



Fiery® EX8000AP Color Server



Variable Data Printing

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
Terminology and conventions	5
About this document	6
OVERVIEW	7
Overview of variable data printing	7
Variable data job components	8
Fiery EX8000AP variable data printing	10
Compatible variable data printing languages	10
Fiery EX8000AP core features for variable data printing	11
PRINTING VARIABLE DATA DOCUMENTS	13
Printing variable data documents using FreeForm	14
How FreeForm works	14
Creating the master document	15
Creating the variable document	15
Combining the FreeForm master with the variable document	16
Guidelines	18
Previewing master documents in the Windows printer driver	22
Printing other variable data printing jobs	23
Imposing variable data jobs	24
Imposing FreeForm jobs with Impose	24
Imposing FreeForm 2 jobs with Impose	25
Imposing other variable data jobs with Impose	26
INDEX	27





INTRODUCTION

This document provides information about variable data printing (VDP) and describes the variable data printing features supported by the Fiery EX8000AP, including:

- Compatible variable data printing languages such as FreeForm and FreeForm 2
- Imposing FreeForm 2 jobs with Impose

Terminology and conventions

This document uses the following terminology and conventions.

Term or convention	Refers to
Aero	Fiery EX8000AP (in illustrations and examples)
Digital press	DocuColor 8000AP digital press
Fiery EX8000AP	Fiery EX8000AP Color Server
Mac OS	Apple Mac OS X
Titles in <i>italics</i>	Other documents in this set
Windows	Microsoft Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Server 2003
	Topics for which additional information is available by starting Help in the software
	Tips and information
	Important information
	Important information about issues that can result in physical harm to you or others

About this document

The document covers the following topics:

- Basic concepts of variable data printing
- Supported Fiery EX8000AP features and compatible variable data printing languages
- Instructions for printing variable documents with FreeForm and FreeForm 2
- Instructions for printing and submitting other variable data job formats, such as PPML

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 supported components 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 four-color 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 digital press. The customized communication includes rules that specify the selection of content from the database and the placement of that content in the document.

The following two 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 13.

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 EX8000AP and cached as a group.

Personalized Print Markup Language (PPML) is an element-based technology. For more information about PPML, see [“Compatible variable data printing languages”](#) on page 10.

Variable data job components

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

- 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 a specific audience. 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

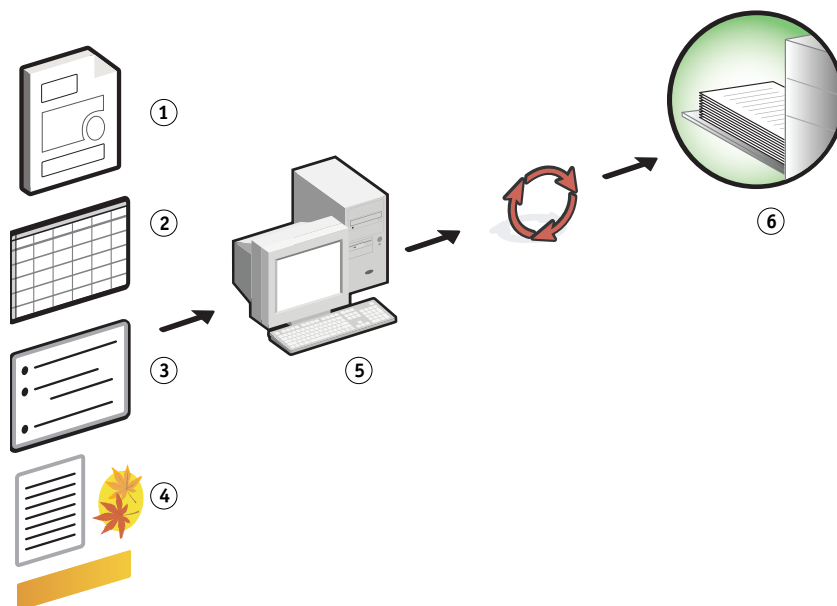
Variable data print applications combine master elements and variable information and prepare the document for printing. For FreeForm, you do not need a dedicated variable data print application.

