Customer
ItemPath

Industry
Software

Challenge
ItemPath needed to find a printing solution that would connect directly to its cloud software.

Solutions
- Zebra Link-OS printers
- Zebra Link-OS Cloud Connect
- ItemPath

Benefits
- ItemPath users can print from any device from the cloud with a Zebra Link-OS printer and Link-OS Cloud Connect.
- Freedom from drivers and additional hardware reduces overhead for organizations and gives them a new level of flexibility and convenience for labeling their ItemPath items.

ITEMPATH CUSTOMERS PRINT FLEXIBLY FROM ANY DEVICE, FROM THE CLOUD

ItemPath Finds Zebra the Only Solution to Enable Cloud Printing

ABOUT ITEMPATH

For many organizations, detailed traceability of their products and materials is increasingly becoming a priority. Online software ItemPath (www.itempath.com) helps them do business better by keeping tabs on every single item. Companies of all sizes in a wide range of industries rely on the software to maintain an electronic trail of their many items.

CHALLENGE

Developers created ItemPath to be accessible from anywhere, using simply a browser on any device or operating system. Whether users are solopreneurs or global companies, all can access their item information in real time in the cloud, no matter where they are.

But the makers of ItemPath found label printing from anywhere wasn't as simple. ItemPath customers had to either pre-print labels separately and then scan them into ItemPath or use intermediate software or hardware to get ItemPath to talk to a printer. The goal was to find a printer that worked with the cloud regardless of location, device or operating system.

"We needed a printer that was smart enough to connect to ItemPath in the cloud so that customers could send print jobs directly," said Bill deVries, president of Chain Reference Inc., a partner in ItemPath. "We talked to about eight printer companies and none of them addressed that need."

SOLUTION

deVries was excited to find a team at Zebra was already working to solve the challenge. After hearing about the new Link-OS ecosystem and Cloud Connect system, deVries discovered that a solution was available.

"We had a conference call with the Link-OS team, and I realized that Zebra was building exactly what we were looking for," deVries said. "Only the Zebra Link-OS™ printers have the capability we need."

Zebra Link-OS pairs an operating system for smart Zebra devices with powerful software apps, making the devices easy to integrate, manage and maintain from any location. Zebra's Cloud Connect allows Zebra Link-OS printers to interact directly with apps that run in the cloud.

Thus, ItemPath became the first cloud application that can print barcode labels or tags to a label printer anywhere. Customers can generate barcodes, 2D codes or RFID tags and print directly from the cloud.

""Zebra Link-OS is the only tool we know of that allows cloud printing."
– Bill deVries

ItemPath and Zebra co-developed and validated the new cloud printing system, using the Internet as their test environment. "We printed from a browser, using ItemPath, from my office in Canada to Zebra printers located in the U.S. and the U.K. – and it worked beautifully," deVries said.

Now ItemPath customers with Zebra Link-OS printers with Cloud Connect can connect label printers to ItemPath over the Internet and print from anywhere. The solution runs securely without printer drivers, plug-ins, USB or Bluetooth connections. A device running ItemPath in a browser and the printer don't even need to be on the same network. The customer can even monitor the status of all their printers over the Internet using a browser.

Customers can begin printing from ItemPath within a few minutes. The Link-OS printer simply needs to be connected to the internet, and configured to look for ItemPath. Users then log into their accounts on any device from their ItemPath home page and they're ready to print.

"Our goal is for non-tech users to connect the first time within five minutes," deVries said.

Anywhere, any-device cloud printing has a number of potential applications for ItemPath customers:

• A retail chain can issue nationwide markdowns on items and each store can tap into the new prices in ItemPath and print accurate labels immediately – without having to install software or drivers at every single store location.

• Food industry companies – and even their offsite contractors – can draw from one database to tag items accurately, enhancing customer safety.

• A manufacturer can manage all printing in China via a browser from a location in North America.

RESULTS

ItemPath and Zebra have successfully solved the cloud printing challenge. All other web apps that print from the cloud require something additional – browser plugins, printer drivers, local software, connecting or pairing the printer to a device, or having the printer and device on the same network or host. ItemPath with Link-OS printers requires none of these.

Freedom from drivers and additional hardware reduces cost for organizations and gives them a new level of flexibility and convenience for labeling their ItemPath items. Now organizations can store all label data in one place and control it centrally, but print anywhere.

"It's a lot less overhead for organizations and they print in a more timely and accurate fashion," deVries said. "Plus it's fast and secure."

Moving forward, ItemPath will recommend Zebra printers to customers for the unique ability to print from the cloud.

"Zebra Link-OS is the only tool we know of that allows cloud printing," deVries said. "Zebra has really stepped up to the plate and is leading the industry."