

Ricoh to demonstrate SaaS solution at Africa Print

Ricoh will demonstrate its software-as-a-service (SaaS) web-to-print system for commercial printers and in-house corporate print shops at Africa Print from 21-23 August 2013 at the Sandton Convention Centre.



MarcomCentral, developed by PTI, helps print service providers and corporate customers with marketing services, cross media and web-to-print adoption. The SaaS model deals with initial cost to entry into this market, the complexity of managing these environments, proven return on investment (ROI) without significant capex and proof of concept.

"Two of the biggest issues that commercial printers face are growing their businesses - what can they do that will help them be more competitive - and internally: what can they do to be more efficient and reduce their processing times," says Dawid Malan, head of software sales at [Ricoh SA](#).

"MarcomCentral helps them to deal with those two primary concerns by enabling a seamless transition from the web-based storefront to processing jobs, output, invoicing and billing, including managing authorisations and proofs."

New business opportunities

The new solution enables print service providers to add value and expand services beyond print via branded online storefronts specifically designed to their client's requirements. It offers them new business opportunities and helps to position them as a marketing services provider, which allows them to offer value added services such as e-mail and online marketing as well as personalised assets.

Corporate customers can implement a centralised asset repository that is accessed by internal stakeholders to order, download, personalise and manage a wide range of marketing assets. The single location enables local creativity, where allowed, while providing consistent brand collateral.

The solution is built on open-architected SaaS technology and automates a variety of marketing, creative and fulfilment processes using a centralised and integrated online marketing portal. End users have access to a wide range of corporate marketing assets such as print, digital, and promotional materials with customisation and personalisation capabilities.

"About 10% of commercial printers in South Africa use some form of web-to-print system but that is mostly for job ticketing and receiving documents from customers," says Malan. "Thereafter, though, their systems revert to manual processes for other steps in the process. With this system, they get file reception, make-ready, proofing, finalisation, fiery throughput, authorisation and output fully automated."

Full solution rare

The full solution comprises a storefront or portal for e-commerce, asset management and repository. A dashboard does fulfilment and job management and routing. A manager performs administration and offers a GUI for setup. FusionProVDF Creator is an Acrobat plug-in with templates. FusionPro Expression offers image personalisation; FusionPro Links offers personalised URLs (PURLs); Exact Target offers cross-media e-mail; FusionPro VDP Producer is a server-based solution for local VDP processing; and the FusionPro API can be used for integration by third-party web-to-print solutions.

There are very few solutions that offer the full gamut of web-to-print services that commercial printers and in-plant print shops

need and, as a result, InfoTrends found that most organisations that have been using it need more than one solution.

However, many have developed their own systems and InfoTrends expects these to convert to commercial offerings since they have matured. The continued drive toward web-to-print is expected to continue as a growing number of corporate clients want the benefits it offers.

The prevalence of SaaS and growing bandwidth availability are seeing the SaaS model growing by the greatest factor, even if it is not expected to overtake licenced software in the short term.

Adoption rates could be 30%

"InfoTrends tells us that larger print organisations are quicker to adopt web-to-print than smaller businesses, 55.6% of the types of businesses with more than 250 employees have adopted it. Further down the scale, the percentage ranges between 20% and 26.8% for companies between five and 50 employees. Most of the print service providers in South Africa fall in the 10- to 50-employee range where adoption rates are close to 30%, so we expect good traction in the local market."

"When companies do embark on web-to-print projects they want different things from it. 27.4% want straight web-to-print, 17.8% want cross-media campaign management, 16.2% want digital workflow management, 15.4% want image personalisation software, 14.9% want data analytics software, 13.7% want print MIS, 13.3% want variable data printing, 11.2% want digital asset management, 7.9% conventional workflow management and 5.8% want creative and layout software," concludes Malan.

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