- 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 EX8000AP variable data printing

The Fiery EX8000AP combines variable data printing languages, third-party variable data printing applications, and Fiery EX8000AP 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 EX8000AP is compatible with the following variable data printing languages:

- FreeForm and FreeForm 2

FreeForm and FreeForm 2 are used with variable data software solutions. FreeForm technology reusable data is RIPped only once, enabling the digital press 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, the job management tools, and Hot Folders. For more information about FreeForm, see [“Printing variable data documents”](#) on page 13.

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-Fiery Version) that specifically supports FreeForm 2. For more information about FreeForm 2, see [“Printing variable data documents”](#) on page 13.

- Personalized Print Markup Language (PPML) version 2.2

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

The Fiery EX8000AP accepts zipped and non-zipped PPML jobs. To print documents in PPML format, use a third-party application that is compatible with PPML format. Send the PPML job to the Fiery EX8000AP or download the PPML file using Command WorkStation or Hot Folders.

NOTE: PPML version 2.2 files created using either the IMPOSITION or PRINT_LAYOUT commands specified from the PPML application are not supported on the Fiery EX8000AP. Instead, specify these options from Command WorkStation using Impose.

- 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.

Fiery EX8000AP core features for variable data printing

By integrating variable data support into the Fiery EX8000AP 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 use the Resource Manager to manage reusable objects for a variable data job.

Impose with variable data printing imposition

The Fiery EX8000AP is compatible with variable data printing imposition with Impose for the following variable data printing languages:

- FreeForm and FreeForm 2
- PPML
- Xerox VIPP

For information about imposing a variable data job, see [“Imposing FreeForm jobs with Impose”](#) on page 24.



For more information about imposition layouts, 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 EX8000AP. 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, including imposed variable data jobs. When using Mixed Media settings, the Fiery EX8000AP 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 an imposed variable data job, the Mixed Media settings are applied to the output sets of the variable data job.

For an example of a variable data Mixed Media workflow, see [Workflow Examples](#). For more information about setting Mixed Media for a job, see [Utilities](#).

Resource Manager

Reusable objects are required images that you must download to the Fiery EX8000AP for variable data jobs that contain variable elements. These reusable objects are stored on the Fiery EX8000AP and cached as a group.

Resource Manager allows you to manage disk space on the Fiery EX8000AP by viewing the list of the reusable objects and deleting them or allowing them to reside for future variable data jobs. Resource Manager is compatible with the following variable data printing languages:

- FreeForm
- PPML
- Xerox VIPP



For more information about using Resource Manager, see Resource Manager 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 EX8000AP.

This chapter explains how to do the following:

- Print documents with FreeForm.
- Create a master and variable document.
- Print documents with FreeForm 2 using a third-party variable data application.
- Print other variable data formats.
- Impose a variable data job.

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 EX8000AP and rasterizes it separately from the variable-element data. The master-element data is stored on the Fiery EX8000AP 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 EX8000AP, 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 and combine it 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 or Hot Folders. After the master document is RIPped, it appears on the Command WorkStation FreeForm tab. You can also use Command WorkStation to monitor and manage all the FreeForm masters stored on the Fiery EX8000AP.



For more information, see Command WorkStation Help.

Creating the master document

Before you can use FreeForm, you must create a master document and a variable document. This includes creating the layout for the combined document, as well as individual elements. In a page layout or graphics application, 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



After you finalize the design of the master document, print it to the Fiery EX8000AP and specify that a FreeForm master be created from the job (see [page 19](#)).

NOTE: Although the Fiery EX8000AP can store up to 100 FreeForm masters, the printer driver interface only allows you to select numbers 1 through 15. To create a FreeForm master with a number greater than 15, the operator must create the master page and RIP the job from Command WorkStation.

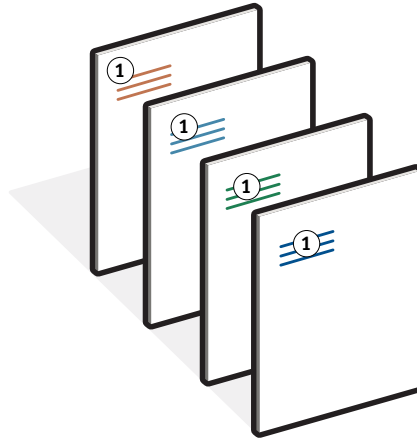
Creating the variable document

You can create the variable document with a word processing application that provides a mail merge function, a database application, or a page layout application that supports scripting. In all cases, information is taken from a list or database and merged into an existing document that is designed to accept the information. Each application has different controls for this function. For detailed instructions, see the documentation that accompanies the application. Before you add variable elements to the master document, format them to conform to the layout of the master document. To do this, create a document with the correct formatting, and then add the variable information in the appropriate places.

