Workflow Integration of
EFI Colorproof XF

How to integrate EFI Colorproof XF into an existing prepress workflow

Table of content

1   Used system configuration

This article relates to the following system configuration:

Software Version:

EFI Colorproof XF v3.0

Miscellanious:

2 Topics

This article compares the three different possibilities about the automatic job processing tools from EFI Colorproof XF. The three tools are:

- Hotfolder.

- Virtual printer.

- EFI Uni Driver.

General information about the installation will be explained in the user manual and not in this Know-How article.

Every input tool has its advantages and disadvantages and can be used in different situations. A hotfolder for example offers a full automated job processing but no job interaction. The virtual printer allows to make job adjustment but might lead to unexpected results in PostScript processing.

You will find more information about all this on the next pages.

2.1 Hotfolder integration

2.1.1 General explanation

A hotfolder in general can be compared with a "watched" folder. The software application checks a selected folder from time to time (30 sec. by default) and looks if this folder contains a new job. If there is a new job in this folder the job gets picked up and processed thru the selected workflow.

The hotfolder is always hard wired to a workflow. Therefore EFI Colorproof XF knows how to process the job and where it needs to get printed.
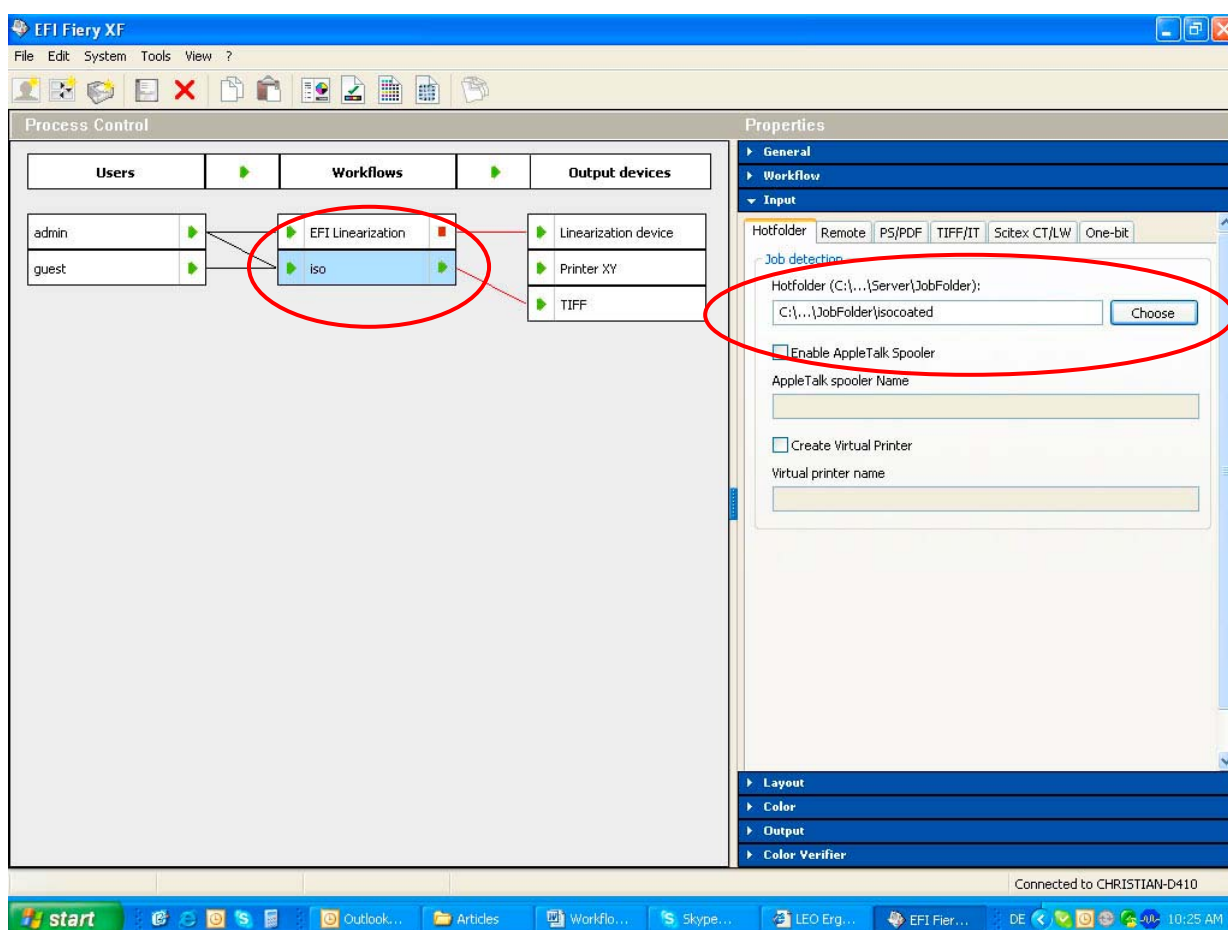
2.1.2   Advantage

