



Print Solutions from Atac

Newsletter for Asia Pacific Region

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Output Manager – Forms Overlay Processing

Some print streams are made more efficient by the use of an Overlay or Form which appears on multiple pages. The Form contains all the repeating page information, such as background shading, static text, images and line drawing etc.

When Output Manager detects multiple uses of one or more Forms, each Form is processed once then stored as a VDO for re-use. Subsequent copies of the same Form are not processed again, speeding up processing enormously.

The profile option PSIN/PDFIN_USE_OVERLAYS=YES tells the input client to monitor Forms usage and create a VDO for each repeating Form. Where Truetype fonts are stored as part of the Form, they are only processed once.

If Forms Overlay processing is turned OFF via PSIN/PDFIN_USE_OVERLAYS=NO, then every Form is re-processed as it is encountered. Truetype fonts in a Form are processed to VDFs with unique names.

A huge performance penalty can be realised with Forms Overlay processing turned OFF and Forms encountered containing many Truetype fonts. Every Form is re-processed and a whole new set of VDFs is created; there is no mechanism to compare Truetype fonts so a new VDF is created for each one present in a Form.

Recently, a client complained that their job was running very slowly so we had a look at it. The job had 20,000 odd sides and although it started off ok, it just got slower and slower. The job folder contained thousands of VDFs, growing in number as each side was processed. Eventually, after 12 hours and 40 minutes the job completed.

Examination of the profile revealed it had PSIN_USE_OVERLAYS=NO. When changed to PSIN_USE_OVERLAYS=YES, the entire job ran to completion in ONE MINUTE and THIRTY-ONE SECONDS. That's right – 12 hours and 40 minutes down to 1 minute and 31 seconds!

Obviously, this was an extreme case, with over 50 Truetype fonts present in a repeating Form. When we queried the client as to why Forms Overlay processing was turned OFF, they responded that they didn't know. Each profile was simply cloned from another; the issue was replicated to practically all jobs in their library.

With this sort of processing time and size advantage to be gained, spend some time considering which profile options are actually necessary to run the job. If an option is added to a profile to solve a particular issue, comment it appropriately (//Special option – this job only – do not replicate) and don't clone it to other jobs.

Consider instead creating each new job from an optimised set of profile master templates to avoid this situation.

Contact Atac if you need assistance setting up your profile master templates.

PDF Best Practice Guidelines

With the plethora of free PDF creation tools available today, all sorts of weird and wonderful PDF variants are being encountered by print shops. We took a look at putting together some guidelines for print shop customers, in terms of what is acceptable and what is not. Here's what we came up with:

- Resolution should be 300dpi for best performance.
- All fonts must be embedded, with no external references. Fonts must use ANSI (WinAnsi or MacRoman) encoding and preferably have no subsetting. Subsetting takes place when only the actual characters used in the document are provided in the embedded font. The main issue is where a font is subsetting and individual

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characters are not encoded in ANSI standard positions, making text extraction problematic.

- Each font must have an accompanying Unicode dictionary, with widths matching the glyph widths of the font characters.
- Simple Truetype fonts must have a 'cmap' table.
- No files should have been run through OCR, which can result in large numbers of fonts.
- The PDF version should be 1.3, which has no transparencies. Acrobat Pro can save any PDF as a PDF 1.3 file; if transparencies are present they are flattened.
- If transparencies absolutely must be used, then PDF 1.4 is acceptable provided the transparencies use the same colour space as the document, i.e. they are not RGB, where the document is CMYK.
- No Annotations present; these are treated as transparencies.
- Blend mode must be "Normal" or "Compatible"; all other modes are treated as transparencies.
- If a PDF is to be treated as "duplex", then it should have an even number of sides.
- Resource names should be unique across each "run" where multiple PDF files are supplied.

These items account for the vast majority of issues experienced over the last few years across several major print shops.

Contact Atac to discuss PDF Best Practice Guidelines further.

BHCS ALA Reminders

BHCS incorporates a mechanism which pops-up an Annual License Agreement (ALA) reminder when the ALA renewal date approaches. We've had a few calls from clients concerned that their Barr system will stop functioning on or after the expiry date. This is definitely NOT the case. Here are the guidelines so you know what to expect:

Timing

For purposes of describing the timing-related features, time is divided into 4 periods: more than 30 days until ALA expiration, between 30 and 0 days until expiration, between 0 and 30 days after expiration and after the Stop Date has occurred.

More than 30 days until expiration

The ALA renewal dialog never automatically displays during this time period.

Between 30 and 0 days until expiration

The ALA reminder dialog displays 10 minutes after the Spool UI is launched. Sometimes the system is extremely busy immediately after launching the Spool UI so we wanted to give the system a chance to settle down before we bother the user with the ALA reminder.

Between 0 and 30 days after expiration

The ALA reminder dialog displays 10 minutes after the Spool UI is launched. This will happen for up to 30 days until the Stop Date is reached.

After Stop Date

BHCS will continue to function normally until the Stop Date is reached (ALA date plus 30 days, rounded to the next Tuesday if it occurs on Sat/Sun/Mon). If the ALA is not renewed by the Stop Date, the BHCS software will cease to function.

ALA Expiration & Stop Dates

BHCS gets the ALA Expiration and Stop Dates from the BHCS License.

Remember

In ALL cases where the ALA reminder displays, it can be simply dismissed by clicking the [REMINDE ME LATER] or [OK] button. The software will continue to function normally, with no loss of functionality. However, if the ALA is not renewed by the Stop Date, the BHCS software will cease to run.

Contact Atac if you have any ALA concerns or queries.

Q & A

Q. What form of encryption is used for the print files in BHCS?

A. When sending between BHCS machines, data can be compressed and/or encrypted as it is sent from the source machine. BHCS uses AES (Rijndael), a fast, robust encryption algorithm with data compression and decompression. Compressing data before encryption eliminates redundant data and improves the robustness of the encryption. It also improves efficiency because there is less data to encrypt and transfer. At the receiving end, the data is decrypted and then decompressed. Data is not encrypted at all when stored on disk in Spool or Retain folders.

Q. Would you know what ports are required to allow the Remote Spool Window to connect to the BHCS server?

A. RSW uses the Windows Communication Foundation (WCF) which negotiates with the Net.TCP Port Sharing Service. The Net.TCP Port Sharing Service uses Port 808 itself, and can share any open ports. Here's an MS article with more information:

<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/framework/wcf/feature-details/net-tcp-port-sharing>

So, RSW needs Port 808 open to talk to Net.TCP Port Sharing Service via WCF. From there on it's pretty dynamic.

Q. We are migrating our BHCS software from Windows 7 to Server 2016. Is there any chance of getting, say, a 30-day temporary license to enable us to cut-over in a timely fashion?

A. Absolutely. Let us know if you need more time for the cut-over and we're happy to extend the temp license for another 30 days. We can also provide a set of procedures to follow to ensure all settings etc. are migrated correctly.

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