FirstPROOF

Defining File Name Filters

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Overview

To make the roaming of jobs easier, FirstPROOF always tries to group the files that make up the job into a Job/Page/Separation hierarchy.

In the case of a PGB based workflow, FirstPROOF can do this with no user assistance due to the valuable information contained within the file.

In the case of a TIFF based workflow, this becomes more difficult because of the lack of a clear standard with regards to using Job Tags and file naming. To work around this problem FirstPROOF uses a powerful file name filter system that allows the user to define a file naming scheme that will be used to group TIFF files into a correct Job hierarchy.

The creation of TIFF file name filters can be done manually or by using the Assistant/Wizard (recommended) and these two options are covered in separate sections of this guide.

In the case of a LEN based workflow, a limited amount of information is contained within the file. A small amount of further information is available in the file name. Applications that generate LEN files follow a standard convention with regards to file naming, so a pre-defined file name filter “All LEN Files” is defined which should suffice. However, in case any new applications use a different file naming scheme, the powerful file name filter system in FirstPROOF can be used to define a different file naming scheme that will be used to group LEN files into a correct Job hierarchy.

The creation of LEN file name filters can be done manually or by using the Assistant/Wizard (recommended) and these two options are covered in separate sections of this guide.

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Defining TIFF File Name Filters

Although TIFF files do contain the ability to store job names, job numbers, page numbers and so on, using baseline tags, many applications do not store this info in the TIFF file. An application such as a RIP which processes multiple jobs containing multiple pages, containing multiple separations also has to solve the issue of uniquely naming the TIFF files produced. The way most applications solve this is to use the job name, job number, page numbers and so on as part of the name that it gives to the TIFF file. Unfortunately as previously mentioned, there is no standard for this, and different applications use different methods.

For example one application might output TIFF files as follows:

01Firstjob01c.tif

01Firstjob01m.tif

01Firstjob01y.tif

01Firstjob01k.tif

01Firstjob02c.tif

...

01Firstjob02k.tif

...

01Firstjob15k.tif

02Secondjob01c.tif

...

02Secondjob01k.tif

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In this case, the first two digits represent the Job Number, the following text the Job Name, the following number the Page Number, and the following character (an abbreviation of) the Color Name (Cyan - c, Magenta - m, Yellow - y and Black - k). This means that 01Firstjob01c.tif translates to;

- Job Number – 01
- Job Name – Firstjob
- Page Number – 01
- Color – Cyan

The File Name Filter mechanism has, due to this naming problem, been designed as a flexible method of extracting the relevant information from the given TIFF file names. Depending on the source providing the TIFF files, a new filter can be created (or an existing one reused) that can parse the file name and extract the expected/required info.

The Filter String specified in the Define Filter dialog allows one to enter a string which contains either Literal Text (which is matched against the text in the file name), or Special Characters (which provide extended matching capabilities), or Special Modifiers (which provide information extraction capabilities).

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Adding a new file name filter

To Add a TIFF File Name Filter;

- Select the ***Filter Manager*** from the file menus or the ***Configure TIFF Input*** screen.

- Click the ***Add*** button.

- Enter a name in the ***Filter Name*** edit box that will allow you to identify the filter string.
- Enter a filter string in the Filter String edit box.
- Click ***OK*** to save the new filter and return to the ***Filter Manager*** screen

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Editing a file name filter

To Edit a TIFF File Name Filter;

- Select the ***Filter Manager*** from the file menus or the ***Configure TIFF Input*** screen.

- Select the filter that you wish to edit from the ***Filter List***.
- Click the ***Edit*** button.

- Edit the ***Filter Name*** or ***Filter String***.
- Click OK to save the new filter and return to the ***Filter Manager*** screen

Deleting a file name filter

To Delete a TIFF File Name Filter;

- Select the ***Filter Manager*** from the file menus or the ***Configure TIFF Input*** screen.

- Select the filter/s that you wish to delete from the ***Filter List***.
- Click the ***Delete*** button.

Defining LEN File Name Filters

The procedure for defining a LEN File Name Filter is exactly the same as that for defining a TIFF File Name Filter, except that the suffix of “tif[f]” in the Filter String is replaced by “len”.

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File Name Filter String Format

Literal Text

This is straight forward text which must match part of the file name; all upper case characters in both the Filter String and File Name are converted to lower case when comparing for a match. For example, if all TIFF file names end in ".tif" then this literal string would be visible at the end of the Filter String. eg "*.tif" (the "*" character will be explained later on).

Note that in this case a TIFF file ending with ".tiff" would not be matched.

