

Network Printing

With

NextPDF v3.2

Well Develop International Ltd

Version 1.1

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1. Introduction

NextPDF is a Print-to-PDF print capture solution that enables any application to print-convert their output to PDF format. Before the version 3.2, users are required to install the NextPDF in their PC(s) as a virtual printer. In an interactive mode, when NextPDF is being selected as the output printer, print output from the initiating application will be captured, a dialog (See Fig. 1) will pop up to prompt the user to specify the additional parameter, such as PDF User Password, Security Options, Watermarking ... etc and then the captured output will be converted to PDF and saved at the target destination specified by the user.



Fig. 1 NextPDF Conversion Dialog

In NextPDF v3.1, we have introduced the "Silent Mode" mechanism. In "Silent Mode", no dialog will be popped up to prompt users for additional information. Instead, a set of pre-determined parameters are used to generate the PDF output. A user interface is provided to configure these default settings (Fig. 2). No user intervention is required. The "Silent Mode" mechanism was designed to facilitate 3rd-party application developers to leverage NextPDF to create solutions for their clients. For example, a developer of billing system can leverage NextPDF to convert all billing statements to PDF formats by simply print the statements to the NextPDF printer and then email the statements in PDF format to end users. The PDF format converted therefore can be standardized, such as paper size in A4, with company headers, etc.

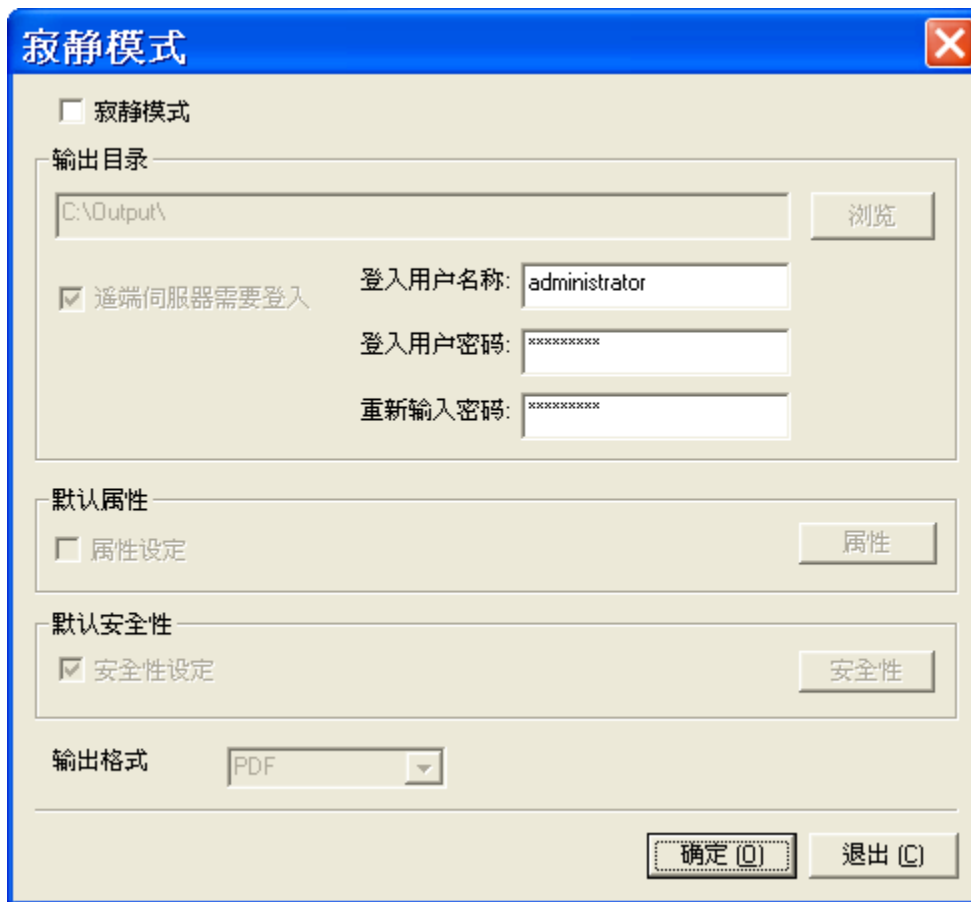


Fig. 2 Silent Mode Configuration

2. Network Printing

NextPDF v3.2 is taking the above approach further to support Network Printing. In Network Printing, NextPDF will be installed in a server (see Fig. 3) and the NextPDF will be configured as a share printer. The remote clients in the network with the appropriate access right can add this shared NextPDF printer (Fig. 4) to their "Printers and Faxes" settings.



