



# Print Solutions from Atac

Newsletter for Asia Pacific Region

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<http://www.atac.com.au>

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## A drop-in IPDS printer replacement

When IBM introduced Intelligent Printer Data Stream (IPDS) back in 1984 it was truly state-of-the-art. However, giant strides have been made in host-to-printer technology since then. If you are still running IPDS today you are wasting money. Many companies remain locked into their old solutions because they are reluctant to make changes to their host systems – and so they should be. However, your company can be freed from IPDS printers without a single change to your mainframe environment.

Barr IPDS Converter processes IPDS from AFP enabled Host systems such as mainframes (zSeries), AS400s (iSeries) and more. It can be installed in a matter of minutes on a Microsoft Windows PC, where it runs as a Windows Service.

The Barr IPDS Converter converts IPDS into highly-efficient PDF files with encryption and an optional XML file of “meta-data” produced for each PDF file output. The XML file includes the IPDS spool file attributes received, which can be used to route the jobs.

Cost is based on the speed of the output required and whether the output will contain Black & White only or Colour. To the PSF or InfoPrint Manager system, Barr IPDS Converter looks like either an IBM IPDS Cut Sheet or Continuous Forms printer.

Atac can arrange a free Trial of Barr IPDS Converter, with unlimited free setup support, to prove the technology in your environment.

Contact Atac for more info or go to <http://www.atac.com.au/ipds-converter/>

## BHCS TCP/IP – What does it do?

Barr Host Communications Suite's base Spool module provides Spool & Retain GUIs, Help and Accounting features, and can write to DISK, LAN, Local and LPR printers. To receive LPR or IP Socket print streams you can add the BHCS TCP/IP module.

The BHCS TCP/IP module allows you to setup named LPD print queues for reception of print data directed to same. A <default> LPD queue caters for print data arriving via an undefined queue. Deletion of the <default> LPD queue means print data must match a defined queue name or it is rejected.

Each print queue defined can accept print data as a <default> filter type of either ASCII, ECBDIC, TEXT, BINARY or XEROX. The queue's <default> filter type is used if the filter doesn't match one defined. Deletion of the queue's <default> filter type means print data must match a defined filter type or it is rejected.

When the HOST (source computer) wants to send print data it first sends a Line Print Request packet. The LPR packet contains the destination IP address and LPD queue name as well as the filter type flag and filesize. The LPR also contains job attributes such as HOSTNAME, HOST IP, JOBNAME, SENDING USER, BANNER HEADER etc.

The BHCS LPD examines the LPR packet and checks whether it has a defined matching queue or a <default> queue on which to receive the data; if not the LPR is rejected. If an acceptable queue is located, BHCS LPD then checks to see if there is a defined matching filter type or a <default> type on which to receive the data; if not the LPR is rejected.

If accepted, data is received via the LPD queue defined, as the type of data defined by the filter. Attributes are extracted from the LPR packet and stored against the job in Spool. Static values for job attribute fields are next applied, if defined against the receiving LPD queue, i.e. all jobs arriving on queue “testdata” have CLASS set to “Z” and FORM set to “TEST”. Additionally, job attribute values may be extracted from static positions on the leading banner page(s) if they are present.

Similarly, the IP Socket component of BHCS TCP/IP module allows you to setup receive parameters for data arriving via IP address and Socket number. Each Socket number

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can be thought of as a separate queue, with its own data type and static values to be applied. Sockets are usually in the range of 9100 and up.

Both LPR/LPD and IP Socket print streams are passed through the Override Table as they are fed into Spool, where Conditional Actions are applied, i.e. if FORM = "TEST", then job is put on HOLD or similar.

The BHCS TCP/IP module allows you to setup an unlimited number of LPD and IP Socket queues, for reception from multiple sources, simultaneously. A special "Archive" format can be applied to jobs sent from one BHCS to another; the Archive format unpacks on the receiving machine to an exact copy of the source file format and job attributes etc.

Contact Atac today to discuss your LPR/LPD and/or IP Socket print stream requirements.

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## Output Manager Job Submission

Output Manager transforms print from one language to another, i.e. AFP to PDF, LCDS to PS, PDF to AFP etc. While transforming print data, modifications to the print stream can be performed such as logo changes, barcode additions, address manipulation, data extraction etc.

Each Output Manager job is driven by a Profile which contains a list of instructions for input, output and modification. During development of a job, the developer manually starts the profile to test / proof the job. When the job goes live, however, it is usually expected to be automatically run.

Most job automation is accomplished via the Connect-SPL module which contains a number of entries of different types, each for a different purpose. Single files are processed using the FILE= command string which polls a named folder for a certain filespec (wildcard) and runs a named Profile against the job.

Multiple files can be processed in one of two ways – by Bundling or by Merging. Bundling is supported for PDF and PS files only and is accomplished using the BUNDLEDDATA= command string. BUNDLEDDATA polls a named folder for a certain filespec (wildcard), concatenates all the matching files into a single file, then runs a named Profile against the bundle when a trigger is received.

Merging is used where dis-similar print types, such as AFP and LCDS, are to be combined into a single submission and uses the SPOOL\_FILE= and SPOOL\_MERGE= command strings. Print files are processed through input as separate Output Manager jobs, then the VDD files are merged together into a single set of VDD files by VDE2VDD, the MERGE client.

SPOOL\_FILE= statements define search scans for groups of files to be merged and tagged with a Merge-ID. Each data file is processed through input using a specified Profile. SPOOL\_MERGE= is then used to define the Output Enhancement merge details required to merge the files defined by the SPOOL\_FILE statements.

Connect-SPL can be auto-started when the machine boots, as can relevant input and output clients. In conjunction with Output Manager's "Unattended Mode" this allows jobs to process in an automated environment, from power-on to job completion, without any human interaction.

Contact Atac today for help automating your Output Manager environment.

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## Q & A

**Q.** Our Xerox work is now converted to PDF by Emtex and sent to an external print bureau. What they produce has rendered our barcodes unreadable. What gives?

**A.** The printer your external bureau uses (IP500) is a 360dpi printer so there's some scaling going on somewhere. We've tested by substituting a Truetype barcode font at 14 point and the barcodes are now reliably read.

**Q.** We are in the process of outsourcing our print, currently sent via Barr to our Xerox printers. How can we also send files to our proposed outsourcer so they can print in parallel with us for a trial period?

**A.** Barr includes the ability to pre-assign print jobs to one or more printers. Create a File Port (write to disk) printer, then use the Override Table to pre-assign every job to both the Xerox AND the File Port printer.

**Q.** Our Xerox work is now converted to PDF by Emtex and sent to an external print bureau. We used to use pre-printed stationery on the Xerox; how can we simulate this now?

**A.** First, obtain high-quality scans of the stationery (front and back) in uncompressed TIFF format. Next, convert each to an Emtex VDI (image) via TIF2VDI, an Emtex tool. Finally, specify that the images for front and back are applied whenever the original Xerox Tray calls are made, in the job profile.

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## Feedback

Your feedback is valuable to Atac and helps us provide the high standard of service which you have come to expect from us, and which we are proud to deliver. Whether you have questions about our product range, a story to share regarding your experiences, or you would like to comment on our newsletter, just send us an **email**.

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