

AT&T

AT&T Calls on Adobe Acrobat Software to Cut Costs and Streamline Processes in Delivering Company Documents

Adobe® Acrobat® in Technical Document Distribution

Key Benefits Summary

- Documents are created only once for both printed and electronic distribution.
- Acrobat software integrates seamlessly with numerous authoring platforms.
- End users are provided with fully formatted documents that look identical to their printed counterparts.
- Features such as Bookmarks and Article Threads provide enhanced document navigation.
- Cost of distribution for a single set of documents was reduced from \$600 for print distribution to \$42 for distribution in the Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF).

After years of providing technical documentation, manuals, guides, drawings, and other task-support materials exclusively in hard-copy format, AT&T's Customer Information Center (CIC) has recently introduced a new family of electronic services designed to help accelerate the migration from paper-based documentation to electronic publishing. These new services, called E:MASTERSM, include demand printing, CD-ROM publishing, network file delivery, scanning, and on-line dial-up. E:MASTER relies on Adobe Acrobat software to make it easy and inexpensive for both clients and customers to use electronic publishing services.

"Acrobat software was the breakthrough we needed," says David J. Roller, manager, strategic planning and new technology development for AT&T's CIC. "It lets authors create documents only once for both hard-copy and electronic distribution, and it's very intuitive. From the end user's perspective, Acrobat software accelerates the transition to electronic media by coupling the cost advantages of electronic documents with the look and feel of paper. From the originator's perspective, it accelerates the transition by seamlessly fitting in with authoring platforms and methods currently in use." According to Roller, the relative low cost and simplicity of CIC's E:MASTER offerings are attributable to three primary factors: E:MASTER uses PostScript[®] language and ASCII input file formats, which are application- and operating system-independent, to ensure immediate compatibility with virtually any authoring system. A single PostScript language source file is used to produce a variety of outputs. Acrobat Distiller[®] software, included in Adobe Acrobat Pro, is used to

convert PostScript language files to Adobe PDF files that can be searched, viewed, and printed using ordinary PCs. Acrobat software enables end users to see an exact image of the paper CIC would normally create, complete with full-featured navigation tools such as bookmarks, an interactive table of contents, hypertext links, thumbnails, full-text searches, article threads, and library listings of PDF document titles. Using Acrobat Exchange software, more and more users are adding their own links and creating PDF files. "All in all, Acrobat software helps us satisfy the end user's need for paper without the associated costs of producing and distributing paper," says Roller.

Millions of Paper Documents Replaced By PDF files

As AT&T's world headquarters for customer documentation, the CIC offers more than 1.5 million documents to both internal and external subscribers. Documents come to the CIC from more than 200 originating locations throughout AT&T. Previously, most documents would be received, reproduced, and distributed in hard-copy format. Increasingly, users are sending files electronically. The CIC currently receives up to 30 percent of its masters as PostScript language files. Instead of sending a paper master to CIC using surface transportation, the author sends a PDF or PostScript file electronically. "This new front-end process for document production requires no extra effort beyond what has traditionally been required for paper documents. In fact, the electronic process is in many ways easier, because the author does not have to print a hard copy and the master can be sent in at the touch of a button," says Roller.

After an electronic document reaches the CIC, it goes into a custom document



production system residing in an Oracle® database. Customers can order and receive documents in a variety of ways, including printing documents on demand, ordering electronic documents over the Internet or getting enhanced documents on CD-ROM. At AT&T, requests to convert PostScript language files to PDF files are on the rise. PDF files are used primarily for CD-ROM publishing (for large libraries of documents) and network file delivery (for single documents).

PDF Saves Money, Provides Effective Search Capabilities

One of the reasons PDF files are becoming more popular is that they offer customers the benefit of easily searching and navigating large libraries of documents. Mario DeVita, staff manager at AT&T Bell Laboratories, provides customer documentation for AT&T's network switches on CD-ROM. DeVita uses Acrobat Pro to convert PostScript files into PDF files and sends them to the CIC for CD-ROM distribution. "Using Acrobat software preserves the exact page image of the document on-line and enables our customers to do quick full-text searches of these large documents," he says. "This feature is extremely useful because the documents we provide range from 100 to 900 pages."

Cost savings is another reason Acrobat software is becoming widely used. Says Roller, "We have saved money on several projects using Acrobat software. For example, one CD-ROM we produced contained 20 documents. To produce the set

of documents on paper would have cost \$600 per set. Producing and delivering these documents on CD-ROM with added Acrobat software features such as hypertext links cost just \$42. There are often enough cost savings associated with CD-ROM dis-

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*David Roller,
manager, strategic planning and
new technology development,
AT&T Customer Information Center*

tribution to recover both authoring and production expenses, even if only a small percentage of recipients requests electronic documents."

E:MASTER network file delivery is designed to complement CIC's CD-ROM services by providing its 4,000 customers with the means of obtaining single documents and receiving document updates as soon as they are available. Customers who order PDF files via network file delivery get many advantages including delivery within minutes or hours, reduced costs, and use of AT&T network resources as opposed to costly courier services. PDF files are distributed through the Internet via FTP,

HTTP, or UUCP. In the past few months, Roller has seen a serious increase in the number of people interested in distributing and accessing PDF files over the Internet. A building engineering group within AT&T recently asked the CIC to convert a set of 400 practices to PDF files and distribute them via a World Wide Web server.

The CIC deals daily with massive volumes of very large documents. "We knew the only way to reduce costs was to convert to an electronic document system," says Roller. "We evaluated alternative platforms, but most either required authoring documents twice—once for print and again for electronic distribution—or were based on a proprietary file format. Some also required powerful, expensive workstation-class hardware. Because of the page integrity made possible by Acrobat software, along with its platform and hardware independence, the conversion of a paper-based information center to an electronic system was painless."

AT&T Systems at-a-Glance

Hardware

IBM® PC-compatibles
Mainframe systems

Software

Adobe Acrobat Pro
Adobe Acrobat Exchange
Adobe Acrobat Reader
Adobe Illustrator®
Adobe PageMaker®
Oracle database
Microsoft® Word

Adobe Systems Incorporated
1585 Charleston Road, P.O. Box 7900
Mountain View, CA 94039-7900 USA

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Adobe Systems Co., Ltd.
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4-20-3 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku
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