

Ricoh Streamline NX 2



- ★★★★☆ Features and Productivity
- ★★★★☆ Value
- ★★★★☆ Administration
- ★★★★☆ Usability
- ★★★★☆ Software Integration
- ★★★★☆ Security
- ★★★★☆ Customer Support and Training

RICOH

OVERVIEW

Ricoh Streamline NX (SLNX) is a modular document imaging solution suite that allows customers to capture paper and electronic documents from almost any source; process a variety of formats such as text, searchable PDFs or Microsoft Word; and then share the information immediately via a wide range of line of business applications, email, FTP sites, network folders, archives, document management systems, and fax turning. In addition to its core scan/fax-capture abilities to improve and simplify workers daily tasks to make critical information accessible. SLNX also includes server- and MFP-resident components to handle user authentication, usage accounting, rules-based printing, secure pull printing and mobile printing, network device administration and activity reporting.



BLI Recommendation



Ricoh's Streamline NX offers an impressive array of document-capture and output-management features in a single platform that can replace a variety of separate applications. The base product handles user authentication, accounting, device management and reporting. The optional Secure Print Manager module adds pull printing for enhanced document security, while the optional Scan and Fax Manager module adds robust document capture/processing/routing features. The optional Streamline Client Secure Print modules allows for tracking of desktop USB printers, print delegation, usage accounting and rules-based printing (such as converting simplex jobs to duplex and redirect jobs to devices with a lower cost per page).

What makes the SLNX suite most appealing is the "one stop shop" nature of the suite. Organizations can gain a wealth of functionality by committing to the platform, and add features over time as needs arise. The alternative is disparate platforms from multiple vendors, each with its own administration console,

Strengths

- Wide-ranging feature set covers almost every MFP-centric need, from authentication to usage accounting to scan capture/routing to device management
- Single platform replaces disparate products (often from various vendors), which can streamline administration and software maintenance
- High-availability features (including failover, caching and load balancing) suitable for mission-critical business processes
- Optional HotFolder plug-in allows electronic documents to be part of workflows and also lets any scanning device (regardless of manufacturer) to serve as an on-ramp for workflows
- Creating document workflows is easier than with some competing products
- Advanced document processing steps for captured documents including full-page and zonal OCR, conversion to Microsoft Office formats, Bates stamping, barcode recognition and more
- More complete device management features than most competing platforms
- Straightforward device-license pricing model

Weaknesses

- Most functionality is limited to compatible Ricoh devices, unlike with third-party document capture and output management products
- Different components have separate administration utilities

software update/maintenance schedule, and so on. Additionally, the platform is scalable and offers the high-availability features—including failover, caching, and load balancing—required of enterprise-class software handling mission-critical business processes.

While the MFP-resident component is available for Ricoh family devices only, some SLNX functionality can be extended to third-party MFPs in a couple of ways. For example, the available Print Release Station extends secure pull printing to any networked output device regardless of brand. SLNX also has an optional HotFolder plug-in that allows document workflows to be enacted on electronic files deposited to the watched folder. This effectively lets any device that can scan to a network folder function as the entry point for capture/conversion/delivery workflows. Plus, the platform’s Client Accounting option can track jobs sent to non-Ricoh devices for accounting/billing purposes. That said, note that each SLNX module (with the notable exception of the device management component) might not have every feature found in a best-of-breed standalone package. Still, SLNX delivers all the functionality most organizations need, and enables customers to get the most out of their Ricoh MFP investment.

