



Fiery® Print Controller

Variable Data Printing



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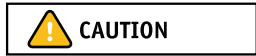

INTRODUCTION

This document provides information about variable data printing (VDP) and describes the variable data printing features that may be supported by the Fiery print controller.

NOTE: For additional information about variable data features, see [Printing](#).

Terminology and conventions

This document uses the following terminology and conventions.

Term or convention	Refers to
Copier	Copier or printer
Titles in <i>italics</i>	Other documents in this set
	Topics for which additional information is available by starting Help in the software
	Tips and information
	A warning concerning operations that may lead to death or injury to persons if not performed correctly. To use the equipment safely, always pay attention to these warnings.
	A caution concerning operations that may lead to injury to persons if not performed correctly. To use the equipment safely, always pay attention to these cautions.
	Operational requirements and restrictions. Be sure to read these items carefully to operate the equipment correctly, and avoid damage to the equipment or property.

About this document

The document covers the following topics:

- Basic concepts of variable data printing
- Supported Fiery print controller features and compatible variable data printing languages
- Instructions for printing variable documents with FreeForm or FreeForm 2
- Instructions for printing and submitting other variable data job formats, such as PDF/VT, PPML, VIPP, and Creo VPS
- Printing variable data jobs with remote resources
- An overview of imposing variable data jobs

NOTE: For detailed information about printing variable data jobs using third-party variable data printing applications, see the documentation that accompanies the application.

For example scenarios of popular variable data printing workflows, see [Workflow Examples](#).

OVERVIEW

This chapter describes variable printing technology and discusses the components that may be supported with your Fiery print controller that allow you to create variable data print jobs.

For specific variable data printing scenarios and workflows, see [Workflow Examples](#).

Overview of variable data printing

Variable data printing is typically used for personalized mailings, such as direct-mail advertising. It involves combining a set of master elements that are common across copies of a document (reusable data) with a set of variable elements that change from copy to copy. When you use variable data printing, you create personalized communications with elements that have special appeal to your targeted audience.

An example of variable data printing is a brochure that greets customers by name and may include other personal information about the customer obtained from a marketing database. Background elements, illustrations, and text blocks that do not change across copies of the brochure are master elements. The customer's name and other customer-specific information are variable elements.

In its simplest form, you can use variable data printing as a basic mail merge. However, you can also dynamically assemble images, charts, text, and other objects to create attractive, highly customized documents.

Variable data printing uses digital printing technology that customizes communication by linking databases that contain the content for printed documents to a print device, such as the copier. The customized communication includes rules that specify the selection of content from the database and the placement of that content in the document.

Variable data printing technologies

The following variable data printing technologies describe how reusable data is specified within a variable data printing language.

Page-based technology describes static, reusable data (the master element) in terms of entire pages. Each page element is called a master page. Page-based languages are more suitable for simple, predictable layouts. FreeForm is a page-based language. For more information about FreeForm, see [“Printing Variable Data Documents”](#) on page 14.

Element-based technology describes static, reusable data in terms of elements or objects. Element-based technology allows you to use many separate objects within a page as static elements or variable elements individually.

Element-based variable data jobs use reusable objects for the variable elements in the job, such as images. Because these elements are frequently accessed, they are stored on the Fiery print controller and cached as a group.