Special Characters

These are single character commands that provide extended matching capabilities. There are four such commands "*", "?", "\" and "[]" (ok the last one is two characters).

a) "*" - This matches any number of characters in the file name.

b) "?" - This matches any single character in the file name.

c) "\" - This 'escapes' the next single character in the file name, treating it literally; this is required, for example, if a file name really does include a "*".

d) "[]" - This encompasses an optional section - that is all the characters contained between the starting "[" and the finishing "]" may exist in the file name, but do not have to. The most common use of this is in specifying the end of a TIFF file name, which may be either ".tif" or ".tiff".

Note that Special Modifiers (see next section) may be contained within an optional section.

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Special Modifiers

These are always prefixed with a "%" character. There are eight of these:

a) "%j" - This is used to extract the following text and use it as the Job Name.

b) "%c" - This is used to extract the following text and use it as the Color Name.

c) "%s" - This is used to extract the following text and use it as the Page Side Name.

d) “%t” - This is used to extract the following text which is then discarded.

e) "%n" - This is used to extract the following integer and use it as the Job Number.

f) "%p" - This is used to extract the following integer and use it as the Page Number.

g) "%r" - This is used to extract the following integer and use it as the Job Resolution.

h) "%i" - This is used to extract the following integer which is then discarded.

The number of characters making up either a string or integer can be specified using an optional integer between the "%" character and the modifier character. For example if the Color Name were specified as a single character, one would use "%1c" to match this and extract the color name. Note that in this case, for the color name to be used in FirstPROOF, it must exist in the Color Manager, either as the Name of a color, or as an Alias of a color.

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Consider the example sequence given above, starting with 01Firstjob01c.tif. In this case the job number can be extracted using "%n" (or "%2n"), the job name using "%j", the page number using "%p" (or "%2p") and the color name using "%c" (or "%1c"). A Filter String for this could therefore be written as "%n%j%p%c.tif" or even better still as "%2n%j%2p%1c.tif[f]".

Special Modifier Length Restrictions

As well as stating the precise number of characters to make up a field, a minimum and maximum number of characters can also be set. This is done by using a "-" sign before/after the minimum/maximum. For example, "%2-c" means 2 characters or more, "%-2c" means two characters at most, and "%2-4c" means between 2 and 4 characters.

Special Modifier Character Restrictions

The Special Modifiers that represent strings (%j - Job Name, %c - Color Name, %s - Page Side, etc…) can be further restricted so that they only apply to certain characters. This is achieved by putting those characters inside braces immediately before the special modifier ("j", "c", "s", etc…). A range of characters can be specified by using a "-" between the two. For example "%{1234567890a-zA-Z}c", permits only all the digits as well as lower and upper characters.

A good example of where this may be useful is if the incoming files are scans where the color is represented by a single letter "c", "m", "y" or "k". The color can be precisely matched by using "%1c", but can further be restricted by using "%1{cmyk}c".

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This would be most useful if the scanned files were also mixed with general jobs, whereby the scanned files would then be detected by using a filter such as "%j[%1{cmyk}c]". That is the file names are the job names, with any scans having a single letter ('c', 'm', 'y' or 'k') at the end.

The restricted character set can also be 'inverted' so as to exclude characters, by putting a "~" before the braces.

A good example of this is where a file name consists of a job name followed by a color name, where the color name is known not to include a space. The job name and color name would then be correctly extracted by using a filter such as "%j %~{ }c". If this is not done, then it is not always obvious which part of the file name is the job name, and which part of the file name is the color name.

Consider a file name "Printing Unit Black". A simple filter for this would be "%j %c" which means the job name followed by a space, followed by the color name. However, which part of this is the job name and which part is the color name? Is the job name "Printing" and the color name "Unit Black", or, the job name "Printing Unit" and the color name "Black". If one restricts the color name to not include a space, that is to use the filter "%j %~{ }c" then the color name has to be "Black", and so the job name has to be "Printing Unit".

Special Modifier Content Restrictions

The Special Modifiers that represent strings (%j - Job Name, %c - Color Name, %s - Page Side, etc…) can be further restricted so that their contents match certain criteria. This includes where part of one modifier contains another. This is achieved by putting the content restriction inside double-quotes immediately after the special modifier ("j", "c", "s", etc…). The contents that must match can be any sequence of characters, including additional special characters or special modifiers. For example “%j=”job_%n””, specifies that the job name consists of “job_12345” where

the “12345” is also the job number. As another example, “[%s=”Back”]”, specifies that the Page Side (%s) is optional, but when it is present must be “Back”.

This allows for very powerful job information extraction.