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. Add empty pages to the last record of the variable document, if necessary.

Variable document

1 Variable element



After you create a variable document, print it to the Fiery EX8000AP and specify that it be combined with the corresponding FreeForm master (see [page 19](#)).

Combining the FreeForm master with the variable document

When you print a variable document to the Fiery EX8000AP, specify the FreeForm master created from your master document with the Use Master print option. The Fiery EX8000AP combines the raster data of the variable document with the previously RIPPed FreeForm master, creating a new raster data file. You can soft-proof the merged raster file (before it is printed) in the thumbnail windows of Command WorkStation.

NOTE: The Soft Proofing feature is available with the Graphic Arts Package.

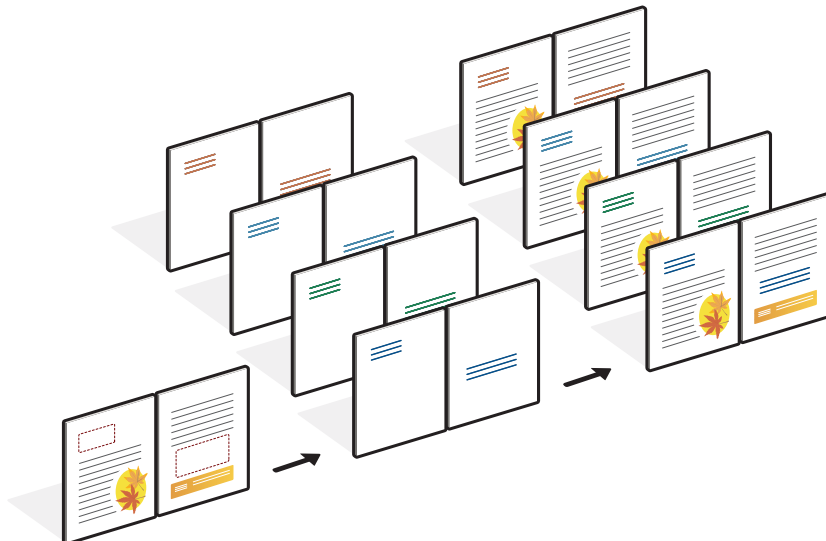


For more information about soft-proofing and the thumbnail windows of Command WorkStation, see Command WorkStation Help.

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.

If FreeForm printing is used by a large number of users at your site, you can assign FreeForm master numbers, or ranges of numbers, to specific users or groups. Users can select only numbers 1 through 15 as print option settings. The operator can override FreeForm master numbers and reassign them to numbers greater than 15 from Command WorkStation. Request that the operator assign all FreeForm master numbers to avoid potential conflicts in the use of FreeForm master numbers.

- Do not send your variable printing jobs to the Direct connection through Command WorkStation.

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.

To create or use a FreeForm master number greater than 15, use these fields to tell the operator to override the appropriate job setting (Create Master or Use Master) and RIP the job from Command WorkStation.

- Give 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.

- Consider the restrictions on Print Options when using FreeForm.

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

- The following settings for the master document and variable document must match:

Color Mode (Mac OS) or Print Mode (Windows)

Combine Separations

Duplex

Orientation

Page Size

Stapler Mode

- The following settings for the variable document override the corresponding settings in the master document:

Media Type

Page Order

Paper Source

You cannot use the following print option when printing variable data:

- Combine Separations to On

For more information, see [Print Options](#).

TO PRINT VARIABLE DATA DOCUMENTS USING FREEFORM

1 Create a master document.

The following example illustrates one page of a master document for a tri-fold brochure created with a page layout application.



2 Print the master document to the Fiery EX8000AP with the Create Master print option set to one of the FreeForm Master numbers (1 through 15).

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.