The advantage of using a hot folder is the full automated processing. The user needs to set up the software and its different workflows only once. After that he just copies or saves the jobs into the watched hotfolder and the application does all the rest of the processing.

If the jobs should also get printed automatically, the workflow needs to be set up on "automatic" that means all arrows needs to be on green.

2.1.3   Disadvantage

The disadvantage is that the user can´t have any interaction with the application. Neither he can make changes to the job while he prints the job to the application. For example if he selected a workflow which does automatically rotate all incoming jobs but he wants to pint the job not rotated, he needs to do the job changes in the EFI Client application. In order to do so he needs to switch the workflow output device on red square so that the job stops

after calculation. Then he needs to open the Job Explorer and does the job changes. The same applies if he wants to do other changes like job scaling.

Another disadvantage is, that the job needs to get converted into a format which EFI Colorproof XF can process. For example EFI Colorproof XF can not process native file formats (except Adobe Photoshop Files). These file types need to get converted into PostScript or PDF before.

2.1.4   Appliance within EFI Colorproof XF

Create a new workflow in the System Manager by making a right mouse click. Select the blue Input bar and the first tab called "Hotfolder".
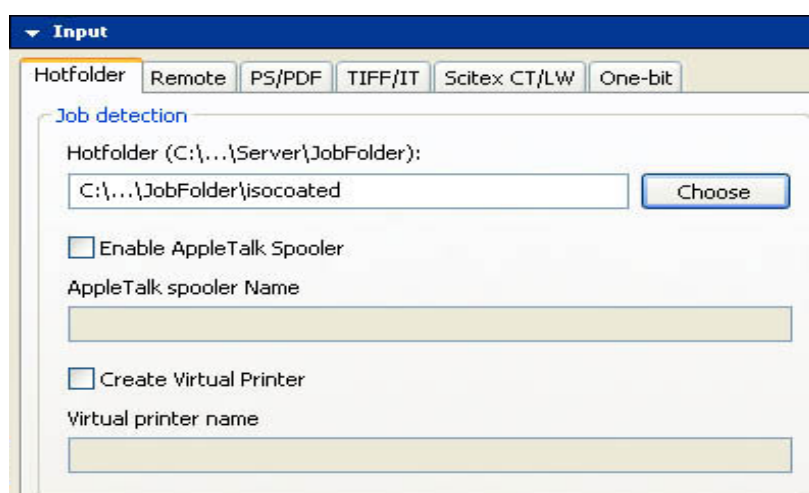
In order to select a Hotfolder click on the "Choose" button and navigate to the desired folder. It does not make a difference where this folder is located. It is even possible to select a folder somewhere on the network. The only requirement is, that the path to the hotfolder should be the physical path and not any network shortcut from the desktop!

2.1.5   Assigning hotfolder on other computer

Because EFI Colorproof XF runs as a service and not as a Windows application, a number of things have changed regarding the monitoring of hotfolders in network environments. In order for files to be retrieved from a network, it is essential that the service on the Server computer logs on with the right user name.

