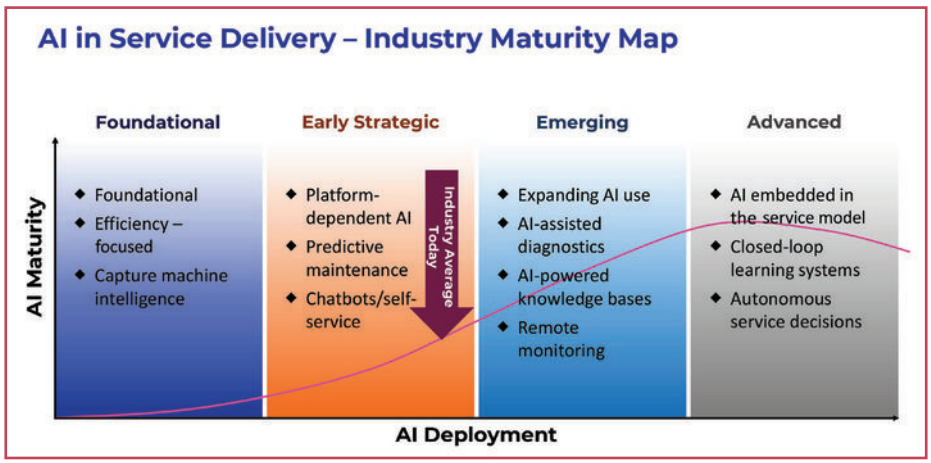
How AI is Reshaping Service

Moving to a predictive, remote & proactive model

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is finding its way into almost every conversation about office technology, but some of its most practical applications are happening behind the scenes. Service delivery has traditionally depended on people, experience and technical knowledge. At the same time, dealerships must balance service costs with device uptime and customer satisfaction, while attracting and developing new technicians. AI offers an opportunity to make better use of the technical expertise, accumulated knowledge and increasing volumes of data already available to service organizations. More significantly, it could help move service away from reactive break/fix and toward a model that is increasingly predictive, remote and proactive.



Making Experience Available to Everyone

Ask an experienced technician to diagnose an unusual problem and years of accumulated knowledge will play a role. The challenge comes when that experience walks out the door. One of the most immediate applications for AI is capturing institutional knowledge and making it more widely accessible. AI-powered knowledge systems can bring together service manuals, previous cases, device histories and other technical information to give technicians relevant guidance at the point of need. Instead of searching multiple resources or relying on the one person who remembers seeing the problem before, a technician can potentially identify likely causes and recommended actions much more quickly.

This is becoming increasingly common across field service. Salesforce's "State of Service" research found that 68% of surveyed field-service leaders currently use AI for knowledge retrieval, while 66% use it to support technician utilization. Technicians surveyed also estimated that AI could eliminate around two hours of administrative work each week.

For dealers, the opportunity extends beyond productivity. AI can potentially turn accumulated service knowledge into a training resource. Intelligent search, adaptive training and real-time guidance can help newer technicians access expertise while they are learning and continue to support them in the field. The result could be a shorter path to competency and less reliance on a relatively small number of highly experienced individuals.

That becomes increasingly important as the technician's role itself changes. Print service is converging with IT support, requiring greater familiarity with networking, cloud environments, software and data alongside traditional hardware skills. AI-assisted knowledge and diagnostic tools could help bridge this expanding skills requirement without expecting every technician to be an expert in every technology.

From Break/Fix to Predict & Prevent

Remote monitoring is nothing new to the office technology industry. Dealers have long been able to receive meter information, consumables alerts and fault notifications from connected devices. AI takes this model further. Instead of simply reporting that something has happened, machine learning can analyze telemetry, operating history and previous service information to identify patterns indicating that something is likely to happen before the customer experiences downtime. A service call could potentially be scheduled at a convenient time, the required part identified beforehand or, in some cases, the issue addressed remotely.