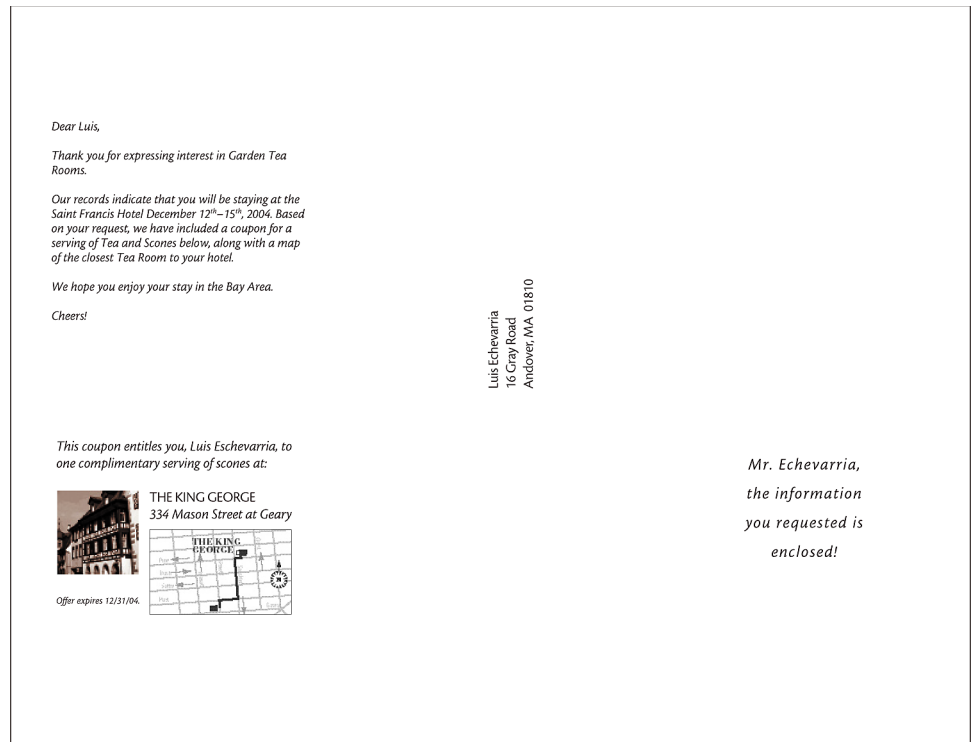
For more information, see Command WorkStation Help.

To print your FreeForm master to make sure that it is correct before you merge it with variable data, enable the Print Master feature after the file is sent to the Fiery EX8000AP (see [Print Options](#)).

3 Create the variable document.

You can create the variable document using a different file, different application, or different computer platform than you used to create the master document, but some print options must be the same (for details, see [page 18](#)).

The following example illustrates one page of the variable document for the tri-fold brochure. The data in this document can be as simple as a name and address, or as complex as multiple, full-color graphics and photographic elements.



NOTE: To impose the job, see “[Imposing FreeForm jobs with Impose](#)” on page 24.

4 Print the variable document to the Fiery EX8000AP with the Use Master print option set to the appropriate FreeForm master number.

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

To preview the master page, click Preview Master from the printer driver to generate a low-resolution image of the master page.

FreeForm master numbers can be overridden from Command WorkStation. Consult the operator to make sure that the FreeForm master number you specify is the correct one for the FreeForm master that you want to use.

To check the job before it prints, instruct the operator to Process and Hold the job so you can preview it from Command WorkStation.

The following example illustrates the FreeForm master and variable document combined. The variable data is overlaid on the master document.



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 EX8000AP 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 EX8000AP.**

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 [Printing from Windows](#) and [Printing from Mac OS](#).

- 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.**

Printing other variable data printing jobs

You can design the master and variable elements of your job using a variable data printing application, and then print to the Fiery EX8000AP from the application using a compatible file format. The Fiery EX8000AP is compatible with the supported variable data languages. For more information, see “[Compatible variable data printing languages](#)” on page 10.

For more information about printing documents with variable data formats, see the documentation that accompanies your third-party printing application.

When you send a PPML job to the Fiery EX8000AP, you must reference external resources. The Fiery EX8000AP automatically searches for the global images using File Search Paths created in the Configure WebTool.



For more information, see Configure Help.

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 from the Printer Driver. To specify the File Search Path, see [Print Options](#).

