



The A3 Document: Perception versus Reality

As offices review their office printing costs, one significant area almost entirely overlooked is the cost of having A3 devices. The perception is that the A3 document is as necessary to our office printing needs as power-steering is to our cars. The reality, as evidenced by NewField IT's review of more than 50,000 devices supporting over 105,000 users, is that A3 output in the office is remarkably low - less than 2.5% of total page volumes on average.

Yet, because of the perception, companies are spending more than TWICE as much as they needed to on printers and nearly THREE times as much on copiers to provide A3 capability to staff - extrapolating this across NewField IT's survey base shows an organisation of 1,700 staff and 390 output devices is spending £70,000 more than it needs to on output hardware. By understanding the true A3 requirements in the office companies could significantly reduce their annual capital purchases for output hardware without affecting office productivity.

This Research Paper explains why A3 output is not as prevalent in the office as many people believe. There are several reasons why the perception of A3 usage is so much higher than the reality, but discovering general user requirements and actual A3 usage is not as complicated as some might believe. This paper concludes by providing several suggestions on how any Procurement or IT Manager can challenge the accepted view.

THE A3 MYTH

NewField IT has audited more than 50,000 devices covering over 105,000 staff both in the UK and overseas in the last two years and across a variety of

business sectors. The statistics on A3 capability as opposed to A3 usage has been surprising. In terms of capability, a typical administrative building with 1,700 staff will have 72 printers capable of printing A3 documents (20% of the printer fleet) and 56 copiers/multifunctional devices (MFD) with such functionality (89% of the fleet). The percentage of A3 capable devices varies within different business sectors, the financial services sector being the highest with an average of 26%.

Six different organisations, identified only by industry sector, are shown below. These organisations represent 3,839 devices and over 10,000 office based employees.

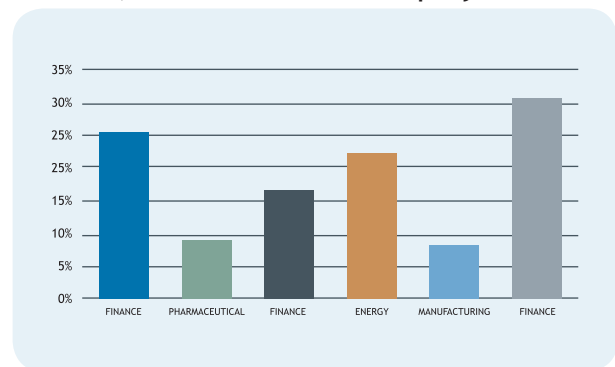


Figure1: A3 capable printers as a % of all printers

Despite the level of capability, analysis of the paper volumes and page counts shows that just 2.35% of the total page volume is on A3 paper. Given that the average office based worker produces 8,636 pages a year, just 202 pages are A3, which is less than a page a day - hardly an essential accessory!

While A3 usage in the office as a whole is low, there are significant variations between departmental functions. A good example is the Finance department, where A3 output is required for large spreadsheets. Another area is Human resources. A3 output in these areas can be as much as 15% of annual page output. Since these departments have high usage, the actual usage in other parts of the organisation is even lower. Our analysis

