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**KELVIN SIMKINS**  
Head of Digital Transformation



#### Business Profile

PHD Mail Ltd. is a UK-based mail processing company offering outsourced services including hybrid mail, transactional print and mail, electronic billing, scanning and disaster recovery. With over 20 years experience, PHD Mail routinely mails over 30 million envelopes and prints over 55 million pages each year.

#### Industry

Print Service Bureau

#### Locations

Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, UK

#### Business Solution

- PDF Optimization
- Workflow Automation

#### Solimar Products

- ReadyPDF® Prepress Server™

#### Benefits

- Achieved a 99% processing success rate by optimizing fonts, images, and objects inside of customer-supplied PDF files
- Eliminated font errors by removing extraneous fonts and subsetting fonts to create a smaller and optimized files
- Automated file processing using standard profiles to correct common file issues before they enter the print workflow and are processed at the DFE
- Replaced their time-consuming and error-prone PDF to AFP conversion with an automated and standardized PDF optimization workflow

## Revolutionizing Hybrid Mail Efficiency: The PHD Mail Ltd. Success Story with ReadyPDF—Industrial PDF Optimization

### Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of mail processing, where efficiency is paramount, PHD Mail Ltd., a prominent mail processor based in the UK, embarked on a transformative journey to enhance its Hybrid Mail Environment. Faced with the challenge of managing print files arriving from diverse composition platforms, PHD Mail sought a solution to streamline its production and safeguard its tight delivery timelines.

The answer came in the form of Solimar Systems' ReadyPDF Prepress Server, which proved to be the catalyst for unprecedented efficiency gains.

In an era where businesses continually seek ways to optimize operations and cut costs, customer communications play a pivotal role in engaging customers and driving desired actions. While digital delivery has become prevalent, there are instances where physically printed and mailed communications remain imperative, either for legal compliance or for targeted outreach to specific audiences.

The synergy between digitally delivered and printed communications is well-established. Physical mail serves as a tangible disruptor, prompting recipients to take action, with many journeys seamlessly transitioning to online channels. Research from JICMAIL in the UK market highlights the increasing effectiveness of mail in driving responses to digital channels, with 9% of mail recipients visiting the sender's website and 6% seeking additional information online.

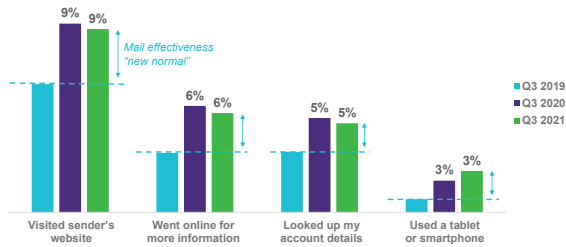
The evolving landscape of remote work has also influenced how organizations send communications. Hybrid Mail, a strategic approach adopted by businesses, allows for improved communication efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Hybrid Mail ensures timely and cost-effective delivery by enabling a remote workforce to generate customer communications at their workstations and outsourcing the printing and mailing process to a third-party provider. The Royal Mail in the UK reported a significant 46% cost savings with Hybrid Mail compared to traditional first-class mail for as few as 1,000 mail pieces.

*“The automation within ReadyPDF allowed for far more customisability in comparison and once the PDF files are optimised we get them copied straight over to Ricoh Process Director ready to print.”*

**KELVIN SIMKINS**, Head of Digital Transformation

**A “new normal” in mail’s effectiveness at driving digital actions was established in the pandemic and has been maintained over a year later**

Digital Commercial Actions (All Mail Types) % of mail items



Source: JICMAIL, Item Data Q2 2017 to Q3 2021 n=205,876 mail items

## PHD Mail’s Electronic Post on Demand (EPOD)

Recognizing the potential of Hybrid Mail services, PHD Mail launched its EPOD service. Leveraging decades of experience in transactional print and mailing services, Ricoh-based workflow and printers, PHD Mail processes millions of mail pieces monthly.

Jamie Mason, IT Director at PHD Mail, reflects on the fundamental differences between Hybrid Mail and their standard transactional workflows: *“In transactional work, we receive data files or tested finished document types (PDF). However, with Hybrid Mail, users are free to upload any PDF or Word document, posing challenges for printing and enclosing processes.”*

For Hybrid Mail production, customers submit tens of thousands of documents monthly, which are then segmented into batches based on mail class and format size and then printed, inserted, and mailed. The stringent Service Level Agreements (SLAs) demand a same-day turnaround for first-class mail service.