Product Profile

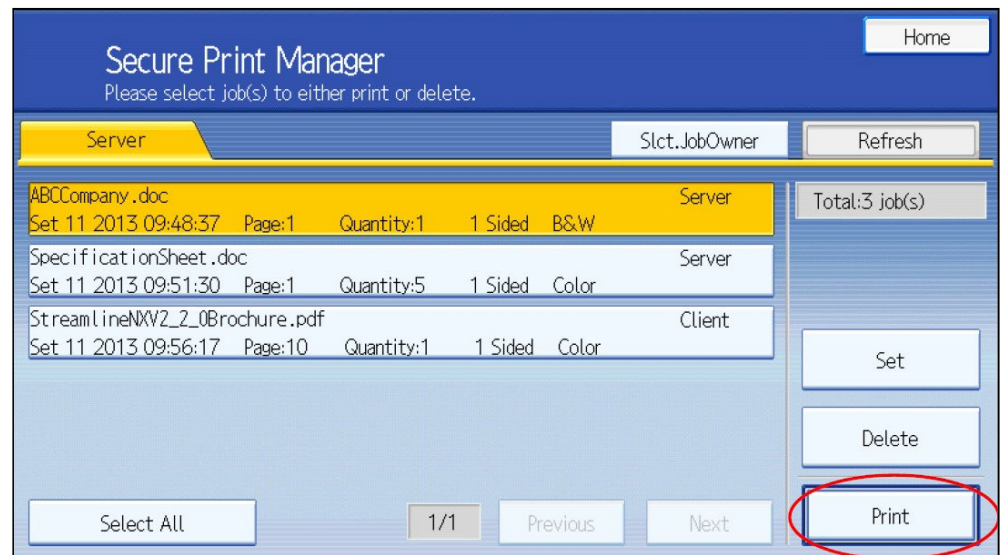
Product:	Ricoh Streamline NX
Version:	2.4
Software Developer:	Ricoh Company Ltd.
Server Requirements:	3-GHz Intel Xeon 5000 series CPU; 4-GB RAM; Microsoft Windows Server 2003 R2, Server 2008, Server 2008 R2, Server 2012, 2012 R2
Client Requirements:	2.33-GHz Pentium CPU; 512-MB RAM; 128-MB disk space; Microsoft Windows XP, Vista SP2, Windows 7 SP1, Windows 8; Mac OS 10.5, 10.6, 10.7
Supported Devices:	For device monitoring: Any output device with an industry-standard printer MIB. For device management: Any networked Ricoh-family devices. For secure pull printing: ESA-enabled Ricoh devices (and other devices with addition of Print Release Station). For scan and fax management: ESA-enabled Ricoh devices.
Suggested Retail Price:	\$372 per device license (includes 1 device license with accounting, reporting, and device management features); \$858 per device license (includes 1 device license with accounting, reporting, device management, and secure pull printing); \$1,380 per device license (includes 1 device license with accounting, reporting, device management, secure pull print, and scan and fax management). All Licenses include 1 year of maintenance and support.
Availability:	The solution is available worldwide directly from Ricoh, as well as from Ricoh dealers and resellers.
Languages Supported:	The program and its documentation are available in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Danish, Dutch, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese, and Russian.



Features and Productivity



SLNX's standard and optional functionality covers almost the complete swath of MFP-centric input/output, including network device management, user authentication, usage tracking, secure pull printing and mobile printing, rules-based printing, and document capture/processing/distribution workflows. The core product comprises three modules: Administration Manager (a network device management solution), Authentication and Accounting Manager (an integrated identification system that can track usage and restrict access to MFP functions) and Report Generator (which provides organizations with visibility into print/copy activity and its associated costs).



SLNX offers a wide range of document- and MFP-centric functionality, such as secure pull printing.

