunities that we will capitalise on – for example MPS is a proven way to help organisations reduce costs and increase efficiency, the MFP can be the backbone of the office, but even today, it can be overlooked. Our approach is to glean a forensic understanding of how clients use and do not use office equipment and then assist them in the best way we can to improve their operations and reduce their costs.

Over the past 12 months Ethos has invested heavily in high performing salespeople to generate broader penetration into existing customer accounts and develop new business. We have also invested in service delivery to improve the overall customer experience by rolling out engineer connectivity and growing the service desk to support remote fault resolution.

We have also created and launched a new cyber risk division. We provide a cyber security score card designed to enable clients to understand weaknesses in their set-up and the potential cost, we can then support them in closing the gaps and eliminating the financial and reputational risk of a breach. In today's climate making sure home workers are operating securely has to be the top priority for everyone.

MR: What are the biggest challenges facing channel businesses today, can OEMs help?

BM: I think agility is really important – you have to be able to quickly react to change. It's important not only to react to change within your own company but you also have to be able to flex to accommodate clients' changing requirements – if you are to remain relevant.

OEMs are there to help their channel partners do business, so long as they recognise that and do all they can to help – that's all you can ask.

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ECS discuss the consequences of using products that are made with inferior plastics.



As one of the largest UK remanufacturers and recyclers of toner cartridges, ECS are extremely well-informed about the dangers and issues caused by poorly made toner cartridges which make use of cheap, ineffective plastics, enabling the seller to offer an attractive, reduced price to customers. Unfortunately, the majority of customers buying these types of cartridge are unable to identify a cartridge which contains these types of materials or the problems that they can cause before it's too late.

For a remanufacturer like ECS, these types of products on the market can often tarnish the reputation of their own remanufactured and compatible products, even though theirs are produced with high quality materials in the UK using precision-engineering combined with years of technical experience.

The Environmental Dangers and cartridge contaminants

Effective Consumable Solutions informed us that a recent investigation and subsequent report by ECHA (European Chemicals Agency) discovered that over 23% of products imported into the EU were non-compliant with REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals), meaning that many of the substances contained within the plastic cartridges from overseas are in fact hazardous and toxic for the environment, making them illegal to be placed onto EU marketplaces. ECS added that there has been much discussion and publication within the industry and by the Government

regarding the chemical components of many structural parts of toner cartridges, most notably those that fall under the classification of "New Build Cartridges" from China. The majority of these cartridges are guilty of containing substances that are banned from being placed onto EU markets, such as PBDE's.

Director of ECS, Chris Fink, said "We encourage all within the industry to ensure that they know exactly what it is that they're buying when it comes to their toners. One piece of plastic may not look any different to another but it can be the difference between placing a perfectly good product onto the market or a completely illegal one. We advise that best practice is to ensure that your distributor meet the requirements, standards, laws and policies for the European market in order to avoid any severe consequences further down the line."



ECS Remanufactured Canon C-EXV28-29 Black Drum Unit

A Whole World of Pain

While you might not be able to visibly see the hazardous substances contained within poorly manufactured toners, you'll most certainly be able to see the aftermath caused by one when it all goes horribly wrong inside on of your machines, ECS explained.

"You don't want to be on the receiving end of a customer complaint when this happens" said ECS's Director of Operations, Adam Lighton. "Leaks, explosions, clogging, printer damage and poor quality prints are just some of the most common results of what happens when an expensive device meets an inferior, poorly manufactured toner cartridge made with low-grade plastic."

ECS added that their cartridges must meet certain regulations and pass extremely thorough tests and regulations before being placed onto the market to ensure that this is never the case with any of their own remanufactured or compatible products.



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New monitoring as a service solutions

Kodak Alaris is expanding its remote service offerings with three new monitoring as a service tools that deliver cloud-based device management and optimise scanner performance

The new MPS Capture Agent, Scanner Manager and Scanner Finder Tool from Kodak Alaris enable channel partners to deliver added customer value by allowing scanners from Kodak Alaris to be seamlessly integrated into device monitoring solutions for smarter reporting and management. By leveraging these new capabilities, partners will be able to optimise customers' document capture infrastructures as easily as printer fleets, achieve visibility over all imaging costs, reduce the cost to provide service, and expand their business opportunities.

With the MPS Capture Agent, developers can seamlessly add scanners from Kodak Alaris to a fleet of devices a business is monitoring without needing to deploy an additional device management tool. The MPS Capture Agent integrates easily with MPS and PC management solutions, is compliant with industry-standard security requirements and provides MPS providers and end-user customers with visibility of key scanner operational data and status via existing dashboards.

