



Performance

We have the fastest transforms in the market! Everyone says this, but we can back it up with facts. Let us say this another way "We have the fastest transforms in the market, bar none!".

Print application conversion performance always "depends on the application", and that is absolutely true. Applications which use no graphics and a smaller number of fonts will normally convert faster than applications with huge variety of fonts, and lots of embedded graphics.

Why do we say ours is fastest. Several reasons. First our software is scalable. It can be run on any computing platform needed, from a lowly Windows Intel system to a Sun or IBM RISC processor to a zSeries IBM mainframe. That allows you to throw as much horsepower at the conversion as you need. Multi threading allows us to take advantage of multi-processor configurations to maximize your throughput.

These are all teasers though. The bottom line is our customers prove ours is fastest every day. We have customers who run huge volumes of documents through our software on mild-mannered systems and report high throughput numbers to us. We have seen 8-hour runs on competitive products collapsed to 15 minutes with a PRO product.

How do you rate transform performance? There is no industry benchmark, so we have put something in place to help our customers gauge their throughput. The bottom line is how many pages can be processed in any amount of time. Our software reports the number of pages processed and the interval of time. As well, it tells the user the application conversion rate in pages per second, minute and hour and gives a performance rating.

We have reviewed the performance of many applications and configurations, and decided to put a rating system in place, not unlike what other industries do. The following table summarizes the rating scheme we use:

Category	Pages per hour
PLATINUM	1,000,000 +
GOLD	600,000 - 1,000,000
SILVER	420,000 - 600,000
BRONZE	240,000 - 420,000
BLUE	60,000 – 240,000
GREEN	12,000 – 60,000
RED	0 – 12,000

So what does this mean when it comes time for you to estimate the throughput you will receive. The only real way to be sure is to install the software on the target system and run a large sample of the print application through and look at the statistics generated.



With the PRO Meta and PRO AFP transform products, most production applications will fit into the GOLD category, on average on a typical Intel Pentium 3-based server. That means that if your shop has a typical mix of applications, some will be slower and some will be faster, but you can expect to average between 400,000 and 600,000 pages per hour. Pretty impressive! Just try and find a shop with enough printers to keep up! We haven't yet.

How does this compare with other programs. We have asked our customers and they have shared experiences with us. One had a metacode application that ran on another product, with a typical production run taking 8 hours. When they installed our software and ran the same application through it, it took the conversion down to 15 minutes of processing. Other customers have reported similar findings. One went from 8 hours down to 3 minutes.

How fast can the PRO Transforms go? The fastest sample we have seen was a simple Xerox LCDS application that processed at a rate of 23 million pages/hour on an Intel Pentium III processor. But, do not expect your complex applications with embedded graph is, images and a lot of fonts to run this fast.

What slows a transform down? If you are creating large PDF files with lots of bookmarks, this will slow it down. Lots of large unique embedded images will slow it a little. A lot of complex GOCA graphics on each page will slow PRO AFP a little. But typically, these graphics only occur on a small number of pages in the entire job mix, so the impact will be small overall.

What about performance on a mainframe? Even though the PRO product family has been written in C++ and C, we still achieve outstanding performance on zSeries processors. One of our customers reported their typical production work running between 150 and 300 pages/ CPU second. They found this to be much faster than their composition system could format documents.

How can transform speed be improved? The first thing to do is to look at your error log and make sure that the transform is not running into a lot of error conditions. If so, then find and fix the errors. Next, make sure that you are not generating debug messages. Look in your statistics log and make sure that the debug parameter is set to 0 and the Stats parameter is not set to Detail.

Other things you can do include reducing the number of indexes in use, making sure the input data is on a fast local drive and the output file is also bring written to a fast local drive.

Often applications are inefficient and can be restructured to make them go faster, but that is a subject for another paper.

So what is the bottom line? Why waste time and cycles with other transform products? If you want solid productivity, install the fastest transform in the west, east, north and south and never worry about missing your transform window again. PRO stands for Performance and Production Productivity.



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