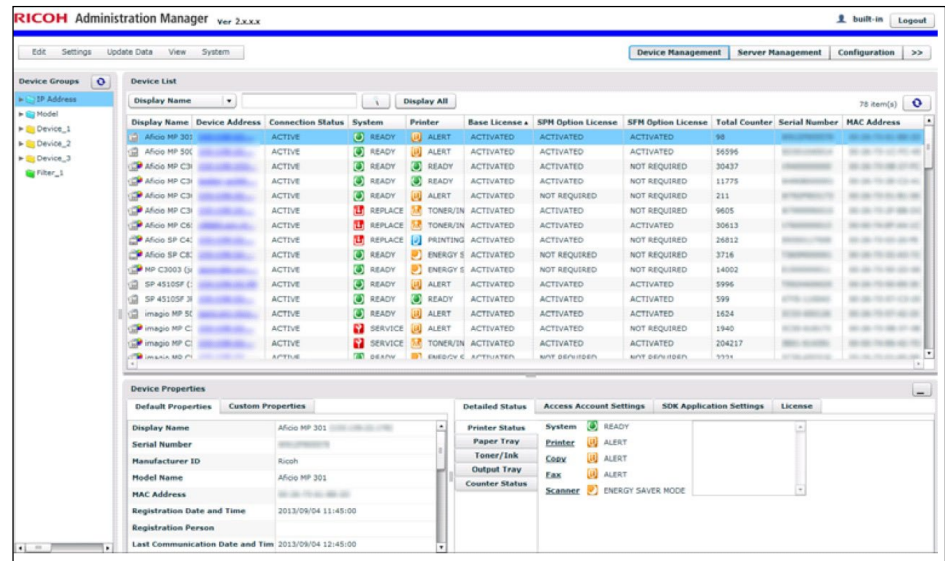
Customers can add additional modules as needed. Secure Print Manager enables secure pull printing for networked devices. Scan and Fax Manager powers the capture, processing and routing of scanned documents to select destinations and back-end repositories, while the optional HotFolder plug-in extends those capabilities to electronic files placed in a watched folder. The Client Secure Print component allows usage tracking of print jobs from USB-connected printers and USB/networked third-party devices. It also supports rules-based printing to automatically apply rules set by the administrator such as re-directing a print job if it is more pages than a set threshold, forcing simplex jobs to print in duplex mode, converting color jobs to black-and-white and more.

Administration Manager

The Administration Manager portion delivers complete device monitoring for both Ricoh and third-party devices (any with a standard printer MIB), along with advanced management for Ricoh-family printers and MFPs on the network. A handy Device

List lets IT personnel quickly see the status of devices, meter counts, consumables levels and more. The list can be filtered by just about any condition, and custom groups can be created so devices that are associated in some way (for example, all printers and MFPs in a given department or location, or of a specific make) appear on their own list. The utility also supports the sending of notifications to specified users for specified error conditions, so IT personnel can quickly remedy issues and improve device uptime.

In addition to these fleet-monitoring features, the Administration Manager component delivers full device management for compatible Ricoh printers and MFPs. Time-saving features include the ability to create templates of preferred device settings, which can then be pushed out to devices on the network. This streamlines the rollout of new devices and ensures existing devices conform to the desired default settings. Hundreds of settings are available to be included in a Device Preferences template, ranging from authentication and security settings to toner-save mode and dozens more in between. The utility also offers templates to specify software settings (firmware and SDK embedded applications) and settings for device-resident address books. These settings can be pushed out manually, or on a set schedule.



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Authentication and Accounting Manager

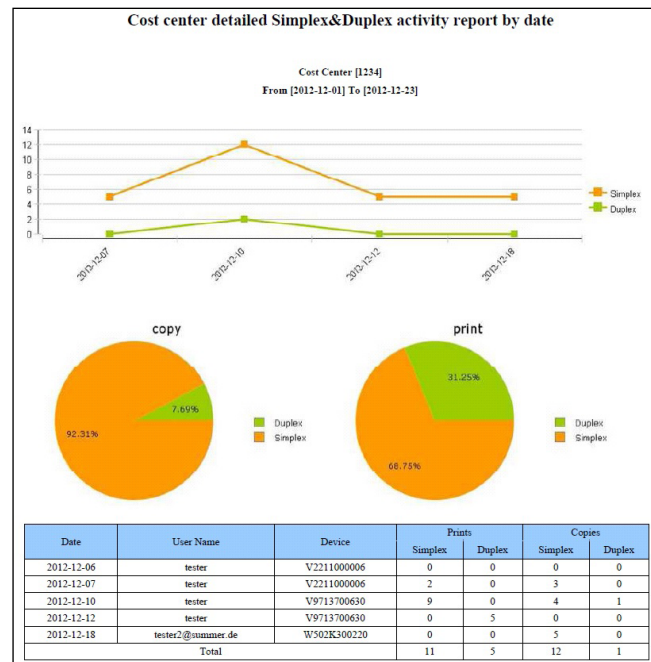
Another core component of SLNX, Authentication and Accounting Manager delivers advanced user log-in for compatible Ricoh MFPs on the network, along with usage tracking and control based on those logins. The system supports a range of authentication schemes, including username/password synced with an organization's Active Directory, LDAP, a six-digit PIN code generated by SLNX and card authentication. Security-conscious organizations can also opt for two-factor authentication, where two login schemes are required for access. Users can be added to logical groups (for example, a given department or location) so usage can be tracked by group as well as per individual.