MPS dealers can benefit by selling dedicated scanners in addition to MFPs to give customers higher quality scans and faster throughput. Plus, they can charge per scan, since scanner usage data will now be easily accessible. Customers also benefit from faster throughput, higher quality scans, greater reliability and access to the Kodak Alaris service team.

Device management dashboard

The Scanner Manager from Kodak Alaris is a smart device management dashboard designed to optimise scanner operations and manage the lifecycle of devices. This cloud-based solution improves productivity and profitability; a Kodak Alaris partner or an end-user's IT department can directly monitor and collect scanners' operational data,

deliver usage reports (including 'power on' hours, scan counts, consumables and firmware or driver versions), and manage multi-variate alerts for customers' devices.

Customers that have mission-critical equipment at multiple scanning locations or customers that have 20 or more scanners in a central facility, can benefit from the ability to remotely access telemetry data rather than physically going to each location.

"Cloud-based service offerings like the Scanner Manager and MPS Capture Agent are essential for organisations that want to manage and track devices as part of their fleet management strategy," said Anne Valaitis, Senior Consultant for InfoTrends' Image Scanning Trends and Professional & Managed Print Services. "It's important for the IT channel to understand and embrace these tools. Being able to measure and optimise utilisation makes you a better partner. There's only upside and benefit to it."

Subscription-based pricing

Kodak Alaris is offering three Scanner Manager plans in a flexible, subscription-based pricing model.

■ **Customer Access:** Administrators use the Scanner Manager tool to access a Health Check Dashboard. The dashboard monitors a fleet of scanners from Kodak Alaris and displays telemetry data. Customers can access and download cloud-based dashboard data anytime, from anywhere, to view real-time status and run reports for monitored scanners. Scanners can be added or removed as required.

■ **Usage Reporting:** Kodak Alaris provides one or more recipients with a standard monthly report via email. The report contains the list of monitored scanners and provides insights derived from scanner-specific rules. When triggered, these rules generate alerts that combine information with insight



to maximise scanner and system performance.

■ **Alert Management:** Real-time alerts for proactive management of fleets such as multi-feed/jam reports, consumables reporting and more. Data-driven insight identifies potential productivity issues and generates proactive responses to prevent unscheduled downtime and help prevent future issues.

Scanner finder tool

Kodak Alaris has also expanded its professional services with the launch of the Scanner Finder Tool. This standalone application can be used as part of the discovery phase of a 'Capture System Assessment' engagement with existing and new customers. The Scanner Finder Tool enables automatic discovery of Kodak Alaris and multi-vendor scanners on customer networks and delivers an initial inventory of a customer's USB scanner base in minutes. It can be delivered as a chargeable professional service or as a complimentary service to customers purchasing the Scanner Manager tool.

"Kodak Alaris understands the needs of our partners and customers," said Gary Chamberlain, Vice President Global Services, Alaris division of Kodak Alaris. "We now have unique tools in the marketplace that maximise efficiency and productivity, leading to a more outcome-based model and helping customers realise the full benefits of 'as a service' options.

"MPS vendors are leaving money on the table by leaving scanners out of their offers. With the MPS Capture Agent, vendors can now include scanners in their offerings and connect them to their MPS solutions," Chamberlain concluded.

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Partner programme for the multi-cloud era

Nutanix brings partner ecosystem together in a single programme architecture with enhanced services and investments to grow partners' business with hybrid and multi-cloud solutions

Nutanix's new simplified global partner programme Elevate, has been designed to re-define the partner engagement journey. Built on an already robust partner programme, Elevate will bring together Nutanix's global partner ecosystem – value added resellers and value added distributors; service providers and Telcos; hyperscalers; independent software, hardware, and platform vendors; global system integrators; and services delivery partners – under one integrated architecture to deliver simplification, profitability and an accelerated multi-product, multi-cloud roadmap towards partners' business transformation.

Elevate simplifies engagement for Nutanix's entire partner ecosystem using a consistent set of tools, resources and marketing platforms provided in the new partner portal – making it easier for partners to outline their path to success. Further enhancements include a new performance+ deal registration designed to increase incentive potential and opportunity protection. This consistency of experience and support also extends to programme terminology – bringing together all partner organisations under a single Elevate programme brand and badging structure.

Hamza Nadi, Head of Solution Sales, SVA said: "Elevate encompasses all the support and resources I could have asked for, including a re-imagining of deal registration processes that will enable our teams to be successful teaming with Nutanix. It is very comprehensive."

Simplicity

"Our vision has always been about simplicity, from the technology we innovate to the way we do business, and Elevate will deliver that vision to the entire partner ecosystem – enabling them to leverage market shifts toward subscription-based, multi-product, multi-cloud delivery of IT for their customers," said Christian Alvarez, Senior Vice President of Worldwide

Channels at Nutanix.

