Print Solutions from Atac

More information at…

https://www.atac.com.au

Email David Kirk

or call +61 (419) 962 386

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 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. 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 [REMIND 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.

Output Manager Re-Plexing

For efficiency reasons, it's often best to output print files in Duplex, halving the number of pages in each envelope. Duplex can be "forced" via profile commands xxxIN_PLEX_DEFAULT and xxxIN_PLEX_OVERRIDE, where "xxx" is "PDF" or "PS". This works for "well-behaved" files…

Sometimes print files are supplied by the originator as Simplex, i.e. each "page" is printed on a sheet front with the sheet back left empty. Forcing Duplex only works if each mailpiece within a file has an even number of sides, or else eventually we end up with a Page 1 on the back of a prior mailpiece.

If we bundle files together, the bundler adds an extra side to each file if it has an odd number of sides. This works well when individual mailpieces are being bundled, i.e. each file contains only one mailpiece.

If files being bundled contain multiple mailpieces, each mailpiece must already have an even number of sides. The bundler doesn't recognise mailpiece boundaries, and will only add an extra side to the last mailpiece, if the whole file has an odd number of sides.

Whether we process individual files or bundled files, eventually we need to programmatically convert Simplex to Duplex. Recently we saw a print file containing multiple 3-sided mailpieces; 1,2,3,1,2,3,1,2,3 etc. Forcing Duplex would put the second mailpiece's side 1 on the back of the first mailpiece's side 3 (a huge no-no).

The programming involves setting up a variable type (STORETYPE) which can contain all page elements, then declaring a variable of that type:
[STORETYPE_SideContent] STORETYPE USER INLINEIMAGE AND BARCODE AND FORM AND IMAGE AND TEXT;
[VARIABLE_SideContent] VARIABLE [STORETYPE_SideContent];

As our script processes each mailpiece, it extracts all the page content to our variable:
[EXTRACT_SideContent] EXTRACT [VARIABLE_SideContent] EQ WINDOW;
and keeps track of whether it is odd or even input side.

If the input side is odd-numbered, we DELETE the Simplex input page, INSERT a Duplex page and ADD the page content to the front of the Duplex page.

If the input side is even-numbered, we DELETE the Simplex page and then ADD the page content to the back of the prior Duplex.

Our controlling OBJECT should be a Boundary Object, which can check each side to see if it's a new mailpiece. Usually, the position and identifying text is passed from the profile in the form of BOUNDARY_TOP_X, TOP_Y, BOT_X, BOT_Y and BOUNDARY_STRING. The Boundary Object calls a REGION Object which does the re-plexing detailed above for each mailpiece.

Contact Atac if you'd like to discuss your Output Manager re-plexing needs today.

BARR/PRINT for TCP/IP Enhanced Support for Mainframe Printing

BARR/PRINT for TCP/IP (our LPD module) supports special features in IBM's IP Printway and LRS' VPS/LCDS packages on the mainframe. The primary goal of the enhanced support is to allow mainframe print data, such as Xerox LCDS and Metacode to be cleanly transferred from the mainframe to Barr without any conversions taking place.

This is possible because these vendors use a common record format that we call 'Mainframe IP Record Format'. This format is similar to IBM VBM or Barr S/370 format, in that it uses a two byte record length field followed by carriage control and data.

In the case of IP Printway, the customer needs to define the LPR printer on the mainframe as a 'Remote PSF'. This will set IP Printway so that it transmits the Mainframe IP Record Format without any conversions on the data. In the Barr software, a queue needs to be configured in LPD to use the Mainframe IP Record Format. IP Printway has the additional advantage of sending header information such as Form name, Class and Destination when used in this way.

If the customer is using LRS' VPS/LCDS software on the mainframe, then a socket connection needs to be configured on the Barr LPD side, also set for Mainframe IP Record Format. VPS/LCDS sends a small header that has a Job name, but little else of interest, unfortunately.

The two TCP/IP based capabilities of BHCS make it possible for many customers to move away from SNA based solutions to TCP/IP based solutions. BARR/PRINT for TCP/IP is useful for customers who need to receive production print over TCP/IP from the mainframe.

Contact Atac to discuss your mainframe production print needs.

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Q & A

Q. We want to remove Visual C++2012 from the BHCS PC. Will this affect BHCS?

A. Note that BHCS has never used VC++2012.

- Versions 7.1.39.4 through to 7.1.50.5 all used VC++2008.
- Versions 7.2.2.34 through to 7.2.3.5 all used VC++2010.
- Version 7.3.1.6 used VC++2017.
- Versions 7.3.1.9 through to 7.3.1.14 all used VC++2015-2022.

Now you know removing VC++2012 will not affect BHCS.

Q. What ports need to be open to run the Output Manager (Emtex) Remote GUI?

A. The port specified in generic.cfg (VIPEXECCONNECTION) must be open for TCP.

- The default for this is 6001; this is used by Remote GUI to connect the EXEC Console.
- The Remote Client machine needs access to the server fileshares, using Windows networking, and so a minimum of port 139 must also be open for TCP too.
- If the site wants to allow the full "chatter" of windows, i.e. intervention messages appearing on multiple Remote GUI clients, then they should open ports 137, 138 and 139 (both TCP and UDP).

Q. One of our Output Manager (Emtex) jobs is dropping all space characters from the addresses we are scraping. What gives?

A. The PARENT command has an option "VDEOPTIONS SPACEADJUST nnn". This reduces the number of VIP units required for a space to be considered to be present.

Add "VDEOPTIONS SPACEADJUST -500" before the pass which extracts text, i.e. [PARENT_start] PARENT **VDEOPTIONS SPACEADJUST -500** [OBJECT_Pass1];

Re-run the job and see if spaces are present. If not, reduce the adjustment value and re-run the job until spaces are detected, i.e. -600, -700 etc.

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