In addition to tabulating usage, Authentication and Accounting Manager lets an administrator set limits through the enforcement of quotas and print policies, which can save on output costs and help companies meet “green” initiatives. Administrators can enter a limit value for the number of pages a user (or department) is allowed, as well as set rules to force jobs to print in duplex mode, convert all jobs to black and white or outright prohibit color jobs. Administrators can also opt to have a message pop up on the MFP’s display if the user exceeds the specified usage limit.

While its accounting and usage-limit functions are handy, note that this module’s features are not a replacement for a full-blown print management/cost-recovery platform. But the recent release did extend the program’s accounting functions with advanced options to charge for jobs and billing of costs to a client or department account for cost-recovery purposes. Also note that enforceable rules for print and copy output are fairly basic compared to the multi-faceted rules available in dedicated print management products and tracking/limiting scan and fax usage requires the addition of the Scan and Fax Manager component.

Report Generator

The included Report Generator module lets administrators and managers check on an organization’s hardcopy-output history and patterns. Top-level reports show usage by simplex/duplex, back-and-white/color, paper size and scan/fax usage. A pricing table can be applied to a report to calculate the dollar costs associated with the reported output, which can help managers identify areas for potential savings.



The package includes a reporting engine to generate standard and custom reports on a range of usage metrics.

Even more value is delivered by the granular usage reports the module can generate. Administrators can produce line graphs, pie charts and tables showing detailed activity for a specified cost center or department by date range, by user and by output type (simplex/duplex, black-and-white/color, print/copy). SLNX also offers detailed activity reports by device and by user. There are also summary reports available for both output and deleted jobs by cost center, by device, by date and by department. Administrators can customize and create their own reports if any of the standard reports do not meet their needs. Taken together, SLNX reports deliver a very complete view of an organization's output habits. Some dedicated print management platforms offer even more reports, but the summary and detailed reports offered in Report Generator should provide the information most administrators and managers should need.

Secure Print Manager

Secure Print Manager is an optional component for SLNX that adds secure pull printing capabilities for supported Ricoh devices. With this module, users' print jobs can be held at the server until the individual authenticates at the MFP/LP to release it. This improves document security, as sensitive jobs are not left in an output tray for others to see and only the user who sent the job can see it in the pending jobs list at the MFP. The feature also increases user convenience, since jobs can be released at any registered device. And unlike many competing solutions, SLNX allows users to change job settings at the MFP before releasing the job. Pull printing can even cut down on print costs, since jobs that are not retrieved—approximately 10 percent of sent jobs, according to some estimates—are not printed in the first place.

When used in conjunction with the SLNX Client Tool, a PC-resident utility that resides on each user's desktop, Secure Print Manager can retrieve secure jobs from folders on the client PC (rather than the server). And unlike some secure-print tools, SLNX's Secure Print Manager module allows administrators to authorize a designated user to release print jobs for another user (for example, so an administrative assistant can retrieve jobs sent by his boss). However, as with other OEM-developed platforms (but unlike third-party solutions), the secure print functionality works natively only with Ricoh-family devices; a Print Release Station add-on is required for non-Ricoh devices. The feature also relies on Ricoh's Universal Print Driver when submitting jobs, which offers basic print settings (number of copies, simplex/duplex, monochrome/color, check print) but not advanced finishing options such as stapling.

Scan and Fax Manager

Unlike most (though not all) output management solutions, SLNX offers scan- and fax-capture abilities that enable robust capture-processing-routing workflows. With the optional Scan and Fax Manager component, administrators can create and deploy one-touch workflows to route scanned documents from compatible Ricoh MFPs to select back-end destinations. Optional plug-ins support advanced processing steps performed at the server, such as barcode recognition and OCR.