"Our new Elevate partner programme significantly deepens our commitment to all partner types around the world, and the enhancements we are rolling out today are just the beginning of many more exciting updates to come so we can partner even more effectively."

Commenting on the new programme, Mark Poon, General Manager, ICON Business Systems said: "We are excited by the way Nutanix is embracing simplicity through the single-programme architecture and automated processes – making it much easier to define a clear path to success for our company and our customers."



Channel benefits

To start, the Elevate Partner Programme will roll-out benefits for the channel community with further programme expansion reaching additional partner organisations in the year ahead. These upcoming Elevate partner programme elements will include updated competencies and solution validation options for alliance partners, flexible pricing models and simplified billing for service providers, and robust offer development resources for service delivery partners.

The Elevate programme for channel differs from traditional partner programmes by providing a unique emphasis on partner capabilities and competencies to sell and support the Nutanix portfolio, rather than revenue targets. The new programme represents a significant double-digit increase in investment by Nutanix into the channel and will provide the following benefits:

■ **Simplicity:** One programme

architecture for all partners to deliver software sales and consultative services based on Nutanix technology. The refreshed partner portal will provide greater access to information and insights across the partner ecosystem through custom-branded marketing materials, training tools, and personalised insights allowing for more effective data-driven decisions.

■ **Protection:** The new performance+ deal registration programme brings greater alignment between partner and Nutanix sellers to deliver increased discounts, more predictable deal margins, enhanced opportunity protection, and attractive incentives for driving net-new business in today's highly competitive market.

■ **Transformation:** Elevate focuses on delivering benefits to the partners who invest in expanding their Nutanix skill sets through certifications that demonstrate specific competencies and outlines a clear roadmap on how partners can develop their desired areas of expertise.

■ **Profit:** Elevate brings a new level of profitability, including front end margins, new mechanisms to help deliver margin-rich services, richer rebate levels for bringing new business, and a new rebate that rewards Elevate cloud champion partners for selling across the entire Nutanix portfolio.

■ **Experience:** Elevate will ensure there are no interruptions to existing incentives from the previous channel charter programme. Additionally, Nutanix has launched the new Americas partner support centre (PSC) – a team of dedicated channel sales, system engineers and marketing resources – who will deliver an enhanced partner experience and will be available to usher the partner community through the transition along with ongoing presales support.

Ed Palmer, Chief Operating Officer, Winslow Technology Group said: "As a longstanding Nutanix partner, we appreciate Nutanix's initiative to redesign its channel programme with a partner-first approach, including simplified engagement and a focus on consistent profitability via rebates, partner incentives, proposal based market development funds, and services opportunities."

www.nutanix.com



Christian Alvarez

Exertis creates new print specialist business

Exertis is merging its print hardware and supplies divisions to create one specialist print business unit. Michelle Ryder spoke to Andrew Beaumont, Managing Director, Exertis Supplies and Al Coyne General Manager, Print, to find out more about how a joined up hardware and supplies business will create a better customer experience as well as deliver value-add to its vendor partners

The Exertis group combines a number of technology pillars including IT, print, consumer, enterprise, mobile and supplies. Print was the first technology it sold, dating back to the mid-1980s when it was known as Micro-P.

With a clear strategic goal to grow the print business, Exertis entered the A3 market with brands such as Samsung (acquired by HP), Lexmark and Epson RIPS devices, and set-up a specialist sales team, dedicated to selling to traditional copier dealers who understood, lived and breathed OA. From its purpose-built Norfolk base, the dedicated print hardware business which also distributes Brother, Kyocera and OKI, comprises a commercial team of customer-facing product sales specialists that align to brands as well as a product management team supporting them.

Exertis also inherited the Epson large format printers, ink and media business from sister company Computers Unlimited and offers complementary products such as scanners from brands including Kodak Alaris, Brother, Epson and Plustek.

In terms of channel support, it offers a range of additional services including asset tagging, PDI, collection and disposal of legacy equipment, hard drive destruction, as well as basic network set-



Andrew Beaumont

up and training. It also has a nationwide network of engineers.

Bring print and supplies together

Exertis Supplies came about following the acquisition of consumables distributor Advent Data in 2011, a move that enabled the firm to achieve a foothold in the supplies market. According to Beaumont, the long-term plan was always to bring print and supplies together. "We have a lot of specialist experience within both divisions, by merging the two, we're giving customers access to all of the products we provide, and making it easier to transact with us. So Exertis Supplies customers can buy print hardware alongside supplies and in the same vein, Exertis print customers will have easy access to the supplies we distribute," he said.