## Navigating Hybrid Mail Challenges

The inherent challenge of Hybrid Mail lies in the fact that customers submit documents as PDF print files for PHD’s print workflow. The production workflow must be robust enough to handle issues within customer files and fast enough to manage high volumes. Without addressing common issues in customer-supplied files, processing times can be prolonged, potentially leading to print job failure.

PHD had two options in their existing workflow to mitigate processing errors related to fonts, transparencies, and other PDF-related issues. The first option was encapsulating the PDF file in an Advanced Function Presentation (AFP) wrapper, which, though quicker, still resulted in

errors in approximately 50% of the files. The second option, a more comprehensive approach using a PDF-to-AFP transform, required additional processing time, leading to an average of two processing failures per week.

This resulted in manual troubleshooting by PHD’s IT department, leading to two main issues:

- The file correction process lacked standardization and automation.
- File troubleshooting relied on the expertise of IT staff, diverting focus and time from higher-value IT projects.

## Empowering Efficiency with ReadyPDF Prepress Server

In the quest for a solution to eliminate file processing errors caused by customer-supplied files, PHD Mail turned to Solimar Systems’ ReadyPDF. Kelvin Simkins, Head of Digital Transformation at PHD, attests to the success of the solution: *“Before ReadyPDF, we tested other PDF optimization tools, which were extremely slow and failed to optimize files at all. Following a successful trial with both remote and onsite assistance from the Solimar Team, we implemented ReadyPDF.”*

ReadyPDF automates the processing of customer-supplied files for Hybrid Mail, using standard profiles to correct common file issues before they enter the print workflow. The solution addresses issues related to subset and extraneous fonts, optimizing images, flattening transparencies, and removing unnecessary objects, resulting in an optimized print file with a processing success rate exceeding 99%.

Simkins emphasizes the impact of ReadyPDF: *“The automation within the ReadyPDF software allowed for far more customizability. Issues in the process have been reduced from 5-10% down to an almost insignificant amount. This has saved us at least 10 hours of IT intervention a month and virtually eliminated the risk to SLAs.”*

PHD Mail’s positive experience is not isolated. As businesses receive precomposed files from customers, the need to optimize these files for printing becomes increasingly crucial. ReadyPDF has become integral to PHD Mail’s development toolkit, ensuring:

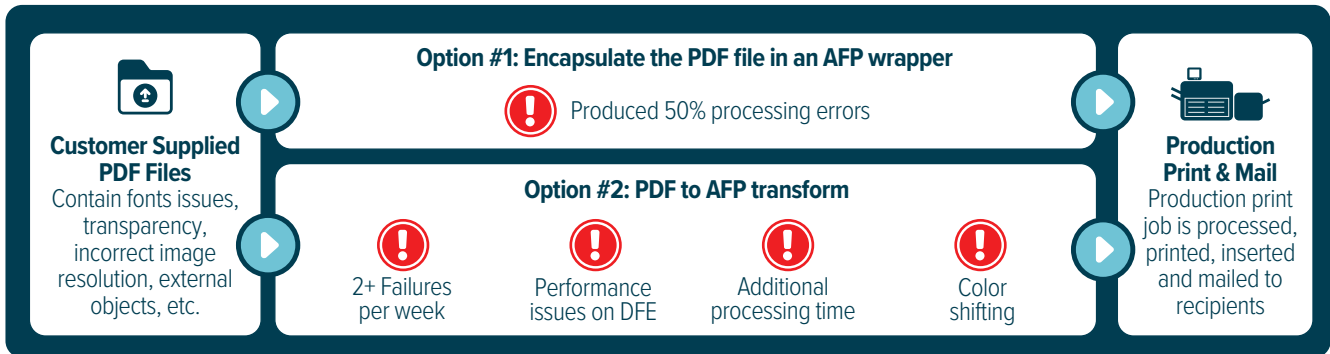
- Reliable production
- Meeting tight SLAs
- Allowing IT resources to focus on strategic projects

Solimar Systems’ ReadyPDF has proven to be a game-changer for PHD Mail Ltd., revolutionizing their Hybrid Mail production and elevating efficiency to new heights. As businesses worldwide seek ways to enhance their communication processes, ReadyPDF stands as a beacon, offering a reliable and innovative solution to the challenges posed by customer-supplied files in the ever-evolving landscape of mail processing.