To set this up, on the EFI Colorproof XF computer, go to Control Panel -> Administrative Tools ->Services. Right-click the service "EFI Colorproof XF Server" and choose "Properties"

from the context menu. Click the tab "Log On". The default log on setting is "Local System account". Select the radio button "This account" and type in the login data of the user. Make sure that the user has adequate read/write privileges to the Server. If the computer is in a domain, this should be sufficient. In the case of computers in user groups, we recommend that you create one user with exactly the same name and password on both computers (EFI Colorproof XF Server and file server) and to enter this information on the "Log On" tab.

Please make sure that the user either already has administrative rights on the EFI Colorproof XF computer or grant him full access manually to the folders "FlexLM", "EFI Colorproof XF 2.6" and "EFI Colorproof XF Profiles". Apply the settings and then restart EFI Colorproof XF via EFI Colorproof XF Control. Log on to a Server from the Client installed on the computer and define a hotfolder. This is necessary even if hotfolders have already been assigned to workflows.

2.1.6   Hotfolder and Apple Talk

In order to integrate Mac OS 9 machines into the prepress workflow, EFI Colorproof XF offers the possibility to display the selected hotfolder as an apple talk printer. After selecting a hotfolder the check box "Enable Apple Talk Spooler" needs to get selected. EFI Colorproof XF uses the installed Apple Talk protocol from the computer and displays the hotfolder in the network. Please note that the checkbox will be only available if the Apple Talk protocol is installed. If not, the check box will be grayed out.

The Apple Talk printer will get a standard name which follows the naming convention: "`workflow` on `computer`". But in some production environments the naming convention might not be transparent for the user. Therefore it is possible to change the name of the apple talk spooler which will get displayed on the Mac OS 9 computer.

Because the hotfolder will get displayed as an Apple Talk printer on the Mac OS 9 system, it requires a PPD file. This PPD file can be found on the EFI Colorproof XF installation CD.

Some operating systems do not support the Apple Talk protocol by default. EFI offers a Apple Talk driver in the "Tools" folder which you can find in the installation folder. Please do the following in order to install the protocol:

1)   Open the "Local Area Connection Properties" by making a right mouse click onto the "network environment".
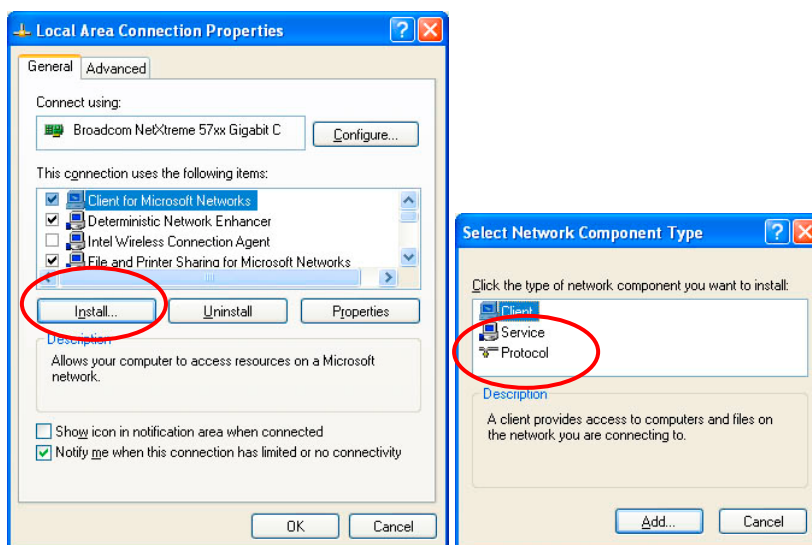
2) Click on the "Install" button.

3) Select "Protocol".

4) Click on "Have disc" and navigate to the "Tools" folder within the installation folder. After clicking on "OK", the Apple Talk protocol is ready to use.

