



## Keeping it Digital

***Available tools that help you lower the expense of using Dead-Tree-Ware.***

***Despite all the available high tech alternatives people are still creating, coping and sharing information on a 2,000 year-old Egyptian invention.***

Warning: This article contains excessive use of dysphemisms!

Ok, first off I am not a “tree hugger.” I love trees and nature but do not consider myself an environmentalist nor have I studied any related scientific research or watched “An Inconvenient Truth” and when it comes to global warming, to my way of thinking we could all use a little less winter.

Now I have heard that trees moderate our climate, improve our air quality help conserve water, and provide a great setting for us to observe squirrels, birds and other wildlife at play. So trees seem like a good thing to have around. Although there are times when trees can be pretty irritating, especially in the fall here in NJ when they drop their leaves requiring me to get way too friendly with a leaf rake and in the spring when the pine trees dust everything I own with so much thick green pollen that it looks like I have been the victim of a chemical spill. I will have to admit that there is evidence that trees are essential to a healthy environment and a healthy environment is essential for a healthy person, and that includes you and me, our children, their children and all future generations. Consuming trees and habitat and processing paper generates tons of industrial pollutants. The pulp and paper industry is the third-largest industrial polluter in North America. They release millions of pounds of toxic pollution--including dioxin, a cancer-causing byproduct of the chlorine-bleaching process--into the air, ground and water. Paper is also the main material in solid waste and paper-producing companies are huge energy consumers.

But all that aside I just don't like seeing money thrown away on useless, time wasting processes like the daily filling of waste baskets with discarded “dead-tree-ware”, all for no good reason. And that is why in my opinion that in most cases any information that is born digital does not have to be printed out on a “dead-tree” (paper) for archiving or for the purpose of sharing the information with others.

I love that Capital One TV commercial where the woman gets a home loan at an excessive rate that turns into a monkey on her back that keeps reaching into her purse and throwing away her money, all without her seeming to know what is going on. Well that very same commercial with some slight modifications could be describing how many dealership processes have aspects that are easily visualized as “money wasting monkeys on dealer's backs”.

I have a long list of these “monkeys” that I use as a guide when performing a dealership process audit and in my experience completely removing or putting these monkeys on a tight lease is the difference between a profitable dealerships and the one that are struggling to keep the money they make.

Remember the term “paperless office”? Despite all the available high tech alternatives people are still creating, coping and sharing information on a 2,000 year-old Egyptian invention. In my opinion the “paperless office” is the “big-foot” of technology solutions. Lots of theory and discussion by well meaning, persuasive experts but the fact is I have never seen one and don’t know anyone who has.

The thing is that most dealerships tear through paper at an uncontrolled rate and even though paper may seem relatively affordable; the cost of using it is many times higher than the amount on the check you give to the office supply warehouse. The real cost includes maintaining printers and copiers, mailing correspondence, storing records and handling office paper and the cost of first aid (you forgot about those nasty paper cuts?).

The reality is that thought the “paperless office” may not exist, when it comes to cutting paper related costs there are some low hanging fruit available for picking.

**What to do:**

While recycling office paper is always good idea and many dealers do this already, the most cost-effective strategy is simply reducing the amount of paper used. Buying less paper lowers expenses directly and lowers paper waste, savings in waste collection, printer and copy machine usage, etc.

Ok, please understand I am not recommending the Sheryl Crow solution of one square of toilet paper per rest room visit. What we need is a paper saving policy and processes that is relatively easy to implement and that everyone can work with.

Regardless of your motivation, saving money or the spotted owl you will need some new computer tools and processes.

Let’s start with an easy one. An “uh huh” report, you know the one where you pick up the paper, read it, nod and say “uh huh” once or twice and then wad it into the world’s smallest basketball and then doing your best Jason Kapono impersonation deposit it into the waste basket. Next time don’t print it out and don’t allow your staff to print one for you (or for their own use as well). So, let’s begin with that criterion, no information should be presented on “dead-tree-ware” that is born to be through away. Keep it digital.

To rein in the “tree-killers” (printers) attached to the PCs on your network I recommend that you start with giving your staff a replacement for the tradition of creating information in the “dead tree format”. A favorite of mine is the PDF printer. Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format created by Adobe Systems for computer use in the early 90s. PDF is designed to work just like a printed document in digital format and

to be displayed on any monitor regardless of its resolution. Anyone may create applications that read and write PDF files without having to pay royalties to Adobe. Thought Adobe holds patents relating to PDF it licenses them for free for to use in software that complies with their PDF specification. This means that you can get started using PDF “paperless” printers for free!