Scan and Fax Manager can convert captured files to common formats such as PDF, encrypted PDF, PDF/A, compressed PDF, XML and various image formats. The standard OCR allows documents to be converted to searchable PDF, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel formats before delivery. An optional Zone OCR plug-in adds processing support for zonal OCR (a key feature when capturing forms and structured documents such as invoices), while the Barcode Recognition plug-in allows the server to read barcode data contained on a document and manage the document according to data contained in the barcode. Notably, Ricoh also offers the optional HotFolder plug-in for Scan and Fax Manager, which lets SLNX monitor specified network folders for newly arrived documents and processes them according to the workflow set for that folder. This lets users incorporate existing electronic documents (or documents captured at any device with scan-to-folder capabilities) into SLNX workflows.

On the delivery end, the Scan and Fax Manager component can deliver processed documents via email, to a folder, to an FTP destination, to a registered printer and to WebDAV folders. Optional plug-ins available for Ricoh DocumentMall, Open-Text RightFax, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SharePoint, Documentum, OpenText Content Manager, FileNET and more.



Value



Ricoh has priced the SLNX platform in a straightforward manner. Customers pay a per-device license fee, with three tiers depending on the functionality selected: \$372 for Authentication and Accounting Manager, the core device management module, and the Report Generator module; \$858 per device for those three plus Secure Print Manager (and the optional plug-ins for print delegation and print redirect); and \$1,380 per device for those four plus the Scan and Fax Manager component (with optional processing/delivery plug-ins priced separately).

As with similar products, customers should expect to incur professional services charges for installation and initial setup of the solution. On the plus side, the first year of maintenance and support is included in the price, which is not always the case. And note that some competing output management platforms charge for a server license, a device license, a client PC license, and then additional costs for add-on modules.

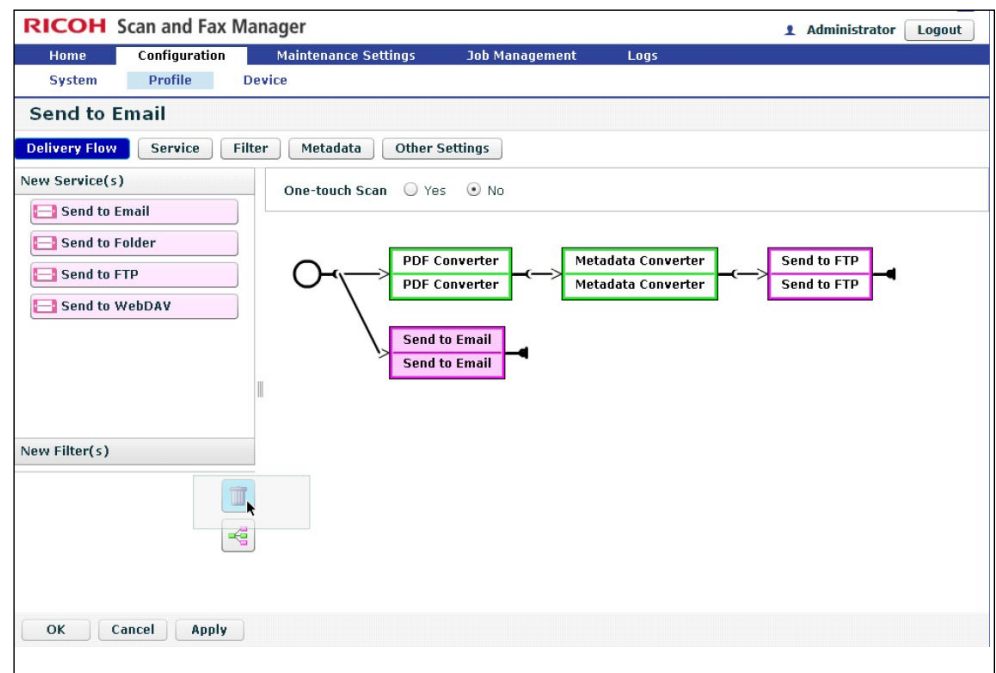
Compared to other output management platforms, this pricing makes SLNX more affordable to purchase for smaller organizations with 10 or fewer devices to incorporate into the system (although some of those platforms deliver more functionality in any given area). Its price is competitive with comparable solutions for organizations looking to support 10 to 20 devices. And note that Ricoh offers enterprise pricing plans for large organizations with 500 or more devices to add to the system.



