

Industry Standard Established for Device Management, allowing Office Devices to be used More Efficiently

- Public Releases of Office Device Management Standard Specification and Security White Paper, in addition to BMLinkS Scan/Storage/Print Services -

The BMLinkS Project Committee, consisting of 16 member companies of Japan Business Machine and Information System Industries Association (NP Onarimon Bldg., 4th Floor, 3-25-33 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003, Japan; President Yoshihiro Maeda), has defined and released BMLinkS Office Device Management Standard Specification and Security White Paper in an effort to help use office equipment, including multi-function devices (MFPs), more securely and efficiently in a network environment.

Applying BMLinkS Standard Specification for device management helps system integrators to develop applications to efficiently manage devices from multiple vendors, and enables users and IT administrators to consistently and securely configure all the BMLinkS compliant equipment, monitor it, and obtain the devices' usage history in an environment where devices from different vendors co-exist.

The Security White Paper describes how to deploy BMLinkS compliant equipment securely.

Office Device Management Standard Specification and Security White Paper will be used to establish an industry standard of device management that helps to use multi-function devices (MFPs) efficiently.

History

The BMLinkS Project Committee has consistently worked on enhancing the usability of office equipment in a network environment by providing BMLinkS Standard Specifications as well as Common Software to boost the connectivity and data exchange capability among office equipment.

The Project Committee has been making arrangements for a document distribution infrastructure that allows documents to be scanned, stored, and printed, using any office equipment with the BMLinkS functionality, overcoming the barrier between electronic medium and paper. Now, the Project Committee also considers it important to continue its efforts in new areas including device management and security.

Especially in device management, although MIB (Management Information Base) has long been widely used for single-function printers, there was no industry standard capable of managing multi-function devices (MFPs) in an integrated way. In addition, the Project Committee realized through a survey conducted last year among end users and system integrators that, multi-function devices (MFPs) from multiple vendors co-exist in many corporate workplaces, connected to the networks like single-function printers but not fully utilized in such environments. This finding led the Project Committee work on improving the situation.

Public Releases of the Office Device Management Standard Specification and Security White Paper

By using the office equipment compliant with the Office Device Management Standard Specification, administrators can change the configuration when deploying and moving their office equipment, monitor the devices in everyday operation, and conduct data collection for aggregating device usage information. Since it allows the use of an integrated communication protocol for managing devices from different vendors, the workload of management and operation would be reduced.

The Security White Paper, on the other hand, explains how security is addressed in the existing BMLinkS Standard Specifications and how to cope with risks for the administrators and end users who are planning to deploy BMLinkS compliant equipment. Specifically, it introduces how the BMLinkS Standard Specifications address potential security risks of information leaks from office equipment, in terms of encryption of communication channels, user authentication, and access control, so that BMLinkS compliant office equipment can be used securely.

Expansion of Services with BMLinkS Compliant Equipment

In May, 2003, eight models of office equipment supporting the Print Service were certified and launched. Since then, there has been continued launch of BMLinkS-certified equipment from the participating member companies. Currently a total of 300 compliant equipment have been launched successfully into the market.

The Project Committee expects the Office Device Management Standard Specification will help accelerate the introduction of BMLinkS compliant devices into the market to meet various needs and service demands.

Further Development

In addition to the release of the Office Device Management Standard Specification and the Security White Paper, the Project Committee will continue working on promoting the BMLinkS Standard Specification by revising the existing Standard Specifications as well as enhancing support for the Integrated Printer Driver and application software so that the users of BMLinkS compliant equipment can rest assured.

Also, in the area of document security, which is increasingly more important, the Project Committee plans to explore a new field where a new value proposition can be made in a multi-vendor environment, and to quickly establish a standard.

Member Companies (in alphabetical order)

Big Valley Co.,Ltd., Brother Industries, Ltd., Canon Inc., Casio Computer Co., Ltd., Duplo Corporation, Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd., Fujitsu Limited, Grape Systems Inc., Konica Minolta Business Technologies, Inc., Kyocera Mita Corporation, Panasonic Communications Co., Ltd., Ricoh Company, Ltd., Riso Kagaku Corporation, Seiko Epson Corporation, Sharp Corporation, Toshiba Tec Corporation (16 companies)

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