Print Solutions from Atac

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More information at…

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Atac – Australian Owned & Homed

Atac Pty Ltd has been in business since 1967, initially running as a bureau providing mainframe data processing and print services for several large insurance companies. In 1985 Atac got into the print market, supplying Barr Systems' connectivity products to print bureaux and large financial institutions.

This enabled bureaux to securely transport print data from client sites, and many, many large banks and financial institutions have out-sourced their print to bureaux via Barr links since then.

Twenty years ago, Atac became the Emtex (now Output Manager) distributor for the region. Where Barr Systems' products provide rapid and secure TRANSPORT of print data, Output Manager provides TRANSFORMATION of print streams from any Print Data Language (PDL) to any other.

Bureaux could now bid for any format of print and transform it to suit their printers, i.e. AFP print data from a mainframe or AS-400 could be transformed into Xerox Metacode for printing at a Xerox print shop.

Output Manager also provides powerful document enhancement capabilities via a proprietary programming language (VDE) which can manipulate every element of a document.

Print bureaux could now add some serious value to client print output, differentiating themselves from opposition bids to simply print the data "as-is", on the basis of price alone. Atac provides training services to equip bureaux programmers with the knowledge to write sophisticated VDE scripts to perform any document manipulations or bureau standardisations required.

Atac has extensive technical expertise, providing pre- and post-sales consulting, as well as support services for Barr Systems and Output Manager products.

We've installed systems into Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea, USA, Japan and China. We provide highly-praised and timely support services to all countries.

Atac is wholly Australian-owned and based in Melbourne, Australia. Our web presence is 100% Australian-hosted; this includes our email, websites and all support services. Most importantly, we guarantee that any client data provided to Atac for analysis never leaves Australia.

IPDS Converter PDF Output Processing

Barr Systems' IPDS Converter emulates one or more TCP/IP attached IPDS printers.

To the HOST, IPDS Converter looks like either an IPDS cut sheet or continuous forms printer. Files received via IPDS Converter can be transformed into highly efficient PDF files for printing on inexpensive desktop printers, or simply archived as view-on-demand documents, eliminating print completely.

PDF files can be written by IPDS Converter to a static folder on a local or network disk. Files can also be written to different folders based on job attributes sent from the HOST with each job. Attributes include JobName, JobClass, JobId, JobForm, JobNumber, Filename, ClassName, LibName, UserName, UserId, QueueName and SpoolId. These Job attributes are all written to an XML file which has the same base filename as the PDF file.

IPDS Converter's output processing options are DIR, EXE and CMD. DIR writes PDF files to a static folder. EXE passes the PDF file to another program for additional processing. CMD calls a Windows batch file (.cmd), passing arguments (base filename etc.) to same. The CMD option in conjunction with the XML attribute file provides great flexibility in delivering PDF files to multiple folder locations.

The CMD file called can open the PDF's matching XML file and read in any required attributes.

Based on these attributes the CMD file can write the PDF to a variable folder structure, i.e. c:\pdf\%FormName%\%ClassName%, where %FormName% and %ClassName% are xml variables.

Alternatively, certain values for XML variables can trigger the CMD file to branch, providing unique processing for some jobs only, i.e. All jobs are written to c:\pdf unless the JobClass is "Z" in which case the jobs are written elsewhere (or deleted, sent to another program or handled in a completely different manner).

If you are using IPDS Converter and are simply writing all output to a fixed folder (DIR), the CMD option can provide more flexibility in automating document delivery / processing.

First, enable the XML file creation option in IPDS Converter. Next, confirm the job attributes arriving to the XML files are unique to the processing tasks required. Finally, write a CMD file to perform the tasks required.

Contact Atac for (free) help to configure IPDS Converter and write your CMD file.

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Pre-paying Multi-Year Maintenance

Did you know that you can pre-pay multiple years of licensing/maintenance for Barr and Output Manager (Emtex)? There are a number of reasons why you might prefer to do this:

- Lock-in the maintenance cost over several years; this might suit customers who are leasing equipment. It provides coverage at today's prices, regardless of future price rises.
- Lock-in the period of maintenance; this might suit customers who are managing facilities for a third party, and are looking for back-to-back contracts running several years into the future.
- Lock-in the license expiry; you'll receive a license with the expiry set several years into the future, and won't have to touch it until then.

Regular maintenance price rises have become the norm, with 3% annual increases over the last few years, as our suppliers battle inflation and the rising cost of everything. This year (2023) sees Atac's product price rise by 5%, which increases maintenance by the same rate.

Maintenance is calculated at 20% of the current new product price. Annual prise rises of around 3% compound over 5 years to nearly 16%, so pre-purchasing multi-year maintenance at the year 1 price makes a lot of sense.

Contact Atac today to discuss your multi-year licensing/maintenance pre-payment options.

Q & A

Q. If we add a new LPD input queue to BHCS, do we need to restart the Barr Services?

A. No. You can add an LPD queue to BHCS and receive files to it immediately, without restarting any Services.

Q. Can Emtex read a barcode, not just extract the characters used on the page?

A. Yes. The EXTRACTBARCODEDATA action extracts the contents of one or more barcodes into an array variable, together with information about the barcode(s), such as the symbologies used.

Q. Yesterday we tried to upgrade to 7.1.50.5. The process failed, saying Barrsna.dll and DBGSVR.EXE were both in use, despite having shut down BHCS and stopping all Services prior.

A. Barr Systems are aware of this issue and are working on it now.

- If this has already happened to you, run SETUP again and choose Uninstall (Clean); reboot after this and run SETUP again to install.

- If you are about to upgrade to 7.1.50.5, you should first disable the Message, Security and SNA Services; reboot and then do the upgrade.

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