

Solution Report



MPS Monitor 2.0



OVERVIEW

MPS Monitor is a cloud-based fleet assessment and management tool that lets equipment dealers and MPS providers remotely track device meters and the remaining capacity of consumables such as toner cartridges and drums. Dealers can access and create sophisticated dynamic reports thanks to Microsoft PowerBI integration and can export data for further analysis in other software. As it's cloud-based, MPS Monitor can be accessed and used on any device with a web browser. Data is collected by a discreet utility (loaded on a networked PC at the customer site) that detects the devices connected to clients' networks, collects data from those devices and sends it to MPS Monitor. DCAs are available for a variety of operating systems and even print devices such as HP Future Smart 3 and 4, Lexmark eSF, Kyocera HyPass, Olivetti, Samsung XOA and Raspberry Pi devices. MPS Monitor searches the public and private MIBs for data, so it can gather data that devices don't normally provide.



Product Snapshot

Product: MPS Monitor 2.0

Version: 3.7.6

Software Developer:

MPS Monitor s.r.l.

Web: www.mpsmonitor.com

For more information on this software, and other products, visit buyerslab.com/bliQ.

About Buyers Lab: Since 1961, Buyers Lab has been a leading test laboratory in the world of digital imaging equipment. Buyers Lab is completely independent in all of its testing processes and subsequent reporting. All of Buyers Lab's product evaluations are conducted by highly experienced employees in its on-site testing facilities in the United Kingdom and United States where hundreds of new copiers, printers, wide-format devices, scanners, and multi-function (MFP) products are evaluated and reported on each year.





CHIEF BENEFITS

- SAVES TIME AND INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY Data is collected by software, so staff can be better employed on more productive tasks rather than costly site visits.
- ACCESS ANYWHERE MPS Monitor is cloud-based, so users can access and use the solution from any device with a web browser, whether it's a phone, tablet or PC.
- REDUCES IT COSTS The solution is hosted by MPS Monitor and not the user, so customers don't have to pay for costly servers or pay for staff to look after them.
- ENABLES PROACTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE MPS Monitor lets you view the consumable capacities of multiple devices, meter readings, and more—all on one page. Automatic alerts help users send fresh consumables to customers exactly when they need them, increasing customer satisfaction and minimizing customer intervention.
- REMOTE ADMINSTRATION OF HP DEVICES HP's SDS technology lets you remotely update firmware, report a problem app and reboot devices of HP SDS-enabled devices, which saves you time and keeps you productive.
- EXPORT DATA TO SPOT TRENDS AND PATTERNS Users can export data in many different formats, including MS Excel and CSV, for further analysis in other programs.
- CREATE CONTRACTS AND INVOICES Dealers can create contracts detailing the devices included and pricing of the dealer's services, then generate invoices for customers, saving money on other software.
- LOGISTIC MANAGEMENT FOR CONSUMABLES Dealers can automate supplies shipping and integrate MPS Monitor with the dealer's internal warehouse systems or external logistic providers, which provides additional savings and process optimization.

OUR TAKE

MPS Monitor is a full-featured MPS solution that lets dealers monitor print fleets dispersed among many customers, proactively manage consumables replenishment and use powerful and sophisticated tools to analyse data. Dealers can even create contracts and generate invoices from within MPS Monitor.

MPS Monitor is a cloud-based solution, which means dealers can use it without having to buy, manage and maintain expensive servers. This makes it perfect for less tech-savvy dealers. MPS Monitor is sold as a service to which dealers subscribe, and all of a dealer's data is hosted on MPS Monitor's cloud servers. If a dealer decides they no longer want to subscribe to the service they can walk away, so there's no need to make a large upfront investment. MPS Monitor is scalable too. Whether a dealership is a sole-proprietor operation or a large enterprise, MPS Monitor can handle the fleet volumes.

Its architecture translates to a fast and easy deployment. Dealers simply log in to the service, configure their customers and get started. The only software that needs to be set up is the MPS Monitor DCA utility, which collects data from devices and sends it to the MPS Monitor servers. Plus, dealers can access MPS Monitor from any device with a web browser, although Buyers Lab recommends desktop computers and tablets and not mobile phones when interacting with MPS Monitor.





MPS Monitor provided Buyers Lab with a wealth of data about its devices, from headline counters to operator panel messages, and was pleased that MPS Monitor kept historic data on devices and alerts. Alerts can be emailed to dealers so that they can resolve to issues proactively, and dealers can customize the HTML-based emails to include items such as styled text, tables and images.

