

7 Simple Security Features to Look for in Your Next Printer

Data security is a hot button issue these days, and for good reason. Once seen as a problem restricted to large enterprise, a 2017 report from smallbiz.com showed that 43% of cyber-attacks target small businesses. Even more alarming, 60 percent of small companies go out of business within six months of a cyber-attack. Statistics like these have helped push security concerns to the top of the priority list.

But in order to protect against security risks, you have to know where to find them. What's more, you need a plan that is affordable, reliable, and easy to execute. One surprisingly easy place to start securing your data is your printer.

Here are the 7 security innovations you need to look for in your next printer, and how each one can help protect you against the most common document security risks:

1. **Secure Printing.** Unsecured printing poses a number of risks, starting with one you're probably overlooking – your staff. Employees routinely send documents to the printer and then leave them lying in the printer tray, allowing anyone who passes by to access your – potentially confidential – data. Look for a printer that offers user authentication, an option which ensures that the printer will only release documents when users enter their PIN at the machine. No more paper lying unsecured at the device.
2. **Print Encryption.** Sensitive data that is sent to the printer without encryption leaves you vulnerable to hackers. File encryption protects your data as it moves, ensuring it is safe from creation to destination.
3. **Data Clearing.** Your networked PC is a critical entry point for hackers, which is why most SMBs (small and medium businesses) protect their data by routinely clearing the hard drive. You MFP is also a computer, and requires the same attention and protection. Look for a printer that enables you to delete processed or stored data you no longer need with approved data clearing and sanitization algorithms.
4. **Cloud to Device Automation.** Another way that seemingly harmless habits can add up to serious risk is when your team scans and stores critical office data to unauthorized or personal cloud apps. The right printer can help you eliminate this risk while simultaneously helping your staff work better by automating cloud to device workflows so it's easier to access cloud apps safely and securely.
5. **Password Protection.** Sure, those filing cabinets are an eyesore, but are they really a security risk? If left unlocked and accessible, then yes, they are. Use your MFP to digitize your documents and password protect them. You'll not only make that information harder to access, you'll also free up space and open yourself up to possibilities to streamline workflows and improve productivity.
6. **Activity Monitoring.** Unmonitored printers mean you can't track who is printing, or how much they're printing. With so much sensitive information passing to and through your device, you want to know who used it – and what they did there. MFP audit trails and authentication help you figure out who used your devices and when, and give you the opportunity to restrict access as you see fit.
7. **Password Protected Scanning.** By allowing unrestricted scanning, you're potentially making sensitive information available to the wrong parties. A smart MFP gives you the choice to password protect your PDFs so that only the right people can access the data they contain.