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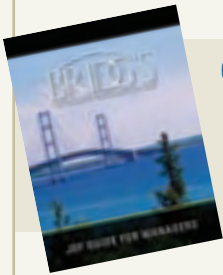
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The Pocket Guide to JDF



The JDF Pocket Guide was created in Adobe InDesign CS2, and uses a FOLDrite custom digital template.



Content for this pocket guide excerpted from the *JDF Guide For Managers*, a new, 32-page publication currently available through PIA/GATF, BRIDG'S, CIP4, and Network PDF.

Executive Summary

JDF is an XML-based file format that serves as a single source of real-time job information. JDF job data travels and accumulates from job initiation through to distribution and invoicing. JDF supports a bi-directional workflow, meaning that your MIS, or command center, can talk to the equipment throughout the production process, and the equipment can talk back. Implementing a JDF workflow means that you are taking an important step toward process automation by using an industry-approved specification.

While not always providing an immediate influx of profit by implementing JDF, an increase in throughput, cost reductions due to fewer operator errors, better reporting and analysis, less manual intervention and redundant work, faster and more accurate billing, and increased process efficiency are all benefits of JDF.

Although JDF is the industry standard language for operating in a Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) environment, it is not the only way to do it—there are proprietary and homegrown solutions to CIM as well. The compelling reason for choosing JDF lies in its ability to provide a common language that is vendor-neutral, which allows for an open system solution, providing greater flexibility when choosing the best products for your workflow. JDF will be hard to ignore moving forward, due to strong industry momentum and drive toward process improvement



through automation. Integrated automation, even if only partially implemented, has the potential to provide significant gains in the competitive race to reduce costs and production cycle time, as well as increase flexibility to better meet customer requirements.¹

A partial JDF workflow is what is most common in the industry right now. Many who are using JDF are connecting “islands of automation” together, one at a time, working toward a goal of total process automation.

In conclusion, JDF is a strategy, not an event. You will likely plan for it years in advance and implement it slowly over time. Because of this, there is no advantage to waiting. The technology of JDF is solid. Some JDF-enabled products are configured differently than others and may need to be adjusted to fit your situation. Therefore, you can expect that you may need to have your IT staff or an outside integrator tailor the connections between JDF-enabled products to make it work most effectively. Creating a long-term workflow integration plan using a JDF strategy will help ensure that you incrementally reach your desired level of automation and interoperability.

¹ PrintCom Consulting Group. *Status of Integrated Automation in the Commercial Printing Industry—2006* (Charlotte, NC: 2006), p iii.

Is JDF right for you?

Although JDF can benefit just about any workflow, it’s not for everyone. If you’re jumping on the JDF bandwagon because you think you have to, then you’re doing it for the wrong reason. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does integration fit with our business strategy?
- What are our expectations? Are these expectations achievable?
- What is our capital spending plan for the next 5 years? 10 years?
- Do we have the people/resources to make it happen and the commitment to follow through on it?
- Do we have buy-in from key decision makers and team members?
- What is our competition doing? Will this help us keep up or set us apart?

- At what point might we have to rethink or rework more of our workflow than makes sense for implementation?

Remember that innovation for the sake of innovation is a waste of money, but innovation for the sake of ongoing cost avoidance is an imperative if a company wishes to be truly competitive.

Is JDF here to stay?

The answer to this question is a resounding yes. According to the CIP4 organization, about 150 companies are providing JDF-enabled products — more than 180 JDF-enabled products are available, and nearly 4,000 users are working with one or more JDF-enabled products. In addition to those who are already using JDF-enabled products, there are another 3,800 companies currently pending purchase of JDF systems. A tremendous amount of time, resources, testing and discussion has been dedicated to this specification, and the momentum is building.

Is JDF an all-or-nothing commitment?

Partial JDF implementation is absolutely attainable. As a matter of fact, a partial JDF workflow is what is most common in the industry right now. Many who are using JDF are connecting “islands of automation” together, one at a time. It’s a great way to get started.

How do I get started?

Although the idea of overhauling and automating your workflow can be overwhelming, remember that **JDF is a strategy, not an event**. You will likely plan for it years in advance and implement it slowly over time. You can start by designating a project leader and checking the JDF-specific resources listed in this brochure. If you’re intimidated by the subject matter, overwhelmed by the process, or just not sure if JDF is right for your organization, start small with a map of your workflow and begin to configure a plan. Call one of your vendors and ask them to put you in touch with someone like you who is making it work.

- Here are some tips for deciding exactly what part of the production process to tackle first:
- Look for low-hanging fruit, go on the path of least resistance and highest immediate ROI. Look for the simpler things when you start. Don’t tackle the hardest, most political or capital-intense project first.
 - Focus on short-term wins that will build confidence in the project, then move on to the meatier workflow issues.
 - Map out and analyze your workflow and look for bottlenecks — these are the places in your workflow that need the most help and can show noticeable results. In doing this, you may even find that there are some simple improvements you can make that don’t involve JDF at all.
 - Apply best practices methodologies — make sure your process is optimized and standardized before you think about automating. Your workflow and business practices must be sound because automating a bad practice or bad workflow is only going to get you to a bad product faster.
 - Look to your vendors for help — they may have fairly simple upgrades and extensions or insight that helps you decide what part of your workflow to improve.

Visit, www.cip4.org/cippi/ for more information, ROI calculations, various JDF implementations and current case studies.

JDF-Specific Resources

CIP4 Web-site (www.cip4.org) — Source of JDF whitepapers, software downloads, FAQ, sample files, and more.

JDF Marketplace (<http://www.cip4.org/marketplace/>) — A directory of JDF-enabled products and related services updated quarterly and published as a free PDF download.

JDF Bulletin (http://www.cip4.org/contact/subscribe_cip4info.php) — Semi-monthly e-mail newsletter on JDF developments free to the public.

ICS (Interoperability Conformance Specifications) document (www.cip4.org) — Defines a set of conformance requirements that a conforming JDF-enabled product must meet in order to achieve interoperability with other conforming JDF-enabled products.

CIPPI Awards (See www.cip4.org/cippi/) — Detailed award-winning implementation case studies.

JDF Users Forum (http://www.printplanet.com/to-sign-up-and-see-http://www.cip4.org/groups/user_groups.html for French, Spanish, Japanese and German language User Forums.) — Popular open exchange of ideas, comments and issues via e-mail list serve.

JDF Expert Certificate Program (www.ipa.org/jdf) — 13-part technical training program for non-programmers available on CD-ROM and streaming media.

Implementing a JDF Workflow (www.gain.org) — PIA/GATF two-day training program.

USE-EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL MANUFACTURING ROLES AND POTENTIAL JDF DATA COLLECTION
(The roles illustrated here are unique, but not mutually exclusive)

