

Enhancements to Apollo-FM 05/05/2004

I have added some new features to the Apollo-FM software to assist in handling printers, and displaying some of the system information usually carried out at TCL. These new features are being Beta Tested at present, but will hopefully be ready for general issue soon. The features added to the ADMIN section of Apollo-FM are:

Printer Status :	Display status of printer including activity print jobs being output etc.
D3 Spooler Info :	Display printers that are started on the system.
List Users :	Display users logged on.
FlashCONNECT Status :	Display the WWW-STATUS.
List Tape Devices :	Display which tape devices are on the system.
List Devices :	Display all devices available on the system.
Physical Printer :	Update physical printer definition as in SB+
Maintain Printers :	Start and stop printers from physical printer definitions.

It is the last two that are the most significant as printers cause users the most bother. The physical printer definition draws on the SB+ Physical printer definition but enhances it for D3 on NT/W2k. The screen looks like this:

Create Physical Printer

Printer Name:

Description:

Device / Port Number: Must be between 11 and 32

Pages to Eject Between Jobs:

Printer Number:

Form Queue Number:

NT Printer Name: e.g. \\WIMS\HP LJ (case sensitive)

The added information required above that used by SB+ is the Printer Number, Form Queue Number, and the NT Printer Name. When users start using this system they should update the records with the additional fields needed to maintain the printers. The search button displays all Printer Definitions (including the old ones from SB+) which can be chosen to update, using the Apollo-FM search engine, as shown below:

Printer Definitions

1 to 10 of 11 displayed

Printer	Printer Name	Pib	Class	Pr No	Frm Q	Nt Name
ALAN	TEST	22	DEFAULT.CLASS	22	22	\\MINKY\HP
DEFAULT.PRINTER	DEFAULT PRINTER DEFINITION	12	DEFAULT.CLASS			
EPSON1520	EPSON 1520	12	EPSON.CLASS			
EPSON850	ALANS EPSON	15	DEFAULT.CLASS	3	3	\\ALAN\EPSON850
EPSON8502	Condensed Mode	15	HP.LASER.JET.II.CLAS			
FILE	File On Nt	14	DOSFILE			
FRED	TEST PRINTER USED WITH MINKY	21	DEFAULT.CLASS	21	21	\\MINKY\HP
MINKY	OFFICE LASER	11	DEFAULT.CLASS	1	1	\\MINKY\HP
MINKY2	COMPRESSED PRINT	16	DEFAULT.CLASS	4	4	\\MINKY\HP
TEST	TEST PRINTER FOR CONDENSED PRI	0	HP.LASER.JET.II.CLAS			

The user chooses the printer by clicking on the printer name (in bold). You can see from this example some of the printers are not yet updated. This is what you would see from the SB+ records. When the user has added the additional information, the record would display as complete. Printer classes are not important, so the class used by Apollo-FM printer set up uses default class.

The next stage is to Maintain these printers on the system. The following is the new screen to do this.

<i>Maintain Printers</i>						
Printer No.	NAME	Form Queue	Form Feed	Port	Status	Action
	EPSON8502		1	15		<input type="button" value="Start1"/>
3	EPSON850	3	1	15		<input type="button" value="Start2"/>
0	EPSON1520	0	0	12	inactive	<input type="button" value="Delete3"/>
	TEST		0	0		<input type="button" value="Start4"/>
2	FILE	2		14	inactive	<input type="button" value="Delete5"/>
21	FRED	21	0	21		<input type="button" value="Start6"/>
22	ALAN	22	1	22		<input type="button" value="Start7"/>
	TEST16		0	16		<input type="button" value="Start8"/>
4	MINKY2	4	0	16	inactive	<input type="button" value="Delete9"/>
1	MINKY	1	0	11	inactive	<input type="button" value="Delete10"/>
	DEFAULT.PRINTER		0	12		<input type="button" value="Start11"/>

This screen displays ALL printers setup in the printer definitions file. Those that can be used have a DELETE button, those that are not able to be used have a START button. To stop a printer all the user has to do is to click on the DELETE button. This will:

1. Stop the printer
2. Kill the printer
3. Release the lock(s) of any print jobs
4. Remove the printer from the device list

5. Remove the printer from the SB+ Maintain Printers list.
6. Remove the printer from the USER-COLDSTART.

When the above screen returns the printers button will have changed to START. The DELETE button does NOT delete the physical printer definition so the system can start the printer again. When the user clicks on the START button, provided all the additional information has been added correctly to the printer definition, the system will:

1. Create a device from the NT Printer name
2. Start the printer
3. Create an entry in the SB+ Maintain printers file.
4. Add the necessary lines to the USER-COLDSTART.

As you can see this is a very simple way of maintaining printers on the system. The simplicity is created through the extensive programming used to create this feature. In future all you have to do to create a printer on an NT / W2k system is to set up the printer on the server and print a test page to it, and then fill in the definition in Apollo-FM and click on the START button in Maintain Printers. One thing that users should be aware of when using this feature to unlock print jobs in the spooler. If the locked job was a hold file, then it will unlock it, but do not try to print this job again when the printer has been restarted. For some reason when a job has been locked, it seems to lock up again when a second attempt is made. It is better to delete the hold file once unlocked.