A great new development is the inclusion of the Microsoft PowerBI business intelligence (BI) platform, which lets dealers analyse the data within their MPS Monitor database to divine new sales opportunities, control costs and much more. Microsoft PowerBI brings dynamic reports that dealers can tweak to change the way data is visualized on screen, with data updating as filters and other interactive elements are modified. MPS Monitor provides several ready-made BI reports, and dealers can modify them or create their own. Dealers will need training to create their own BI reports, but the results will be worth it.

Consumables data for multiple devices can be seen on screen at the same time with remaining consumable life represented graphically and textually, so dealers can quickly see which consumables will need to be replaced soon. Dealers can also receive emails telling them that consumables have reached a specific threshold (dealer defined), such as 15%, 20% or whatever the dealer believes is appropriate. Consumables include much more than ink and toner, and cover items such as drums, maintenance kits and rollers, among others. Dealers can export data to third-party ERP and logistics software and create contracts and generate invoices from within MPS Monitor which charge for items beyond clicks. There's also a great deal of help available, including tutorial videos and a built-in news area where dealers can find out about new features in MPS Monitor and new help content.

Given its wealth of features, MPS Monitor is a great MPS solution.

Features & Productivity

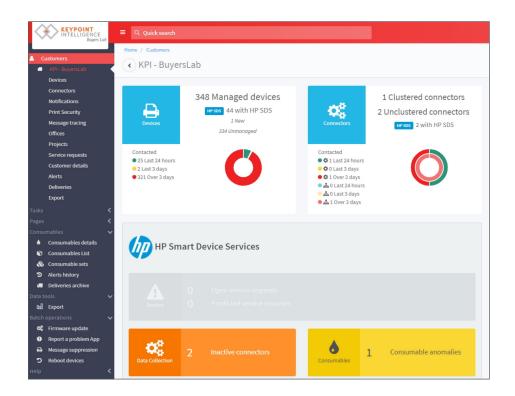
MPS Monitor has many of the features that managed print service (MPS) providers expect of a remote fleet management system, such as notifications alerting dealers to problem devices, automatic counter readings and supplies management functions.

MPS Monitor gathers data from printers' public and private management information bases (MIBs), so dealers can view detailed information on meters and consumables levels for almost every printer and MFP. Dealers can even see error messages from the device that would be displayed on the device's display panel. This elevates MPS Monitor above most OEM MPS solutions, as these typically only report information from other brand's public MIBs, and only provide information from private MIBs for their own models. The company claims it can use any brand's public and private MIB data within MPS Monitor and has enough SNMP experience to reverse-engineer the private MIB information of a device should it be necessary.

The MPS Monitor Customers dashboard is where dealers can see data relating to their customers' fleets and see where action must be taken to ship consumables and resolve device issues. Dealers can also see any issues relating to HP SDS-compatible devices, such as the use of a non-genuine HP toner cartridge and the number of inactive data collection agents (DCAs), if any.







The MPS Monitor Customer dashboard lets dealers see any connection issues with HP SDS-compatible devices at a glance.

DEVICE MANAGEMENT

Devices are either managed or unmanaged. Managed devices are those for which MPS Monitor provides full data and analysis. Dealers can still see the meter counts of unmanaged devices and use that data as a sales tool to convince a customer to include an unmanaged device in a contract. No more than 40% of a dealer's devices can be unmanaged. Devices can be toggled between managed and unmanaged easily using a switch in the full table of devices or when looking at the details of a specific device.

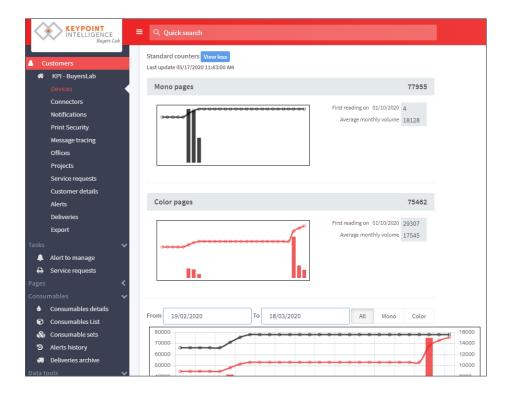
COUNTERS

The device screen lists devices in either a tabular or list format. The list view shows several device details, so that dealers can see its headline meter counts and the current consumables levels (graphically and textually). It also states when the device was last contacted and provides data such as IP address, serial number, and firmware level, among other things. The tabular view doesn't show consumables life or meter counts but does show more info related to data collection.

