



## Fulton Francis Launches Vendor-Agnostic Print as a Service for the New Normal of Hybrid Work

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### IDC's Quick Take

International MPS player, Fulton Francis has announced the launch of a new application designed to enable remote vendor-agnostic printing under business agreements. The unprecedented situation caused by the COVID-19 crisis and related lockdown has led to a radical change in the way businesses operate. Whilst video conferencing and other cloud-based corporate applications were swiftly implemented across organizations to enable staff to easily adapt to the new normal, printing has hit record lows during the lockdown. In most cases, home printing cannot be billed and is also difficult to secure for sensitive documents. By rapidly adapting to home working, companies may lack security, visibility, and control of sensitive customer information, introducing data compliance dilemmas. Some employees might be unknowingly managing customer data in a non-compliant way, while some might be aware of the risk, but decide to print anyway due to lack of options.

Fulton Francis proposes a new approach that replaces existing MPS agreements and includes any home print peripheral used by staff at home. Home printing is therefore made accountable and most importantly secure. Leveraging a key partnership deal with Microsoft to utilize the Microsoft Azure platform, Fulton Francis offers an easily scalable print management solution that can manage and track devices and print whether they are on premise or printed by home workers.

### Product Announcement Highlights

This month, Fulton Francis introduced its PRAAS platform targeted at the new normal of hybrid working where companies have a significantly higher proportion of home workers than pre-crisis levels and where offices have lower occupancy rates due initially to social distancing and the large scale equipment of workers to do their jobs virtually.

IDC believes this cloud-based print as a service approach is a good fit for the new hybrid way of working. Already high on organization's agenda, the relevance of security only increased during the COVID-19 lockdown. Recent IDC research shows that security was among the top three challenges for businesses when establishing new lockdown work from home measures. Also, pre-crisis, 57% of large enterprises reported print related security breaches and this percentage may well have increased as home printing of documents has increased. Fulton Francis newly introduced PRAAS platform enables remote tracking of printed documents, keeping print compliant with the corporate security standards. This is particularly relevant in security sensitivity sectors such as financial and healthcare that have struggled the most with security issues during the lockdown.

In addition, IDC research on companies' responses to the COVID-19 crisis shows an increased propensity for companies to want an aaS model for IT purchases in uncertain times. Another advantage of Fulton Francis's PRAAS solution is the support of most print devices including older models. As companies rushed to equip the high volume of new home workers, there were difficulties in getting printers for

them – cost, availability of devices and availability of consumables. A lot of devices that people already had at home were pressed into service, resulting in a very diverse installed base.

Specific details of the Fulton Francis PRAAS platform offering are:

- Based in Microsoft Azure
- Utilises PRAAS contract, asset billing management and reporting (through Microsoft Power BI)
- Print management technology is provided by Printix
- Uses Udocx cloud-based scanning solution
- Incorporates ServiceNow IT Service Management
- Serverless

## IDC's Point of View

This is a very timely announcement from Fulton Francis. Recent IDC research shows that once the lockdown is over most of businesses will not go back to the same setup they previously had. Hybrid working and virtual meeting will continue to be the default option for knowledge workers and IT vendors have no choice but to adapt to the next normal. In a context where 40% of businesses have either drastically slashed or stopped printing altogether, vendor-agnostic print solutions have the potential to keep corporate printing and scanning secure and accountable for the many diverse devices now being used by home workers.

The new partnership with Microsoft sets Fulton Francis in a strong position to scale the solution and thrive in this market. Whilst other MPS players had previously managed to incorporate mono-brand home printing under MPS, Fulton Francis is making the solution available for any brand of print hardware. This essentially commoditizes print and reverses the recent trend where vendors were increasingly introducing smart peripherals and positioning them as new document hubs.

Going forward, businesses will continue to foster seamless transitions between the physical and digital world and vendors that cannot adapt will lose against competition. Print is a key component, but in order to survive it needs to be digitally traceable, secure and compliant, irrespective of whether it is printed in the home office or corporate office. As companies continue to digitally transform physical and manual processes and move to the new normal of hybrid working, the management of home printing and scanning needs to be incorporated into the process.

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