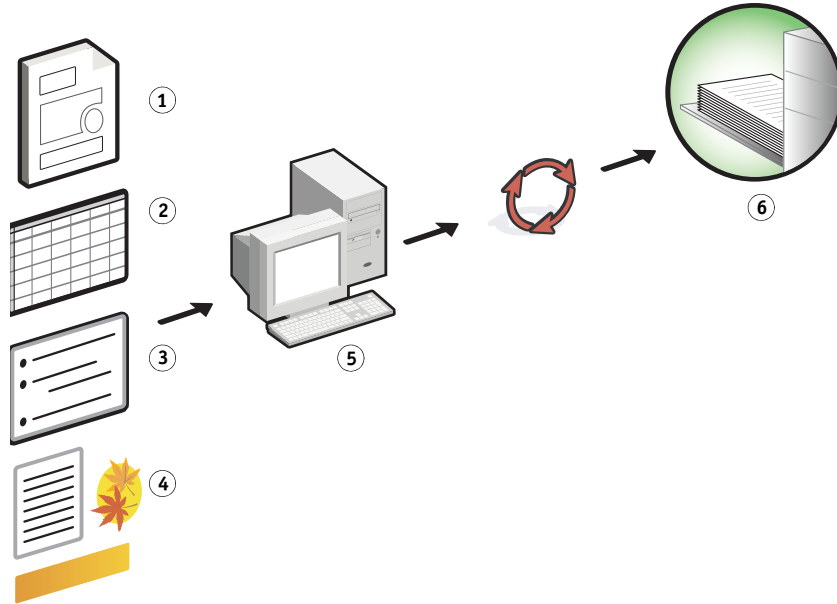
Variable data job components

A typical variable data print job includes the following major components:

Variable data component	Description
Content	Content includes the text, images, or photographs placed in different areas of your document. You can create static or variable content using a variety of applications, such as Adobe Photoshop or Microsoft Word.
Database	A database is a table containing all the changeable or variable elements in a printed document, such as text, graphics, and photographs. You can use a database created in popular desktop programs, such as Microsoft Excel or FileMaker Pro. The data must be organized into records and fields (categories) for each record. For example, in a database about people, a person is a record and the information about that person, such as name, address, and phone number, is a field.
Business rules	Business rules, created in a variable data printing application, specify what variable content to use and where to place it within your document. According to these predefined rules, which are described by “if” and “then” statements, the variable data application uses particular elements from databases to create personalized pages and documents that contain different text and images for specific audiences. For example, you can set up a rule to print specific content for a specific age range.
Layout	Layout encompasses the design or page layout of your document in any desktop publishing or word processing application. The layout must accommodate space for variable text and images.
Variable data print applications	Variable data print applications combine master elements and variable information and prepare the document for printing. For FreeForm, you do not need a dedicated variable data print application.
Print device	The print device is the output device that turns digital files into hardcopy documents. This can be any printer, copier, or digital press that supports variable data printing.

The following diagram shows the variable data printing components.

- 1 Layout
- 2 Database
- 3 Business rules
- 4 Content
- 5 Variable data application
- 6 Print device



Fiery print controller variable data printing

The Fiery print controller combines variable data printing languages, third-party variable data printing applications, and Fiery print controller core features to integrate into many existing workflows. For more information about variable data printing workflows, see [Workflow Examples](#).

Compatible variable data printing languages

The Fiery print controller is compatible with the following variable data printing languages:

- FreeForm and FreeForm 2

FreeForm and FreeForm 2 are used with variable data solutions. With FreeForm technology, reusable data is RIPPed only once, enabling the copier to run faster.

FreeForm supports the creation of master elements and variable data from any desktop application or computer platform. Within the application, the master page is assigned a number from 1 to 100. FreeForm options are found in the driver and job management tools. For more information about FreeForm, see “[Printing Variable Data Documents](#)” on page 14.

FreeForm 2 expands FreeForm technology by allowing you to determine page conditions and rules for printing a job containing multiple master pages. It also allows you to define the boundaries of each record in the data stream. This means defining a start and end for each record. Unlike FreeForm, FreeForm 2 requires a variable data printing application (for example, PrintShop Mail) that specifically supports FreeForm 2. For more information about FreeForm 2, see “[Printing Variable Data Documents](#)” on page 14.

- Personalized Print Markup Language (PPML) version 2.2

PPML, an XML-based language developed by PODi, is considered an industry standard. PPML allows the copier to store text elements and graphic elements and reuse them as needed, making variable data jobs print faster.

The Fiery print controller accepts zipped and non-zipped PPML jobs. To print documents in PPML format, use a third-party software application that is compatible with PPML format, such as Pageflex Persona. Send the PPML job to the Fiery print controller or download the PPML file using Command WorkStation or Hot Folders.

NOTE: PPML version 2.2 files that were created using either the IMPOSITION or PRINT_LAYOUT commands specified from the PPML application are not supported on the Fiery print controller. Instead, specify these options from Command WorkStation, using Impose.

