

newsletter



PGCG

Pretty Good Consulting Group

Got a problem? We create solutions.

EOM News and Views
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Got Images???

EOM has the capability to place images on a page. A recent solution places check images after each user in a bank statement.

The concept of EOM handling check images is not new. As of EOM 7.0 the DDA Position Graphic command prints .BMP, .GIF, .WMF, .EMF, .JPG, .PNG, and .TIFF. What may not have occurred to the user community at large is that it is pretty simple to print multiple images on single page combining the DDA Position Graphic with the Logical Page attribute.

DocuTrust Services is a full service print shop based in Orlando, Florida. They are experts at processing MISER output, ITI output, and post-processing of that output (folding, inserting, mailing). They use EOM and have recently taken advantage of the DDA Position Graphic command and Logical Page feature to merge check images with statement data.

The first hurdle was to extract image files from the "COF" files, formally known and defined as the Federal Reserve Common Output Format. The primary file is the ".IMG"

file, where the images and data about those images are combined. A standalone program extracts images and data from the files, writing the data into a directory EOM will reference when the statement file is processed. This program also inserts references to individual image files in the statement file.

When the statement file is processed by EOM, the DDA searches for image information and queues a Print Attribute to print those images. This Print Attribute happens to use a Logical Page defined to be 2 columns by 5 rows (that is 10 images per page folks). The DDA simply uses the image information in the statement file to find the image and write text below the image that typical image statements possess. At the end of the image information, for that customer statement, a Queue Print Attribute is called to format the next customer's statement. The example text in the box depicts the general format of the data in the statement file after it

is processed by the standalone program.

```
John Doe           Date: 10/31/08
1234 Street        Acct: 8787
City, St 12345

*** Regular checking ***
...

$IMAGES$
00000000123456789-010939A-20080429.tif
00000000123456789-010939B-20080429.tif
00000000123456789-200603A-20080429.tif
00000000123456789-200603B-20080429.tif
$IMAGES-END$

Jane Doe           Date: 10/31/08
...
```

DDA Feature *(you may not know about)*

Ever need to draw lines, like for OMR marks or to underline text? The Draw Rectangle DDA command has a variety of uses, ranging from surrounding text, framing a page or paragraph, adding color, and drawing lines. The Draw Rectangle command requires X and Y coordinates, a height and width, and options for the border line and rectangle fill. To draw a line, you simply set the X,Y where the line starts, the width (how long the line is), the height (very short), set a border width/color/fill to the desired color. One recent use of drawing lines was to create OMR marks on pages for post-processing. Another recent use was to dynamically add a signature line (with "Authorized Signature" text below the line) depending on the amount of the check. Given that the Draw Rectangle command allows

for color, you could highlight positive and negative amounts with different colors.

```
DDA Item:      Signature
Data Identification = No
Draw Rectangle:
  X coord      = 5.0
  Y coord      = 3.0
  Width        = 3.2
  Height       = 0.01
  Border Width = 3

Set Variable:  Text = "Authorized Signature"
Print Data:    Text
  X Coord      = 5.7
  Y Coord      = 13.1
```

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How do I ...?

This section of the newsletter will discuss solutions to questions that come from real customers trying to solve real problems. Multiple questions have surfaced in the last year regarding signature files, how to use and manage signature files.

Many customers are already printing documents with signature files. This article will walk through how to create signature files, how to use signature files, and a couple of strategies to protect signature files.

Creating signature files

There are a couple of ways to create signature files.:

- 1) Contract with a 3rd party to create a signature font. You send them a signed piece of paper, they send you a font file. The font, PCL or Windows TrueType, is used like other fonts but typically requires a specific string of characters to print the signature. For example, if your 3rd party provider created a PCL font, you would use the Print Attribute Command File to download the font to the printer, then use DDA to send a command to invoke the font, followed by string of characters to print the signature (like "ABCD").
- 2) Some printers have cartridge slots for font/signature/form files. You contract with the printer vendor to create the cartridge. Then you either plug the cartridge in 24x7 or plug the cartridge into the printer whenever you need the signature - you still need to invoke the font, usually via DDA.
- 3) The easiest way to create a signature file is to simply sign a bright-white piece of paper with a dark (blue/black) felt-tip pen, scan the image using a scanner/printer and crop the signature into a common graphic format (i.e. .bmp, .gif,...).

