

Black Ice Newsletter

Black Ice Software, Inc.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR! Welcome to 2004!



Thank you from everyone at Black Ice Software for making 2003 such a great year. We wish the best for everyone in 2004.

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New V.34 support added to the Fax C++/ActiveX

Last month, Black Ice software announced the release of version 10.0 of the Fax C++/ActiveX, which implemented V.34 faxing based on the Class 1.0 fax command set. A fax sent at 33,600 bps (V.34) is more than twice as fast as a fax sent at 14,400 bps. The increased transmission speed increases performance by drastically reducing training time. The same fax can

be sent in half the time as before, saving money on phone bills.

Black Ice has recently expanded the V.34 faxing capabilities of the Fax C++/ActiveX by adding support for additional V.34 fax hardware from Mainpine Ltd.. Mainpine Ltd. is the UK based manufacturer of the RockForce line of multi-port fax and voice cards, which include two, four, and eight port cards, all of which sup-

port Class 1.0 V.34 faxing. RockForce fax cards are available through resellers and distributors worldwide.

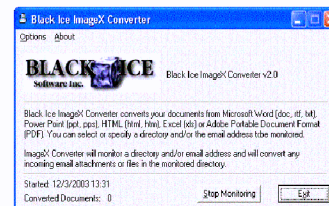
The RockForce cards are Universal PCI 2.3 PNP compliant, 3.3V and 5.5V signaling, and a world beating short board format, enabling hassle-free physical installation into any server.

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NEW - Printer Driver Add-on - Batch Converter Part II

Last month, Black Ice introduced a new "Batch Converter" add-on to the printer driver, which enabled developers to monitor a specified email address and would convert any files attached to the incoming emails into images.

The Batch converter sample has now been further enhanced to monitor a specified directory and automatically convert any supported files into image files. This invaluable feature provides developers with the ability to automate the document conversion process



The Black Ice Batch Converter

Developers can specify a directory for the Batch

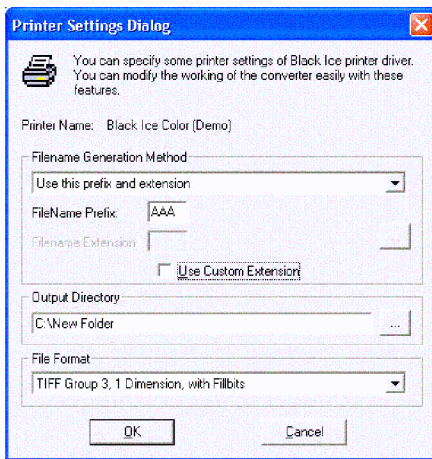
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(New exciting additions - Continued from page 1)
converter to monitor. Any supported file placed in the directory will be automatically converted into an image file by printing that file to the Black Ice printer driver. Settings such as the generated file format and output directory can be changed from within the sample as well. The sample also provides access to some of the more common printer settings, such as file format type, file name generation details, and the output directory for the generated image files.



Control key printer settings such as file format

The Batch Converter sample application can also log in to a specified POP3 email address and retrieve the emails from a given user account. The attachments of the emails (Word, Excel, HTML, text files, etc.) will be printed to the Black Ice printer driver which will result in converting the received documents into images (JPEG, PDF, TIFF, BMP, etc.).

Some possible uses for the new Batch Converter add-on include:

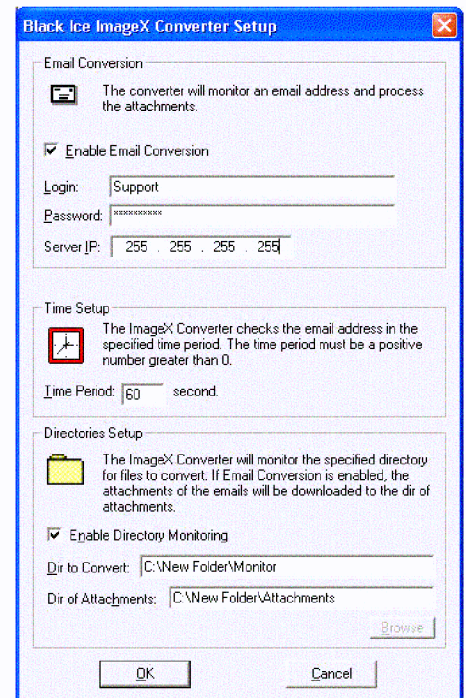
Network wide document conversion: Creating a network shared drive which is monitored by the batch converter. Network users can then save or drop files into the shared folder and they will be automatically converted into an image file.

Automated faxing: Users can drag or save a file into a directory monitored by the batch converter. The files can then be converted into TIFF files for faxing and automatically faxed out.

Developers can modify this sample later on to fit their exact needs by

adding additional features to suit their specific needs.