- Creo Variable Print Specification (VPS)

Creo VPS is an extension of the PostScript language developed by Creo. A Creo VPS file consists of a Header section and a Booklet section. The Header section contains the global objects for the entire job. The Booklet section contains one copy of a personalized document. Page elements are reusable objects as defined in the Creo VPS format. All of the page elements must be packaged inside of the Creo VPS file.

To print, you must have an application that emits the Creo VPS data stream, such as Atlas PrintShop Mail or Creo Darwin Desktop. You can download a Creo VPS file using Command WorkStation or Hot Folders.

- Xerox Variable Data Intelligent PostScript Printware (VIPP)

VIPP is a proprietary page description language developed by Xerox. To print documents in Xerox VIPP format, use a third-party application that is compatible with Xerox VIPP format. Send the Xerox VIPP job or download the Xerox VIPP file using Command WorkStation or Hot Folders.

- Portable Document Format/Variable Transitional (PDF/VT), version 1.0

PDF/VT is created by Adobe based on PDF technology. PDF/VT enables reliable document exchange for variable data and transactional printing. Transactional documents include invoices, statements, and documents that integrate billing information with marketing information.

A VDP application generates the PDF/VT files, which contain pages and records and pages per record metadata. These PDF/VT files are imported to the Fiery print controller. The PDF/VT files can be processed through PostScript or APPE and can show pages and records and pages per record. PDF/VT uses object-based technology.

- PS and PDF files when Define Record Length is set to On

A PS or PDF file can be processed like a variable data job when Define Record Length is selected in Job Properties. With this option selected, you can define a fixed subset length to be used for variable data processing.

NOTE: Define Record Length is not an available option for VDP and Quick Doc Merge jobs.

Fiery print controller core features for variable data printing

By integrating variable data support into the Fiery print controller's core features, such as Impose and Mixed Media, you can create custom layouts and apply different media and finishing options to your variable data jobs. You can also manage reusable objects for a variable data job using VDP Resources.

Impose with variable data printing imposition

The Fiery print controller is compatible with variable data printing imposition with Impose for the following variable data printing languages:

- FreeForm and FreeForm 2 variable data jobs
- PPML
- Creo VPS
- Xerox VIPP
- PDF/VT
- PS and PDF files when Define Record Length is selected



For information about imposing a variable data job, see Command WorkStation Help.

Hot Folders with variable data printing imposition

You can impose a variable data job using Hot Folders when you submit it to the Fiery print controller. You must set up a proper variable data printing imposition template for the specific Hot Folder in the Hot Folders application.



For information about imposing a variable data job with Hot Folders, see Hot Folders Help. For information about variable data imposition options, see Command WorkStation Help.

Mixed media with variable data printing

You can apply Mixed Media settings to all variable data printing jobs. When using Mixed Media settings, the Fiery print controller recognizes each variable data record as a separate job. For a variable data job that is not imposed, the Mixed Media settings are applied to all records of the variable data job.

For more information about setting Mixed Media for a job, see [Utilities](#).

VDP Resources

Reusable objects are required images that you must download to the Fiery print controller for variable data jobs that contain variable elements. These reusable objects are stored on the Fiery print controller and cached as a group.

The VDP Resources feature available from Command WorkStation allows you to manage disk space on the Fiery print controller by viewing the list of the reusable objects and deleting them, or allowing them to reside for future variable data jobs. VDP Resources is compatible with the following variable data printing languages:

- FreeForm
- PPML
- Creo VPS
- Xerox VIPP
- PDF/VT



For more information about using VDP Resources, see Command WorkStation Help.

PRINTING VARIABLE DATA DOCUMENTS

With FreeForm technology, you can use print options to define master documents and assign them to variable data jobs sent to the Fiery print controller.

This chapter explains how to do the following:

- Print documents with FreeForm.
- Print documents with FreeForm 2 using a third-party variable data application.
- Print other variable data formats.
- Print variable data jobs with remote resources.
- Impose a variable data job.

NOTE: For information about supported variable data languages and features, see [Printing](#).

Printing variable data documents using FreeForm

You can use FreeForm to print variable data documents. This section provides an overview of FreeForm and describes how to create and combine master and variable elements. Guidelines and tips are discussed at the end of the section.