Dealers can click a link to view more detailed info on a specific device in either view. They can view basic counter data, such as the mono and colour click count at installation and the value of the same counters during the present time and view charts of monthly colour and mono average use. MPS Monitor shows hundreds of different counters for each device (the exact amount depends on the device).



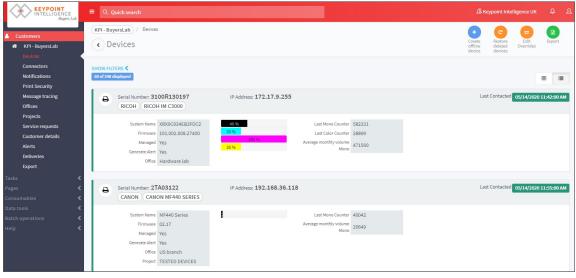




Dealers can view charts detailing device use during a specified time period in addition to headline and more obscure counters.

CONSUMABLES

Consumables levels can be monitored in two different areas: clicking through to a device in the Device menu of a customer and viewing various screens in the Consumables menu. Dealers can see the status of ink or toner consumables for a specific device graphically and textually (as a percentage), and an icon provides a visual warning when consumables levels are close to zero. Other consumables, such as drums and maintenance kits, are also listed but only included where the device provides that data in its public or private MIBs. HP SDS-compatible devices provide even more consumable levels data, such as tray roller kits, service fluid containers and printhead wipers.

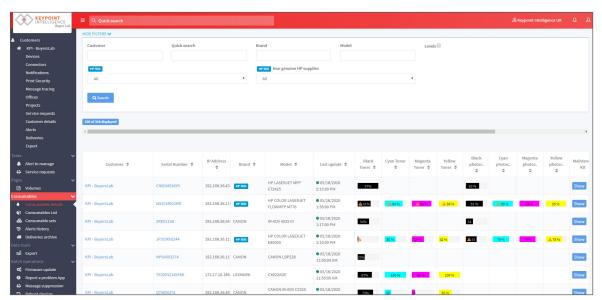


The Devices screen shows consumables and other data for devices graphically and textually as a percentage.

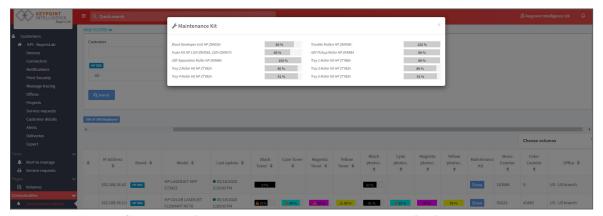




The Consumables Details screen is perhaps the best screen to see consumables levels at a glance because it shows narrow rows so that more devices and their consumables data can be seen on screen at the same time. This screen shows remaining drum life (where applicable), and dealers can click a Show button to see other consumables data for a device. Filters can be used to view only devices with remaining consumables life within a certain range such as 5% to 40%.



The Consumables Details screen lets dealers see consumables data for multiple devices more easily than the Devices screen.



Dealers can click the Show button for a device to see quickly the remaining life of extra consumables.

Dealers can set device alert thresholds for each consumable type detected for a specific printer. So a device that is used heavily can have a higher toner life remaining threshold than a device that is used sparingly, because replacement toner will be needed more quickly for the former device than the latter. Alert thresholds are entered as a percentage, and alert thresholds can be switched on and off, and dealers can set alert thresholds for multiple devices to save time.

In order to manage alerts and consumables, dealers must add the consumables relating to their devices to a list and then to a device. Dealers can search for consumables from MPS Monitor's database. If a consumable is not listed, a dealer can provide some information such as duration (the number of prints before the consumable expires), the consumable's part name, type and colour. Dealers can also upload an Excel file containing new consumables data, which saves time where there are a lot of new consumables that must be uploaded. Consumables are bundled into consumable sets that are applied to one or more devices. Dealers can see alerts relating to specific consumables in the Alerts History screen and click through to see more info on a particular alert and the device for which the alert was generated.