Please see the manual for more detailed information about the Apple Talk spooler.

2.2   Virtual printer

2.2.1   General explanation

The virtual printer basically displays a hotfolder as a printer in the operating system. The virtual printer is not a real printer driver like standard vendor printer driver. It is still a PostScript driver but does not allow settings like paper size or page positioning. In order to use the virtual printer you have to create and assign a Hotfolder to the Workflow.

2.2.2   Advantage

The virtual printer is a very simple solution in order to print jobs to EFI Colorproof XF. It can be selected from within the application like a standard printer driver which is very intuitive for the user. Next to the usability another argument for the virtual printer is that the virtual printer is a PostScript printer driver. That means that he can convert every file type into PostScript. PostScript can be calculated by EFI Colorproof XF. So the user doesn´t need to take care what file format he is using and if EFI Colorproof XF can calculate this.

Another advantage is, that due to the structure of the virtual printer the user also doesn´t need to take care about the page size or other settings. Because it is not a real printer driver all settings will be overwritten by EFI Colorproof XF anyway.

2.2.3 Disadvantage

The virtual printer has two disadvantages. It is not possible to make last minute changes to a workflow setting for example job rotation or job scaling. The user needs to do these changes within the EFI Colorproof XF interface. If this is a real disadvantage depends on the needed flexibility of the production workflow.

The other disadvantage is that the user needs to create a virtual printer for every installed workflow. Because the virtual printer is a hard wired connection like a hotfolder to a specific workflow, every workflow needs its on virtual printer. A company with a lot of workflows might get lots of printer on the operating system level.

2.2.4 Appliance within EFI Colorproof XF

After the selection of a hotfolder, please select the checkbox "Create Virtual Printer" and type in a name. For more detailed information please see the user manual.

### 2.2.5 How to integrate the virtual printer driver?

The virtual printer driver can be handled as a normal windows printer driver. That means it is possible to share the virtual printer driver in the network. That´s very helpful because it makes it possible to install the driver only once for every workflow onto the server computer and share it with all other clients. The Virtual Printers can be used as LPR Printers, so that nearly every OS which supports LPR Printing can print to it.

2.3 EFI Uni Driver

2.3.1 General explanation

The EFI Uni Driver is in comparison to the virtual printer a real printer driver. The difference is that a real printer driver takes the parameter set by the user and actively applies these

changes to the job. For example if the user wants to print an A3 document but set the page size in the Uni Driver to A4, the document will be clipped on the A4 format.
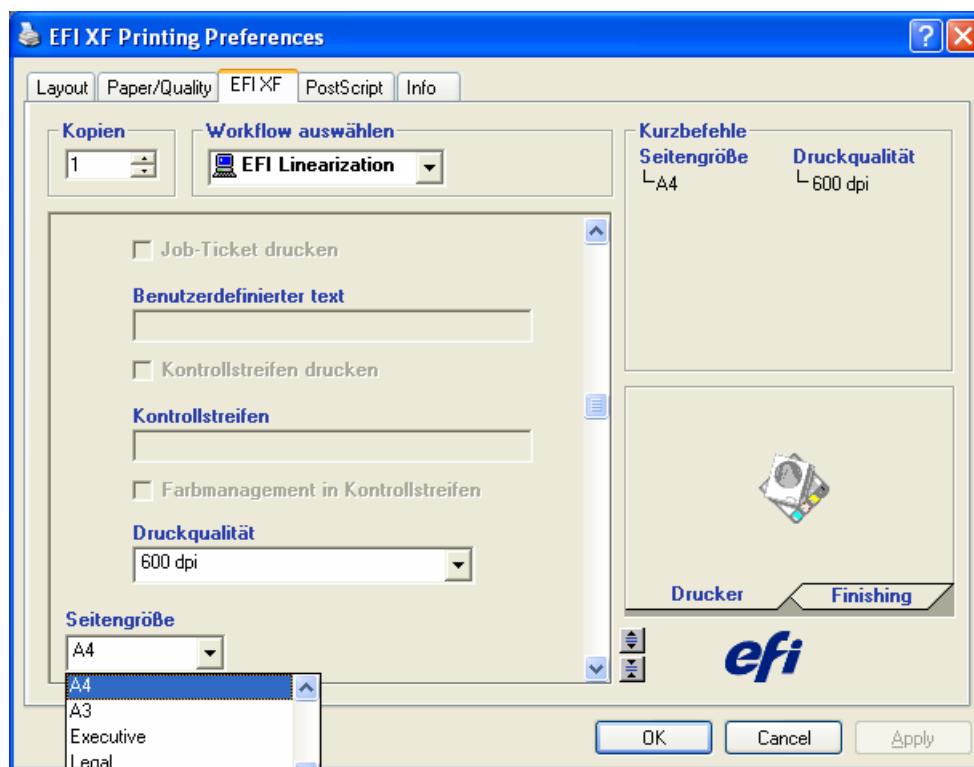