On the print side, Exertis currently transacts with approximately 500 channel businesses, within supplies that number sits at around 2,000. The company is expecting that to grow quite significantly. It has just launched a new trading platform which once finalised company-wide will enable resellers to buy both supplies and hardware as one transaction under one account.

Speaking about the rationale behind the decision, Beaumont said it will create opportunity. "We will be able to offer customers more of the group's portfolio and become a one stop shop for all of their printing needs. In theory, customers can come through supplies and buy hardware, supplies or both, without having to go through another part of the business and open up a new account."

"Bringing both business units together and creating a joined up hardware and supplies business will deliver a better customer experience and we also believe it's a move that will also



Al Coyne

benefit our vendors," Coyne added.

Continued growth

"Over the past few years (since 2016) we've doubled print hardware revenue," Coyne added. "We want to continue to grow in a market which is actually flat or declining. Despite the current challenging climate, we have done a good job so far, but by bringing our businesses together, and creating that specialism for both hardware and supplies, we are confident we can continue to grow and add more value to deliver what our customers need."

Exertis distributes HP, Epson, Brother, Kyocera and OKI supplies. Beaumont admits that the division has seen limited growth as a result of market conditions but that the addition of office products to its offering has elevated its position within the channel, enabling it to also compete in the wholesale sector.

In terms of the new set-up, the structure will remain largely unchanged with Beaumont remaining at the helm of the business. "What's key is making sure that we focus on ensuring that whether it's from a vendor's or a dealer's point of view, the teams are joined up to deliver an end-to-end, value-added service," he said.

Beaumont confirmed that the company is also working on the services part of the business, and inferred that Exertis will be able to offer more services moving forward. "For us, the key message is that we see this move as really positive for both our vendors and customers alike," he concluded.

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DTP Group deploys MPS Monitor to improve business efficiency

DTP Group, a HP Platinum Partner, has recently onboarded MPS Monitor. Michelle Ryder spoke to Technical Consultant Tobias Dartsch to find out more about how the full-featured MPS solution will drive productivity, profitability and efficiency



Nicola De Blasi

DTP Group has been in the managed print business for over 30 years and has over time expanded its offering to include a range of complementary managed IT services. Headquartered in Leeds, the company services customers nationwide and also counts a number of European organisations among its customer base.

In terms of print, DTP Group is a single line HP dealer and has achieved the highest – Platinum – status in the OEM's partner programme. The company has a lot of experience within the higher education sector, a number of major

universities are long-standing customers and it has also widened its reach into the corporate market, providing solutions to both large enterprise and SMB organisations.

DTP Group is leveraging MPS Monitor to streamline its billing and consumables replenishment processes. Consumables management is integrated in a single, fully automated end-to-end process, while the engine for contracts management covers the whole invoicing process, up to the issuing of invoices in PDF, XML or CSV, ready to be sent to the customer and/or imported into the dealer's accounting systems.

The consumables management functionality is one feature which Dartsch believes is going to have a positive impact on the business. "We have got a number of different charging models for customers and we want to know if a customer replaces a consumable early. That can massively impact the profit that we can make on some accounts. With MPS Monitor we can access reports on this and raise any issues with the customer using the data to highlight what percentages consumables have been replaced when they should have probably stayed in the devices for longer."

He continued: "What we will also find useful is the different types of connectors that you can use for the solution, where you can install an embedded connector on a device. The majority of our customers are quite large, but we also do have smaller customers with maybe only a handful of devices that have very little infrastructure or even standalone devices. We've tested the embedded connector and it works really well in terms of getting meter readings etc. with no manual intervention."

Seamless process

DTP Group has gone through a successful trial phase and has now onboarded the majority of its customers. "From the customers' perspective other than letting them know what we were installing, it's been an entirely seamless process, with no impact on their ability to print or disruption in continuity of service," Dartsch explained.

According to Dartsch, one of the most exciting elements of the platform is its full integration with the HP Smart Device Services (SDS) platform. The MPS Monitor SDS platform provides printer fleet managers with advanced tools for remote hardware management, diagnosis and problem solving, thus reducing effort and costs for maintenance operations, improving service levels and maximising customer satisfaction.

"Over and above remote monitoring and managing our installed devices, our print solutions team delivers a full range of HP-driven security solutions. We are heavily involved in the implementation on the customer side, and we are really excited to look at the HP SDS capabilities, this is going to benefit many different areas of the business," he said.

The platform is feature-rich and provides a number of functions which save time and money, for example, device configuration and remote remediation allow dealers and maintenance teams to manage, configure and update all the printers installed at their customers' premises without having to go onsite.

Remote embedded web server access provides service staff with permanent



and secure remote access to the printer's embedded web server, without any need to activate a VPN or other remote access to the customers' network.

