BLI Solution Report

EFI Self-Serve M500 Copy/Print Station

- Features & Productivity
- Usability
- IT Admin & Security
- Support & Training
- Value

Competitive Range

Product Snapshot

Product: EFI Self-Serve M500 Copy/Print Station

Version: Release 1.3

Software Developer: Electronics For Imaging, Inc.

Web: www.efi.com

Phone: 1-650-357-3500

For more information on the EFI Self-Serve Copy/Print Station and other EFI solutions, see BLI's comprehensive coverage at Buyerslab.com.

About BLI: Since 1961, BLI has been a leading test laboratory in the world of digital imaging equipment. BLI is completely independent in all of its testing processes and subsequent reporting. All of BLI'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, faxes and multi-function (MFP) products are evaluated and reported on each year.
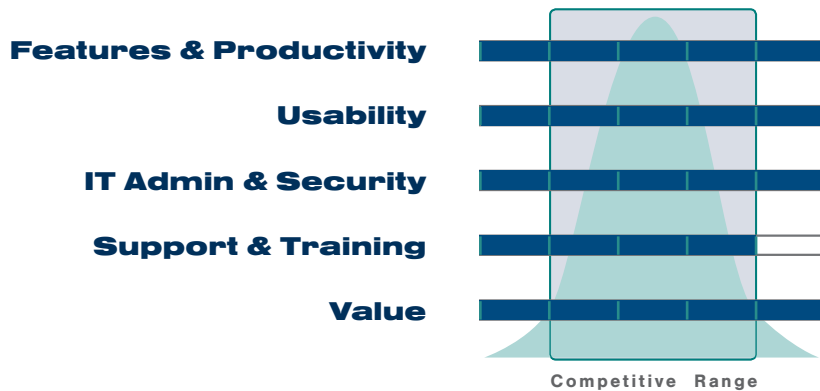
OVERVIEW

The EFI Self-Serve M500 Copy/Print Station is designed to overcome the limitations of traditional cash and coin-op vending systems and make paying for copier/printer use easier, eliminating the use of coins and implementing payment with credit/debit cards, student cash account cards, and other payment cards. It consists of a compact console with a 10-inch color touch screen, card reader, and USB port for printing directly from a USB device. A sister unit, the M505 adds a barcode reader to make it easier to use EFI's PrintMe Cloud Print Service. This console can be mounted on a desktop, in a kiosk, or on a pole stand next to the copier/MFP.

Benefits

ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR CURRENCY—The M500 works with credit and other cards, not currency. Staff doesn't need to deal with coins and making change.

VARIABLE CHARGES FOR SERVICES—Enterprises can charge different rates for different print and copy services such as color/black and white, two-sided, or oversized prints (if MFP supports this).

EXCEPTIONALLY EASY TO USE—The touch screen interface is familiar and self-explanatory. A user will only need to interact with site staff in the event of a malfunction.

USER CAN PRINT FROM MANY SOURCES—Today's users have documents located in different places. The M500 lets a user print from a USB memory stick or portable USB drive, online services such as Dropbox, Box, Google Drive and OneDrive, and through EFI's PrintMe Cloud service.

PROVIDES EXCELLENT SECURITY FOR CREDIT CARD DATA—No card data is maintained after the transaction has been authorized and completed. All transmission between the M500 Station and payment gateways is encrypted and transmitted using HTTPS protocol.

OUR TAKE

Public use copiers/MFPs with cash-acceptance modules attached are a common sight in libraries, college campuses, hotels, and other locations. These cash-vending systems do allow payment collection for machine use, but have limitations. One is the necessity of the user to have enough and correct change to pay for the copies and/or prints made. This requirement also places a burden on staff where the device is located to make change when necessary. Another limitation of the change box approach is the inability to charge differently for different services such as two-sided copies or prints, color versus black and white, or to charge and record sales tax separately in locations where this is required. Finally, there is the necessity to retrieve the change from each coin device and verify that the collection accurately matches the usage of the device.