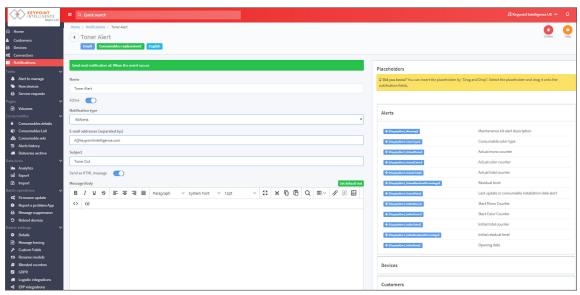


ALERTS MANAGEMENT

Open alerts can be seen on the Home dashboard and dealers can have alerts sent to multiple recipients via email. Open alerts are listed in a table with each row containing data relating to the alert, such as the serial number and model name of the device, the type of consumable that caused the alert, remaining life of the consumable at the point the alert was generated and counter info, among other things. Two buttons on each alert row in the table let dealers handle the alert in different ways. Dealers can generate a 'delivery' for a device, which emails a customer to tell them the consumable has shipped.

Dealers can filter alerts to see those related to a particular customer, or to a specific device brand and model.

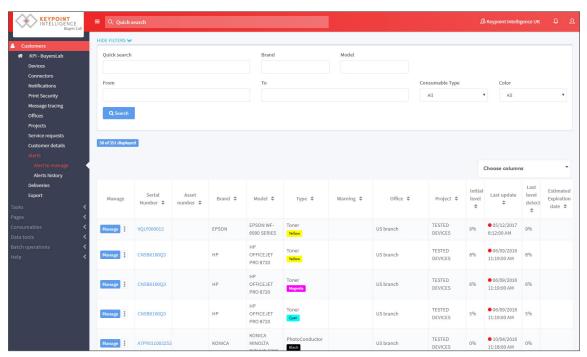
The tool for creating emailed alerts is pretty powerful and alerts can be created that relate to consumables replacement, reading problems, inactive DCAs, and more. MPS Monitor provides a variety of word processing tools to help craft HTML-based emails that contain images, styled text, and tables. There's also a bank of variables split into various categories such as Alerts, Devices and Customers, and dealers can drag and drop these variables onto the email template. This means that the email can contain data such as the consumable type, colour, and level at the time of the alert, as well as the device's IP address, serial number, and external identifier, among many other things. Alerts can be toggled off and on using a switch and can be edited or deleted.



The email creation tool is powerful, with lots of variables from which to choose.



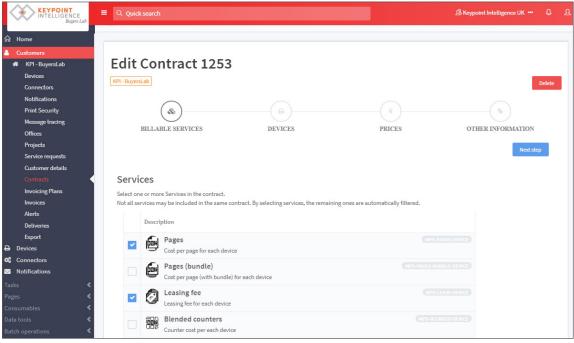




Dealers can view alerts at a glance and use filters to select a subset of them.

BILLING AND INVOICING

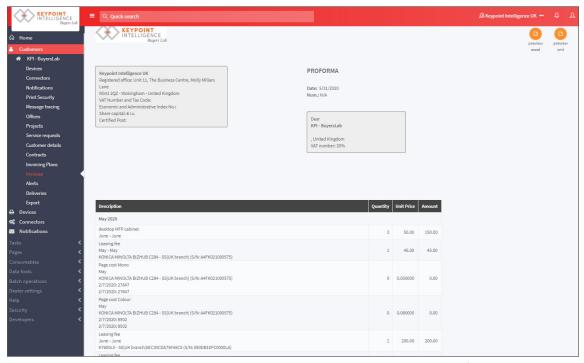
Dealers can create invoices and bill customers for the dealer's services using MPS Monitor alone. Dealers must create contracts, which involves specifying the way a customer will be charged (clicks, leasing fee, and other items such as device, cabinets, or paper) and the prices of the dealer's services. The dealer then selects the date on which an invoice should be created, such as the last day of each calendar month, a summary of the services provided by the dealer and the email address of the person to which the invoice should be sent. Dealers can view a list of invoices for a customer at any time and can export the invoice as an Excel or XML document.



Dealers can easily create contracts that include different kinds of pricing.