How FreeForm works

FreeForm variable data printing sends the master-element data for the job to the Fiery print controller and rasterizes it separately from the variable-element data. The master-element data is stored on the Fiery print controller in rasterized form as a FreeForm master, and can be used as often as required, with multiple sets of variable-element data. Because the FreeForm master job is preRIPped and stored on the Fiery print controller, the only RIP time required for variable data print jobs is the time necessary to RIP the variable-element data.

You can use FreeForm masters for any fixed-element data you might combine with different data from day to day. For example, you can store a letterhead template as a FreeForm master and use it repeatedly as the background for different letter content (the variable-element data).

FreeForm allows you to create the master and variable documents using any application. You can create the two documents using different applications or computer platforms. To create the master document, use a page layout or graphics application. To create the variable document, use a word processing application that has a mail merge feature, a page layout application that supports scripting, or a database application.

You control FreeForm functions with the Create Master and Use Master print options. Set these options in the printer driver when you send a job, or instruct the operator to set them with job overrides from Command WorkStation. After the master document is RIPPed, it appears in VDP Resources in the Device Center of Command WorkStation. You can also use Command WorkStation to monitor and manage all the FreeForm masters stored on the Fiery print controller. For more information, see Command WorkStation Help.



You must perform the following tasks to print a variable data job with FreeForm:

Step	Task	For more information
1	Create a master document	see page 16
2	Create a variable document	see page 17
3	Combine the master and variable file using FreeForm	see page 18

Creating the master document

Before you can use FreeForm, you must create a master document and a variable document.

TO CREATE THE MASTER DOCUMENT

- 1 From an application of your choice, create the layout of the master, which will ultimately be the layout for the combined document, with space for individual elements.
- 2 Arrange the master elements (text and graphics that do not change) on one or more pages, leaving space for the variable elements.

Master document

- 1 Space for variable elements
- 2 Unchanging master elements



- 3 Save the file.

Creating the variable document

To create the variable document, you need a word processing application that provides a mail merge function, a database application, or a page layout application that supports scripting.

TO CREATE THE VARIABLE DOCUMENT

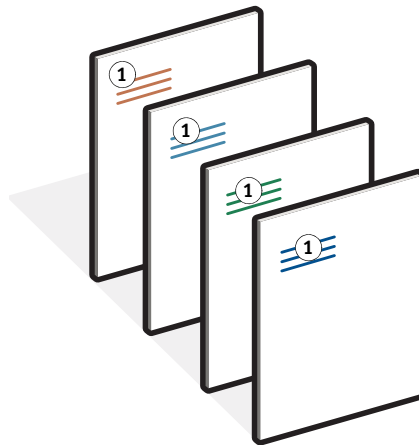
- 1 From your supported application, create the variable document to conform to the layout of the master document.
- 2 Add the variable information in the appropriate places in your document.

Your application creates the information taken from a list or database and merges it into an existing document that is designed to accept the master information. Each application has different controls for this function. For detailed instructions, see the documentation that accompanies your application.

NOTE: You must create a variable document with the same page count as the master page document. For example, if a master document has a record length of four pages, all the variable documents must have a record length of four pages. Use Enhanced FreeForm to add empty pages to the last record of the variable document, if necessary (see “[Enhanced FreeForm](#)” on page 23).

Variable document

1 Variable element



- 3 Save the file.

Combining the FreeForm master with the variable document

When you print a variable document to the Fiery print controller, specify the FreeForm master created from your master document with the Use Master print option. The Fiery print controller combines the raster data of the variable document with the previously RIPPed FreeForm master, creating a new raster data file.

TO PRINT VARIABLE DATA DOCUMENTS USING FREEFORM

- 1 **Print the master document that you created (see [page 16](#)) to the Fiery print controller, with the Create Master print option set to one of the FreeForm Master numbers.**

You can also set the Create Master option to None and instruct the operator to use overrides from Command WorkStation to create a FreeForm master from this job.

For more information, see Command WorkStation Help.



To print your FreeForm master to ensure that it is correct before you merge it with variable data, enable the Print Master feature after the file is sent to the Fiery print controller (see [Printing](#)).