The EFI Self-Serve M500 Copy/Print Station is a dedicated hardware and software solution designed to do one thing: eliminate those clunky cash-box vending system for public copiers/printers. And it does that very well. At the heart of the system is a kiosk-style screen and card reader, which enables walk-up users to make copies or select jobs to print (complete with job preview), then pay for the output by credit card or any number of third-party payment cards. The M500's utility is extended with the use of EFI's free PrintMe Cloud service, which lets a user print to the device attached to the M500 from smartphones, tablets, laptops or PCs via the service. A user can also sign on and retrieve and print documents from popular cloud storage services.

Ease of use is a key selling point for the solution. End users will require no instruction to use the tablet-like display, and they can easily change print settings (such as number of copies, print page range, two-sided output) if desired. The system is also easy to implement and maintain. Administrators manage M500 Stations through EFI Self-Serve AdminCentral, the Cloud-based administration utility. The console, among other things, allows key personnel to view device status and create user permissions. And administrators can push software updates directly to all connected M500 Stations.

The M500 system can also be set to create charges to standing accounts for departments or specific staff via a charge-back code, a convenience especially in education settings so staff does not need to use a payment card. That said, unlike server-based print management solutions such as those from Equitrac, Pharos, PaperCut and others, the M500 isn't meant to limit print choices, enforce usage quotas, enforce printing rules and the like. But for schools, libraries, hotels and business locations looking for a turnkey solution to provide printing/copying kiosks for public use—without the hassle of cash-payment systems—the EFI system is an elegant answer.

Strengths

- User interface at the MFP/printer console is very intuitive

- Pull print jobs from a USB device or popular cloud services

- Printing from mobile devices, desktop PCs and laptops is available using the included EFI PrintMe Cloud service

- Can be set up for a wide variety of payment cards

- M500 console can display up to 20 alternating screen savers when idle, which can be custom screens uploaded by the owner

- Cost is comparable to, or more cost-effective than, traditional cash vending systems

Weaknesses

- Cannot directly print XLS or Postscript files; these need to be sent to the target printer using EFI's PrintMe Cloud service where the files are converted to PDF format for printing

- Use with the copier function of an MFP requires installation of a Foreign Hardware Interface on the copier, which might increase the overall cost of the installation or may not be offered for the target MFP

Product Profile

Versions	The product family consists of the M500 and the M505, which adds a barcode reader to make it easier to use EFI's PrintMe Cloud Print Service.
Pricing	Each M500 or M505 console is priced at $2,949. A manufacturer-specific cable for copy tracking (where available) is $49. Additionally, AdminCentral costs $499 a year (from the initial install onward) and is charged yearly for each M500 console.
Users	Maximum number of users supported: Unlimited
Server	Not applicable (cloud- and MFP-resident solution)
Client	Administration is accomplished through a web browser. Browsers supported include Chrome, Internet Explorer 9 or later, Firefox and Safari.
Compatible Hardware	EFI is continually updating the list of supported vendors and models. This list is available on its web site. At the time of BLI's testing, this list showed nearly 150 models. The supported device must support Postscript or a PostScript emulation
Software Integration	The EFI Self-Serve M500/M505 Copy/Print Station and associated AdminCentral application do not have an API or other method for integration with other software applications.
Mobile Compatibility	Mobile compatibility is provided by the use of EFI's free PrintMe Cloud service. Apps are available for Android and iOS, and a print driver is available for Windows-based devices. The user sends the print job to the PrintMe service using an app or the print driver, and a release code is sent back to the user in both numerical and barcode format via email. This code is then entered or scanned at the M500/M505 console, which then downloads the print job, offers the same print choices as if the file had been entered at the console (number of copies, color/mono, single/double sided, and so on.) and requests payment before the job is printed.
Availability	The solution is sold worldwide with a strong presence in North America, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. Version 1.3 added support for Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Columbia.
Languages	English, Spanish, German, French, Dutch, Brazilian Portuguese

Features & Productivity

By design, the M500 system has a simple feature set to achieve its primary goal: easily enable non-cash payments for prints and copies in public locations. But the convenience it delivers for an organization's members/customers, and the productivity gains it enables for staff, are notable:

- The easy-to-understand tablet-like touch screen is self-explanatory for walk-up customers to understand and use, which means little to no intervention will be required on the part of staff.

