

WHAT DOES A MANAGED PRINT ASSESSMENT COVER?

A managed print assessment gives office managers, IT directors, finance leaders, procurement teams and others solid information about the state of document technology across the business, even if that involves multiple locations.

This article dives into common questions about what goes into a comprehensive printing assessment using the Novatech Office X-ray as an example.

PRINTING ASSESSMENT: PART OF THE BIGGER OFFICE PICTURE

The Novatech Office X-ray differs from other types of technology assessments. For one thing, it's **more comprehensive**. An Office X-ray takes a holistic approach to the state of your office technology by combining three specific assessments:

- Network security
- Printing devices, software and document workflow
- IT processes and systems

Although these assessments may launch at the same time in an Office X-ray, they follow their own life cycles to arrive at meaningful data capture for analysis. This article drills down into **what's involved in the print assessment portion of the Office X-ray**.

MANAGED PRINT ASSESSMENT NEEDS BOTH IN-PERSON AND DIGITAL VIEWS

In some ways, a managed print assessment feels very similar to the network security piece of a full Managed Office assessment. The print assessment also leverages a web-based tool to hunt for networked print devices and understand their current state and utilization. This tool won't capture locally connected printers, so it's important to engage with a partner who uses diagnostic tools and in-person walkthroughs to validate what's on the network, inspect all local printers and interview end users.

Drawing on this multifaceted exploration, the assessment provider will:

- Identify document lifecycles and workflows
- Discover the "why" behind your print patterns
- Build your print wish list
- Define opportunities for better solutions or changes

The assessment gives the provider a strong foundation for a more solid, transparent proposal about what comes next.



HOW LONG DOES A MANAGED PRINT ASSESSMENT TAKE?

A managed print assessment generally takes longer than the managed IT portion of a total technology overview. For the best print assessment, it's recommended to run the tools long enough to capture 30 days of print activity, because business print patterns vary during different periods of the month and year.

A two-week slice may not reflect the true nature of your monthly print volumes and therefore, your costs. You don't want to take a two-week snapshot and assume that doubling it reflects your actual volume. You could significantly overshoot or underestimate what's truly going on.

WHAT RESULTS SHOULD I EXPECT FROM A MANAGED PRINT ASSESSMENT?

After the diagnostic tools run their course, and the physical walk-throughs and interviews are complete, the provider's team identifies needs, gaps and solutions. A print assessment won't return the same results for all businesses, of course, but you should expect several pieces of standard documentation:

- **Inventory discovery list** – Usually an Excel spreadsheet, it shares findings and apparent page volumes.
- **Visio diagram** – Maps locations of current printers and associates them by number to line items on the inventory discovery list.
- **Overall proposal** – Covers current state, cost analysis, future recommendations.

Sometimes the outcome may just be a service agreement. For other organizations, next steps could involve the four Rs: retire, refresh, redeploy and replace.

WHAT TOOLS ARE USED FOR A MANAGED PRINT ASSESSMENT?

Anyone doing print assessments will probably bring in a tool for that specific purpose, but **find out what they're using for network discovery** as well.

At Novatech, we developed and branded NSight, our own discovery data collection agent based on the popular FMAudit real-time monitoring software. NSight has unique automation, alerts and reporting built in that make it more useful than other solutions.

Find out if the print assessment provider continues to make a healthy investment in maintaining whatever tools they use and in the team that supports them. You're only as good as your tools, right?

Another question to ask vendors is do they give **customer access to the print management tools?** Many refuse, but some like Novatech believe in shared visibility, partnership and access to actionable data.

MANAGED PRINT ASSESSMENT: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

When your business commits to a managed print assessment, the value comes back in several ways:

- **Keep print fleet operational** – When IT departments are also responsible for managing fleets of printers, the demands can be overwhelming. The print assessment helps focus and prioritize resources to make print more manageable and reliable. Out of a print assessment may come the realization that a managed print partnership makes more sense for your business.
- **Wrap your arms around spending** – The cost efficiencies of managed print accrue over time. With better, optimized print management as guided by the assessment, businesses gain financially by getting more value from their spend.
- **Optimize and standardize printer fleet** – Be more proactive about maintaining your print and copier fleet to remain at the optimal performance level without crisis. The assessment may include recommendations on how to put lifecycles in place for documents or for devices that would usually just age out.
- **Eliminate inefficiencies in print management** – Once you know what's causing problems and inefficiencies in your document and device workflows, you can set about eliminating them and keeping them at bay. Ongoing Managed Print Services provide a reliable model for many organizations.

Look for a partner team that brings a variety of perspectives. Expect the print assessment project to include technical professionals who have a good understanding of output devices. Ask about their certifications like the HP Printers Security Certified designation. The more you know about what a good print assessment looks like, the better you'll be able to capture the best results for your business.