Administration



As with similar wide-ranging platforms, installation and initial setup of SLNX is handled by the reseller, with input from the customer's IT personnel who will ultimately administer the system. Notably, Ricoh revamped the install process with version 2.0 to make that chore easier, and indeed the installation and configuration processes are now akin to that of comparable platforms. Steps the reseller will perform include installing and licensing purchased components, setting up the database, discovering and grouping devices to monitor/manage, connecting with LDAP/Active Directory (or adding users manually), pushing embedded components out to registered MFPs and (optionally) creating scan workflows. Customers should budget about half a day for setup and initial training of IT personnel, or longer if multiple modules/plugin-ins are purchased.



Capture/processing/distribution workflows are built in an intuitive, graphical workflow builder

Conveniently, end users are able to self-register authentication cards at the device the first time they try to log in after SLNX is deployed, which is a time-saver for IT personnel. Another handy convenience: Administrators can opt to leave walk-up copying open on some devices so guest users won't need to log in to simply make copies at the device.

Once configured, SLNX should not require much day-to-day administration; that said, training of IT personnel is certainly in order to get the most out of the system and its features. Also note that, unlike some platforms, the modular nature of SLNX

means that there are several different management utilities depending on the function. For example, server and device management is handled in the main Administration Manager console, the Report Generator is a separate utility, and the Scan and Fax Manager has a separate UI launched from within Administration Manager.

Still, each administration component is intuitively designed and should feel familiar to IT personnel used to administering such software. For example, the Device Manager UI is similar to other device management solutions, with a device list that can be sorted and filtered, icons to show device status and the ability to drill down into details for a selected device. Creating reports in Report Generator is very simple and should take no time to learn. And notably, the graphical builder for creating workflows (called Projects) in Scan and Fax Manager is easier to master than that of some competing platforms, which means administrators can deploy custom workflows to MFPs with little effort.

The Administration Manager component can be used to monitor and manage tasks (called jobs) in that component, as well as in Secure Print Manager and Scan and Fax Manager (if those components are installed). Administration Manager also offers a complete log of all activity in the modules. In addition, a helpdesk integration feature lets IT personnel open and close service tickets for reported problems with managed devices.

Should an administrator need help, Ricoh includes an exhaustive library of PDF manuals with SLNX—20, in fact, when optional components and plug-ins are accounted for. Each manual thoroughly explains and illustrates the features of the component and how to perform administrative and other chores.

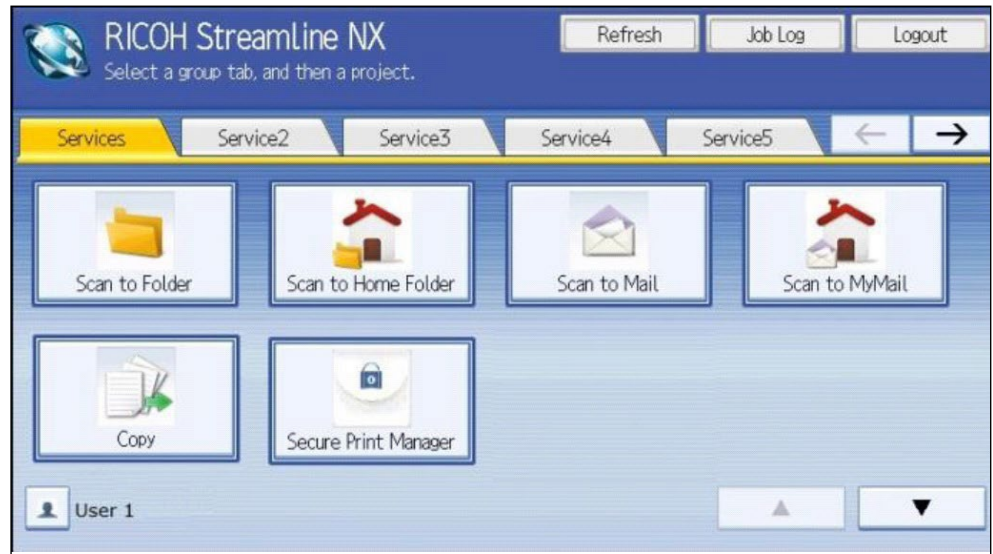


Usability



From an end-user's perspective, SLNX is straightforward to work with, and should simplify daily MFP-centric chores. For example, if card authentication is employed, users will be able to log into devices with an access card, rather than entering a username and password on the control panel.

