



Software for Variable Data Publishing
Fast Flexible Functional

PSL Page Builder Pro -- Software for Variable Data Publishing

Three adjectives describe what separates PSL Page Builder from competing VDP solutions -

Fast, Functional and, Flexible

Fast: Fast merge speed – Fast composition – Fast, “lights out” workflow automation

PSL is not a plug into static graphics products such as InDesign™ which limit merge speeds to 300 pages per minute or less. Rather it receives images from such products for users to use with a quite robust array of composition tools designed for VDP. The entire merge data file is normally brought into memory – resulting in the impressive merge speeds.

Since PSL Page Builder can run on as many cores as are available, including among multiple computers, merge speed is completely scalable. With a single core processor, and simple projects, merge speeds exceeding 60,000 pages per minute can be seen. Using three cores in an Intel i7™ chip merge speeds of 180,000 pages per minute and more can be seen.

On the low end, on the 32 bit Page Builder (Lite) system such a project runs at 60,000 pages a minute.

Addressing merge speed for transactional work on Page Builder Pro, such as the Visa application included as an Example in PSL, we see, when running on six processors;

16,320 customer statements a minute, producing,

26,160 pages a minute, involving,

490,440 transactions.

An example perhaps more common would be the 4-Up postcard, with nine data driven versions, duplexed. That runs at;

84,500 records, or duplexed postcards per minute, printed four up.

Being a 64 bit application (32 bit is available) there are simply no realistic limits on file sizes, number of variables, number of images involved and the like. PSL users commonly produce



*Software for Variable Data Publishing
Fast Flexible Functional*

projects involving hundreds of thousands and even millions of pages. Certainly many PSL users produce millions of pages per day.

Using PSL's Automation Tool, Robbie the Robot, production of a single job could be spread among multiple computers resulting in merge speeds in the millions per minute.

The PSL GUI has been rated the easiest to learn and use by experts. Truly complex projects can be set up quickly given the wide array of drag & drop composition tools available.

PSL Page Builder provides specialized composition tools for particular functions;

Images,

Formatted Text – Word™ like (but better),

Scaled Text for special effects like shading,

Both text boxes include, scaling and wrapping, and all dimensions, including font size, bolding, slant and underline, super and subscript can be set to 0.001 units.

Address Box – obeys USPS rules, IMB correctly placed,

BarCodes, and finally,

Custom Boxes for all manner of interesting functionality, such as 3-D bar and pie charts, e-mails, tables (for statements) -- to be discussed elsewhere.

Jet Letter looks at composition as another area where automation can be applied. For example consider an N-Up project, such as postcards for three different customers, based on roughly the same data format – including a field for the product (or customer) involved and another for the income of the recipient. The PSL user would compose three “fronts” depending on the product, and then compose nine “backs” based on three products and three levels of income. Once the composition is done the user checks the “N-Up” box and the “Layout” box and, using the default stock size (13”x 19”) PSL automatically fits as many cards onto the stock as possible, using the default gutters and margins. Users may of course change the default parameters if necessary. The user then indicates which “front” image gets printed for each record based on a merge value and which “back” image gets printed based on a “condition” involving the two variables produced much like the “Calculator” in Windows™.



*Software for Variable Data Publishing
Fast Flexible Functional*

The only other selection to be made is batch size, if necessary -- then press the run button. Fronts and backs are printed correctly placed and in “cut and stack” order. Furthermore, should the user make a mistake (never happens), such as getting the gutter wrong so that the images overlap when printed – PSL simply will not honor a request to print.

And if the tools above prove inadequate the user can always drop into programming mode using the PSL language – the only modern dedicated VDP programming language in existence – to complete any project.

The reader might ask; “Why is composition being discussed in the section called ‘Fast’?” The answer is simple. PSL Page Builder’s composition tools result in a quicker set-up and more projects out the door on a given day. They contribute to profitability in several ways – including speed of composition.

Composition Automation is a companion to Workflow Automation discussed elsewhere.

Functional: PSL Page Builder began life as a programming language for VDP – called PSL. It’s a professional grade, compiled programming language developed specifically for variable data publishing. It provides functionality for the most precise typesetting and word processing functions as well as robust systems work. For five years it was Jet Letter’s only product. That language now comprises over 1,000 functions. A few users still primarily use that language as it provides the ultimate VDP functionality. Never, not once, has a user (or prospect) presented a project that PSL could not handle (think of complex phone company billing).