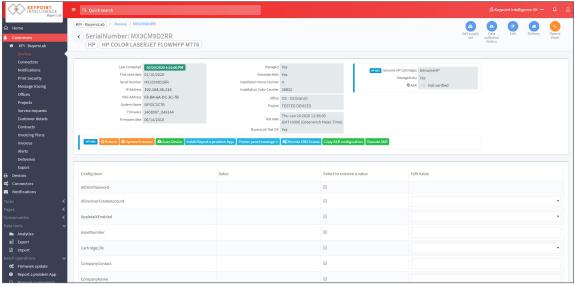




Dealers can view previously generated invoices and can export them as Excel and XML files.

HP SMART DEVICE SERVICES (SDS)

HP SDS lets dealers handle tasks such as updating firmware, rebooting devices and diagnosing device issues remotely. It can also be used to configure devices remotely, with options to set an asset number for a device, modify a device's file system password, and enable Apple Talk, for example. Dealers can also click a link within MPS Monitor to view and interact with a HP SDS-compatible device's embedded web server remotely. MPS Monitor integrates SDS deeply to provide dealers with the best experience. More information can be found at: https://www.mpsmonitor.com/hp-smart-device-services-integration/



MPS Monitor provides close integration with HP SDS-compatible devices.

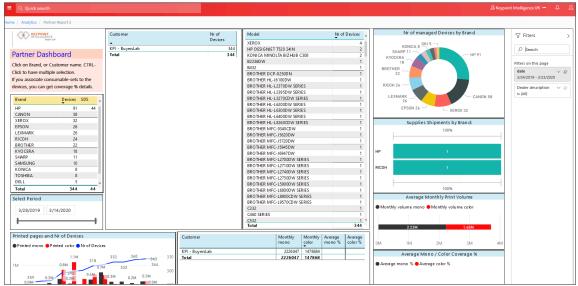




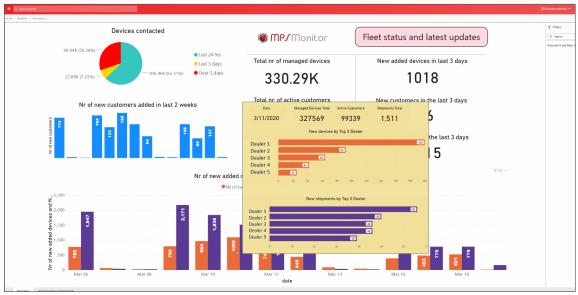
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYTICS

MPS Monitor uses the Microsoft PowerBI business intelligence system, fully integrated into the Web Portal, to provide dealers with dynamic data analysis. There are many ready-made 'reports' and dealers can modify them or create their own using a palette of visualization and data tools. The tools let dealers create intricate and sophisticated reports visually. The data on screen can be tweaked on the fly using filters, and charts can be expanded to fill the screen and can be sorted according to certain criteria, to give a few examples. The ready-made reports provide dealers with data relating to shipped supplies, print volumes and fleet status among other things. This is a very powerful tool and dealers will need training and plenty of practice to master it, but the results will be worth the effort. Dealers have a wealth of data in their MPS Monitor database and can use the analysis tools to divine sales strategies and control costs.

MPS Monitor uses Microsoft PowerBI Embedded technology. This means dealers can exploit Power-BI's full capabilities using the entire MPS Monitor dataset without an external Microsoft account and without any additional cost, as the PowerBI Licence is included in the MPS Monitor service. Dealers just need to log in to MPS Monitor to use Microsoft PowerBI.



Dealers can interact with report elements and use filters to better visualize the data.



Dealers can 'drill-down' into their MPS Monitor database to make the best use of their data.



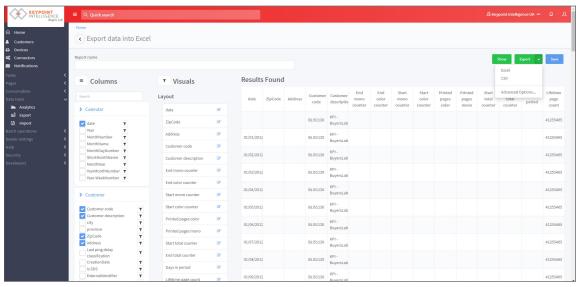


USER AND CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

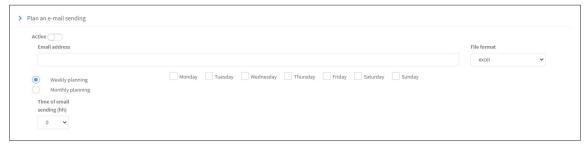
Multiple users can be created to manage all or different aspects of MPS Monitor. Users are given different roles to suit their position within the company. The roles they are given dictate the screens they can see and the tasks they can perform. A user with the Customer Care role can view device data, customer details and project-related information but can't manage alerts and deliveries, for example, while someone with the Installer role can only see enough customer data to download and install a DCA for the user. The person creating a user can see the permissions granted to a user beforehand. Should the included roles be deemed insufficient or not fit a dealer's needs, the dealer can create custom roles for users with a specific set of permissions. Once created, users can be edited and deleted.