Most user interaction with SLNX occurs with document capture at the MFP. The custom Projects make it feel as if the user is working with a dedicated app, not an overarching capture system. All SLNX screens can be customized to address specific document workflow needs, so Project button names, icons, supported features, and so on can be tailored to each organization's needs.



To the end user at the MFP, SLNX applications appear as menu choices on the control panel, just like the MFP's other features.

For example, the reseller or administrator can create and deploy any number of targeted workflows, each of which appears as an entry on the home page of the MFP. So a workflow that captures invoices to DocumentMall can have its own entry (called Invoice Processing or whatever the admin chooses), while an email workflow can have its own Send via Email button. Subsequent screens are equally intuitive, and walk the user through choosing settings, entering index information and other steps as configured in the workflow.

The result is an intuitive experience at the MFP that should streamline capture tasks, turning multi-step operations involving the MFP and desktop PC software into a seamless process for knowledge workers. This saves time, reduces the amount of training required for new hires and makes it possible to off-load formerly complex tasks to less experienced workers.

To help end users learn the system, SLNX includes a 114-page PDF User's Guide that covers the system as a whole, as well as short guides dedicated to individual functions (such as the barcode-recognition plug-in). Each is clearly written and illustrated with helpful screenshots where appropriate.



Software Integration



SLNX integrates with a wide range of other systems an organization may have in place. It features Active Directory integration for "set it-and forget it" user management, as any personnel changes made in AD will be reflected in SLNX automati-

cally. Its accounting functions can integrate with more robust print management platforms from Print Audit. For scan capture, connectors are available for Ricoh DocumentMall, OpenText RightFax, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SharePoint, Documentum, FileNET, OpenText Content Manager and IBM File Content Manager. While this list is shorter than destinations supported by leading third-party scan-routing platforms, it should be noted that the majority of output-management products don't support scan capture/routing at all. Also, SLNX's ability to scan to a WebDAV destination means that, with a bit of coding, any back-end system that can import WebDAV data can accept scans from SLNX.

There's also an SDK that allows for the integration of DM-NX with popular helpdesk applications such as Remedy. A ready-made connector for ServiceNow's IT business management platform is available from Ricoh, as is integration with Microsoft's System Center Operations Manager.



Security



SLNX offers excellent security features. From a features perspective, its authentication functions keep unauthorized users from accessing MFPs on the network, and the available two-factor authentication can require users to enter two forms of login information. Particular users can also be locked out of certain functions; for example, to allow temporary workers to access copy and print functions but not scan/send functions of the MFP. For the optional scan capture, documents can be saved to encrypted PDF format (although the system does not offer on-the-fly redaction of specified words or data-string types as BLI has seen in a leading MFP capture program). And of course, the optional pull printing features help improve document security by ensuring that only the authorized user (or her designee) who sent a print job is able to retrieve it.

To safeguard the program itself, SLNX can require users of the administration utilities to log in with a username and password. Moreover, users can be assigned to different admin groups that have different levels of program access. For example, an Administrator can have full access to all functions and settings, while a User might have read-only access to device-usage logs and reports.



Customer Support and Training



Customer training is handled by the Ricoh reseller placing the system. The technician will train the administrator or other IT personnel, and those employees will in turn train end users on how to interface with the system. In addition, Ricoh offers a 4-day training course for customer IT personnel free of charge.

One year of maintenance and support is included with the purchase of SLNX. First-level support is provided by the resellers, who have technicians that have undergone training in order to become versed in installing and supporting SLNX. Should the need arise, support issues can be elevated to Ricoh's in-house development and support staff. The Ricoh technical support line is available 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time (there is also a prompt for "after hours" support beyond that window). BLI called the toll-free number several times during those hours and, after following the prompts to get to the solutions support desk, our calls were picked up immediately. Ricoh also offers 24/7 support contracts for SLNX, an email support page as well as an online knowledgebase.

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