APPLICATION STUDY

Insurer Doubles Throughput with Help from M.I.S. Print

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Employing more than 19,000 different forms to generate 1.5 million impressions a month per printer, American National Property & Casualty Company (ANPAC) is always looking for ways to do things even faster, smarter. A subsidiary of the American National Insurance Company, ANPAC provides property and casualty insurance in 37 states.

"Each state has its own insurance regulations, which means we have to tailor our forms and correspondence for every state we conduct business," explains Chuck Swearingen, director of Operations and Systems Programming for the Springfield, Missouri-based company. "We can easily use a couple thousand forms to print one job."

Which is why when the print room's four legacy printers began to pass their prime, Swearingen and his staff worked aggressively to evaluate new print technologies. The customer needed to upgrade to more cost effective printers, capable of generating all policy administration information to insureds, agents, and mortgagee/ lien holders including renewals, new business, cancellations and notification of changes.

"We wanted a system that would help us improve productivity," says Swearingen. "Every time an insured makes a change to his or her policy—a new automobile, a teenage child who's got his license and will be driving the family car—we're required to send the policy back to the insured with the changes. And we send a copy to the insured's agent. Every transaction requires a lot of printing."

Enter RSA

After running trials with several different print vendors, software solutions and extensive testing, ANPAC chose RSA. The winning solution was to upgrade ANPAC's LPS printers to new printers installed with RSA's M.I.S. Print.

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Unlike solutions that run on a PC platform, M.I.S. Print runs as an application on the powerful and reliable Sun server that drives the new production printers. M.I.S. Print emulates the functionality of the LPS printers, enabling the new printers to print both mainframe and network jobs simultaneously.

At ANPAC, they chose to connect M.I.S. Print to their OS/390 host with an RSA Sun-based channel server, providing a transparent migration path from their legacy channel-attached printer. M.I.S. Print is an integrated software solution, automatically converting DJDE data streams to PostScript without requiring program or job process changes.

"It was a good merging of technology," says Swearingen of the new system. "At first, we had considered going in another direction, but it's good that we made these choices. Now we've got productivity tools that have proved highly useful to us."

Doubling throughput, reducing costs

Among the benefits: M.I.S. Print's ability to translate OTEXT, or operator text, messages. On the previous printers, text messages would appear on the LPS printer console to halt production in order for the operator to place certain paper types in the printer. Now, many of the manual processes are streamlined by M.I.S. Print's automation features, which are installed and maintained by RSA.

"Automation of OTEXT recognition was a pleasant surprise. OTEXT messages are an essential part of ANPAC's applications for ensuring jobs get printed on the proper paper

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stock," explains Swearingen. "OTEXT instructions come up on the console to tell the operator what paper stock to use for this particular job. For example, it'll tell the operator to put card stock in drawer two. Anything that's not standard stock gets an OTEXT message."

"What's really useful about M.I.S. Print is that it reads the OTEXT message and, instead of displaying the command for the operator to act on, it automatically interprets the paper requirements and generates feed commands," he continues. "If the printer needs paper, the operator has to handle that part, but otherwise, M.I.S. Print makes sure that the printer adjusts accordingly."

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The printer vendor systems manager, explains "RSA really came through for us and was a major reason we won this account in a very competitive situation. Their ability to handle every one of ANPAC's print jobs plus automate their OTEXT jobs made the difference. RSA's M.I.S. Print was the only software solution that could automate the OTEXT messages. The powerful OTEXT paper matching features not only ensure that all jobs print on the proper stocks, they also eliminate a significant amount of operator intervention. It's been a real productivity boost for ANPAC."

ANPAC's existing printer resources are used to support prior investments in forms, job set-ups, fonts, logos and other important document components. These resources are loaded on each printer, but management of the resources occurs on a designated master M.I.S. Print controller. Updates are automatically propagated to the other printers with M.I.S. Print's resource distribution feature, again saving the company time and money.

As a result of this new system, Swearingen says his group has been able to double its throughput while lowering costs. "We've reduced the number of printers in our center from four to three and having one less printer feels very comfortable even with our print volume."

Mapping out a unique solution

During the installation process, Swearingen admits that it was a tight squeeze as the four old printers continued working through while the new system got up and running. "At first I was apprehensive," he says of the process. "You hear a salesperson talking but in the back of your head you're wondering, do they really understand what we're trying to do here? We explained to RSA that with the number of forms we use, they better be prepared to be flexible to make sure their software meets our needs. And the team did a great job. They spent a lot of time with us to make sure this system really worked perfectly for us."

Explains RSA sales engineering manager, Ryan Kiley, "We mapped out the unique solution ANPAC was looking for and how M.I.S. Print was configured to support them. With hundreds of OTEXT messages integrated in their print stream, we knew up-front mapping of OTEXT to Postscript paper types was not feasible. Instead, we used a combination of interactive and automatic OTEXT handling features to provide a system that would improve in efficiency over time. The system performs as their legacy LPS printers did, pausing on OTEXT messages that were not recognized. As new OTEXT messages were encountered, we'd add them to the configuration, eliminating the pause and operator intervention the next time the job was run. Eventually all messages were caught and processed automatically."