

Global Technology Conglomerate

LRS & Ricoh help international technology leader implement Zero-Trust SAP and desktop printing



Organization

Established over a century ago, this global technology conglomerate delivers a wide range of large-scale industrial products and services for the transport, energy, health technology and other sectors. With revenues of over €75 Billion and more than 300,000 employees in over 190 countries, the firm is ranked among the top 10 companies in the world.

Like many large organizations, this industry leader looked to create a more modern IT infrastructure able to leverage Internet and Cloud technologies for a flexible yet secure computing environment. The goal was to eliminate their current Intranet environment and move to an Internet-only strategy in which user desktops, printers, and other IT assets are linked via secure Internet connections protected using Zero-Trust security measures.

SAP & desktop printing challenges

The customer's current computing environment was outsourced to a large European IT service provider. Administration of its output devices and print infrastructure was conducted under a managed print services contract with Ricoh, whose Streamline NX software provided high-level control of the output environment.

As the customer's movement toward an Internet-only IT strategy progressed, several challenges became apparent.

Firstly, many key business processes were driven by critical SAP application output, and neither Ricoh nor the IT outsourcer would be able to provide an SAP-certified solution for securely printing these documents once Intranet connectivity was disabled. Like most risk-averse large organizations, the customer insisted on official SAP certification for any solution they would need to live with for the long term.

"We also realized that once the customer's existing Intranet was disabled, there would no longer be a secure, encrypted mechanism for printing sensitive output from backend applications," said Sebastian Rasche, Global Account Director at Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. (LRS). "The Streamline NX solution is ideally suited for document workflows from user desktops but lacked a certified interface for the latest SAP environments. The customer also had various Zebra, HP, and other printer brands at remote sites, which were not able to be managed using Streamline NX."

The mission was threefold:

- Ensure secure output delivery from desktop & backend apps via the Internet to the Ricoh Streamline NX solution
- Establish a print mechanism with SAP S/4 HANA Private & Public Cloud support as well as Works with Rise with SAP
- Manage mainframe output, documents with special PRESCRIBE datastreams, and barcode data destined for Zebra label printers

AT A GLANCE

The Company

International engineering & tech conglomerate with over 75 Billion Euros in revenue and 300,000+ employees

The Industry

Engineering & Technology

The Requirements

Secure delivery of SAP, desktop, and other output in a zero-trust environment

The Solution

VPSX, VPSX/OutputManager, PRESCRIBE to PCL transform, and Streamline NX from Ricoh

The Benefits

The company was able to safely migrate their current Intranet-centric network topology to an Internet-only environment with Zero-Trust authentication.

They eliminated the need for Windows Print Servers, CUPS servers, and a non-SAP-certified Xprint solution.

The company implemented a fully SAP-certified, holistic output management solution able to scale and evolve as their needs change over time. The new solution is easier to maintain and manage, far less complex, more reliable and secure than the system it replaces.

CASE STUDY

Partner collaboration yields ideal solution

In their search to provide these capabilities to this important client, Ricoh's account team reached out to LRS, with whom they have been business and technical partners for more than a decade. After reviewing the customer's requirements, LRS proposed a solution centered around the VPSX® and VPSX/OutputManager® products.

VPSX software provides robust, scalable output management for a variety of computing platforms and operating systems. Designed to manage large document volumes from any application or platform, the solution acts as a middleware that can store, control, and reliably deliver the output to distributed printers, MFPs, file servers, and other devices. A single VPSX product instance can drive thousands of printers from any combination of hardware vendors, including the Zebra and other non-Ricoh devices used in this customer environment.

The VPSX solution also offered several other useful capabilities needed in this customer application. Chief among these was the VPSX/OutputManager extension product, which provides a fully SAP-certified interface to all of the SAP applications. Proven in large SAP customer environments and verified by SAP staff, VPSX/OutputManager software is the only BC-XOM certified interface that supports SAP S/4HANA Private Cloud (including Works with RISE with SAP), SAP S/4HANA Public Edition, SAP BTP, SAP Print Service, and SAP Digital Manufacturing. This advanced and fully certified integration with the SAP ecosystem gives customers the reassurance that even as SAP modifies their platforms over time, the ability to print will not be affected. "Frankly, this is a big advantage of our solutions," says LRS® Solutions Architect Al Nichols. "Before SAP modifies one of their interfaces, they let us know so we can test and address any issues with the appropriate fixes. Unfortunately for the larger SAP community, not many other print management vendors can say the same."

Besides this important SAP integration, other LRS capabilities helped the Ricoh MPS team overcome other challenges in this customer environment. An important one was the ability to securely deliver documents to Internet-only destinations. Leveraging robust encryption and support for Zero-Trust authentication over IPPS connections, the LRS solution helped Ricoh offer end-to-end security from the originating application to the Streamline NX system and/or non-Ricoh devices in any location connected to the Internet.

Legacy platforms and data in this customer's environment were also handled with the help of LRS software. VPS® software, running on the IBM Z mainframe platform, can route mainframe customer data to the VPSX server for secure delivery to Ricoh Streamline NX or non-Ricoh devices. Likewise, legacy data formats like PRESCRIBE datastreams specifically designed to print on Kyocera devices are converted with the use of LRS data transforms. These change proprietary Kyocera-formatted data into standard PCL data streams supported by Ricoh software and hardware.

"From a technical perspective, the joint LRS-Ricoh solution checked all the boxes," adds Rasche. "Just as importantly, the combination of Streamline NX and LRS software delivered an overall package that comfortably meets the client's present needs as well as future ones without changing the way they work."

"Employees already know how to use Streamline NX, and the additional LRS software required runs transparently in the background, so no additional user training is required. Users print just as they have in the past and have no idea of the Zero-Trust authentication and data transformation that is happening behind the scenes. Print jobs just arrive where they are supposed to, the first time, every time."

Learn how LRS® solutions can reduce cost and complexity in your SAP environment.

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