

CREWsystem

Capture/Render Enabling Workflow

“Let CREW enhance *your* digital workflow!”

The CREW system is a completely new generation of workflow controlling software for the Sierra line of digital products. More importantly, this system sets a solid foundation for integrating a diverse range of products into the digital workflow.

The initial release of this system (Dec. 2000) was intended to be a direct replacement for the existing “Job Controller” and “Toolpak” programs that are currently being used for Netprinter and Miléca products. CREW will provide backward-compatibility with the “command file” based communication protocols for the existing Job Controller system to ease the transition to the new system. Although the functionality provided in the first release is very similar to the software that it is replacing, it is important to note that it is an entirely new code base. This system is built on a much more flexible, scalable, and robust design, and adds several significant image-processing features such as rotation, resampling, sharpening and center cropping.

The CREW System replaces Job Controller as the standard operating software for all Netprinter (812 and Digital Station) and Miléca printers.

CREW is a modular workflow system that provides communications via the standard XML (eXtensible Markup Language) language. Each module in the system is designed to address one or more aspects of the digital workflow in any number of lab types. There are several core modules that are common to any CREW installation, and many optional modules that can be added to address each customer’s specific needs. CREW also provides methods for 3rd party systems to submit images into the workflow.

The December 2002 release of the CREW System (v. 1.10) consists of the following components:

- **“CREW Task Server”**
 - Replaces “Job Controller” 2.5 software directly
 - Provides a central scheduling system for image processing
 - Interfaces to external modules to assign image processing tasks
 - Provides active 2-way communication between client modules and work modules for status and configuration
 - Legacy “command file” FPCL communications are accepted through the CREW Hotfolder Client for backward compatibility

- **“CREW Render”**
 - Provides image processing and manipulation capabilities to the CREW System
 - Features include rotation, resizing, sharpening, cropping, and more
 - Fully scalable architecture: can be run on the same computer as the Task Server or on multiple separate computers for increased throughput
 - Automatic priority-based distribution of image processing tasks between all available Render modules

- Completely autonomous software: runs as a Windows NT/2000 “service” that starts automatically. Requires no user intervention for normal operation.
- One copy is provided with the Task Server module, additional copies may be purchased to increase the throughput of the system

- **“CREW Task Generator”**
 - Used for submitting individual images and image batches to the CREW Task Server for processing and printing
 - Allows selection of basic image processing options, including:
 - Sizing control and image resampling
 - Image rotation in 90 degree increments
 - Center cropping
 - Page placement and margin size control
 - Printing multiple copies
 - Job status monitoring

- **“CREW Hotfolder Client” software**
 - Provides backwards-compatibility with software that submits images to the older Job Controller 2.X software. Command files generated by these types of applications can be saved into the “Hotfolder”, and they will automatically be processed and submitted to the CREW Task Server for printing.
 - Allows 3rd party applications that use Job Controller 2.X style commands to easily print using the new CREW System.

Software Compatibility

CREW is designed to be backwards compatible with applications that use the Job Controller 2.X “Hotfolder” system to submit jobs to be printed. 3rd party applications that use this communication method should be compatible with the CREW System, however Thomas Electronics has not certified any such programs at this time.

The current list of compatible software is as follows. Software that is not on this list may or may not fully function with CREW. We cannot provide support for any problems encountered when using non-certified software.

- Repri /Ellegro version 4.2 and higher¹
- Timestone Neopack+ version 1.2, NeoGroup version 1.1 and NeoComposite version 1.0
- Pixel Photographics Composer, Product Designer, and Data Match versions 3.1, and Easy Pack and Student View versions 1.0

Additional programs can interface to the CREW System through the Graphx RasterPlus “Network Printer” interface, by simply using the “File → Print” command and RasterPlus driver. Although most applications that can print to a network printer can use this interface, Thomas Electronics cannot provide technical support for applications that we have not tested and verified.

Please refer to the “Recommended Configurations” list from Thomas Electronics for a complete and current listing of approved software systems.

¹ Images cannot be submitted through Repri/Ellegro and the Task Server at the same time, as this may cause communications problems or image interleaving.