

Staying on Form

With the continuous squeeze on local authority finances, there is a constant quest to maintain or improve the quality of services, while minimising the costs. Pendle Borough Council, in the North of England, is no exception to this rule. As part of the move to a new computer system, their printing environment was an obvious candidate for improving return on investment and reducing response times. The challenge for reseller Integrex was keeping the electronic forms functionality of the old centralised printer on the apparently less capable HP printers, a case where they knew their local JetCAPS partner could help.

Cost and Ecology

Pendle Borough Council, with their central data processing located in Nelson in Lancashire, were already availing of the cost and ecological advantages of the electronic generation of standard forms. By printing on plain paper, they not only avoid the direct costs of pre-printed stationery, but also the indirect costs of waste, obsolescence and logistics. Though their use of e-forms was already forward thinking, they also realised the need to meet modern expectations of efficiency and speed by moving on from centralised computing and overnight, batch printing of reports and documents. The new system replaced a mainframe and a single, high-volume printer with a client/server network and immediate, local printing. Reliability and quality made HP LaserJet printers an obvious candidate. The purchase price was much lower – in fact they could afford three HP 8000 LaserJet printers and a couple of HP 4000 LaserJets for a fraction of the price of replacing the central printer, and the reliability of the LaserJet meant that maintenance amounted to little more than replacing the toner cartridge, which could be changed quickly by anybody – as opposed to the frequent downtime and subsequent repair that the old central printer had required from internal and external specialists.

Though the choice seemed clear, there was no obvious replacement for the electronic forms capability they had been using. This was the point when the HP sales representative, Mick Larbaestier, prompted Integrex to contact the local JetCAPS partner, s.a.x. U.K. Ltd.



Printed on an HP Color LaserJet Printer





The JetCAPS program has imaginative and proven solutions for all sorts of printing challenges, and in particular for electronic forms. From their extensive experience, s.a.x. immediately recommended a solution based on the JetCAPS EMP FormServer working with a JetCAPS FlashDIMM installed on the printer - a configuration that provides an easy, and easily maintained way of producing legible and attractive looking forms without requiring any reprogramming of the host system.

Getting Up and Running

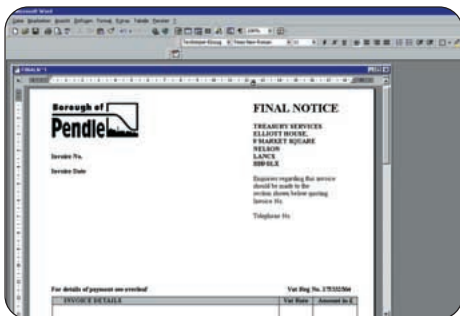
Pendle Borough Council uses a range of forms for invoices, reminders, notices and so on. Though these are initiated at various points in the organisation, they are printed centrally (on one of the 8000s) for further distribution.

s.a.x. programmed the initial set of forms, with blanks in the appropriate places for the individual information, onto the JetCAPS FlashDIMM. This was then slotted into the HP LaserJet, to hold the overlays ready for printing at any time. The JetCAPS EMP FormServer runs on the Unix system and intercepts data on its way to the printer. If a form is being printed, the software recognises which form it is, formats the variable data to fill in the blanks, and controls the merging with the appropriate overlay to produce the correct form, with the logo and letterhead on plain paper.

Future Flexibility

The flexibility of the JetCAPS solution also means that changes to existing forms and the creation of new forms can be easily accommodated. I.T. services in Nelson can alter how the EMP FormServer interprets the raw data on the Unix system, and by using the JetCAPS Forms and Font Manager software, they can revise, implement and download overlays and logos for the FlashDIMM. The Principal Technical Officer who was responsible for the migration and implementation of the new systems, Paul Byrom, reports "no problems" with updating and creating forms after the first year.

The JetCAPS solution has meant that local printers and distributed processing can make documents available immediately and locally, without sacrificing existing functionality. The reliability of the HP LaserJet printers has also decreased maintenance cost and effort in addition to the already substantial savings offered by electronic forms. So it is little wonder when Paul Byrom adds that they were "glad to see the back of" their old centralised printer.



For further information please contact your local JetCAPS Partner at <http://www.jetcaps.com/partners.htm>



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