"The ability to securely access devices through the cloud portal is going to be a huge game changer for the entire service desk, engineering and our company," Dartsch added.

Remote diagnosis

"We have a large network of engineers, some of whom are permanently based on a customer's site," Dartsch explained. "Features such as diagnose before dispatch which enables most hardware problems in devices to be diagnosed remotely, will ensure we only send an engineer onsite when they are really needed.

"Another great feature is the error message functionality, the platform provides very detailed information around fault messages including videos and photos and how to resolve these including which parts to replace. That gives us a very good head start in terms of diagnosing faults with devices, and getting parts ordered before we attend the customer's site, thus improving our first-time fix rates. Our engineers really like that feature," he added.

Nicola De Blasi, CEO MPS Monitor expanded on this: "The SDS integration includes a feature that allows the dealer to access the embedded web server of any HP printer from inside MPS Monitor. It's really easy to do, simply click on a button and you can access any printer remotely, as if you were on the customers' network, but what is most important is the feature is fully secure because this is HP technology. It's a very compelling advantage for service desks and it removes the requirement to ask a customer to open a remote connection to the network which can cause inconvenience and takes time."

He continued: "Knowing that a printer is faulty, having insight into what exactly the problem is and how to fix it either remotely or by going onsite is a huge benefit. Another key advantage is that the dealer is aware of any issues and not relying on a customer to report them. For example, in a university there may be a number of students using a device and just getting frustrated with it not working. But how many of them would actually log it as a fault?"

"The SDS integration provides very

powerful remote maintenance features. For a HP dealer, this means money saved and a much improved customer experience."

Automated reporting

"The automated reporting on error calls is one big feature that we are looking to implement across the board," Dartsch said. "It's possible to install an app on the devices that allows the user to log a service call without having to go through their service desk – that's clever. We haven't implemented that on the customer side yet but we've tested it thoroughly in-house. That's definitely on the project map, we've got quite a few customers that have asked for a feature like this, and HP technology enables us to develop our own apps and make this happen."

Dartsch also mentioned that MPS Monitor has got some strong security features in-built which he said is a huge value-add.

MPS Monitor enables security policies to be defined on the fleet, the dealer can easily check for the latest firmware and whether network protocols are enabled or disabled etc. Once the policies are created, the dealer can on a daily basis run checks to check compliance and ensure enforcement by simply modifying the configuration of the device for those parameters, so that it becomes compliant to the policy.

"It's very similar to HP Jet Advantage Security Manager (JASM)," De Blasi said. "But there are two differences – it's cloud not on-premise so it's much less complex to manage, and secondly, unlike JASM it is free of charge, because it's included in MPS Monitor."

Security mark

Importantly, the MPS Monitor 2.0 platform is among the first to pass the Keypoint Intelligence-Buyers Lab (BLI) Printer & MFP Security Validation Testing for Policy Compliance. The neutral third-party security testing benchmark program standardises the requirements for output device and office IoT (Internet of Things) security.

Buyers Lab analysts confirmed the claimed features and effectiveness of the MPS Monitor 2.0 platform in satisfying the test methodology criteria, when used to manage HP Inc. printers and MFPs fully supported by the HP SDS platform:

- Discover and highlight at-risk firmware



Tobias Dartsch

(that is, out-of-date firmware with known and/or likely vulnerabilities) that are still in use on devices;

- Provide fleet-scalable, secure firmware update capability;
- Ensure a customer's devices are secured to a vendor's and/or customer's recommended settings (via templates, policies, or similar mechanism);
- Provide a method to discover out-of-compliance devices;
- Generate a report (or dashboard view) showing at-risk devices;
- Provide a way to automatically apply the desired settings to bring devices back into compliance;
- Provide ongoing checks to ensure the devices are still in compliance with the recommended settings;
- Automatically detect newly connected but unconfigured device(s) attached to the network and automatically apply the policy designated by the administrator for new devices.

"We're delighted to have DTP Group on board. MPS Monitor SDS drastically reduces incoming customer calls, speeds up the response time and simplifies maintenance processes. Proactive device monitoring enables remote diagnosis, often before the customer even knows there is an issue to report, reducing machine downtime and repeated interventions for the same problem. In addition, if an intervention requires parts replacement, the SDS system will identify the parts required and, thanks to an integration with supplier systems, check availability and location in real-time, all of which delivers a real value-add to the dealer's business." De Blasi concluded.

www.dtpgroup.co.uk

www.mpsmonitor.com

The ability to securely access devices through the cloud portal is going to be a huge game changer for the entire service desk, engineering and our company

Looking to the future: Part two

COVID-19 has presented a number of unprecedented challenges to organisations in every sector, however it has also opened doors of opportunity for print and IT vendors to innovate. *PrintIT Reseller* invited a panel of industry leaders to share their thoughts on business post-pandemic

PrintIT Reseller: What do you think business recovery will look like post-COVID-19?

