ITEC
QUALITY PEOPLE, SMART OFFICE SOLUTIONS

Don't neglect information security
in the office automation environment

Adding user authentication and user privilege management controls into document output environments

Companies need to build strong user authentication and user privilege management controls into their document output environments to ensure that confidential information is safe from eyes that should not see it.

That's according to Holger Groenert, product marketing manager at Itec Distribution. He says that many companies make heavy investments into securing computers and networks without giving a second thought to the amount of sensitive information that gets fed into scanners and spat out by their printers.

"A user that wants to walk out of your office with a confidential business plan might do so by photocopying it rather than emailing it," he adds. "And we have heard many horror stories about payroll information left lying in a printer tray for the next person who walks past to see."

ENTER PRINT DIRECTOR

Groenert says that Itec's multifunction products support a combination of sophisticated hardware and software solutions that allow companies to control access to information and printers, authenticate users, track user activity in the printing environment and enforce company policies.

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>
> *HOLGER GROENERT*

"Solutions such as Itec Print Director mean that organisations can implement security measures such as follow-me printing which forces users to authenticate themselves at the printer before the print will be released, thereby ensuring that confidential documents are not left unattended in the printer tray," he adds.

With follow-me-printing, users are able to print to any related device in their workgroups that they have permissions for, rather than having their print job sent to one specific printer. Apart from its security benefits, it helps improve productivity in busy offices.

Follow-me printing also saves companies money because prints will not be released until the user authenticates him or herself at the printer and if a print job is not released within a specified time frame, the job will be deleted. Documents that are printed and never collected account for a surprising amount of wastage in the average office, says Groenert.

Tools such as Print Director can also determine whether a user may print or use the scanner, and even control their ability to copy documents.

ACCESS CONTROL SOLUTIONS

Groenert says that companies can integrate software with hardware solutions such as keypads and card readers for access control and user authentication. Card readers are widely used for building access control and the same cards could be used to control copying and printing.

There are also more sophisticated options such as biometric readers, says Groenert. "Apart from security, putting these solutions in place can benefit companies in a number of other ways," he adds. "For example, if users have to authenticate themselves to print, copy or scan documents, you can easily track their usage of company resources."

Companies are already making use of these tools to track user or group volumes for internal cost control and billing, so it would be a simple task for savvy companies to extend these solutions to include output device security.

Itec Print Director makes it easy to track, audit and control all printing and photocopying on a network. You have a complete record of the number of prints and copies made on each device so that you can track use and possible abuse of output devices. You can configure user access rights through a management control panel.

Groenert says that there are also solutions available that watermark documents with a background pattern, making it impossible to photocopy them. "Companies have a range of options to protect information in the office automation environment. They should take this aspect of information security as seriously as they do all the others," he concludes.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information about tools to secure your document output environment, call 27 11 236 2000 or visit www.itecgroup.co.za.