

The Modern Print Platform

Why dealers cannot afford to ignore this shift

by: Jonathan Blakey, Technology Assurance Group (TAG)

Imagine waking up tomorrow, hopping into your car and reading the words “Update Completed” on your dashboard. You then realize your car now only drives in first gear. The engine still runs, the wheels still turn, but suddenly you are crawling down the highway at 15 miles an hour. That is exactly what many of your clients are about to experience once Microsoft fully launches its Modern Print Platform (MPP) in Windows 11.

This “update” will disrupt many of your clients’ businesses overnight. For organizations that rely heavily on printing — health care, legal, finance, government and education — the shift is not just inconvenient, it is harmful. Secure workflows, finishing options, watermarks and compliance features will vanish overnight the moment MPP is enabled. Your customers will assume they are enhancing their cybersecurity, but if they click the wrong buttons, they could cause tons of downtime for their organizations.

But here is the twist: While clients will feel the frustration of being stuck in first gear, dealers have the opportunity to step in as guides, preventing chaos and cementing themselves as indispensable advisors.

So, if you have not educated your clients on this pending change from Microsoft — which could cause major disruptions to their operations — would you prefer another office technology dealer do so? Or would you like to be the dealer they look for guidance from?

Microsoft is Working to Retire Legacy Print Drivers

Instead of each manufacturer offering its own driver with robust features, all devices will funnel into Microsoft’s IPP (Internet Printing Protocol) driver, which is based on Mopria standards. This means your clients that rely on advanced features (e.g., secure print, booklet making, watermarks, direct scanning, etc.) will click a button and that functionality could disappear. It also means that companies that rely on multifunction devices for their workflows in compliance-heavy industries (e.g., HIPAA, payroll confidentiality, HR records, etc.) will break down instantly.



It also means that if any of your customers are running their businesses off of legacy printers, those printers may simply stop working altogether, halting their operations. It is not an exaggeration to say this is the biggest change in printing in more than 25 years.

Why is Microsoft Making the Move?

The answer is simple: cybersecurity. While a significant number of recent cybersecurity hacks came through unprotected printers, Microsoft has decided to mandate the updated printer protocol to secure devices. If you combine that with the fact that approximately 80% of breaches are tied to human error and 20% are tied to weak infrastructures, you can see why cybersecurity analysts are slamming the door on old printer drivers. The intention makes sense. Standardizing drivers equals fewer attack surfaces. But the price of stronger security is fewer features and more headaches for clients.

Why This Matters for Office Technology Dealers

Clients do not read Microsoft press releases. They are not combing through Mopria certifications in their spare time. They will simply hit “Use Windows Protected Print” one day

and then call you in a panic when secure payroll printing no longer works.

But this does not need to be a negative thing. It is another chance to demonstrate your proactivity, leadership and technological expertise.

That is why this shift is a dealer's opportunity. Here is how you can make this transition work for you:

■ **Educate your clients before it happens.** Show them what is coming and how they can prepare.

■ **Encourage clients to audit their fleets now.** Identify compatible versus non-compatible devices so they can understand their costs before their organizations grind to a halt.

■ **Position yourself beyond hardware.** If you have ever felt like your clients do not fully appreciate the full breadth and depth of your company's product and services portfolio, this is a symptom of a larger problem. They do not view your company as a technology advisor, but just as an equipment provider. But by alerting clients of this shift — and other technology shifts like it — you begin to distinguish your company as one that has taken strategic ownership of their success via technology.

In the modern workplace, MFPs are not just MFPs — they are the on-ramps to workflows, compliance and security. As your clients' technology advisor, it is your duty to keep them protected, efficient and prepared for change instead of allowing them to be blindsided.

■ **Win competitive deals.** If you can speak confidently about MPP while competitors are still selling transactionally, you are already miles ahead because you are demonstrating your expertise.

The Clock is Ticking

Right now, enabling MPP is optional, but the writing is on

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the wall that third-party drivers will be retired. That gives dealers a limited window to get ahead of this transformation.

By reaching out ahead of time, you give your clients the opportunity to plan ahead instead of being hit with unplanned capital expenditures. Those who act early will become trusted advisors. Those who wait will be cleaning up the messes — and may even be blamed.

Final Thought

Printing has not fundamentally changed in 60 years. However, Windows 11's MPP is rewriting the rules. For clients, it may feel like suddenly being stuck in first gear.

For you as a dealer, it is the perfect opportunity to step up, guide clients through the transition and prove your value as a technology partner — not just a hardware vendor. The dealers who own this conversation now will own their client relationships tomorrow. ■

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Collectively, its members do more than \$800 million per year in IT, cybersecurity, telecommunications, video surveillance, access control and MFPs. Dealers interested in joining forces with an organization of leading MTSPs in the United States and Canada are encouraged to reach out to TAG so their office technology dealerships can benefit from its collective expertise in providing technology solutions.

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