In 2010 Jet Letter introduced it’s drag and drop GUI; the PSL Page Builder suite. While the base GUI continues to evolve, some other components; Custom Boxes, Value Functions and Value Statements have facilitated a goal held since Jet Letter started producing a GUI – to make it not necessary to use the wonderful robust PSL programming language. Functionality often requiring PostScript or JavaScript programming in competing products are built into the PSL Page Builder GUI. Both Value Functions and Custom Boxes are in fact containers for the PSL programming language that can be used in the GUI. Value Functions can be treated like data – dragged and dropped into text, used like data to fill in a property box, and the like. There is really no limit to what can be done with them – the only limit is what we have done so far – 12 Libraries, over one hundred fifty functions such as time and date formatted as you wish, string functions, logic functions, typesetting based on data, paragraph libraries, “handwritten” underlining, and so forth.



*Software for Variable Data Publishing
Fast Flexible Functional*

Custom Boxes are much like the five standard drag and drop composition tools. Placed on a page the user sees a drop down dialog box allowing her to fill in the properties. They are part of the GUI. There are 14 libraries of them comprising about 50 functions – at the moment. These provide composition tools felt useful such as bar and pie charts (done very well), all manner of shapes, layout tools such as “step and repeat”, e-mailing, and file making and table making tools.

Logical Functions are in a small library and permit functionality like allowing definition of one “Page2” for overflow of tables or text and having that page repeated until the text or tabular material has all been printed.

One custom box facilitates the automation of products like statements from credit card companies or medical groups where bills from various departments, each with their own data and format, are presented on one statement presented to the customer. Dealing with the white space management required is a daunting task. One does not want to start a section with a header and two lines at the bottom of a page with the rest on the next page. Normally some sophisticated programming is required – particularly considering all the variability often presented. Not so for PSL Page Builder. It performs such tasks **automatically**. No programming required!

Automation Tools -- Robbie the Robot. The top of the line in PSL Page Builder’s arsenal of functionality is the Automation Tool known as Robbie the Robot. It is designed to facilitate “Lights Out” workflow automation. Someone, such as a customer, places a zipped file such as a data file into a designated hot folder and Robbie springs into action executing a script of instructions which may include; running a PSL program (of course), running “other” PSL programs, executing DOS or PowerShell commands, and changing Job Options. Since “other programs” such as sortation, “C” programs, Java Programs, etc. may be called from DOS, PowerShell or from PSL then all manner of flexibility can be achieved.

The “Bottom Line” regarding PSL functionality is that one firm recently won a very hotly competed piece of business due to PSL’s ability to perform a function competing firms could not deliver.



*Software for Variable Data Publishing
Fast Flexible Functional*

Flexible: Flexible performance – Flexible workflows – Flexible acquisition

PSL users have NEVER found a project too complex for PSL to handle. PSL Page Builder is suitable for any project – from basic promotional and marketing work to complex financial projects.

Types of users – the pure, non-technical GUI user, programmers, people supporting work flow architecture and automation pros. Some people use nothing but the GUI while a (much) smaller group does nothing but programming. A “mix and match” of GUI use and programming is often used and recommended.

Types of companies supported. The PSL Page Builder product family is geared specifically toward direct mail applications. Users currently range from firms doing perhaps a few million pages a year to those doing several millions a day. Customers range from community utility companies, charities, in-plant printing and mailing departments through mid-sized direct mail firms to firms printing and mailing millions of pages a day. Often pages printed and mailed are presented in multi-media or as online bill presentment for payment.

Being based on a modern compiled programming language (PSL itself) the very useful tools known as Custom Boxes and Value Functions, which become available in the GUI, can handily be constructed (programmed) by Jet Letter, by the user if so inclined, or by a consultancy. Consequently a very complex function can be reduced to a drag and drop “box” presenting field names awaiting addition of field values,

Lastly the method of delivery, licensing and pricing are quite flexible. PSL can run on PCs or on a server, it’s licensed based on a computer and a log-in name. The number of simultaneous users is known as “x” and the number of computers on which it may be installed is “y”. At the moment “y” is (largely) unlimited. PSL has three levels Regular, Plus and Pro. Prices range from \$2,500 through \$12,500 for the first seat license with deep discounts after that. PSL can be sold on a monthly subscription basis as well -- or even on a per click basis.

PSL can be sold as a “site license” and in the larger firms dozens of seats are installed.