- 2 **Print the variable document that you created (see [page 17](#)) to the Fiery print controller, with the Use Master print option set to the appropriate FreeForm master number.**
- 3 **To preview the master page, click Preview Master from the printer driver to generate a low-resolution image of the master page. For more information, see [“Previewing master documents in the Windows printer driver”](#) on page 22.**

IMPORTANT

The FreeForm master number can be one that you set when you send the master document, or one assigned by the operator.

To check the job from Command WorkStation Preview before it prints, Process and Hold the job from Command WorkStation.

To impose the job, see Command WorkStation Help.

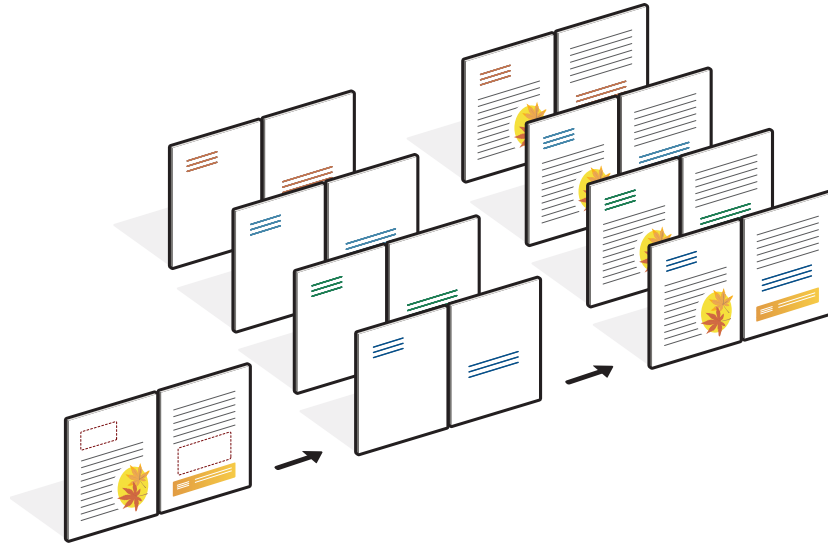
The Fiery print controller combines the raster data of the variable document with the previously RIPped FreeForm master, creating a new raster data file.

Combined document

A master document can include more than one page. When you print a variable document and specify a FreeForm master that contains multiple pages, the variable pages are combined with the master pages in a cyclical fashion. The following example illustrates how a variable document combines with a two-page master document.

Pages 1 and 2 of the variable document are combined with Pages 1 and 2, respectively, of the master document. The cycle of master pages then starts over, and Pages 3 and 4 of the variable document are combined, respectively, with Pages 1 and 2, again, of the master document. This pattern continues for each subsequent set of pages in the variable document.

Combined document



Guidelines

This section provides some suggestions to help you print variable data jobs correctly.

- Ask your administrator or operator how FreeForm master numbers are assigned at your site.
- You cannot specify the Use Master option and Create Master option in the same job.
- Single page FreeForm Masters are limited to single-sided output. You cannot duplex a single page FreeForm Master.
- Do not send your variable printing jobs to the Direct connection.
If you send a variable data job to the Direct connection, the job does not process.
- Use the Notes and Instructions fields to communicate instructions about your job to the operator.

- Assign your jobs unique and descriptive names.

You and the operator must be able to easily identify your jobs if there are many jobs in the queues, the FreeForm master numbers are reassigned, or you must refer to another job in the Notes or Instructions fields.

The Create Master and Use Master options do not allow the use of the following special characters when you specify a name:

|, /, \, *, ?, “, ' , ` , ; , < , > , or special control characters

FreeForm 2 master names cannot begin with “form” or “formU”.

Character length for FreeForm 2 master names is limited to 64 characters.

- Consider the restrictions on Print Options when using FreeForm.

The master file and variable file must use identical paper size and orientation settings. Each job is limited to a single paper size, even when mixed media is applied.

Finishing options and paper tray selection, as specified in the variable data file, take precedence over master job settings, if these settings are different.

Only FreeForm supports the Create Master and Use Master settings in Command WorkStation and the printer driver Job Properties window.

For more information about these restrictions, see [Printing](#).