TO SEARCH FOR EXTERNAL RESOURCES FOR PPML JOBS USING THE FILE SEARCH PATH

- 1 **Download the PPML job to the Fiery EX8000AP using a third-party variable data application that supports the variable data printing language.**
- 2 **In Command WorkStation, select the PPML job and right-click to choose Properties.**
- 3 **Click the VDP icon and enter the File Search Path location.**

NOTE: The File Search Path server must be set up by the administrator.



For more information, see Configure Help.

- 4 **Process the or PPML job.**

NOTE: If the Fiery EX8000AP cannot find the reusable objects for the job, the job does not process. Make sure you enter the correct File Search Path location.

Imposing variable data jobs

If variable data Imposition is enabled on the Fiery EX8000AP, you can impose FreeForm and FreeForm 2 jobs, as well as jobs using other supported variable data languages.



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

When you submit a variable data job to Command Workstation, open Impose to impose the job. The printed job merges and imposes the variable and master file.



When you impose a variable data job, you can choose a single record imposition scheme or a multiple records imposition scheme. For more information, see Command WorkStation Help.

Imposing FreeForm jobs with Impose

You can select Imposition settings for a FreeForm variable data job. Imposition must be enabled on the Fiery EX8000AP.

TO IMPOSE A FREEFORM JOB

- 1 Download any PS or PDF file as a master job to the Fiery EX8000AP.
- 2 Open Command WorkStation, right-click the master job, and then click Properties.
- 3 Click the VDP icon, select the Create Master print option, and assign the master job a number (1-15).
- 4 Send the master job to Print or to Process and Hold.
- 5 Download the variable data file to the Fiery EX8000AP.
- 6 In Command WorkStation, right-click the variable data file and click Properties.
- 7 Click the VDP icon, select the Use Master print option and select the master job number.
- 8 Right-click the variable data file and click Impose.

Select Imposition settings for the variable data job.



For more information about Imposition settings, see Command WorkStation Help.

- 9 Process the variable job.

Imposing FreeForm 2 jobs with Impose

You can select Imposition settings for a FreeForm 2 variable data job. Imposition must be enabled on the Fiery EX8000AP.

TO IMPOSE A FREEFORM 2 JOB

- 1 **Download the master job using a third-party variable data application that supports FreeForm 2.**
- 2 **Open Command WorkStation, and process the master job.**
- 3 **Download the variable job to the Hold queue using a third-party variable data application that supports FreeForm 2.**
- 4 **Select the variable job and click Impose.**

Select Imposition settings for the variable data job.

For more information about Imposition settings, see Command WorkStation Help.



- 5 **Process the variable job.**

Imposing other variable data jobs with Impose

You can select Imposition settings for other variable data jobs. Imposition must be enabled on the Fiery EX8000AP.

TO IMPOSE OTHER VARIABLE DATA PRINTING JOBS

- 1 **Download the Xerox VIPP or PPML job to the Fiery EX8000AP using a third-party variable data application that supports the variable data printing language.**
- 2 **Right-click the job and click Impose.**

Select Imposition settings for the variable data job.

For more information about Imposition settings, see the Command WorkStation Help.



- 3 **Process the variable job.**

INDEX

B

business rules 8

C

Command WorkStation, overriding FreeForm
 Master number 15
content 8
Create Master option 14

D

database 8

E

Element-based technology 7

F

FreeForm
 combining master and variable 15
 create master 15
 create variable 15
 defined 10
 overriding Master number 15
 printing variable data documents 14
 using 14
FreeForm 2
 defined 10

H

Hot Folders, variable data printing
 imposition 11

I

Impose, variable data printing imposition 11
imposing
 FreeForm 2 jobs 5, 25
 PPML jobs 26
 Xerox VIPP jobs 26
imposing FreeForm jobs 24

J

job management tools
 defined 10
 FreeForm options in 10

L

layout 8

M

master elements 7
Master number, overriding 15
Mixed Media 11

O

overriding Master number 15

P

Page-based technology 7
Personalized Print Markup Language (PPML) 8
printing FreeForm jobs 14

R

Resource Manager 12
reusable data 7
reusable objects 8

T

terminology 5

U

Use Master option 14

V

variable data imposition 24
variable data printing
 example 7
 languages 5, 10
 overview 7
variable data printing imposition 11
VIPP 10