DATA EXPORT

Data can be exported in Microsoft Excel (XLSX) or CSV formats using a comprehensive and sophisticated data export tool. Data export is split into different categories, so dealers can export installed devices and counters, installed devices and consumables alerts, and counters detail. Dealers select such a category and then add the columns (such as customer, device brand, latest colour counter) they want to include in the data export. The data can be exported straightaway as a download or it can be emailed to multiple recipients. Emails can be scheduled on a weekly or monthly basis, and dealers can specify the weekdays on which the data export is emailed. One improvement we'd like to see is the ability to specify the hour and minute at which the report is sent to the email recipients; at the moment you can only select the hour.



MPS Monitor's self-service data export system is powerful and sophisticated.



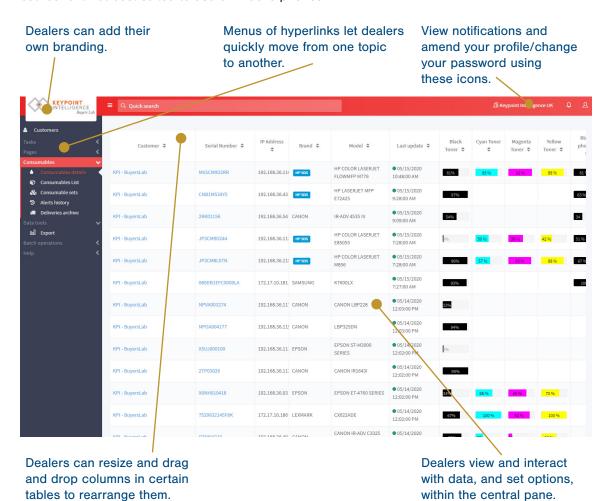
Data exports can be emailed to recipients according to a schedule, and in Excel and CSV formats.





USABILITY

Users interact with MPS Monitor exclusively through the web interface, so the methods of interaction will be familiar to everyone who's ever used the internet. Users move from page to page via hyperlinks at the left-hand side of the screen and can see options and data relating to a specific area, such as devices' consumables data or alert configuration in the central part of the screen. Buyers Lab found the browser-based MPS Monitor 2.0 to be easy to use on desktop monitors and tablet PCs, but found it not best suited to use on mobile phones.

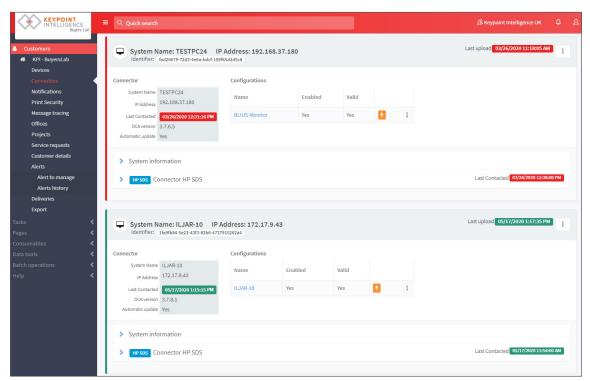




IT ADMIN & SECURITY

MPS Monitor 2.0 is a cloud-based solution, so there is no need to manage servers or purchase new computer systems on which to run it. The only thing dealers need to administrate is the data collection agents (DCAs) that are installed at customers' sites. DCAs collect device data then upload it to MPS Monitor 2.0 so that dealers can view the data and act upon it. Dealers can check that DCAs are still functioning and sending data to MPS Monitor within the MPS Monitor 2.0 web portal and enable or disable them easily. Colour coding makes it easy to see the current status of DCAs at a glance. Dealers can specify the IP address ranges of the networks to be monitored. Data is collected according to a schedule and many schedules can be created per DCA, so a dealer can have a DCA collect data at 07:00 and then again at 23:00, for example.