- You cannot designate an imposed job (.dbp) as a master for any type of FreeForm job.
- Only the variable data file needs to be imposed for FreeForm and FreeForm 2.
- FreeForm 2 jobs require record boundary settings, as produced by the application, for use with VDP imposition and record-based finishing.

Previewing master documents in the Windows printer driver

After a master document is created, you can preview it from the Windows printer driver. This feature allows you to conveniently select your master document when you print using FreeForm.

To PREVIEW MASTER DOCUMENTS IN THE WINDOWS PRINTER DRIVER

- 1 **Choose Print in your application.**
- 2 **Select the Fiery print controller as your printer and click Properties.**
- 3 **Click the Fiery Printing tab.**
- 4 **Click the VDP icon.**
- 5 **Click Update to retrieve the list of FreeForm master names from the Fiery print controller.**

The FreeForm master numbers and names appear in the Create Master and Use Master options.

NOTE: You must enable Two-Way Communication to retrieve the list of FreeForm master names. To enable this feature, see the printer driver Help.



- 6 **Select the master document that you want to preview from the Use Master option and click Preview Master.**

The FreeForm Master Preview window appears.

- 7 **Click Close.**

Enhanced FreeForm

Enhanced FreeForm allows you to map the master and variable file in a user-defined order, eliminating the need to add blank pages to get the desired merged output. Unlike FreeForm, when merging master and variable files, the page order is fixed.

TO MAP MASTER AND VARIABLE FILES WITH ENHANCED FREEFORM

- 1 **Select a FreeForm job and click the VDP tab in Job Properties.**
- 2 **From Use Master, select a FreeForm master.**

NOTE: Make sure that you know the number of master pages used for your job when you select the FreeForm master.

- 3 **Select Enable Enhanced FreeForm and click Define Mapping.**

You can map any page in the master to to any page of the variable document. The master may contain more pages than the final document. Additionally, the variable document record length does not have to match the total number of master pages.

- 4 **In “Variable Pages per record,” enter the number of pages per record for your job.**
- 5 **If you want to preview your master page, click Preview Master, and then click Close when you are finished previewing the file.**

- In "Total pages per record to be finished," enter the record length after all the masters and variables are merged for your job, and then click Continue.

Define Mapping

Master Name (Total Pages)

Variable Pages per record: 3

Total pages per record to be finished: 5

Select mapping & order

Total Pages	Variable Pages	Master Pages
1	Page 1	Master Page 1
2	Page 2	Master Page 2
3	Page 3	Master Page 3
4	No Variable <input type="button" value="↑"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>	Master Page 1
5	No Variable <input type="button" value="↑"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>	Master Page 2

The Total Pages column displays the total number of pages in your record and the page order of your master file and variable page.

- Map each page from the Variable Pages column to a master page from the Master Pages column.
- If there are master pages that are not assigned to a variable page, use the up and down arrows to arrange the page order of these pages.
- Click OK, and then click OK to print your job.

Printing variable data documents with FreeForm 2

FreeForm 2 extends the functionality of FreeForm. FreeForm 2 requires a third-party variable data printing application that supports FreeForm 2, such as PrintShop Mail. Using the third-party printing application and FreeForm, you can create multiple page masters, allowing more personalization and customization of your documents. You can use a master created in another application, and then use a third-party application that supports FreeForm 2, such as PrintShop Mail, to combine the design and database information.

FreeForm 2 and the third-party variable data printing application allow you to specify page conditions that determine rules for individual master pages. These rules, described by “if” and “then” statements in each master page, allow you to skip or print pages within a master file. For more information about creating page conditions, see the documentation that accompanies your third-party variable data printing application.

FreeForm 2 also provides the option of deleting a specified FreeForm master from the Fiery print controller hard disk after its corresponding variable data job has been successfully RIPped and printed. You can set this feature in a third-party application that supports the clearing of FreeForm masters. For more information about deleting FreeForm masters, see the documentation that accompanies the third-party printing application.

TO PRINT A VARIABLE DATA JOB USING FREEFORM 2

- 1 Open the variable document in a third-party variable data printing application that supports FreeForm 2, such as PrintShop Mail.**
- 2 Select FreeForm 2 when you send the variable document.**

For more information about creating a variable data job or printing variable data jobs, see the documentation that accompanies your third-party application.