Fig. 3 NextPDF Shared in Server



Fig. 4 NextPDF in Client PC

Advantages of Network Printing are:

1. Only one copy of NextPDF printer will have to be installed in the server instead of one copy per client PC.
2. Any update to the NextPDF will only have to be applied once in the server and thus saving a lot of administrative work.
3. Conversion to PDF settings can be standardized across the corporation because only a copy of the default setting is stored in the Server that has the NextPDF installed.
4. Network Printing in NextPDF v3.2 leverages the remote printing and spooling mechanism already exists in Windows environment. Print queue management is through the standard and very reliable printing mechanism already built-in in Windows.

2.1 Configuration Requirement for Network Printing to Local Directory

In order to support Network Printer, the remote server, say "\\Print-server", have to implement the following configuration:

1. Install NextPDF v3.2 in the "\\Print-server".
2. Configure NextPDF as a shared printer and set NextPDF as the default printer in "\\Print-server" (Fig. 3).
3. Enable the "Silent Mode" in NextPDF in "\\Print-server". (Fig. 2). Configure the output parameters under "Silent Mode", such as the default output directory, security options, etc.
4. Configure the NextPDF printer to "run as service". This is done by highlighting the NextPDF printer under "Printers and Faxes" group. Right click to bring up the menu and select "Properties". In the Properties dialog box, select "Port" (Fig 5) and then select "Configure Port" (Fig 6). Make sure the "Run as User" checkbox is unchecked. :

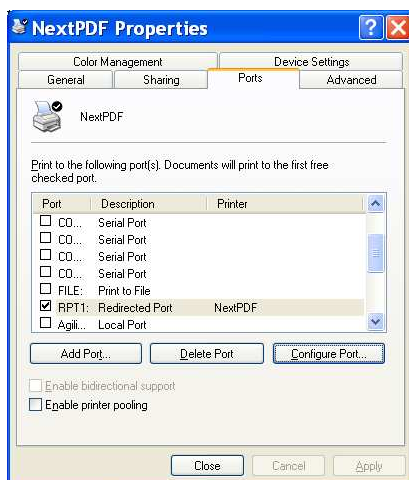


Fig. 5 Properties Settings

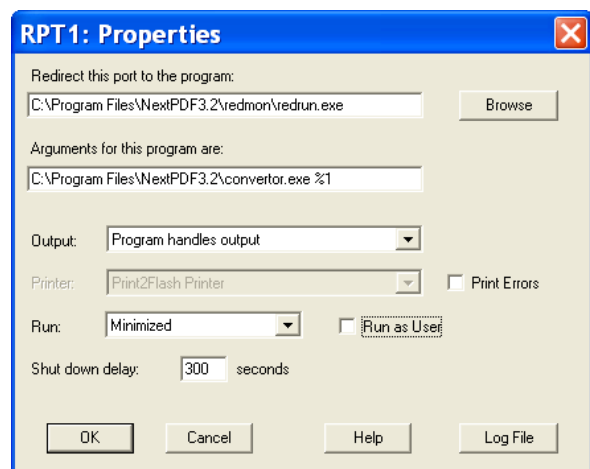


Fig 6. Port Settings

5. In the default output directory, say "C:\Output\" configure shared folder for each user entitled to use the shared NextPDF. For example, two users, say with Windows logon usernames as Mary and John, will share this folder, then create folder "C:\Output\mary" and configure this folder to be read access to user Mary. Create folder "C:\Output\john" and configure this folder to be read access to user John.
6. If you are using Windows Server 2003 or 2008, you have to create a directory NextPDF under the "default user" account. The path is something like "C:\Documents and Settings\Default User\NextPDF". Make sure this directory is enabled with Read/Write access to everyone. The default log file "freepdf.log" will be created in this directory.

If you are using Windows XP, the default log file "freepdf.log" will be create under the "local service" account, which is something like "C:\Documents and Settings\LocalService\freepdf.log"

In order to use the shared NextPDF printer, each user (Mary or John) in the network should:

1. In Control Panel, "Printer and Faxes" tab, add the remote NextPDF printer shared from remote server (Fig. 4). You will be prompted to enter your username and password to logon the remote server. The shared printer name will be something like "\\Print-server\NextPDF". Note that you subsequent output PDF files will be saved under your provided logon username.
2. Use the shared NextPDF as if any other shared real printer. However, the user has to aware that his/her output will be redirected to a share folder designated by the server. In Mary's case, it could be "[\\Print-server\output\mary](#)". In John's care, it could be "[\\Print-server\output\john](#)". This is up to the server administrator to configure.
3. Print jobs forwarded to remote NextPDF printer will be spooled for conversion, same as if the user is printing to a busy network HP printer. When the job is done, his/her converted document should be placed under his/her designated folder using the same original filename but with file extension replaced by ".pdf".

2.2 Configuration Requirement for Network Printing to Network Share

You can have the networked NextPDF installed in one server, say "\\Print-server", while the destination output directory being resided in a different server, e.g. "[\\Doc-server\PDF-doc](#)". Network share in Windows Home/Professional and Windows Server are having different security policies. The latter usually will have more strict security policy such as [username@domain](#), password are required for authentication.