It's our belief that, once the business challenges presented by COVID-19 have been addressed, we can all start to embrace the possibilities presented by 'Business-21'



Frank Hulshoff

Frank Hulshoff, Director Rent, Demo & Marketing, Flex IT Distribution: "Although some markets where Flex IT is active in have suffered, (such as the events industry) overall, we have been able to respond well to the market demands. We believe the economy itself will see a slow recovery. The main question for many markets will be how customer behaviour will be influenced in the long-term by this situation. As far as circular IT goes we feel very positive about the future even in an economic slowdown where people will be even more aware of the ROI benefits it brings."

Steve Holmes, EMEA Regional Director, PaperCut: "It will of course vary from country to country and sector to sector, with many variables playing a role in what recovery looks like for each one."

"Caution will probably be the watchword for many; caution in post recovery plans, caution in getting staff safely back into the workplace, and caution when making purchasing decisions."

"Another factor is the state of the

nation's confidence. Once there are positive signs that processes are in place for bringing the virus under control – that track and trace is comprehensive and effective – we are hoping to see a resulting rise in business confidence. And with that, we then see the start of an economic recovery, albeit slowly.

"Of course, almost all businesses will have to change and adapt, whether it's their overall business strategy, or how and where their staff work. For many companies, the pandemic has accelerated their digital transformation plans. This is probably an unexpected benefit of the pandemic, as digital brings with it the sort of agility and insights that enables business to act and respond quickly to the sort of rapid market changes that extreme events like a pandemic can trigger."

"It's our belief that, once the business challenges presented by COVID-19 have been addressed, we can all start to embrace the possibilities presented by 'Business-21'."

Martin Randall, Sales and Marketing Director, Vision: "We are fortunate to have a large number of clients in sectors, for instance healthcare, that remain fully functional and in general we remain optimistic about the recovery of our market. That said we recognise and accept that there will be long-term impacts on our industry as a result



Steve Holmes



Martin Randall

mainly of the shift to the working from home model. In the medium term we are anticipating 85 per cent of people will return to the office, and volumes to reduce in line with this by 10-15 per cent overall. Uncertainty over how long COVID will be amongst us makes it difficult to predict any timescales for this recovery to fully take effect, all we can do is remain positive, focused, and of course continue to adapt."



Phil Jones

Phil Jones, Managing Director, Brother UK: "Even if we need to permanently re-think how the economy runs, how people work and where businesses are located, and while there's no doubt that tough times are ahead, the Bank of England's latest forecasts suggest things might not be as tough as we first thought, which is really welcome."

"If lockdowns become a feature of our everyday lives, then the economy may be a series of stop/starts. Let's not forget Brexit either, which will also contribute to the economic situation. It will keep the economists busy, that's for sure."



Emma Davies-Carolan

Emma Davies-Carolan, Director of Marketing, Europe, ECI Solutions: "I would imagine businesses across all sectors including field service will be looking to strengthen their online capabilities during the recovery period, with home working providing an incredibly cost-effective and productive model for some. To do this successfully, cloud-based solutions are likely to become more and more common, providing reassurance that whenever required, no matter their location, employees can continue to be able to perform their responsibilities effectively."



Phil Madders

Phil Madders, Managing Director, PAE Business: "I think there will be further consolidation in the channel as the impact of the downturn of page volumes in the hospitality and tourist sectors bite. There will be fewer office printers sold in the short-term as organisations look at their output device fleet to see if it is fit for purpose and we are going to be in for a tough couple of years going forward."

"At PAE we are preparing ourselves to make sure we can support our customers long-term in what threatens to be a challenging time for all of us!"

Clive Hamilton, Managing Director, Pinnacle: "Tough question, which I don't honestly believe anyone actually knows the answer to. All I can say, is that I feel that if we wait to look at the post-COVID recovery, business terrain will have a very different look and feel across the globe."

"It's more like how do we adapt to working environments to cope and work alongside COVID. Think if businesses just get on with life in the most sensible, pre-cautious and safest way ensuring all staff and clients are safe then we can all start trading with a level of the new normal. This will also drive the technology changes quicker for all of us in the digital world."

Michael Field, Managing Director, Workflo Solutions: "The business community is resilient; this is not the first time we have collectively faced challenges. We must not allow anxiety to halt commercial activity. On the contrary, we need to engage in active trade quickly, passionately, and we must be wholly immersed in turning the tide of recession. I see an engaged economy, one where local services, and UK manufacturing, play a major part. Let's invest in each other, and the skills which are in abundance across the country. What do I see post COVID-19; I see innovation, I see technology advancing and taking us to exciting places. And most importantly, I see success."