Avoidable on-site visits consume technician time, add vehicle costs and limit scheduling capacity. As improved diagnostics allow more issues to be identified or resolved remotely, service delivery becomes more efficient. The aim is not to eliminate site visits, but to ensure each one is necessary and that the technician arrives fully informed, with the right part, to complete the repair on the first visit.

Lessons From Outside the Industry

Keypoint Intelligence's research into AI in service found that office equipment is progressing toward more predictive and proactive service, but remains predominantly AI-assisted and human-led. See the graphic on page 23 showing where the industry currently stands in AI service delivery.

Industries with greater downtime risk, such as utilities and aviation, demonstrate what becomes possible as AI is integrated more deeply across the service life cycle. Utilities use AI models to analyze information from smart meters, grid sensors and historical outage records to detect anomalies and predict potential infrastructure failures. Systems can then help prioritize issues and assign field engineers according to factors such as skills, location and availability, while providing diagnostic guidance to technicians.

Aviation takes this further. Aircraft sensor data, flight logs and historical maintenance information can be analyzed for early signs of component failure. When a potential problem is identified, maintenance activity can be coordinated so the required parts, tools and appropriately qualified engineers are available at the destination before the aircraft arrives.

Clearly, a malfunctioning office MFP does not carry the same operational or safety implications as an aircraft or electricity grid, where the consequences of downtime have necessitated greater investment in predictive and automated service. Nevertheless, the comparison reveals an important gap. Individual AI capabilities are increasingly appearing in print service, but they are not always connected. The real opportunity lies in moving beyond standalone AI tools toward a more connected service ecosystem.

From Assistance to Orchestration

Imagine that a device identifies the early signs of a component failure. The service platform reviews its history and diagnoses the likely cause. It determines which part is required, checks inventory and decides whether the problem can be resolved remotely. If an on-site visit is necessary, it identifies an appropriately skilled technician, schedules the call and informs the customer, all before the device fails. Elements of that process already exist today; the challenge is connecting them. Device telemetry, service histories, parts information, inventory, technician skills and customer systems may reside across different platforms. An AI system cannot effectively orchestrate a service response if the information it needs remains fragmented.

Today's AI is primarily assistive to humans. It can identify likely faults, retrieve knowledge, recommend actions and help prioritize or dispatch service activity, while technicians and service personnel remain responsible for important decisions. Agentic systems potentially move from recommending actions toward coordinating and executing them across connected systems. In service, that could mean progressing from detecting and diagnosing a problem to coordinating the subsequent response, with less manual intervention between each stage. Fully integrated, closed-loop service systems remain the exception rather than the norm in the office technology industry today, and human oversight continues to be critical. But the direction of travel is clear.

Remote resolution and automation make sense when they improve speed and convenience, but customers still expect accountability when something goes wrong.

Look Beyond the AI Label

The office technology industry has automated elements of service for years. As AI becomes a marketing term attached to more products and services, it is important to maintain that automation alone does not necessarily make something AI.

So what does AI actually improve? Does it increase first-time-fix rates, reduce downtime, resolve more problems remotely, improve diagnosis or lower the cost of delivering service? These outcomes provide a more meaningful measure of AI's value than the number of AI features attached to a service platform.

There is an important balance to maintain. Remote resolution and automation make sense when they improve speed and convenience, but customers still expect accountability when something goes wrong. A technician does considerably more than repair hardware; he (or she) understands the customer's environment, deals with unexpected circumstances, makes judgment calls and represents the dealership during one of its most important customer touchpoints. For dealers, the opportunity is to use AI to build a more connected and proactive service operation. The measure of success will ultimately remain familiar: better uptime, greater efficiency and a consistently strong customer experience.

Want to learn more? Keypoint Intelligence continues to track how AI is changing service delivery across the office technology industry, including market maturity, emerging use cases and how the industry compares with more advanced service sectors. Visit www.keypointintelligence.com to explore our latest research and analysis. ■

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