Using signature files

Once you have the signature file, you are going to have to place that signature on the output page. The ways to do this include:

- 1) If the signature is in a font file, download the font to the printer, then use DDA to send a command to invoke the font, followed by string of characters to print the signature (like "ABCD"). If the signature is a Windows font, use the DDA command "Change Windows Font" followed by the required string of characters. We will likely see gibberish if you forget to change the font back to a regular output font.
- 2) Place the signature on an electronic form. Sometimes it is easiest to simply create an electronic form where the only item on the form is the signature. The advantage of this method is that you can control the placement of signature relative to the page and use the Print Attribute Command File to invoke the signature (read: no DDA as long as the signature is supposed to appear on every page). You could also keep the signature separate from the rest of the form by creating two electronic forms - one with only the signature, another with the rest of the form. Then, when the signature is required you invoke the signature form. This requires DDA and either an "Execute Command File" or "Position Graphic" command.
- 3) Place the signature dynamically using DDA's "Position Graphic" command. In this case the X and Y offset is exactly where you want the upper left-hand edge of the graphic file to be placed.

Protecting signature files

People get a little nervous when you bring up EOM's ability to print signatures. The first thing that comes to mind is "How are you going to protect the signature from unintended use?" The short answer is that it depends on your site's specific requirements. For example, a signature on an EOM generated insurance advertisement is probably not as important (likely not even a real person) as a signature on a check. Some sites require that the signature is ONLY available in department X, also where the MICR printer resides and special check paper stock is stored. What follows are a few methods that we have seen at a variety of customer sites:

- 1) Place an EOM PC/server in a secure area, where the signature resides on the hard drive. Access to the server, printer, and check stock is restricted by physical security. Access to the EOM PC/server is restricted by Windows security. In this case, you might have a centrally located EOM server "feed" the remote EOM PC/Server (which could have the less expensive EOM Professional Edition installed).
- 2) A customer has a novel way to verify that a signature is used only for a particular check - the signature is used only for that particular check and is NOT used anywhere else. This means that fraud has occurred if the signature shows up on some other document OR if the check shows up with a handwritten signature.
- 3) Printing using the signature file requires that someone from Accounting walks down to the EOM server, copies the file (font, graphic, or form) to a special directory, prints via EOM, and then manually removes the file.

4) Have the DDA validate the data prior to placing the signature. For example, if the check amount is greater than a certain value for from an unknown account then do not print the signature (or maybe print a "**** VOID ****" type message on the page).

5) Multiple sites have DDA commands embedded in the printing DDA. They use the "Get User Input" to ask for the operator's name and then ask the operator to enter a password that is verified by DDA (see EOM News & Views, August 2008). The operator's name is logged in the EOM log via the DDA "Display Variable" command for validation if required. You could take this one step further by using the DDA "Start Job" command to e-mail a message to management whenever the signature file is used.

6) A large government agency requires that the signature for checks is not sitting around on a hard drive. So, a custom program was written that will extract and decrypt the correct signature file from memory in the program if and only if the program operator enters a name and correct password. When the operator completes the output or a time duration elapses, the signature file is replaced with a bogus (for example: "**** VOID ****") signature file. Yes, all of the operator actions are logged in the EOM logfile.

There are likely other solutions out in the field, feel free to send us your solution and we will include it in a future newsletter. Also keep in mind that these are not fool-proof methods of protecting signature files. "Why?" you ask. Because someone with bad intentions can almost always find a way to corrupt an established methodology.

Got F3???

Much to our surprise there are still customers out in the EOM world using the F3 forms design tool. There may be a migration path ...

The F3 ProDesigner forms design tool was the Unisys recommended forms design tool a decade ago. F3 Software Corporation sold all assets to the Keyfile Corporation and then the F3 as a standalone product evaporated. There are still customers using F3, but are required to keep very old operating systems (like Windows 98) alive in order to run the F3 ProDesigner forms design tool. Simply redesigning the forms using another tool is certainly an option, but it may require significant time to do so.

