Printer – Copier Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will the Multi-Functional Printers (MFPs) be too noisy?
A. We have received no complaints from users who currently work by these machines. Machines with finishing capabilities, such as staplers, are noisier and will be located in the copy rooms.

Q. Since we will have fewer printers, will staff waste time waiting for their print jobs?
A. Ecology will still have approximately 1 printer for 7 employees. These printers will have more capabilities and in many cases will be faster than our current printers. If certain areas turn into bottlenecks because of heavy printing needs, they might have higher capacity machines installed or more machines per user. Other areas that have low capacity would have fewer machines. The ratio will depend on the needs of that location. For example, in a field office with two people, the ratio will be 1 to 2. Some areas, the ratio may be 1 to 20. The average will be 1 to 7.

Q. What about the state surplusing rules?
A. Since we are trading our current printers in for value we do not violate any state rules.

Q. I have a job where I can’t be away from my desk. How will I be able to print?
A. The vendor will do a study of each area. Printers will be located based on the specific needs for staff in that location.

Q. I print things that must be kept private. How do I ensure that I will have the needed privacy?
A. There are two ways that we can accommodate privacy. Many printers permit pin numbers so that your job will not print until you enter the pin number. Also we can locate printers in a secure area or close to the person who requires privacy.

Q. What happens to our special use printers such as the ones we use for letterhead or labels?
A. Many of the new MFPs have special trays that can be set up to accommodate these uses. In some cases, a specialty printer might be provided to handle these special uses. We can set up printers so that only certain groups can print to them. This means that we can accommodate special printing needs and volume to any given printer. Some special printers will remain, for example SPILLS uses portable printers in their emergency response vehicles. They will still maintain these printers and pay for the supplies.

Q. What will we do about color printers?
A. Color printing will be accommodated. Color printers will be located throughout our buildings. They will be configured to print in black and white unless the user changes the option. Color printing is more expensive than black and white and draft documents should be printed first in black and white and the final documents in color.

Q. Will the multi-functional machines do scanning and faxing?
A. Yes. Faxing and scanning will be a part of some of the machines. You will be able to fax or e-mail depending on what needs to be accomplished. Scanning a document and sending it via email will save printing and mailing costs. Training will be provided by the vendor on these functions.

Q. Are we moving to a document management system?
A. At some time in the future, Ecology should look at document management systems. These systems replace paper files and save paper. You would scan a document and then store it for later retrieval electronically. This first step will give us the flexibility to move in this direction when the agency is ready.

Q. What happens if it doesn’t work?
A. Every effort will be made to ensure that the service provider chosen will succeed. Vendor references will be checked before a contract is signed. The contract will have performance requirements and Ecology can cancel it if the vendor does not comply. In that event, another service provider will be chosen or Ecology will lease equipment to replace MFPs provided by the vendor and provide the service with Ecology staff.

Q. How will this help us reach our sustainability goals?
A. The MFPs are more energy efficient and emit fewer fumes so that we will lower energy consumption and improve air quality. We will be removing the least efficient equipment. Since we will have fewer machines (approximately 140 devices will be removed), we will also move towards our goals of sustainability. Contract requirements will include: MFPs should use recycled paper; MFPs should use recycled toner; all printers must have duplex capability which will be set as the default; and the vendor must ensure reuse or proper disposal of all used equipment.

Q. How will Ecology employees be involved in the process?
A. Several Ecology committees have already been involved including BITAC, Budget Planners, Waste Reduction/Recycling Committee, Sustainability Team, and FORUM. Trips to the regional offices are planned to answer questions and get feedback about their concerns. There will be every effort made to communicate plans agency wide. Individual employees will be involved when the vendor works with each location to determine specific needs and where to locate the MFPs.

We have formed an oversight or feedback group that will work with the vendor to ensure our goals are met. Included on this group are the following people:

Project Team
- Dan Fears - ERO
- John Althaus - CRO
- Patricia Jatczak - HWTR - Waste Reduction & Recycling Committee
- Gordon Doell - Fiscal
- Ginnie Schiendelman, Karen Phillips - Network Services
- Julie Ruster - WQ, Admin Asst.
- Jane Smith - Help Desk
- Laura Lowe - Contracts

Q. How will we learn to use the new equipment?
A. It will be a requirement in the contract for the contractor to provide training when the MFPs are installed. It will also be a requirement that on-going training will be provided as needed. We will also ask that an instruction booklet be located by each machine.

Q. What happens to the printers we just purchased?
A. They will either be turned in for credit or more likely since they are new, the vendor would choose to use them at Ecology. The vendor is responsible for seeing that we have the capabilities and capacity that we need.

Q. What are the transition costs?
A. We have a three month penalty to buy out the Xerox contract. The trade-in value of the printers should cover this cost.

Q. What are the benefits of this new way of doing business?
A. Benefits include:
   • Buying services, not equipment (no capital investment);
   • More flexibility in changing equipment as needs or technology changes;
   • Less costly;
   • Control and management of printing;
   • More reliable printing with less down-time;
   • Free up our current technology staff to perform other duties.

Q. Laser color printers do not do transparencies well. The heat causes them to jam the machines or curl the transparencies. How will this be handled?
A. This problem has not been resolved yet. Some suggestions include purchasing special transparencies which are more expensive or maintaining some ink jet printers for making transparencies.

Q. Will all locations have the same equipment?
A. In most cases yes. All the vendors we have talked to say that they can provide capabilities and consistency across the agency. The smaller field offices will have better equipment than they do now but because of the low number of staff they might not have the same color equipment. Field offices should have a printer/copier capable of faxing and scanning.

Q. What about program specific equipment that we have purchased such as the slide/photo scanners, and fax machines.
A. This project does not deal with scanners or fax machines. We will provide these features with some of the printers/copiers but we are not removing scanners or faxes. The one exception is the Xerox fax machines which are on our Xerox contract. These will be replaced by multi-functional devices. However, a bonus for us is that multi-functional devices save space and supplies and we may choose to have fewer devices.

Q. If the current printers are returned for credit, does our program get the credit?
A. No, the credit will be applied to the buyout of the Xerox contract. The programs will save money that they currently spend on toner and printer maintenance.
Q. Will we be allowed to purchase printers from our budget if we will maintain them and pay for the supplies?
A. No. The vendor is making their money on this on a cost per page. If we buy our own printers we will not give them the management tools they need to provide us with cost effective service.

Q. Once a vendor has the contract, what would prevent them from keeping older models in use, even when they have become obsolete? Will there be any kind of state retention and upgrading schedule?
A. The vendor will have no desire to continue to maintain a machine past its life cycle since it would not be cost effective. We are planning to ask for a 3 year contract with review periods and possible extensions on a yearly basis for six years. We could terminate and re-bid after 3 years if we choose to do so. The contract can be terminated for non-performance. We are asking the vendors to tell us how they will manage upgrading equipment.

Q. What do we do in emergencies (either my printer wont work or the network is down)?
A. If your printer is broken, you can print to any other network printer in your area. If the network is down and it is an emergency, a printer close to you can be connected to a PC and used as a local printer.

Q. How do you keep your documents printing and not being interrupted by other jobs?
A. Many of these devices provide you with methods to make sure your job is finished before printing other jobs.

Q. Did the study deal with off-site printing?
A. No. The information in the study was only on what we print at our locations. If you sent items to the State Printer or Kinkos’ it was not recorded.

Q. Does duplexing count as one or two pages?
A. It would be a two page count (two images, two prints). However, duplexing saves paper.