- 3 Print the document.**

Printing other variable data printing files

You can design the master and variable elements of your job using a third-party variable data printing application, and then print the job to the Fiery print controller from the application using a compatible file format.

The Fiery print controller is compatible with a number of variable data printing languages. For more information, see [“Compatible variable data printing languages”](#) on page 10.

To print other variable data printing files directly from your application, see the documentation that accompanies your application.

TO IMPORT OTHER VARIABLE DATA PRINTING FILES USING COMMAND WORKSTATION

- 1 **Choose File > Import Job, click Add, navigate to the location of the file that you want to add, and then click Open.**

or

Select the compatible variable data printing file on your computer desktop, and then drag and drop the file into the specified queue in Command WorkStation. Additionally, you can drag and drop an entire folder, and all of the contents of the folder are imported.

- 2 **From Import Using, choose from a list of Server Presets and Virtual Printers that are currently published on the Fiery print controller.**

A preset is a predefined group of settings identified for a print job. To define a preset, see Command WorkStation Help.

- 3 **From Default Action, select the print queue that you want to import the file to. If you select Virtual Printer for the Import Using option, the default action appears dimmed, as the action associated with the Virtual Printer is used.**

IMPORTANT

Do not select Direct connection for variable data jobs. A variable data job must be sent to the Print or Hold queue, in order to take advantage of the reprocessing capabilities of master components. If you send a variable data job to the Direct connection, the job does not process.

Printing PS or PDF files as variable data files

To print PS or PDF files as variable data files, select the Define Record Length option in Job Properties. When Define Record Length is selected, you can define a subset length and enable the file for record-based finishing.

When used, information about the numbers of records and pages per record appears in the Number of records and Pages per record columns of the Job Center view in Command WorkStation.

NOTE: Define Record Length is not an available option for VDP and Quick Doc Merge jobs.

PRINTING PS AND PDF FILES AS VARIABLE DATA FILES USING DEFINE RECORD LENGTH

- 1 **Download any PS or PDF file to the Fiery print controller, open Command WorkStation, select the job, and then click Properties.**

or

Send any PS or PDF file to the Fiery print controller and select Properties or Printing Preferences.
- 2 **Click the VDP tab and select Define Record Length.**
- 3 **From Pages Per Record, specify the fixed master length (in pages) to apply all finishing to records, rather than to the whole job.**

Printing variable data jobs with remote resources

File Search Path allows you to specify a shared location to store remote variable data resources, such as images and fonts. The Fiery print controller accesses all required resources at the location specified and retrieves them automatically.

If you know the path location, you can also search for external resources on a job-by-job basis. Before you print the job, indicate the File Search Path.

File Search Path accepts the following variable data printing languages:

- Creo VPS
- VIPP
- PPML

IMPORTANT



To search for resources remote to the Fiery print controller, the File Search Path to the remote network computer must be entered in Configure. To set the global File Search Path location in Configure, see the Configuring VDP Settings topic in Configure Help.

TO PROCESS CREO VPS, VIPP, OR PPML JOBS WITH REMOTE RESOURCES USING FILE SEARCH PATH

- 1 **Download the Creo VPS, VIPP, or PPML job to the Fiery print controller using a third-party variable data application that supports the variable data printing language.**
- 2 **In Command WorkStation, select the Creo VPS, VIPP, or PPML job and right-click to choose Job Properties.**
- 3 **Click the VDP icon and enter the File Search Path location.**
- 4 **Process the Creo VPS, VIPP, or PPML job.**

NOTE: If the Fiery print controller cannot find the reusable objects for the job, the job does not process. Make sure that you enter the correct File Search Path location.

Imposing variable data jobs

You can use Command WorkStation Impose, if supported on your Fiery print controller, to impose FreeForm and FreeForm 2 jobs, as well as jobs using other compatible variable data languages. For information about compatible variable data printing languages, see [page 12](#).

When you impose a variable data job, you can choose a single record imposition scheme or a multiple records imposition scheme.



For information about how to impose variable data jobs, see Command WorkStation Help.



Additionally, you can impose a variable data job using Hot Folders. For more information, see Hot Folders Help.

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