Note that both the minimum/maximum length restrictions and the special modifier restrictions are not supported by the Filter Assistant/Wizard. However, if the Assistant/Wizard is used to create all the fields, any restrictions can be subsequently added.

Special Prefix

The start of a filter can also start with “..”. In this case the file name that is used in the matching process is prefixed with the folder in which it resides. For example, a file called “job.tif” in a folder “123” would normally be processed as “job.tif”. However, if the filter started with “..” then it would be processed as “123\job.tif” (PC) or “123:job.tif” (Mac).

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Defining Filters using the Assistant/Wizard

FirstPROOF also includes a Filter Assistant/Wizard which has been included as an easy method for creating filter strings. The Assistant/Wizard option is the recommended method for creating filter strings.

The Filter Assistant/Wizard can be accessed by clicking the ***Assistant/Wizard*** button from the ***Define Filter*** screen.

- The Assistant/Wizard will open with a welcome screen. To continue click the ***Next*** button.

- The next step will be to type in or select a file name to use as a reference. Once you have selected the name or typed in the name, click the ***Next*** button.

- The next steps will be to select the individual components of the file name and assign a description to them. In the example above the file name is made up as follows:
    - 2354 = Job Number
    - JOBTEST = Job Name
    - 1 = Page number
    - cyan = Colour (In this case cyan)

- First you will select “2354” from the ***File Name*** edit box and because we know that this is the Job Number, you will select ***Job Number*** from the ***Description*** list.
- We also know that in this case job numbers are always 4 characters so you will choose ***Fixed*** from the ***Length*** drop down box. If the job number is variable choose ***Variable*** length.[1]
- To move onto the next field, click the ***Next*** button.

- The field that was selected as Job Number on the previous dialog has been marked in ***Red*** in the File Name edit box and the string in the Components box has been amended to show “2354” as %4n (Job Number – Fixed Length 4 characters)

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[1] Some file naming schemes may have optional components like job number or page number that may appear in some files and not others. If this is the case mark the selected field as optional.

- Next we will highlight “JOBTEST” from the ***File Name*** edit box and because we know that this is the Job Name you will select ***Job Name*** from the ***Description*** list.
- Again you will need to indicate if this is ***Variable*** or ***Fixed*** length. For Job Name ***Variable*** length would most likely apply.

- To move onto the next field click the ***Next*** button.

- The field that was selected as Job Name on the previous dialog has been marked in ***Orange*** in the File Name edit box and the string in the Components box has been

amended to show “JOBTEST” as %j (Job Name – Variable Length)

- Next we will highlight “1” from the ***File Name*** edit box and because we know that this is the Page Number you will select ***Page Number*** from the ***Description*** list.
- Again you will need to indicate if this is ***Variable*** or ***Fixed*** length. As Page Numbers may be any number of digits, ***Variable*** length may be the best option here.

- To move onto the next field click the ***Next*** button.

- The field that was selected as Page Number on the previous dialog has been marked in ***Red*** in the File Name edit box and the string in the Components box has been amended to show “1” as %p (Page Number – Variable Length)
- Next we will highlight “cyan” from the ***File Name*** edit box and because we know that this is the Page Color you will select ***Page Color*** from the ***Description*** list.
- Again you will need to indicate if this is ***Variable*** or ***Fixed*** length. For Color names, unless indicated by a single character e.g. C = Cyan, M = Magenta, etc…, select ***Variable*** length.

- To move onto the next field click the ***Next*** button

- The field that was selected as Color on the previous dialog has been marked in ***Orange*** in the File Name edit box and the string in the Components box has been amended to show “Cyan” as %c (Color – Variable Length)
- As there are no more components left in the file name you can now click the ***Finish*** button to save and use the filter string that has been created.

- The last step is to give the new filter a unique name and then click the ***Finish*** button.
- So now you have completed a new filter using the Assistant/Wizard.

Although the above example used a TIFF file name, exactly the same procedure should be followed for a LEN file name (except the file name entered or selected will end in “len” as opposed to “tif[f]”).

In addition to the fields that we used in the example above the Assistant/Wizard also caters for;

- Page Side – Normally defined as A, B, Front or Back
- Integers – Integers are used to 'skip' over numbers. For example if you always add a 'revision' number to a TIFF file name, the revision number is not essential to the job name (so there is no special modifier such as with page number for example). One should use a %i to skip over the revision number (this is better than using a * since %i will only skip over a number, where * will skip over any characters).
- String – Some TIFF filenames have a string of characters that are common to all file names such as “.pdf”, or a company name, etc... This field lets you define what these strings are so that they do not interfere with the other components in the TIFF file name.

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