DCAs can be installed on a desktop PC in the background or installed in a compatible MFP (see Product Profile). Installation within an MFP is convenient at those sites where desktop PCs are switched off at night but MFPs aren't. DCAs can be easily downloaded from within MPS Monitor. Dealers can send an email containing DCA installation instructions to all customers, which eases DCA roll-out for dealers with a lot of customers.



The MPS Monitor 2.0 Connectors screen lets dealers see data relating to installed DCAs and view their status at a glance. The red statuses of the upper DCA denote that it's currently offline, while the green statuses of the bottom DCA mean that it's working fine and sending data to MPS Monitor 2.0.

Armed guards patrol the BT Italy datacentre that hosts MPS Monitor, and a BT employee must accompany anyone entering the server room. Video surveillance systems monitor the datacentre, while anti-fire and anti-flood systems protect it. MPS Monitor's infrastructure is penetration-tested every 12 months. MPS Monitor is ISO 27001- and GDPR-compliant, which helps to protect data. HTTPS is used to communicate with the MPS Monitor servers.



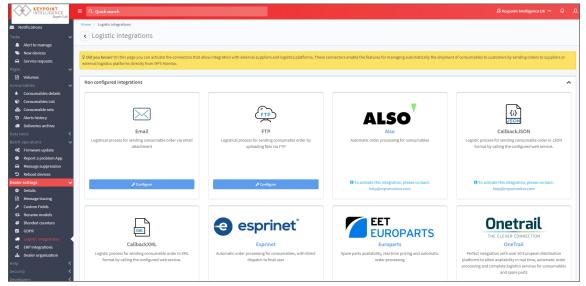


SOFTWARE INTEGRATION

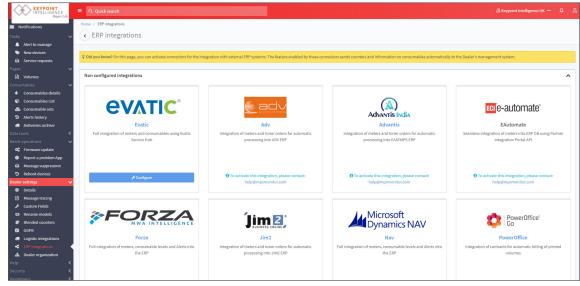
Dealers can access and use MPS Monitor's REST API and SDK for no extra cost and use those technologies to extend the features of MPS Monitor and include MPS Monitor in their own applications. MPS Monitor says its system can be integrated with any external system using the API and SDK. Data can also be traded with third-party systems using CSV, Microsoft Excel, XML and JSON files.

MPS Monitor provides off-the shelf connectors for integration with most standard ERP, Service Management and Logistic platforms:

ERP and Service Management Suites		Logistics Providers
• ADV	Jim2 Business Engine	• ALSO
EasyMPS ERP	MS Dynamics NAV	EET Europarts
ECi e-automate	PowerOffice	Esprinet
Evatic	Radix	Onetrail
Forza	Purpose Software 2Serv	



MPS Monitor makes it easy to integrate MPS Monitor with logistics systems (above) and ERP software (below).



MPS Monitor plans to add many more standard connectors in the future.

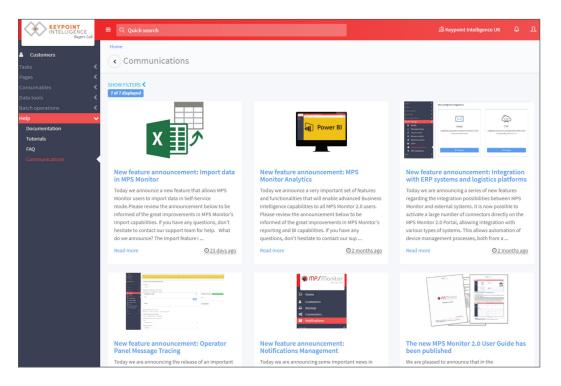




SUPPORT & TRAINING

Support and training are provided remotely, but onsite support or training can be arranged. MPS Monitor provides all support to dealers directly, and support is included in dealers' monthly subscription. Support starts as soon as the subscription becomes active and stops when the subscription ends. MPS Monitor can provide support via email, telephone, Skype, TeamViewer and some other remote access tools, but primary contact is through MPS Monitor's built-in ticketing system which tracks the issue and ensures dealers get updates about how the issue is being handled. An online tutorial video (youtu.be/9sqnDEaRDcE) shows dealers how to use the ticketing system. MPS Monitor says that 95% of issues raised via a ticket are resolved the same day or the next business day, with an approximate average ticket closing time of 3.5 working days. Three time zones are supported during their local business hours: EMEA, the Americas and Asia-Pacific.

