

Print Solutions from Atac

Newsletter for Asia Pacific Region

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Output Manager – Job Profiles

Output Manager (OM) is the best-of-breed software product which converts print jobs from one format to another. During conversion, Output Enhancement (OE) scripts can perform modifications to the print stream. These include sorting, replexing, indexing, adding integrity barcodes, inserting electronic stationery, translating legacy tray calls to modern ones, i.e. Xerox "MAIN" to PCL Tray "1", adding colour text/images, data extraction and much, much more.

OM is often used to convert legacy print streams like Xerox and AFP to cut-sheet PDF or even two-up duplex continuous print for high-speed inkjet roll-fed print production. OM can do this on-the-fly, while feeding these large printers at rated-speed. It's the "no-brainer" solution to handling legacy documents, incorporating name & logo replacements as well as handling current compliance regulations.

Output can be to print devices, disk files or remote systems.

So, how is an OM "job" setup to pull all of these items together? A profile is built which states input & output print file types, input and output OE scripts, various parameters to pass to OE, a customer resource library and job specific settings to ensure files are read and written as required.

A profile is just a plain text file with a .prf extension; you can build one from scratch in any text editor, copy/modify an existing profile, choose File | New | Profile | <input-pdl-type> from the OM Control Window, or choose Tools | Job Builder from the main OM window.

Job Builder is a work in progress, currently supporting AFP and PDF input from disk, ftp and tcp/ip. It's point and click; the profile is built as you complete panels of relevant options, with appropriate vetting of choices. Job Builder generates syntactically correct profiles, so is inherently suitable if you are just starting out with OM.

A profile must include (at the minimum) the input filename and pdl type, the output destination and pdl type as well as a pointer to a customer resource library (.set file). Optional parameters include settings for colour, plex, trays, fonts, resolution, paper-size, document sorting and OE manipulation.

Profiles are the most dynamic file type in OM, with each distinct print job requiring a unique profile to be setup for (manual or automated) processing. Profiles may reference other profiles for job splitting or merging of disparate pdl types. Profiles can execute pre and post-job commands, as well as pass hard-coded values to OE input & output scripts, such as address-block coordinates or barcode placement values.

More information at...

https://www.atac.com.au Email David Kirk or call +61 (419) 962 386 All profile actionable entries are of the format THIS = THAT, i.e. COLOUR = YES, TYPE = AFP, USE_OVERLAYS = NO, RESOLUTION = 600, DATATYPE = DISK, SET = CUSTA.SET, etc.

The OM User's Guide details generic profile parameters, while Input & Output Command Guides detail pdl-specific profile entries; all are explained in concise detail with default values, any related entries and many useful examples.

Atac can help with job setup, script programming and training as well as support at all stages of OM and OE implementation and operation.

Barr Host Communications Suite - Routing Barr Host Communications Suite comprises a Windows-based Spooler with multiple inputs (sources) and outputs (destinations). Files arrive from local, LAN or remote systems which are Windows/Unix/Mainframe based. Files are sent to disk, print devices or remote systems. The BHCS Spool comprises a single window divided into two sections. At the top, all the destinations are listed, be they disk, printer, LPR, channel-attached devices or remote BHCS systems. The bottom window portion contains all the received jobs, regardless of the source. Alongside destinations and jobs are a common set of columns, typically CLASS, FORM, PRIORITY, SIZE and DATE/TIME. More specific columns can be added such as LPD QUEUE, FCBNAME, DATASET NAME, SECURITY NODE, JOB NAME etc. A STATE column shows READY or DISABLED for destinations; for jobs the STATE can be READY, HOLD, SCHEDULED or REPRINT. Jobs can be sorted into any sequence, selected and have STATE changes applied en masse (to all selected jobs at once). ROUTING columns such as CLASS, FORM, FCB are white and can be changed by selecting and typing in new values. Other columns such as Document name, SIZE, DATE/TIME contain static data which cannot be changed. Destinations usually contain unique values in one or more of the routing (white) columns alongside. When a destination is READY, any READY jobs with matching routing info will be sent (routed) to that destination. More information at... This is the essence of routing jobs to destinations. https://www.atac.com.au Say you have some jobs which have FORM "ABC" alongside. The operator sets Email David Kirk the destination state to DISABLED, physically loads "ABC" stationery into the target printer, sets the destination FORM to "ABC", then sets the destination state or call +61 (419) 962 386 back to READY. Any READY jobs with "ABC" will immediately be sent to the destination. Say you have a bunch of jobs which must be sent to a particular destination. Set the destination to a unique CLASS and make it READY. Select all the jobs, then change the CLASS of any one; all jobs will receive the CLASS change. Next, right-click | READY any selected (blued) job and all selected jobs will change state to READY, immediately flowing to the matching destination. All things being equal, jobs will "print" in the order in which they were received (oldest first). If an urgent job arrives, it can be set to jump the queue by changing the Priority alongside the job to a higher value. Routing info can be (i) extracted from jobs as they arrive, (ii) hard-coded against a source device or (iii) programmatically set via the Override Table (O/T). As each job arrives into Spool, it is parsed through the O/T, which can set values based on rules you define, i.e. If FORM = "ABC", then set CLASS = "B" and STATE = READY.A "hands-off", "lights-out" operation can be achieved if all jobs can arrive into Spool READY, with routing values already set, using any of the methods above. Jobs will arrive and flow to the appropriate destination automatically, with no operator intervention. Optionally, printed jobs can be automatically saved locally, making them available to be Restored to Spool, then Reprinted. (No interaction with the source machine is required.)