- The system can be configured to accept a wide variety of debit, credit and other cash payment cards, making it convenient for the widest possible audience. Files to print can be located on a USB device that the user plugs into the kiosk, or the user can use the UI to navigate to files stored on popular on-line storage services including Box, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive, Google Drive or EFI PrintMe.

- Where sales or VAT taxes are required, the tax can be included in the per-service cost, or calculated on the entire print or copy job and added into the total job price as a separate item.

- The user can select to have receipts printed at the printer attached to the console, sent via email, or not generated.

- The system supports use of charge-back codes (via username and password), so staff and other personnel do not need to use a payment card at the MFP.

- The system can also be set up with a "post-pay" option, which generates an invoice with a print/copy job so users can pay an employee in person.

- EFI offers the optional G5 Card Vending Kiosk to sell cards to use with the M500 for users without a supported credit, debit, or other payment card

- The system offers easy-to-generate reports that cover all aspects of functionality. These reports include:

    Sales Reports: Device Sales Activity Report, Location Sales Activity Report, Sales By Day of the Week, Sales By Hour of the Day, Sales Report, Account Access Summary.

    Kiosk Reports: Kiosk Activity Summary, Kiosk Activity Details

    Audit Reports: Staff Audit For Location, Staff Audit for Staff Account

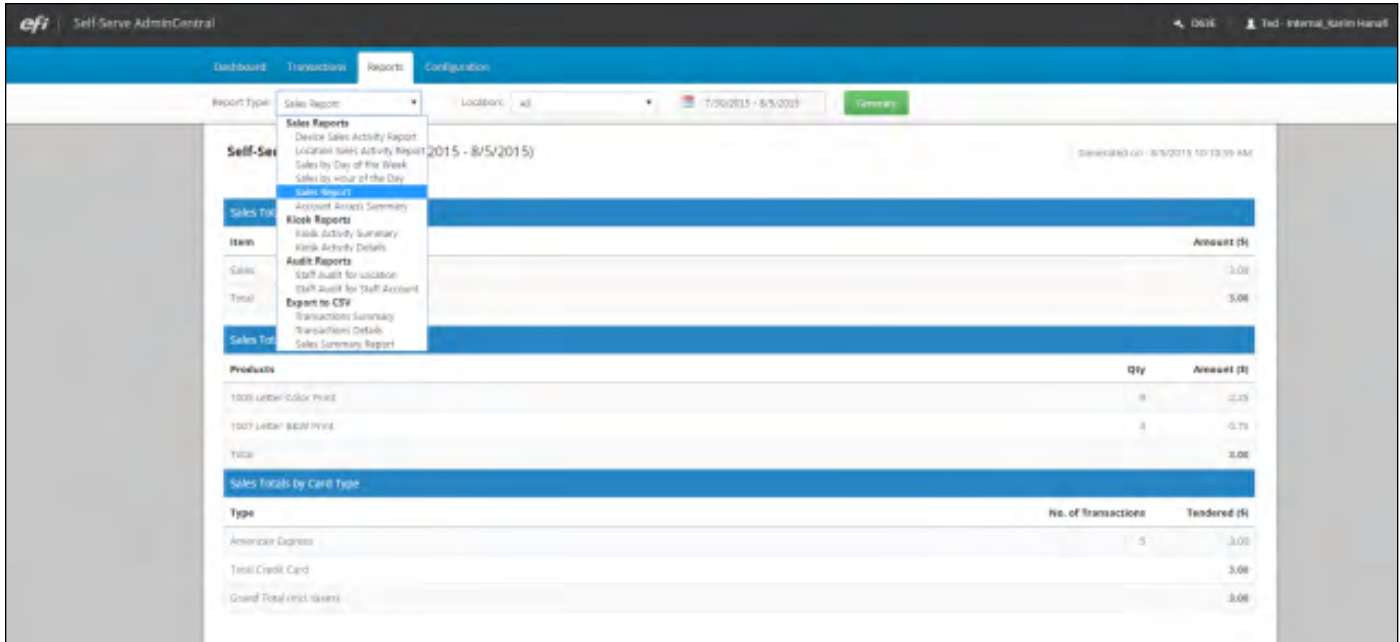   **Export to CSV:** Transaction Summary, Transaction Detail, Sales Summary Report

Report generation is simple and the reports themselves are easy to read and understand.

