



Powerful AFP Conversion and Print Management Delivers Documents to More Than 2500 Offices Statewide

The state's Social Services Data Processing Division manages and distributes approximately 1.8 million print jobs per month. With over 2500 remote printers scattered across 115 counties, the Data Processing Division implemented Solimar's iCONVERT™ solution at a truly enterprise level. Solimar Systems interviewed the agencies' Computer Information Technology Specialist to learn more about their impressive environment.

The organization's Technology Specialist explains the State's requirement for report distribution, "We need fast, reliable and accurate print output on standard PCL printers with input from either LAN (network server) or WAN (mainframe). Our mainframe print data stream is IPDS (Intelligent Printer Data Stream) using IBM PSF (Print Services Facility) and must be converted to a PCL data stream prior to being sent to the printers. Our primary use of iCONVERT is to allow our legacy mainframe to send IPDS print to PCL printers in remote locations. iCONVERT performs this IPDS to PCL conversion for us. The printing process is very fast, conversion from IPDS to PCL takes only seconds per job and the server hardware requirements are modest."

BUSINESS PROFILE

Statewide government agency cuts costs and streamlined AFP job distribution to more than 2500 network printers using iCONVERT™ from Solimar Systems.

INDUSTRY

Government

GEOGRAPHY

Jefferson City, MO

BUSINESS SOLUTION

- Output Management
- Device Connectivity
- Data Stream Conversion

SOLIMAR PRODUCTS

- iCONVERT™
 - IPDS::PostScript
 - IPDS::PCL
 - SCS::PostScript
 - SCS::PCL

BENEFITS

- Enabled legacy IPDS mainframe applications to be distributed to decentralized PCL printers in remote locations
- Centralized print server environment simplified support and maintenance
- Intuitive UI minimized training and allowed for fast deployment into production mode
- Reduced operating expenses with less hardware and software required



With iCONVERT we are able to simplify and standardise our environment while simultaneously saving large sums of money.

TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST – STATE GOVERNMENT



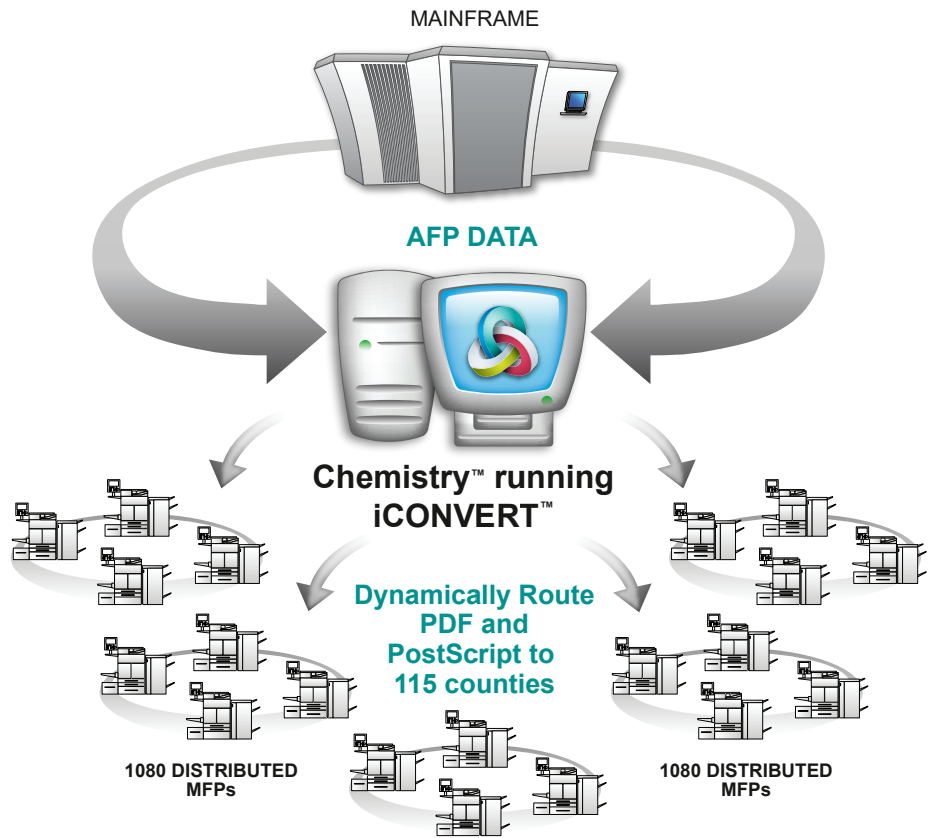
A variety of approaches are available for delivering IPDS data to PCL printers. The State previously tried virtually all of them before standardizing on Solimar's iCONVERT. The Technology Specialist explains the State's decision, "Routing print to remote printers was previously achieved by a variety of means. Due to the nature of mainframe IPDS data, expensive hardware and software solutions were required to ensure the PSF data would print properly on a conventional PCL printer. Some of the options included installing IPDS cards on the remote printers, using OS/2 print servers or other 3rd-party conversion hardware and software solutions at each remote office, and even purchasing expensive IPDS-capable printers. iCONVERT's user interface, ease of configuration and maintenance, versatility and licensing costs were all factors in choosing it above other products."

Managing the statewide deployment of reports is not a trivial task. The Technology Specialist explains the specifics of the State's iCONVERT implementation, "iCONVERT has been implemented in a single, centralized location on seven dedicated print servers, eliminating the need for 200 remote print servers. Each of the seven servers is configured for 359 remote printers to handle all 2500 printers in our environment."

The server platforms are industry-standard and very cost-effective because they only need to be moderately upgraded to handle the number of remote printers. Fault tolerance is provided by spreading each office's printers over all seven servers. This insures that no more than 15% of any office's printers would be off-line in the event of a server failure.

All of the print servers utilize the standard TCP/IP protocol to deliver print output to the proper destination. IPDS data from the mainframe is processed by iCONVERT and standard PCL data leaves the centralized servers en route to its destination. iCONVERT's simple and intuitive UI makes configuration and maintenance easy, and the use of command files provides tremendous flexibility in routing the print jobs. "Having a centralized server environment makes support and maintenance much simpler, faster and more cost-effective," states the Technology Specialist. "This helps insure reliable and always-available print output for our users."

Eliminating the mix of previously installed hardware and software has benefited the organization at many levels. "With iCONVERT we are able to simplify and standardize our environment while simultaneously saving large sums of money. We can use standard PCL printers in all offices now. Centralized server management will also save a tremendous amount of time, money and labor, especially with maintenance and support," explains the Technology Specialist. "Tangible and intangible benefits are currently being realized. Long-term cost figures are not yet available, but it would seem certain that the removal of expensive hardware and software solutions previously in use will result in considerable operating expense savings."



Customer support both before and after a sale is one of Solimar System's top priorities. We asked the Data Processing Division to comment on their experiences, "Simply Superb Support – the best I've worked with. I have never received a busy signal or had to wait on hold to speak to a support technician. Solimar has an extremely competent support staff. The technicians are friendly, fast, knowledgeable and extremely willing to help solve any problem I have. They may not always have the correct answer on the first try, but they stick with the problem until a resolution is achieved. Some problems cannot be fixed with a five-minute telephone call – when this is the case, they devote all necessary resources to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. The support technicians always reply immediately to messages or e-mails, and follow up on each support incident to insure we are happy with the resolution and have no further need of their services."

When asked to summarize the agency's overall impression of iCONVERT, the Technology Specialist states, "The iCONVERT platform has been very stable and consistent in its performance. It's a very flexible product that we can easily expand to handle whatever growth we see in future years."



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