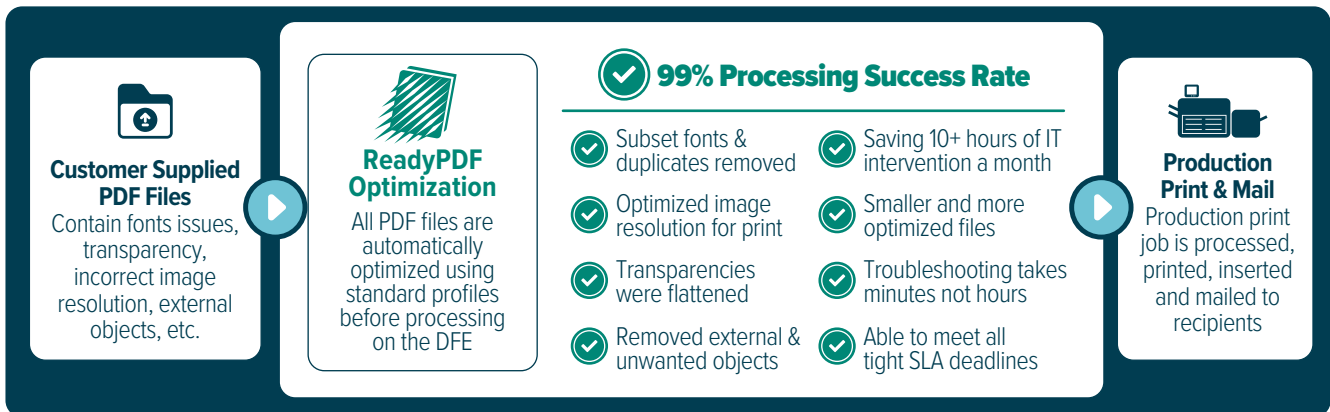
*“Issues in the process have been reduced from 5-10% down to an almost insignificant amount. This has saved us at least 10 hours of IT intervention a month, and virtually eliminated the risk to SLA.”*

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PHD Mail PDF Workflow Before ReadyPDF



PHD Mail PDF Workflow With ReadyPDF



## The Impact of ReadyPDF Prepress Server on PHD Mail’s Bottom Line

Beyond the technical enhancements and operational streamlining achieved through Solimar ReadyPDF, delving into the tangible impact on PHD Mail’s bottom line is crucial.

The implementation of ReadyPDF resolved:

- Pressing issues related to customer-supplied files
- Brought about significant cost savings
- Increased overall productivity

The reduction in processing errors, especially related to fonts, transparencies, and other PDF-related issues, has translated into a smoother workflow for PHD Mail.

With ReadyPDF’s automated file correction and optimization capabilities, the frequency of processing failures has plummeted from 5-10% to an almost negligible amount. This ensures optimal performance of the digital front end (DFE) and eliminates the IT department’s need for extensive manual troubleshooting.

The cost savings realized by PHD Mail are multifaceted:

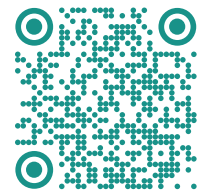
- The hours spent on IT intervention for file troubleshooting have been dramatically reduced, saving at least 10 hours per month. This liberated time can now be directed towards strategic IT projects that contribute to the long-term growth and development of the business.
- The risk of missing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) has been virtually eliminated. With ReadyPDF ensuring a processing success rate exceeding 99%, PHD Mail can confidently meet tight deadlines for first-class mail service, bolstering its reliability and reputation for timely delivery.
- The reduction in the frequency of processing failures directly impacts the production floor’s overall efficiency. With fewer disruptions, the entire production process experiences smoother throughput.





## Additional Solimar Success Stories

For more examples of how Solimar helps organizations lower IT costs, modernize print capabilities, maximize technology investments, and gain control of their printing environment, please scan the QR code or visit [www.solimarsystems.com/case-studies/](http://www.solimarsystems.com/case-studies/).



## Join Solimar’s Cloud-Based Learning Platform

The Solimar University Online (SUO) learning platform provides clients and partners with targeted access to educational content for personal and professional development at times that fit their schedules. This platform provides unique and relevant content to clients and partners based on a user’s profile and preferences. SUO enables online users to access robust learning content such as industry videos, presentations, reference documents, updated SolimarShorts, audio podcasts, and assessment materials. The self-paced SUO learning platform includes industry education, Solimar product and solution training modules and more. Register today at [suo.solimarsystems.com/suo-registration/](http://suo.solimarsystems.com/suo-registration/).



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