Mike Barron, Managing Director, SYNAXON UK: "I am not sure anyone really knows. I believe that the workplace and working practices will be altered permanently as a result of the pandemic and that will mean a change in priorities and emphasis. At the risk of repeating myself, I expect to see a major shift towards cloud usage and managed services."

"For resellers and MSPs, there will be opportunities in handling migrations and then aggregating and managing cloud resources and hybrid infrastructures; further to that, there will be opportunities to manage connectivity,



Clive Hamilton



Michael Field

cybersecurity, back-up and business contingency and devices and accessories. Print is going to be a distinct opportunity within that and there will need to be some new services here because a lot of the print devices will be located within workers' homes.



Mike Barron

"The need for IT solutions certainly won't diminish – in fact, with more people working from home most of the time, there will be an even greater dependency on technology and the services that enable users to stay available, engaged, responsive, productive and secure. Once end-user organisations have adjusted, reset their ways of working and their goals, I think we will see a strong recovery and even more investment with the emphasis firmly shifted to subscription and operational expenditure."

"I also think MSPs will start to become more important to their customers as they [the customers] start to realise the value that the MSP's expert monitoring and support actually provides. Ultimately, this will lead to MSPs winning more business from IT resellers who have not moved with the times and are not delivering the required level of service."

What do I see post COVID-19; I see innovation, I see technology advancing and taking us to exciting places. And most importantly, I see success.

continued...

...continued

There will be a shift towards businesses choosing to work with companies that can help them improve their workplaces



Nigel Allen

Nigel Allen, Marketing Director, ASL Group: "Although heavily affected, the fact that alongside the strong SME focus, we have a very strong education base at ASL is going to aid the recovery. We know that it is a government priority to get children back into schools (even if it does mean pubs closing again!). Therefore that sector will recover, coupled with the fact that there is more demand for services such as document management and touch free secure printing which will help those companies who are able to advise and sell."

"Both of these services have been around for a long time but we are seeing a rapid rise in adoption as the pandemic has really accelerated companies' digitisation strategies. Ultimately it will be a long recovery and companies with resilience will survive as it is very hard to forecast a smooth recovery path due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic and further potential outbreaks."

James Pittick, Partner Channel Director, Canon UK: "Business recovery will be based on showing support for the hybrid office, where workers are more distributed than ever before. Being able to support this environment will be critical. It will also be important to have security at the core of your offering. With people working from home, the security



James Pittick

perimeter has massively expanded, a strong cybersecurity offering is now absolutely essential to winning new business – trust is all important.

"We have been working with our partners for a long time, focusing on diversification and flexibility, so many of our partners are already on a journey, moving solely from print into the IT services world. Business recovery relies on an ability to manage this journey successfully, and to implement information management technologies and the cloud into product portfolios."

Stuart Sykes, Managing Director, Sharp UK: "We know that all businesses value working with a partner that can bring innovative ideas to the table and deliver results, and this need will have only increased tenfold due to the impact of COVID-19. There will also be a shift towards businesses choosing to work with companies that can help them improve their workplaces, making them more flexible and efficient. At Sharp, that is exactly what we can achieve for our customers!"



Stuart Sykes

Alpesh Unalkat, CEO, Aura: "We believe business recovery will be mixed post-COVID-19. Some organisations, dependent on their business sector, the maturity of their technology adoption and their business culture will recover quickly and adopt new working practices to recover and indeed thrive in the post-COVID world, whereas others will potentially struggle."

"Our own business has traded well throughout the pandemic with significant new business wins across EMEA in April, May, June and July, and we see that increasing further as some form of normality resumes. Furthermore, we are an acquisitive business and see more opportunity to consolidate in both the collaboration and managed print markets, something incumbent owners of high quality MPS businesses can benefit from and something we are well positioned to deliver."



Alpesh Unalkat

James Reed, Managing Director UK&I – Endpoint Solutions, Tech Data: "We've seen sales accelerate in some areas while others have been held back, but we are seeing a return to something like normal levels of activity now. I think the recovery will be gradual. Most customer organisations are still reassessing how their own needs have changed and what that means in terms of their IT investment. As they do that, we are likely to see more of a shift towards cloud, collaborative tools, products that enable improved productivity for home workers, and security and services that will provide the necessary management and support for these new infrastructures."



James Reed

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View from the channel

Mike Rae, *Managing Director, Highland Copiers*



Mike Rae

I am confident of Highland Copiers' future and security with no redundancies to date

Q: How's business; better or worse than 12 months ago? And how confident are you about the future?

