

JDF praxis report: ixJED in test departments



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Agfa is using ixJED starting from its first appearance. Agfa has a large test library with samples from different vendors and we need to reverify them with each of our software releases. ixJED is used mainly for its ability to work transparently with JDF mime files and its very fast schema validation. The ability to send/receive JMF messages and to log these was very handy during our initial JMF testing and **ixJED is our JDF/JMF "Swiss Army Knife"**.

When Agfa started with full integrations with MIS and Press Control systems, there was need to simulate these environments in a predictable matter to ensure that our software covered all possible cases. We obtained samples at several customer sites, considered the ICS document and CIP4 samples and defined test sequences based on these. **We considered several options: open source, develop our own software or use commercial software and finally settled on the scripting environment that ixJED could provide.**

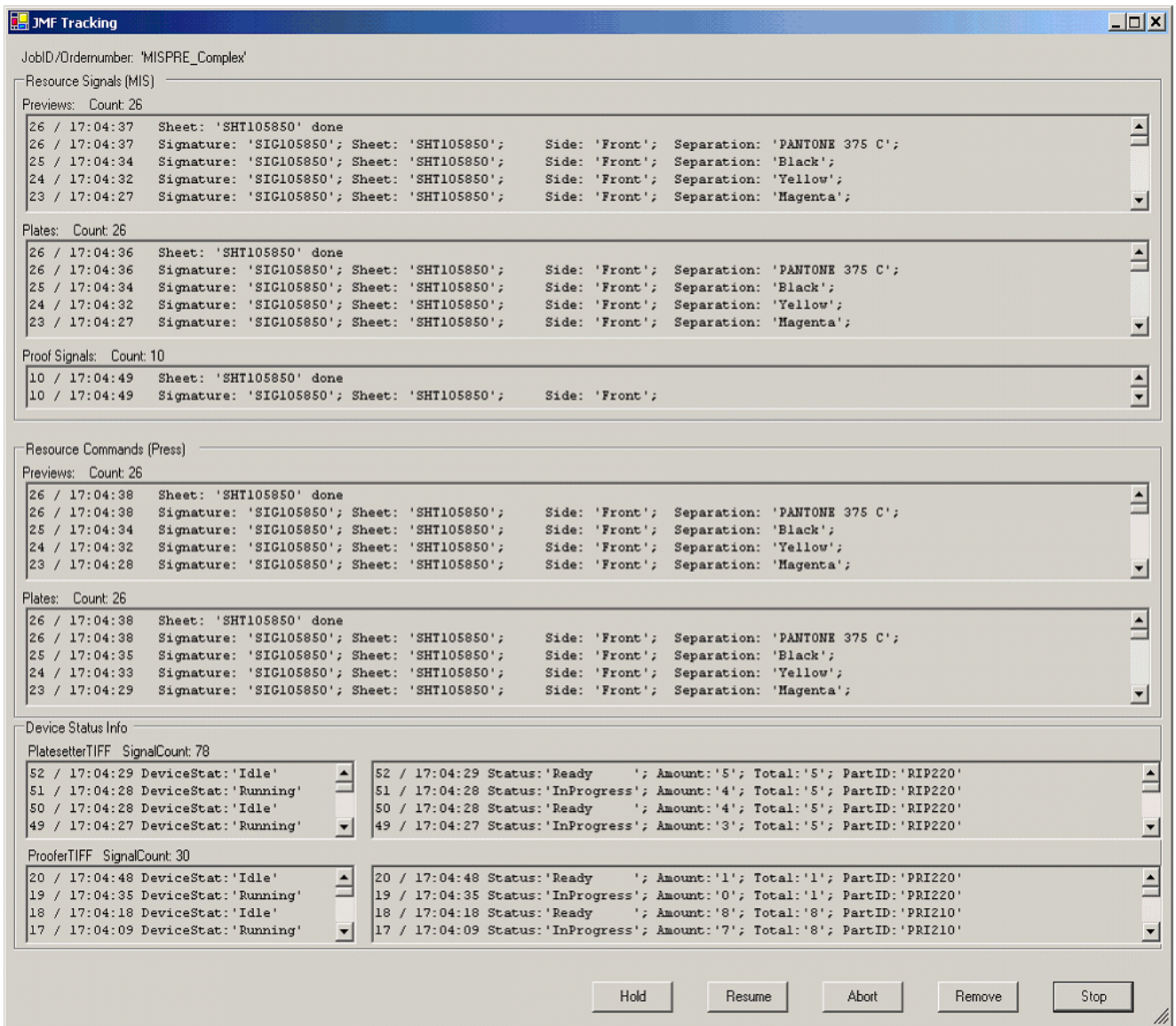
ixact provided us with full support during the beta cycles in a timely matter and a lot of our 'real life' enhancement request were honored. Since the scripting environment was layered on top of .NET, it was often possible to use .NET calls directly as a work-around if some commands were not implemented yet in the scripting environment. This again resulted in a quick script development cycle.

The simulation environment was then working fine but its use in our test department was still a bit limited because it was not so easy to define parameters or interpret the logs.

ixact added a GUI that allowed us to make the environment accessible to all our testers.

Test - scripts that are in use today are:

- **Submit & Check:** takes any MIS job, apply some fixes (URLs, dates) and submits it to our ApogeeX prepress workflow system. A simulation environment with a simple MIS and Press Control system is created. The JMF messages send by ApogeeX to MIS and Press Controller are stored and at the end of the job, a check is done if proper messages were returned for all the plates and previews defined in the MIS job. **Since this is a fully automated test, we can run it daily when we rebuild our software completely each night to track problems very early.**
- **Submit & Track:** a bit similar but tracks the messages 'life' in a UI and logs the most important values. This is used when testing new jobs or new functionality in the code + screenshot.
- **Examine JDF:** analyses the elements/attributes for our complete JDF test suite and creates an Excel spreadsheet that lists the most important attributes for each file and also validates it against required attributes. This is used also as an extra validation after running CIP4 CheckJDF on new samples.
- **DeviceInfo:** sends a KnownDevices messages and generates a readable report with the capabilities of each connected device.



ixJED GUI: JMF tracking

Building the scripts was not so difficult since ixJED has an excellent help function and a collection of tutorial and sample files. It uses a standard language for scripting: LUA and a standard library: .NET for XML functionality, http communication and GUI, so extra help and samples were nearby.

We were pleased to work with the folks of ixact because of the quick reaction to our bugs logged or enhancement requests.

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