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Product Review



OKI DATA SERVICE MANAGES NETWORK PRINTING ASSETS

By Marc Spiwak

As managed services become more popular, organizations can now choose to have a third party manage their hardware, software, databases, backup operations and any number of other business functions. Oki Data recently got into the game with its Managed Services for printers—or, more specifically, any machine with a paper output. The service is available for all printers manufactured by major vendors, and can be resold through the channel.

Managing printers traditionally requires significant overhead, especially in a large organization with many machines. IT departments in many large companies are often unaware of how many printers are in use, what kinds of printers they are, when they were purchased and what they cost to operate. Oki's tool clearly identifies exactly which printers are in use, where they are and how they are being used.

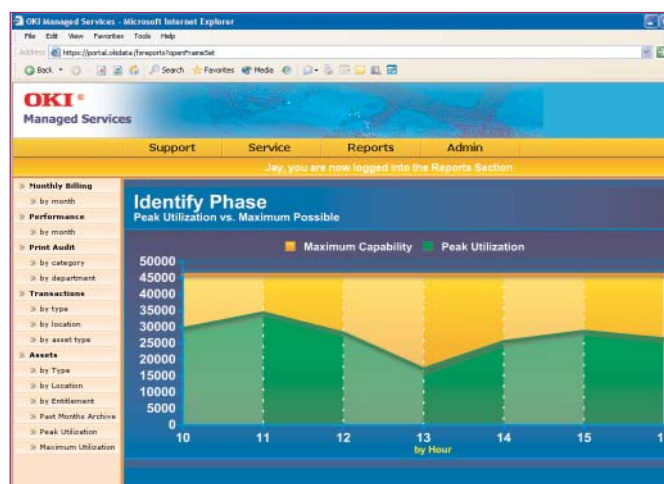
Oki's Managed Services also offers tools for printer asset and consumables tracking. This feature helps customers reduce operating costs, increase productivity and make the most efficient use of every printer.

The program has three phases: Identify, Improve and Manage. In the Identify phase, Oki conducts a thorough, on-site audit of a customer's fleet of printers. An Oki representative runs proprietary print auditing software to determine how often each printer is used, whether it's used mostly for color or monochrome pages and the average percentage of coverage for each print job, as well as future output needs and building floor plans. Oki then delivers a detailed readout of all the printers surveyed.

Once the audit is completed, the Improve phase begins, during which Oki makes recommendations to improve printer use, such as swapping printer locations, moving printers to other areas or retiring an old unit in favor of a new, cost-effective machine.

If a customer uses a reseller to manage its IT assets, Oki will work with that reseller and share revenue. Resellers can even resell the auditing software.

After the printer equipment is updated, the Manage phase begins. Oki's asset management and remote-monitoring software keeps track of printer status and usage and can forecast the replacement of consumables across an entire fleet of printers. Customers are free to do their own life-cycle management or Oki can handle it for them. Oki will maintain an up-to-date printer asset database, maintain and repair all printers and even run a company's printer help desk.



OKI MANAGED SERVICES

RECOMMENDED

> Company:

Oki Data Americas
Mount Laurel, N.J.
(800) 235-2600
www.okidata.com

> Tech Rating: ★★★★★

> Channel Rating: ★★★★★

> Distributors/Integrators: Direct from vendor

NOTE: VENDORS CAN EARN UP TO FIVE STARS FOR TECHNICAL MERIT AND FIVE FOR THEIR CHANNEL PROGRAM. IF THE AVERAGE OF THESE TWO SCORES IS FOUR STARS OR GREATER, THE PRODUCT EARNS CRN TEST CENTER RECOMMENDED STATUS.

Solution providers must maintain targeted sales levels to become authorized for Oki's channel program, and can receive co-op funding, marketing and sales support and training on-site and through the Web. A toll-free reseller hotline provides support for solution providers throughout the selling process. The average margin is 15 percent on the software.