The new "Batch Converter" sample is part of the Printer Driver Resource Toolkit (RTK) and is available with the purchase of the latest version of the printer driver.



The batch converter setup screen

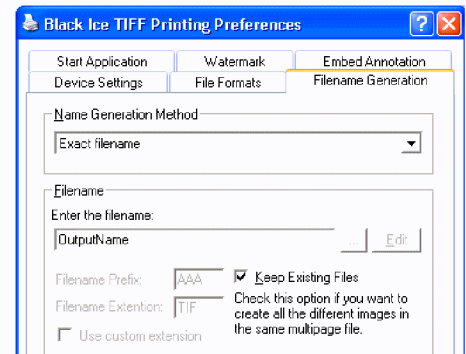
Combining multiple print jobs into a single image file

Sometimes when using the Black Ice printer drivers, a situation arises where an individual may want to combine multiple documents/files into a single image file. The Black Ice printer drivers have a built in mechanism which makes this possible without requiring developers to perform post processing on the generated images.

The "Keep existing files" option can be used when multipage output is supported (TIFF, DCX). When the filename generation method creates output files with the same name for

each document (any of the "Exact Filename" file name generation methods), using the "Keep existing files" option will append the printed pages to the existing images files instead of overwriting the file at the beginning of every new print job.

Using this option, the Black Ice printer drivers can be used to combine multiple print jobs into one file. Developers can programmatically turn this option on and off, allowing their applications to control when print jobs are combined into a single output file.



The "Keep Existing Files" checkbox allows multiple print jobs to be combined into a single output file

(MainPine Support... - Continued from page 1)

The RockForce line of cards are also ideal for computer telephony applications including voice and International CallerID. By utilizing the

Fax/Voice C++/ActiveX to develop a fax or voice application, and using the RockForce line of cards, developers and system integrators can create high end, yet low cost, reliable fax and voice systems.

Support for Mainpine's RockForce line of V.34 fax cards is a new addition to the list of hardware supported by Fax/Voice C++/ActiveX.

Printer Driver Tips: Multiple Printer Settings

Developers who integrate the Black Ice printer drivers into their application often need two or more different sets of settings for the printer driver. Ideally the end user shouldn't have to know which printer settings to change when another type of output is needed, for example if the application needs TIFF images for faxing using (204x196) DPI and uses JPEG images using 600x600 DPI, a few printer settings must be changed and that could be confusing for an end user and also can introduce possible error if the user doesn't select the correct settings.

To simplify this process the developer can try one of the following :

1. Install more than one Black Ice Printer on the same PC
2. Use the "Profile Manager", new in the Black Ice printer drivers
3. Programmatically change the printer settings.

1. Install more than one Black Ice

Printer on the same PC

The developer can use two copies of the same printer driver on the same PC. Installing different versions of the same driver currently is not supported but will be in the near future.

One of the printers (Printer A) will use TIFF Group3D1 for output using 204x196 DPI and Fax Paper Size for faxing. The other printer (Printer B) will create JPEG output using Letter paper size and 600x600 DPI.

Once both printers are installed, the end user simply has to print to Printer A to produce faxable files and print to Printer B to create JPEG files. The user doesn't have to change (or know how to change) the printer settings; he just simply selects the appropriate printer.

Installing multiple copies of the printer must follow the rules of installing one printer, with the following differences:

1. Rename all driver files, so when a printer is uninstalled

the other one can still work. Files that cannot be renamed such as (BiCAppNT.exe, BiImg.dll) must be installed as shared files on the system.

2. Change the name of the printer, the printer driver, printer port and the print processor.
3. The new name of the resource dll (BiCResNT.dll) can be specified in the INI file (BiCIniNT.Ini)
4. The INI file should be also renamed and each one should contain the printer specific settings. This way both printers will be installed with different settings.

Coming up in the next issue: "Using the "Profile Manager" in the Black Ice printer drivers and "Programmatically changing the printer settings."

Extracting Text with the Black Ice Printer Drivers

The Black Ice Printer Drivers include an often overlooked feature which allows the extraction of text from any printed document. The text can be saved by itself, or can include style and position information which can later be used for form reconstruction. The Resource Toolkit included with the printer drivers includes a form reconstruction sample that can be used as a starting point.

Extracting text from printed documents is an inexpensive alternative to OCR. For applications such as document archiving applications, not only can the document image be filed away in the system, but the extracted text can be saved with the image, allowing users to search for documents by typing in text strings, and the application can then return a list of resulting documents by

searching the extracted text files for the text strings and returning the associated files.

The text extraction feature could also be useful for fax applications. When a document is converted to a TIFF file, the extracted text can be searched for key words such as order number, invoice number, etc, and the resultant TIFF can be filed away for company records