There may be another option for those of you still using F3 ProDesigner or that have the F3 forms tucked away in a folder somewhere. The Digicomp company sells a converter program called F3X and a QuarkXPress plug-in called FormsX that allows (nearly) identical conversion from F3 into the QuarkXPress desktop publishing software. This means that you convert and then can edit those forms via the QuarkXPress program. The converter and plug-in cost in the neighborhood of \$5,000, QuarkXPress retails around \$700.

The rub is that QuarkXPress does not output a Windows metafile directly but does output an encapsulated PostScript file (.eps). There are tools that manipulate .eps files so it is likely that through a series of steps you could end up with a metafile. If you are using PCL forms, then you simply "print to file" using a Windows PCL driver and run the PCL stream through the PCLPack utility.

We know what you are thinking: "\$5,000!!!!!!" You will have to decide which is the most efficient use of your company's time and money. If you have a lot of forms it could easily take more than \$5,000 worth of time to redesign. If you have lots of money, then contract with us, we will take care of it for you ☺

Upgrade now!

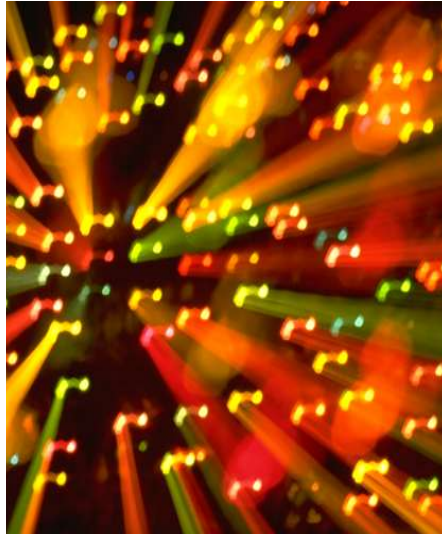
We have been running into a lot of EOM 6.1.2, 6.1.3, and even a 6.1 sites recently. Helping customers with these versions is not nearly as easy as EOM 7.1, nor is it as easy for the customer to maintain. Keep in mind that EOM versions 6.1 and below are no longer supported. A major reason to upgrade to EOM 7.1 is that the latest and greatest software provides latest and greatest capability -- including the ability to import and export parts of the EOM configuration. In addition, Interim Correction 7.1.6 fixes a significant Windows print driver issue.

Who are we?

Highly skilled, creative, solution provider focused on the Unisys Enterprise Output Manager product (formerly known as DEPCON) with a sense of urgency sums up who we are and what we do. We provide general Enterprise Output Manager consulting, migrations, upgrades, configuration, training, and custom programming.

On-site services, remote services, and general consulting are available now.

Why use PGCG? Deep knowledge of the EOM product integrated into a variety of customer environments sets us apart. Our customers production environment depends on solid, working solutions that we provide.



Quick Hits

It appears that a recent MCP release changes how the MCP EOM library is released. The EOM library is included with MCP 12.0, but now named *SYSTEM/DEPCON instead of OBJECT/DEPCON. There are a few implications of this change, most notably if your PrintS device definitions include a specific reference to an EOM library, as in "DEPCONSERV ... IN (uc)OBJECT/DEPCON ON pack". So, either copy the SYSTEM/DEPCON library on top of the current name or change the PrintS device configurations. This might be a good time to switch to the SL syntax, as in "DEPCONSERV ... IN SL DEPCONSUPPORT".

Rumor has it that two Unisys gurus were playing with the EOM 8.0 beta at UNITE and successfully sent data from EOM to Microsoft SharePoint via the new HTTP feature in EOM 8.0. Hopefully we will have more on this in the next month or two.

Have a suggestion for "How do I ...?" Write a brief description and send it to SteveD@PrettyGoodConsultingGroup.com for future newsletter discussion.

Interested in EOM training? We can either do custom training on-site or arrange for a formal class through Unisys. Please contact us for details.

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