

A LARGE PRINT SERVICE PROVIDER OPTIMIZES PDF FILES

Reducing Costs with Increased Efficiencies



BACKGROUND

Optimizing throughput, automating processes and reducing costs are critical factors for success and profitability in today's hyper-competitive world of print and mail outsourcing. With the use of Crawford Technologies' software solutions, this international print and mail services provider was able to achieve that by making significant improvements to the PDFs they were processing and printing.

Like many print providers, this PSP received "print-ready" PDFs from their clients. Although there are many advantages to PDF based workflows, and the file format itself is an ISO standard, the reality is that not all PDF files are created equal.

The Challenge

The challenge that this printer faced was that many of their PDF files were taking hours to process, or would even fail, slowing down or disrupting the entire production process. The impact on efficiency and ultimately on profitability was significant, since problematic PDF files resulted in other jobs being delayed, and risked on-time delivery to their customers.

Although the PSP had an existing product to help manage PDF files, it did not meet their needs, and did not support a high volume, rapid turnaround production environment. According to their Operations Manager, "We were trying out an MS Windows based product that was dependent on a GUI interface, and processed everything through the PDF format internally. We thought that because it used PDF as its internal processing format it would meet our production throughput requirements and our requirements to produce properly structured PDFs for maximum productivity. But a lot of our PDF files still took way too long to process and print.

More and more of our customers send us print files in PDF format and expect that we will just be able to take them and process them properly. We were becoming extremely frustrated with our ability to properly handle these poorly formed PDF files and optimize them to meet our production needs. We were even looking at adding additional servers or upgrading what we had in an attempt to speed up processing. And we needed something that we could integrate with our existing workflow systems — something that was not in place, and which contributed to the overall inefficiencies."

At a Glance

CrawfordTech Products:

- PRO PDF, PRO Indexer, PRO Splitter and PRO Concatenator

Objective:

- To be able to work with existing PDF print ready files and optimize those files for maximum productivity

Approach:

- Using various CrawfordTech PRO transform components standard tools such as PRO PDF, PRO Splitter, PRO Indexer and PRO Concatenator:
- PRO PDF normalizes incoming PDF files by eliminating repeating graphical elements, consolidating fonts and their code points and more to maximize the throughput of downstream processes and minimize file sizes.
- The API and other interfaces integrate with the in-place workflow automation system for production planning, scheduling and billing purposes.
- PRO Splitter, PRO Indexer and other components prepare PDFs for ePresentment and for maximum print and mail efficiency

Results:

- Processing throughput has been significantly improved — as much as 200% — for these troublesome files.



Solution

After assessing their files and their current workflow, Crawford Technologies recommended a combined set of products that would optimize and enhance their PDF files to maximize throughput for all aspects of their print production. A proof of concept was installed on the customer's site so that they could perform a comprehensive evaluation and ensure that it would integrate with their existing systems.

According to their Operations Manager, Crawford Technologies was the only provider able to meet all of their requirements:

- Minimizing PDF file size for faster processing and more efficient archiving.
- Optimizing PDFs for printing, including elimination of repetitive graphical elements, standardization of the PDF's structure, elimination of repetitive fonts with different names, elimination of poorly structured font character sets, and more.
- Supporting seamless integration with their existing workflow system, including the facilitation of page counts, sheet counts, job sizes, and the provision of other operational and billing statistics.

Results

The print services provider experienced significant reduction in the processing time for their PDF files at several points within the production workflow. Files that had previously taken 7 hours to process, are now finished in less than 20 minutes — a significant improvement. Fewer resources are required to prepare, troubleshoot and modify the PDF files, saving additional time and money. They also no longer need to consider expensive upgrades to their servers in an attempt to improve processing speed.

"We were amazed at the productivity and flexibility of the CrawfordTech software. The faster processing of the most problematic files was remarkable, but we have experienced significant productivity improvements for all of our PDF file types. And because we can invoke their software from a script, from a command line or through an API call, we have the production flexibility and integration we need. It also integrates nicely with the other modules in our workflow system. They have really thought of everything in terms of the data and methods we would need to integrate their product into our existing production workflow system."

"More than simply a software provider, Crawford Technologies listens to the specific needs that we have in our environment. The expertise and real world experience that the Crawford Technologies team brings is top notch. It is refreshing to hear 'Oh, I've come across this before. I know how to correct this.'"

CrawfordTech Solutions

Crawford Technologies develops software and solutions to help enterprises optimize and improve the secure and accessible delivery, storage and presentation of their customer communications.

With over 1,800 customers on six continents, CrawfordTech solutions and know-how enable the largest banks, insurers, healthcare providers, utilities and print services companies to use their existing technologies, documents and data in new ways. We help them navigate the challenges in leveraging legacy applications in the platforms and applications of the future.

CrawfordTech's products, services and domain expertise reside at the nexus of content, data, and output management and are essential components of our customers' digital transformation, output management and document accessibility strategies.