VERTICAL MARKET SUITABILITY

- The M500 is especially well-suited to the education, hospitality, municipal government (for libraries, court houses and municipal centers) and retail verticals, where people would need access to copying and printing services.

- For the higher education space, the system offers campus ID card support for CBORD Gold, Odyssey PCS, and Blackboard Transact.
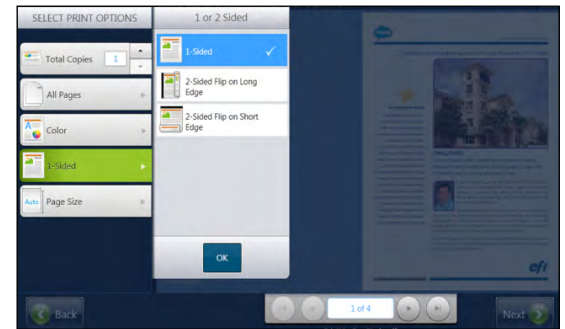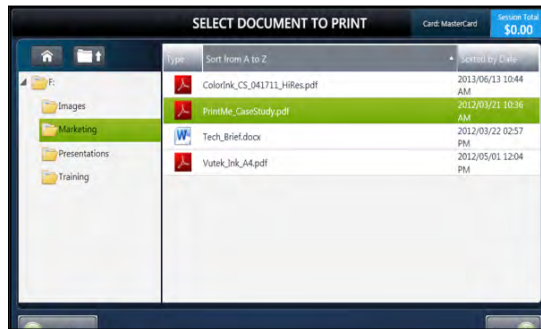
Usability

Whether from the M500 console or remotely using the PrintMe Cloud service, EFI's solution is easy to use.

- The tablet-style screen presents a straightforward user interface that directs the user through a series of screens to select the type of job (copy or print), the location and specific file to print or copy, output options and choice of payment.

Sequential screens on the M500 console walk a user through the printing process.

- Using PrintMe Cloud service is similarly straightforward, allowing users to simply email their documents to print@printme.com where the the job is processed. A release email is then sent to the user. The user then enters the release code at any M500 console, or scans the barcode if the console is an M505, and the job is sent over the Internet from the PrintMe Cloud service to the console where it is forwarded to the printer.

- With Android or iOS apps, EFI PrintMe is selected as the "Send-to" destination.

CONTENTS ▶

IT Administration & Security

INSTALLATION / CONFIGURATION

- IThe EFI M500 Self-Serve Copy/Print Station consists of two components. The M500 console (or M505 console which adds a barcode reader), and the AdminCentral Cloud-based application which is hosted by EFI. There is no on-site server required.

- EFI offers a 33-page Functional Overview & Installation Checklist which is very helpful in organizing the information that will be necessary during the installation and configuration.

- Initial installation and setup of AdminCentral is performed by the customer after EFI provides the initial account login. The administrator enters locations, device configurations, staff authorization and administration privileges for each location.

- Initial setup also includes setting prices for each service available at a specific M500 location. This can be set globally, so the same charges are imposed at all locations, or on an individual basis.

- Sales tax or other applicable tax rates are also set at initial configuration. These tax rates can be set separately for each individual location to accommodate state, county and local rates which may differ by device location.

- The initial setup also requires that the administrator set the payment forms and options which will be accepted. These include the post-pay option; account access via a username and PIN; credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express and in some locations, Discover); cash cards support for Ceridian Stored Value Solutions and Givex; and campus ID card support for CBORD Gold, Odyssey PCS and Blackboard Transact. In some cases, the customer may need to work with EFI to set these up; but for the most part, the documentation is very good at walking the customer through what needs to be entered.

- If credit-card payment is desired, the initial setup also requires that the administrator set up credit card processing gateway information. The solution supports Authorize.Net and Ogone.

- The administrator must set up a secure FTP site to which daily M500 logs will be uploaded nightly. This is required to be in compliance with Payment Card Security Standards if the customer accepts credit cards.

ONGOING ADMINISTRATION

• All ongoing administration is performed in the cloud via the AdminCentral management console, so there's no need for dedicated server hardware or to install and maintain local software.