Therefore it is important that the user pays attention to the setting from the EFI Uni Driver.

2.3.2 Advantages

The EFI Uni Driver is also a PostScript driver. That means if the user prints from the layout or image manipulation application to the EFI Uni Driver, the application proprietary file format gets converted into PostScript which can be processed by EFI Colorproof XF.
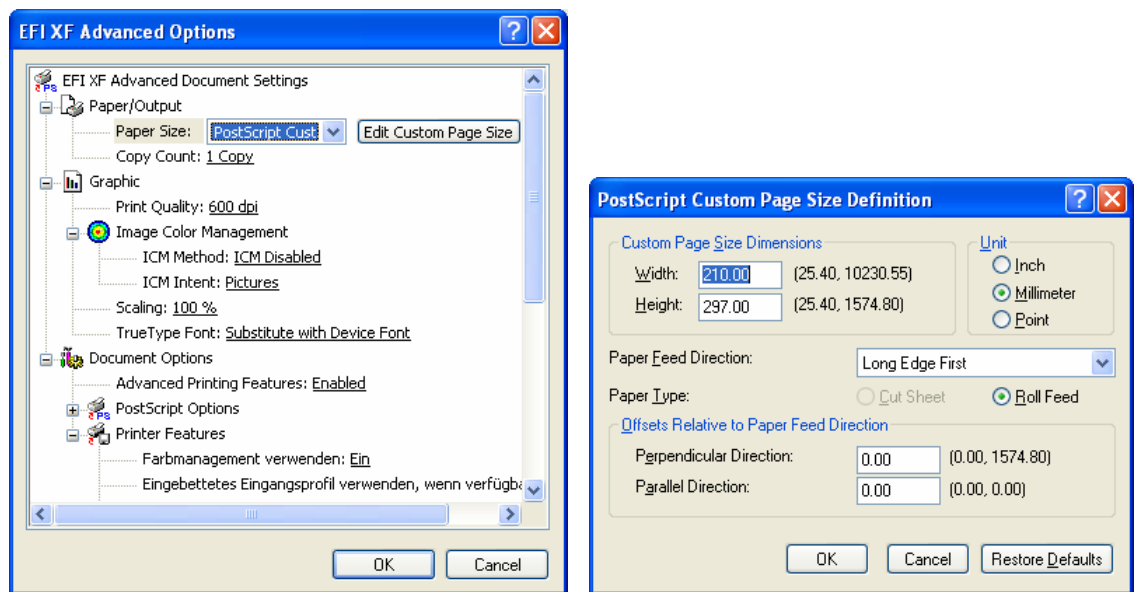
Another advantage is the possibility to select different workflows from one EFI Uni Driver. The EFI Uni Driver has the ability to connect to the EFI Colorproof XF server like the Client application. The EFI Uni Driver gathers information and about all workflows. Depending on the used login name and password, the user will get the option to select different workflows. In this way the EFI Uni Driver needs to get installed only once per Client Computer which makes the operating system level way more cleaned up and organized.
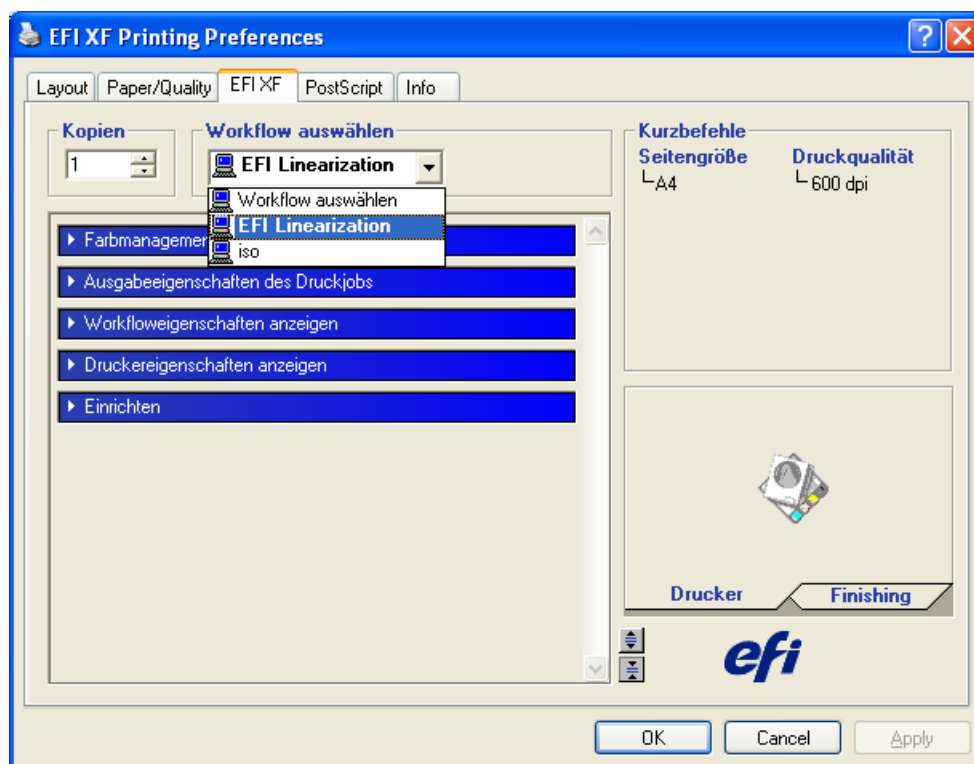
2.3.3 Disadvantages