If your output directory is a network share on a Windows server, you should configure the appropriate username and password pair in Fig 2 dialog to enable proper authentication.

Note: the way NextPDF works in remote printing is different from a normal program. In fact, it is a service invoked through by the remote client. You may be logon to your server to do all the testing

but your logon session and the local service session to be invoked by remote printing from remote clients are TWO different sessions

- 1) You logon session can access any servers authenticated by your domain server without additional logon required but the local service session will need another authentication. Therefore, you have to provide username and password in Silent Mode configuration.
- 2) The mapped drive in your logon session are not visible to any newly created local service session. This session for example, the remote client to a different network share. Because of this configuration, support for mapped drive is not implemented in Network Printing as you can always specify a network share as the destination directory.

2.3 Testing of Your Setup

You can follow the following procedure to test the setup of your network NextPDF.

1. Select to disable the "Silent Mode" and then submit a print job from a remote client to network NextPDF print. You should see a dialog (Fig. 1) pop-up, the default path will depend on your running platform. Try to print the same output to see if it is successful.

In case you failed to see the dialog (Fig. 1), double check if you have enabled "run as user" in Port Settings (Fig. 6).

In case the default output path name is not your submitted filename with a ".pdf" extension concatenated, please check if the freepdf.log file exists and the "NextPDF" directory in your server side has Read/Write access enabled or not.

2. Enable "Silent Mode", select the output directory as a local directory in your server. Try to print something from your remote client.

In case you failed to find your output PDF file, please check if the freepdf.log file exists and the "NextPDF" directory in your server side has Read/Write access enabled or not.

3. Enable "Silent Mode", select the output directory as a Network Share in your server. Try to print something from your remote client.

In case you failed to find your Network Share, please make sure the username and password specified in Fig. 2 is correct.

3. Batch Conversion

NextPDF v3.2 supports "Batch Conversion" to PDF. The Batch Conversion mechanism is built on top of the existing Silent Mode mechanism. End user is required to install NextPDF Form Filler. NextPDF Form Filler has been extended to support batch conversion. To batch convert a folder, in NextPDF Form Filler, select menu "File" → "Batch Convert to PDF" (Fig. 7).

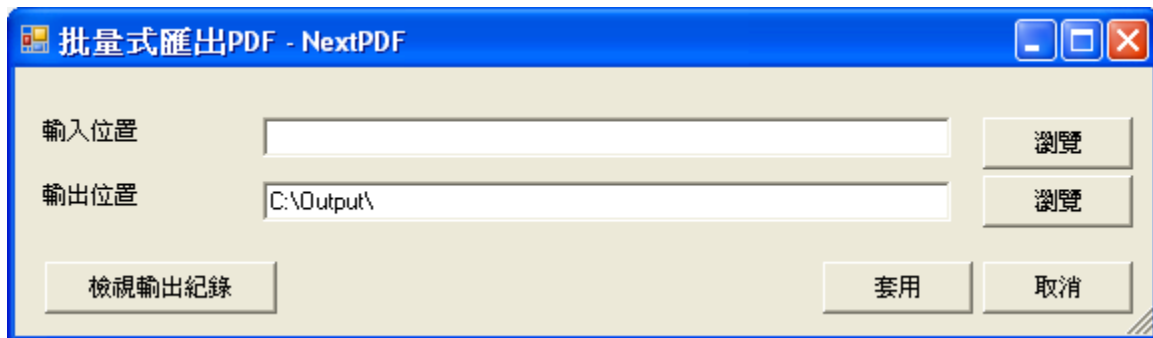


Fig. 7 Batch Conversion Dialog in NextPDF Form Filler

When the "Batch Convert to PDF" dialog is first launched, it will detect if the current default printer is NextPDF. If the default print is a local NextPDF printer, user will be allowed to select the input folder and the output folder.

If the default printer is a network NextPDF printer, user will be allowed only to select the input folder. The output folder will be the "Default Directory" setting in the "Silent Mode" setting of the remote NextPDF printer.

Users can also trace the conversion status by clicking the button of "View Log File" after the conversion.

Batch Conversion has the following limitations:

1. Only one folder can be submitted for process at a time, but sub-folders can also be handled.
2. The default printer must be a local NextPDF printer or a remote network NextPDF printer.
3. After submission, NextPDF Form Filler will scan the source folder for any available documents for print-convert to PDF.
4. In order to be able to process a document type, the appropriate application capable of interpreting that document type must be available in the PC running NextPDF Form Filler. For example, in order to convert Word document (.doc) to PDF, you must have Microsoft Word or NextOffice installed in the client PC. In order to convert Word XML document (.docx) to PDF, you must have Microsoft Word 2007 or NextOffice 9.3 installed in the client PC.

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