Atac can advise the best way to automate your BHCS routing.

Output Manager – Job Queue Manager

Output Manager's Job Queue Manager (JQM) displays jobs which are pending and jobs which are in progress. Optionally, completed jobs can be preserved and displayed as well. The JQM has a set of seven standard TABs across the top which allow you to see All jobs or only jobs which are Pending, Active, Completed, Held, Input Pending or Output Pending.

The JQM window has Columns of information for each job displayed, one per line. Some Columns have static content, such as Jobname, Profile & Job ID. Other Columns have dynamic content which changes as jobs are processed, such as Job State, Input Sides, Output Sides etc.

JQM Columns can be modified for Width, Alignment and Visibility as required. Clicking any Column header will sort jobs into ascending sequence, or descending if clicked again. Right-clicking the JQM empty area pops up a menu allowing the Columns to be extensively manipulated.

Selecting a job and right-clicking invokes choices applicable to the job's State, i.e. Release a Held job, Abort a running job, Pause, Continue, Reprint etc. Choosing the Job Attributes option allows editing of job parameters including Class, Input & Output Client, Priority, Media etc. Here you can re-assign jobs to different Output if a printer is down, for example.

A job's Job Ticket can be examined to see all stages of processing, with snapshots of changes made along the way, i.e. Job was submitted with *this* profile, which had *these* new entries added/modified by processing scripts at these *times*. It's a complete audit trail of actions taken during processing.

If a job creates Splits, then each Split is given its own Job ID and also appears as an entry in the JQM, as a Child of the Parent job. Child jobs can be modified individually in the same manner as any other job. Actions taken for a Parent job can affect all Child jobs, i.e. Deleting a Parent job will delete all Child jobs.

Any job in the JQM can be Viewed (WYSIWYG) and examined in great detail in the OM Viewer. Pages can be searched and viewed with infinite zoom; all details of page composition are available, i.e. paper size, plex, fonts / images / forms present, orientation . . .

Closed-loop reprinting occurs when mailing equipment detects missing/damaged pages as envelope insertion occurs, via an MRD file accompanying each job. A file containing Job details and pages to reprint is fed into OM by the mailing equipment and the Reprint job appears in the JQM temporarily, disappearing once the Reprint pages have been re-sent.

Manual Reprinting via right-click | Reprint of a JQM entry invokes a Reprint dialogue allowing selection of all/part of a job which can be directed to an alternate print device if required. So, a three-page statement from a huge roll-feed print file can be sent to a local cut-sheet printer for re-generation.

The JQM is a powerful tool for tracking jobs from submission right through to postal production, incorporating automatic and manual methods of ensuring every page is guaranteed to have been inserted and mailed.

Contact Atac to discuss the JQM and how it can help to guarantee integrity of your mail production.

More information at...

https://www.atac.com.au Email David Kirk or call +61 (419) 962 386

Q & A

Q. We can't Activate BHCS, as Licence Manager is coming up with a blank H/W code. Why is this?

A. The H/W code is generated by calls to Windows Management Instrumentation (WMI). If WMI is non-functional, this needs to be corrected at the Windows level. A Windows re-install, keeping programs and settings, should fix this (and did).

Q. When we re-position whole A4 pages in Output Enhancement (across and down, on oversized A4) some of the text disappears. This only happens if we use PSIN_USE_OVERLAYS=YES. If we don't use PSIN_USE_OVERLAYS=YES, the job works but runs very slowly. Why is this happening?

A. Using PSIN_USE_OVERLAYS=YES means the content will contain Overlays (or Forms), which speeds up processing considerably, as you've seen.

It's best to reposition these separately from the rest of the page content being moved, i.e. extract everything except FORMS into one variable and extract just FORMS into another. Adding the FORMS back last, with ORDER BACKGROUND should see them placed behind any text.

Q. What diagnostic tools are available with BHCS?

A. BHCS incorporates a Diagnostic snapshot tool which captures all pertinent info regarding the print files and environment, for submission and problem analysis. Included is the Operator Console Log, Error Log, Windows Event Logs and a full MSINFO dump of the PC. Optionally, files can be tagged and then included with the snapshot, all highly compressed into a single file.

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