• The AdminCentral UI is easy to comprehend and navigate.

• Administrative rights to specific functions can be assigned to staff by the overall administrator.

SECURITY

Security for the EFI Self-Serve M500 Print/Copy Station is maintained in different forms in both the M500 console and the AdminCentral Cloud application, and is handled by the Self-Serve AdminCentral Transaction Engine. The payment card is swiped on the M500 console, which communicates with AdminCentral and the payment vendor to generate a Preauthorization Number (PAN) for the transaction. During each transaction, the following security measures are maintained:

• 256-AES encryption at all times for preauthorization to charge a card

• Using encryption keys that change with each transaction

• Never storing encryption keys

• Securely deleting card data records at authorization to make the card data irretrievable

• Purging all card data once the transaction has been completed

• Using secure deletion methods with 3 passes in accordance with DoD 5220.22-M

• Never logging the full PAN or writing it into any other file that remains on the M500

• Never displaying or printing the full PAN for customers or staff

• Never sending sensitive card data to the host

• EFI does not have access to any preauthorization card data from the M500

• The M500 device does not allow user access to the Engine or cardholder data, either remote or local. The M500 software and the Self-Serve AdminCentral Transaction Engine are pre-installed on the M500 device and cannot be installed on another computer or device.

• Additionally, the M500 console itself is designed with a locked rear cover that limits access to the ports and power connection to the device, providing a measure of physical security.

• All transmissions between the device and the hosted AdminCentral application over the Internet are encrypted using 256-bit AES encryption, and transmitted using Secure HTTP protocol.

BLI judges that these measures, which are in accordance with the Payment Application Data Security Standard (PA-DSS), should provide adequate security for the types of transactions for which the solution is designed.

Support & Training

Both the physical install of the M500 console and the setup of the AdminCentral Cloud-based software are performed by the customer's staff, typically the IT personnel.

- A clearly written, illustrated and indexed 108-page Setup & Administration Guide provides step-by-step directions for configuring M500 consoles in multiple locations, defining staff administration privileges and setting up card vending consoles. (No end-user guide is required.)

- The administration program offers context-sensitive help, and EFI maintains a User Forum on its site.

- Should further support be required, EFI offers support via a toll-free number and also through email. Support hours are Monday through Friday from 8 am to 8 pm EST. Calls are typically answered immediately by a live support representative and troubleshooting is done in real-time. If additional investigation is required, the customer will be kept updated on the progress until the issue is resolved.

- EFI also states that while setting up merchant accounts is the responsibility of the customer and the payment vendors, in the past it has provided support to the merchant through the application process if the merchant has trouble getting the payment process to work.

- The M500/M505 console is connected to the Internet, so software and feature upgrades can be downloaded directly into the console.

Value

In many locations, such as school campuses, libraries and hotel business centers, pro-viding print and copy services is more than a convenience, it's a necessity. Depending on print and/or copy volume, charging for this service can also be a substantial revenue source. The M500 Self-Serve Print/Copy Solution is easy to set up and configure, very easy for a user to make use of, and can readily accommodate adding additional loca-tions and payment services as the customer's needs change. In terms of cost, the solution can be just as cost-effective to own and operate—and in some cases more so—as a traditional cash-vending system. And it delivers compelling value when its other convenience features (multiple ways to pay, USB printing, print preview, cloud storage and so on) are factored in.

- EFI notes that it details pricing up front with no hidden or per-usage fees, which allows merchants to more easily understand the cost of ownership. The company claims that when costs for upgrades, per-usage fees, maintenance fees and so on are factored in, the outlay for an M500 solution is comparable to or even less than the competition

- In many cases, the acquisition cost of the M500 console might be rolled into the lease cost of the MFP or into the per-click charge on a managed print services contact, making the M500 Self-Serve solution more accessible to customers with a low to moderate volume of annual prints or copies. The EFI Self-Serve M500 Copy/Print Station solution is generally sold through dealer and OEM channels.

- Supports multiple currencies and languages.

- Once in place, the $499 yearly fee per console (for access to AdminCentral) is a reasonable price to pay for the convenience it offers the users.

- Defective consoles are replaced by EFI, and the defective device is returned to EFI in the packaging used to ship the replacement.