



Baltimore Does More, with Less, Thanks to QDirect, M.I.S. Print and PDF Pro from RSA

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Baltimore
Get in on it.

The City of Baltimore knows a good thing when they find it, and that's why they've added solutions from RSA time and again

For sheer variety of documents being produced, it's hard to find enterprises doing more than the Mayor's Office of Information Technology (MOIT) in the City of Baltimore (CoB). Its customers include citizens, federal and state agencies and numerous departments across this major eastern port city. The total volume of checks for employees and city vendors, bills for all city services, reports, and a multitude of other documents ranged from 2.5 to 3 million images in typical month with peaks as high as 4.2 million. But that was before a city-wide PDF initiative was implemented to reduce the total amount of printing, while making city documents more accessible and easier for customers to use.

The Vision

Barry Lietuvnikas, EDP, Systems Analyst for MOIT, recognized there were substantial cost savings and other advantages to reducing print volume and shifting to PDF documents. A successful transition, though, needed to include a large number of legacy documents and serve the widely varying needs of customers throughout the city.

Barry knew many departments, for instance, might need only a portion of a report and believed that customers would be satisfied if they could view the documents as PDFs and print them if needed.

"We were accustomed to PostScript," he explains. "All of our internally created documents—whether from Microsoft Office or from the mainframe are converted to PostScript. This ensures a document will look the same when printed as it did when it was created. This is a major concern because we have a lot of MICR characters and scan-lines that have to be consistent and accurate. What's more, people like knowing what they see on-screen will print the same way."

He cites the example of a letter bearing the official signatures of the Mayor or the Director of Finance. "A PDF version will be identical to the paper one and still be legally valid. That's very important. Plus, with PDFs we don't need to archive paper documents which dramatically reduces the space needed for archives."

The range of documents includes approximately two hundred legacy form applications, some of them written as long as twenty years ago! These include tax and water bills, parking and traffic tickets, housing violations and more—all based on VSAM mainframe technology. Lietuvnikas says it is not cost-effective to rewrite these applications, most of which are printed using highlight color on Xerox printers. Additional documents are created on desktop computers and printed on various workgroup printers and full-color multi-function devices.

This array of documents made bringing his vision to reality a daunting challenge. The city needed a robust solution that could handle both legacy applications and recently developed programs. Moreover, they wanted a single vendor that could provide an integrated approach that would be scalable and adaptable to meet future needs yet not require rewriting any of the city's legacy applications. Several companies claimed they could solve different parts of the challenge, but none could meet all of their requirements. Until they met with Rochester Software Associates, Inc.

A Solution in Three Parts

Integrating three of RSA's products, M.I.S. Print™, QDirect™ and PDF Pro™, provided the CoB and Lietuvnikas with a complete solution. "We began with M.I.S. Print. It worked perfectly right out of the gate," recalls Barry. "That made us extremely comfortable moving forward and we were able to print 100% of the jobs the first month."

M.I.S. Print handles conversion and printing of legacy mainframe output, LCDS and IPDS, for printing on modern PostScript printers. In addition, it enables highlight color, reprint capability, PDF splitting, indexing, document management integration and complete accounting of all jobs.

"No vendor we have ever dealt with is more attentive to us or more reliable than RSA! As a result we have become much more efficient and responsive to our customers and the citizens of Baltimore."

Barry Lietuvnikas,
Systems Analyst

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APPLICATION STUDY

Plus, M.I.S. Print's tight integration with QDirect, RSA's enterprise output manager, helped build the complete solution Barry and the city required.

"With QDirect, we can print anywhere, anytime. We can balance loads, and organize print runs by paper type or the type of run," notes Barry. "We can separate labels from checks without having to keep altering print trays. If a printer goes down, we can easily route jobs to a different machine. QDirect is an incredible tool for management!"

"PDF Pro from RSA turns out to be one of the best products I can imagine! Across the entire enterprise, users are happy. They like having less paper."

Barry Lietuvnikas,
Systems Analyst

QDirect also proved itself in a crisis. "The redundancy it provides is especially important," recounts Barry. The CoB has a live hot-site that runs on a generator. When a major fire took out all the fiber lines, QDirect kept the whole operation up, which was especially critical for payroll checks, all of which went out on time. "We credit RSA with that. The backup servers all worked seamlessly. RSA is very good about ensuring everything is ready and fully tested on their site before it is installed on a customer's location."

To Print or Not to Print... PDF Pro is the Answer

While M.I.S. Print and QDirect handle their tasks without worry, RSA's PDF Pro closes the loop to make Lietuvnikas' vision of making PDF the preferred document format for Baltimore. Using it, documents throughout the city—from Microsoft Office to AFP from the mainframe to legacy LCDS and Metacode jobs—are all converted automatically to indexed PDF optimized for viewing and printing.

"PDF Pro from RSA turns out to be one of the best products I can imagine!" affirms Barry. "The city has migrated nearly 95 percent of its former print output to PDF and can still print it as needed, usually on the lowest cost device. For example, a report may go to a dozen people, but they don't all need to see the entire document. It is a lot more efficient for them to just view the pages they need and print those if they want to. Or, if we know an agency gets only the total or summary pages, we can separate them so they only get those pages. Do that across the city and it cuts costs significantly because we print so much less."

"We've also added security so a document cannot be edited. The original is locked, but a user can make a copy that is automatically assigned a different name and can make edits and comments to that copy. The original PDF is archived and preserved."

Measurable Results

Any broad-based change like the one Barry engineered can potentially meet with resistance by users, but that has not been the case in the City of Baltimore. "Across the entire enterprise, users are happy. They like having less paper."

The range of applications spreads specific cost savings across many areas, but Barry says using M.I.S. Print has reduced application development time about 10 percent, 9 percent for application execution and output distribution, and another 12 percent in user interface time. QDirect saves some 15 percent in printer allocation time and simplifies job recovery and reprint.

The greatest advantage is the 60 percent reduction in paper and forms costs thanks to PDF Pro. Monthly print volume is now less than 500,000 pages per month, and is continuing to decrease as all systems are migrated to PDF output. Then there is the time savings. Lietuvnikas is seeing a 30% improvement in the time needed to print jobs and distribution to users is 28 percent faster.

From the very beginning, the transition has been a smooth one. "Whenever we made a change, such as adding more printers or needing more queues, it has been a matter of a few hours instead of weeks for the changes to be made. No vendor we have ever dealt with is more attentive to us or more reliable than RSA! As a result we have become much more efficient and responsive to our customers and the citizens of the City of Baltimore."

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The City of Baltimore is saving time, money, as well as paper by leveraging PDF and by only printing documents that truly need to be printed.