A: The last 12 months has been very mixed. During the first six months up to lockdown, I was very happy at the continued rate of Highland Copiers' growth. Whilst I have been satisfied and a little surprised we have continued to show growth recently, the current and most recent six months has been very interesting adapting to the COVID-19 world and its challenges.

Without being complacent, whilst the future may continue to have its challenges, we quickly adapted and made the necessary changes to ensure the company's health and security. I am confident of Highland Copiers' future and security with no redundancies to date and must also thank the loyalty our customers have shown us along with their own resilience in their own businesses to struggle on in these unprecedented of times.

Q: In what areas are you experiencing strongest demand?

A: We have seen an increase in our customers' request for and warmth towards document solutions and workflow software. More recently however, during the current COVID-19 world, as you could expect, we have seen a sharp increase in home and desktop MFDs along with the automated core body temperature monitors.

Q: How have you changed/are you changing business operations to exploit new opportunities?

A: Through word of mouth and flying the flag for local, in an environment with mainly national competition, the local market we operate in has shown ever increasing interest in Highland Copiers and our slogan 'discover true local...'. We chose to offer 'no small print' tie in or early termination penalty clause service contracts. We are confident in the service standards and levels we promise and deliver and we believe our customers stay with us because they want to and not because they are contracted to. We are not insecure in our standards of service and therefore see no reason to have small print tie in early termination period clauses.

Q: What do you see as the biggest challenges facing channel businesses today?

A: Aside from the Brexit unknowns, it's fairly obvious. Operating directly in Scotland, potential future localised lockdowns, restrictions on travel, difficulties and questioning of the ethics/morality around visiting customers in person in the current climate for sales and account management, along with the extensive levels of PPE and hygiene/safety precautions our service team have to take, all make for an interesting and challenging future.

Q: Could vendors and distributors do more to help you overcome them? And if so, what?

A: Whilst we cannot fault our main supplier – Develop (DSales), where we almost always receive free delivery due to the volume of our orders. It is well known the highland area suffers from southern delivery companies operating discriminative stealth taxes/surcharges delivering to the highlands, however, highland delivery companies can deliver to the south with no surcharges.

These one way surcharges could and should be removed and this is possible with doing simple homework on the many different options available to our area such as air, rail, road and even having a main port available. One big change I see currently (however I've seen the wind change many times within my 18 years operating in the industry) is the acceptance rates of finance companies across the board not being as high as pre-COVID times. Whilst I fully understand why, it would be a big help if they lowered their points criteria to help the country continue on.

Q: If you could change one aspect of your job what would it be and why?

A: I do love my job and the addictive satisfaction it gives growing the business, however, in a dream world with no common sense or care of costs, I would love to have many more hands to help as our business continues to grow.

www.Highlandcopiers.co.uk



HighlandCopiers

Business Design Centre London · 11 March 2021

The Convergent Technology Event for IT Resellers & Providers

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www.technologylive.co.uk

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Steve Holmes,
EMEA Regional Director, *PaperCut*



Steve Holmes

What's currently having the greatest impact on your business?

Post-COVID we are seeing customer needs pivoting back to a core set of priorities around how to reduce costs, embrace new ways of remote working, create contactless environments and remove unnecessary infrastructure. These are all fundamentals at PaperCut and part of our DNA.

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Fully featured on-premise solutions have always been the norm, but the move to more agile cloud solutions are gaining traction, especially with SME organisations. In a consolidating market, finding those solutions that can offer the full array of infrastructure options is key.

What would make your day job easier?

We are a global organisation, headquartered in Melbourne, so whilst I run the EMEA Region, a time machine would certainly help with those late night calls.

What's the best bit of business advice you've been given?

Invest in strong relationships and building great teams.

If you had had a crystal ball, would you have done anything differently?

Reflection is always good but every decision you make is an opportunity to learn, no matter the outcome.

Describe your most embarrassing moment.

Leaving my lapel mic on in the toilet before a large presentation. (Luckily only the sound engineer could hear).

What was your first job?

Computer operator (I certainly don't miss the old Nixdorf 8890s).

What would be your dream job?

I have a passion for law and I am halfway through gaining my Private Pilot's Licence, so maybe a good compromise would be an air support pilot with the police.

Fine dining and good wine, or curry and a pint?

Curry and a pint every time.

Money's not an issue, what's your perfect car... and where would you like to drive it?

Audi R8 Spyder driven through the beautiful Swiss Alps.

Favourite holiday destination?

I am lucky enough to see so many amazing places around the world travelling with PaperCut, but for me I would have to say somewhere closer to home, St Ives in the UK.

How do you like to spend your spare time?

With friends and family, preferably in an aeroplane.



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