Print Solutions from Atac

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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 resort 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.

Output Manager – Standardise and Streamline

As any print shop will know, every job is different. Part of winning new business is the ability to adapt to different input formats, over which there is typically very little control. The source PDL, postal and document barcoding, colour content, address positioning, feed control and even document sequencing are attributes of a print job we are sometimes simply "stuck with".

Yet, huge efficiencies can be gained from optimising document barcodes for mailing equipment, adding DPID and pre-sorting mail into postal and/or size order, being able to utilise all in-house equipment fully and having standardised procedures across all jobs.

Imagine being able to regain control and adjust any of these items to suit your own optimised environment. Using Output Manager, documents can be tamed and standardised as follows:

- Convert any PDL to your optimal output format in real time
- Convert barcodes, OMR etc. to suit your output devices
- Convert Colour jobs to Black and White, or add Colour to existing Black and White jobs
- Extract, reformat and reposition address blocks and other info as required
- Map FEED commands to your output devices
- Resequence documents into any meaningful order
- SPLIT or MERGE jobs into manageable bundles
- CONSOLIDATE many small jobs into one, and multiple mailpieces into one envelope
- Re-paginate to Simplex, Duplex or Mixed-plex
- ADD DPID Postal barcoding
- Provide an identical and comprehensive reprint facility for ALL documents
- Audit your jobs, creating detailed logs of all operations performed
- Print any document on any printer
- Reformat docs for 2-Up roll-feed printing with Perforation and Slitter/Cutter control marks

Output Manager provides the ability to standardise documents as they are processed, streamlining your procedures and cutting both costs and time to process.

Contact Atac today to discuss how Output Manager can help grow your business.

BHCS – Spool File Routing

Barr's Host Communications Suite (BHCS) receives print from a number of sources, including RJE, LPD, LAN, DISK, IP Socket, Bus & Tag, Escon, FiCon, NJE and even other BHCS machines.

All print ends up in the BHCS Spool and from there it is sent out to BHCS "printers" or destinations, based on routing info unique to each.

At the simplest level, each destination has a different Class alongside it. If Spool files have a matching Class, and both destination and Spool file are Ready, then the Spool files will be sent to the destination.

If a destination has multiple fields populated alongside, such as Class and Form, then only Spool files which have the same Class and Form will flow to the destination.

How do you automate BHCS so the files arrive into Spool with their routing fields already set?

It's useful to understand the processes which take place as Spool files are received.

First, any attributes which arrive "with the job" are applied.

This includes RJE Form/Class/Job details from the Host, LPD header fields detailing Queuename/User/Jobname from a Unix source, Bus&Tag/Escon/FiCon channel numbers from the mainframe or even info extracted from the leading banner page(s) of the job itself.

Next, any static assignments are applied.

You can assign these via the Receive definitions, i.e. LPD jobs could all have "L" assigned to their Class, or files coming in from DISK could all have "D" assigned etc. The Spool file's State (Ready/Hold) can also be set here, as well as Disposition after printing (Retain or Delete). Every Spool file is also automatically tagged with the source device it came from, i.e. LPD, DISK, RJE, IP Socket etc.

Lastly, as the files are passed into BHCS Spool, they are all processed through the active Override Table, if one exists.

The Override Table performs Conditional processing, where Actions are applied based on certain Conditions being met, i.e. if the Class = "A", then make the Spool file Ready. Many, many Condition/Action pairs or "Rules" can be defined.

With this understanding of how Spool file attributes are assigned, you are now in a position to determine the automation necessary to process Spool files from reception through to disposition, without any human intervention.

Contact Atac for advice and assistance with automating your BHCS routing today.

Q & A

Q. Does Output Manager's AFP input module require fully composed AFP files?

A. NO. Output Manager replaces IBM's PSF and is therefore responsible for interpreting the AFP job stream, and inserting resources where required. If the AFP data is not "fully composed" (contains TAGS pointing at resources, not the actual resources themselves), then a directory accessible to Output Manager must be established, where the AFP fonts etc. are placed. A once only download of the required resources must be performed to establish the resource library.

Q. What do the various "Status" column states mean for my BHCS NJE LU (logical unit) when viewed from the Host Integration (HIS) Server?

A. From the HIS Manager window, it is possible to discern the current status of your NJE LU, and even do some troubleshooting by making note of the value found in the "Status" column. Here is a breakdown of what each status might indicate:

"In Session" – This indicates that an NJE session is active between Barr Host Communications Suite and the host. No further configuration is necessary.

"SSCP" – A physical connection between HIS and the host is active, and Barr is waiting for the NJE session to be started. The following command must be issued on the mainframe in order to start the session: ***$SN,A=applid***, where *applid* is the BARR/NJE LU name. After this command successfully executes, the LU status should change to "In Session".

"Available" – This indicates that a physical connection between HIS and the host is active, but BHCS has not successfully requested use of the LU from HIS. First, check the Services control panel on the BHCS PC to ensure that the NJE service is "Started". If it is, and the LU remains in "Available" state, you will want to confirm your NJE Configuration values. See the BHCS online help for more instructions.

"<blank>" – A blank LU status indicates that there is no physical connection active between HIS and the host. First, make sure that the HIS Service has been started. Next, make sure that the connection is "Active". If not, then chances are that there is a configuration problem with the connection, or a communications problem between HIS and the host.

Q. When I receive an encrypted or compressed file from another BHCS unit, my BHCS tries to re-encrypt or re-compress it when I send it to my local printer. Why does this occur and how can I fix it?

A. Transfers between BHCS units are performed in BARR ARCHIVE format, which preserves all settings, ***including the encryption and compression field contents***. The file therefore arrives on your BHCS with both these fields (still) set. In order to print to a local printer, the fields need to be cleared. This is normally done at receive time by an Override Table rule, unconditionally clearing the NDHBCMPL and NDHBKEYN fields. (If the file is later required to be on-forwarded to another BHCS, you'll need to manually re-populate either or both of these fields again.)