Print Solutions from Atac

More information at…

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Barr Custom Filters

The Barr CUSTOM FILTER function can provide you with a collapsed spool list containing only files matching certain criteria. This can be useful for locating a single file among thousands of RETAIN items, or for applying changes across many files with similar attributes.

The CUSTOM FILTER is available by right-clicking any print job and choosing CUSTOM FILTER. You are presented with a drop-down list of available attributes and a list of valid values for each attribute. These can be browsed and moved to a Selection List. When you've chosen the required attributes to list, click OK and only matching jobs are displayed. These may be further sorted by clicking on column headers to sort Ascending/Descending etc.

Whenever a Custom Filter is in effect, the right-hand button on the button bar lights up. Clicking the button clears the Custom View and displays all items in the default sort order. Note that applying a "Custom View" may involve simply clicking a column header to re-sort by the chosen column.

Custom filters can show:

All files matching the "abc*" file mask.
All files matching the "STD" formname.
All files with a Priority of "6".
Files sorted by size or any other on-screen attribute.
Etc., etc.

Once a Custom View has been setup, it is very easy to clear, but cumbersome to setup repeatedly. However, the View menu includes "Save Settings" and "Save Settings As" options which save the Spool/Retain Window setup, ***including any Custom Filters in effect***. This means you can setup your various "Custom Views", save them each with a different setting name, and simply flick between them with a few clicks of the mouse (VIEW | 1 thru 4 to access the last four screen setups).

Custom Filters are very powerful tools which are made more useful by the ability to save and switch between them easily and quickly. Try them today and see for yourself.

Using Output Manager for Virtual Insertions

Insertion of marketing materials into our utility and bank statement envelopes is fairly commonplace. It usually happens in the back print room where the mailing equipment resides, with special marks on the statement triggering the equipment to insert one or more pages into each mailpack.

This requires the document to be pre-coded in some way to trigger the insertion(s). Additionally, the mailing equipment has to be setup and tested appropriately, insertion stock must be ordered, warehoused, conditioned etc. and more staff are involved in the entire process at several levels.

Output Manager can insert duplex pages with full-colour images front and back as the file is processed; these are called "Virtual Insertions". These can be inserted conditionally based on any criteria in the document itself, such as the CLOSING BALANCE or ACCOUNT TYPE etc.

Rather than inserting physical pieces of paper into mailpacks at the mailing equipment stage, Virtual Insertions can provide many benefits including:

- No insertion stock to order/warehouse/condition etc.
- Last minute changes can be made ***at the last minute***.
- Insertion based on external factors or document content.

- Easier setup in the mailing room as mailpacks are already fully composed.

- "Pre-loaded" insertions can include Customer Name, Address, Account etc. Generic Insertions are first added, then Customer info is applied by Output Manager. Research has shown customers are less likely to throw a pre-loaded form away and more likely to peruse and complete same.

- This process takes *chargeable* impressions off the typesetter and gives them to the print shop.

A number of print bureaux and large Output Manager customers are already using this functionality, which they claim makes a significant difference to responsive, targeted mail campaigns.

Contact Atac to further discuss Virtual Inserts today.

Software, Service and Support since 1967

Atac Pty Ltd has been in business since 1967, providing software, service and support for our valued customers. Initially, Atac developed large mainframe-based systems for insurance, distribution and financial services companies, then ran the largest privately owned mainframe bureau in Australia, providing online mainframe processing for insurance industry heavyweights such as Bishopsgate, Adriatic and several State Insurance Offices.

Later, John Sands Greetings was a bureau customer, running "green-screens" connected to Atac's mainframe from Mt. Waverley. Greeting card orders and scheduling computations were run and reports were couriered from Atac's Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne office to Mt. Waverley. This was true state-of-the-art computing!

The desire to run reports from Mt. Waverley and obtain printed output on-site triggered a world-wide search for the appropriate tool and Barr Systems' RJE product was chosen to fulfil the need. Barr's RJE (Remote Job Entry) software allowed users to remotely login to the mainframe from Mt. Waverley, run jobs and receive output back to locally-attached printers. This included Xerox "big-end" printers channel-attached to the PC itself.

The Barr software ran on a personal computer under MS-DOS and was connected via expensive Telstra leased lines between Mt. Waverley and Atac. Atac was now in the PC business and a Micro-Computer Department was started to sell, service and support same.

Barr was a hit and Atac sold and supported many, many systems throughout Australia. Next, Atac expanded into New Zealand and up through Asia, establishing a network of resellers which included Fuji Xerox, Canon, Konica-Minolta, Pitney Bowes and Kodak. Atac provides second-line support for all systems in the area, with "same-time-zone" availability and extensive setup and operational experience.

Eventually, Atac looked to expand its offerings and became a distributor for Emtex (now Output Manager) software. Output Manager performs real-time transformation of print streams, and Output Enhancement allows almost unlimited tailoring of the print content. Output Manager software was installed and maintained at most large print bureaux, including Salmat and HPA (now FXDMS) as well as SeMa (now IVE Group), Computershare, ZipForm, EDS NZ (now DXC), Datamail NZ (now NZ Post) and many other sites throughout Australasia.

When Pitney Bowes bought Emtex in 2008, Atac continued to sell and support Emtex software under the re-badged Output Manager (was VIP) and Output Enhancement (was VDE) names. Pitney Bowes went from being a reseller of Emtex to being the owner of the software, with Atac being the reseller.

Atac no longer runs a mainframe bureau, being involved mainly in the PC world these days. Atac distributes Barr and Output Manager/Output Enhancement products as well as in-house software developments such as Insight (financial modelling and targeting). Atac provides on-going maintenance for all products, as well as on-site training and professional services which include overflow programming during periods of high customer activity.

Now in our 53rd year in business, Atac continues to provide best-of-breed software, service and support to our customers, from Australia to Japan, from New Zealand to India and all countries in-between!

Q & A

Q. I'm extracting a line of text which contains a numeric account number. I'm trying to use the Output Enhancement Action MODIFY to remove all the [A-Z] and [a-z] text, leaving just the account number, but it's not working.

A. The key with MODIFY statements which include Regular Expressions is the Parent Statement for the Pass must include "VDEOPTIONS REGULAREXPRESSIONS". Alternatively, the MODIFY statement must include "REGEX" to enable Regular Expressions for just this action. If the Parent Statement includes "VDEOPTIONS REGULAREXPRESSIONS" for the current Pass, then the MODIFY statement can turn it OFF by using "NOREGEX". See the Output Enhancement Reference Guide, topics "PARENT" and "MODIFY".

Q. We are trying to process a PDF file through OM and OE. When we view it and then extract the text from the address block, for example, the text is all scrambled, with funny characters instead of those we expect.

A. It sounds like the PDF has embedded fonts which have custom character encoding, i.e. characters do not have the correct ANSI values. Some composition packages take this approach, building a custom character set only using characters actually present in the document. The character values assigned may be random (as encountered) or ANSI standard. In order to extract text successfully from files, embedded fonts must all use ANSI encoding.

Q. How do we setup Output Manager (Emtex) to automatically perform spoils reprints?

A. During the final stage of Output Enhancement processing, you need to Index each document with a Reprint Key which usually includes the Job# + Mailpiece#. Entries in the CONNECT-SPL.CFG file specify the filename format, record format and location to poll for the .SEL files which the mailing equipment puts out when there are spoils. The .SEL file effectively contains a list of index keys, or documents, to be reprinted.

When Emtex polls a .SEL file in, it looks up the job number and reprints the specified document automatically. See the User's Guide, System and Utility Clients, for a complete description of the CONNECT-SPL.CFG commands.

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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