Depending on the workflow it might be a disadvantage that the user needs to set up the paper size and resolution with every print job. Sometimes a user does not want to care about the driver settings or he even doesn't know what to set up. Changing settings within the EFI Uni Driver does also include the danger that the user uses a setting which doesn't match the workflow the user wants to print into.

For example the user prints on a 24 inch paper roll. Unfortunately the the EFI Uni Driver does not offer the option to setup a 24 inch roll. In order to do so, the user needs to click into the Layout tab and then the "Advanced" button. In the following window, he can select "Custom PostScript Page Size" in the menu "Paper size". A windows box opens where he can type in all important information about the desired paper size.

2.3.4   How to integrate the EFI Uni Driver?

The EFI Uni Driver has the ability to connect to the EFI Colorproof XF Server like a standard client application. Therefore he needs to be installed on every client machine. It is not possible to install the EFI Uni Driver on a server and share it with the network.

3 Executive Summary

3.1 Article summary

There are different possibilities to submit a job to the EFI Colorproof XF server. Every technique has its own need and area of application. The hot folder and virtual printer meet the need for an automatic workflow which does not require any manual changes on the job anymore. They are the fastest and easiest way to print a job. It is also the safest way because no unintended changes can be done with the job.

The most flexible way but also the most time consuming is the use of the client application. The client offers the way to do specific changes with the job but requires the manual loading of the job.