There are lots of free print drivers available for download from the internet and they are easy to install. Once installed they work just like a traditional “tree-killer” (printer) except that instead of paper a PDF format file is created and saved in the folder of your choice. How can they afford to give the print drivers to you for free? Simple, the drivers are free but if you want them enhance with other features you have to pay. But, right out of the box and for free they make a great replacement for the “dead tree format”.

So, next time you take a late-in-the-day walk around your dealership make a note of how many “basketball’s” are filling the waste baskets of your staff and feel free to use one of my favorite Jim Skeans Consulting Group mottos “waste is a terrible thing to mind”.

## **For AutoMate Users**

Saving and printing PDF’s from AMPS by Auto/Mate

While AMPS by Auto/Mate has a “Print Preview” feature that will help stop you from “killing trees” by allowing you to view the reports before they are printed, you can also save these in a PDF format for emailing or printing at a later time.

To print or save a PDF of the AMPS screen you are on, right click the mouse on the screen and select “Print Screen”. Then select the PDF printer that was setup on the PC and the screen, in PDF format, will be printed and / or saved.

To print or save a report from the “Print Preview” feature of AMPS, select the report, view it, then if you decide to save it to a PDF, click “Print local” then select the PDF printer. The printer will have the ability to either print the report or save it in PDF format.

*Submitted by Holly Forsberg of AutoMate*

## **For ADAM Inc. Users**

Download one of many internet available PDF printer drivers for use under Windows.

There are great FREE shareware versions, perform a search in [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) and choose the one that best fit your needs. Follow the instructions and install the downloaded software, most of these is wizard driven so you only need to take the default answers to install. Upon completion of installation a new printer will appear in your printers’ folder, this will be the PDF printer. Use it as any other regular printer device; you can print to it from any windows based application. It will save the PDF file to your disk. When you select the print report button, the printer selection dialog box appears. Just select the PDF printer and complete the destination folder/file dialog box. For Print-Screen an Adam proprietary utility is provided that allows you to print the screen contents just by pressing the 'Print Screen' key of your keyboard. This utility program allows you to select destination printer, select your PDF printer and complete the destination folder/file dialog box. *Submitted by Orlando Rodriguez of ADAM Inc*

## **For ADP Elite Users**

Download and follow the installation instructions for the PDF printer driver of your choice. Once successfully installed the PDF print driver should now be in your windows “Printers and Faxes” folder. From the Reflections main menu select “Print Setup” and then the down arrow on the Name selection box. Choose the newly installed PDF printer from the list of all print drivers on your PC. Reflections will remember your selection and use the PDF printer as you default printer for future sessions. Once you have set the PDF print driver from “print setup” you may print reports to PDF use the logging feature or select memory or screen from the print menu. *Submitted by Jim Skeans of Jim Skeans Consulting Group LLC*

## **For ARKONA Users**

On the Arkona system, once a PDF printer has been installed in Windows via the manufacturer’s instructions, you can direct print screens to it from Arkona by clicking File, Printer Setup, and selecting that printer. To configure an Arkona printer to print reports to a file is easy for a person familiar with iSeries Access, but most Arkona customers have theirs configured by Arkona support. You have to start a new emulation session, set the type as “Printer”. You can then click File, Printer Setup, and select the PDF printer to assign it to the new printer session. Add it to the list of printers in Arkona Printer Definitions and you can print reports to PDF by directing it to that printer within Arkona. *Submitted by Jim Jensen of ARKONA*

## **For Reynolds + Reynolds ERA Users**

Download and follow the installation instructions for the PDF printer driver of your choice. The PDF print driver should now be in your windows “Printers and Faxes” folder. From ERALink32 main screen select “Printer setup” and within the dialog box choose “Specific printer” and click on the list of available printers. As they will not all appear in the drop down list when using only the mouse you must use the up/down arrow keys to scroll and view all of the printers that are available for use. Select your newly installed PDF printer and then OK to close the dialog box. To set the PDF printer as the ERALink default printer go to the Windows “Printers and Faxes”, right click on the PDF printer and choose “set as default printer”. *Submitted by Jim Skeans of Jim Skeans Consulting Group LLC*

## **For Reynolds + Reynolds Power System Users**

To create a document or send an email that includes a screenshot, click on the screen to select it, hold down the Alt + Print Screen buttons on the keyboard to capture the image, go to the application, such as Microsoft Word or Outlook, and either select Edit and Paste, or use the keyboard shortcut of simultaneously depressing CTL + V. The POWER application also allows you to share reporting information electronically by automatically creating a PDF attachment of the document. There are three ways to accomplish this:

1. Right Click on the report and select Email from the available options
2. Highlight the desired report, select Tools from the menu bar, and then select Send Internet Email
3. Highlight the desired report and use the keyboard shortcut of CTL + E.

Once the email is created you may save the attached PDF to your PC for future use.  
*Submitted by Jessica Kriegel of the Reynolds and Reynolds Company*