There is a wealth of help in the form of downloadable manuals, FAQs and tutorial videos, all of which can be accessed through the MPS Monitor's Help menu. There's also a Communications screen that shows new feature announcements and details of new manuals and tutorials. This screen is constantly updated, so a dealer can easily check to see what's new in MPS Monitor 2.0.



Dealers can easily find out about new features thanks to the Communications screen.





MPS MONITOR 2.0 TUTORIAL VIDEOS

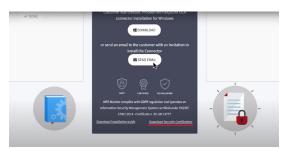
Dealers can access a number of tutorial videos from within the MPS Monitor 2.0 portal. We've listed a selection below. Click a screenshot to play the video on YouTube.



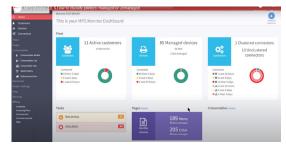
How to create blended counters



How to create clusters of DCAs



How to set up a DCA



How to set a device as managed or unmanaged

VALUE

MPS Monitor is sold on a subscription basis, although there are a number of different subscription plans available. Dealers can pay monthly in arrears for the exact number of devices they have used, for example. Such a setup is called an Enterprise package and is intended for dealers with more than 400 devices. The price charged per device depends on the number of devices managed, starting at 1€ per device, per month for fewer than 500 devices and decreasing to 0.60€ per device, per month for dealers with more than 5,000 managed devices.

Other subscriptions can be bought in packages that are comprised of a number of managed devices and time duration before subscription renewal. The Mini-Cloud package is for dealers with up to 100 devices, Small for 200 devices, and Standard for 400 devices. Such packages can be paid for three, six and 12 months in advance, with longer upfront subscriptions having lower per-device prices (from 150.00€ to 112.50€ for the Mini Cloud and 350.00€ to 262.50€ for the Standard, for example).

As MPS Monitor also tracks unmanaged devices the number of unmanaged devices must not surpass 40% of a dealer's fleet.





STRENGTHS

- Easy to set up
- Can be accessed from anywhere on any device with a web browser
- Detailed device information includes operator panel messages, alert history, and consumables life
- Editable notifications can be emailed to dealers to inform them of issues with a device
- MPS Monitor's application programmer's interface (API) enables it to be integrated into other applications
- Data collection can be achieved discreetly via an embedded DCA for HP FutureSmart 3 and 4, Kyocera HyPAS, Lexmark eSF, Samsung XOA, and Raspberry Pi devices
- Comprehensive options for configuring data exports (Excel and CSV formats) for further analysis of data and device use
- A wealth of tutorials (video and written), and notice of new features and developments lets dealers learn and get the best out of MPS Monitor
- The included Microsoft PowerBI system is a powerful data analysis tool

WEAKNESSES

- Creating reports with the integrated Microsoft PowerBI system is not trivial
- User permissions are not as granular as those of some other MPS solutions we've tested
- Not enough information or tutorials on the integrated Microsoft PowerBI system
- Some on-screen tables lack scrollbars and so not all columns can be seen





PRODUCT PROFILE

Versions:	One version.	
Pricing:	Dealers with fewer than 400 devices to manage can purchase three packages on three-, six- and 12-month subscriptions with upfront pricing: Mini Cloud (150.00€ to 112.50€), Small (250.00€ to 187.50€), and Standard (350.00€ to 262.50€). Dealers with fleets of 400+ can buy an Enterprise subscription based on a per-device, per-month price model, with prices from 0.60€ to 1.00€.	
Users:	Unlimited number of users.	
Server:	Not applicable (cloud-based solution).	
Client:	Any device with a web browser.	
Mobile Device Compatibility:	Any device with a web browser.	
Compatible Output Hardware:	MPS Monitor's agent software can collect data from any output device with a standard printer MIB, and it can collect private MIB data from most devices. The agent can be embedded in HP FutureSmart 3 and 4, Kyocera HyPAS, Lexmark eSF and Samsung XOA devices, as well as a Raspberry Pi device running Windows 10 Embedded or a compatible version of Linux.	
Software Integration:	API/SDK available for software integration.	
Availability:	Sold worldwide.	
Software Integration:	Catalan, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish (Web Portal);English, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish (MPS Monitor DCA).	

