

RipControl

Load balancing software for Harlequin RIPs

User and Installation Manual



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1 Introduction

RipControl is a stand-alone application used to feed multiple Harlequin-based RIPs with jobs. RipControl takes care of job distribution ensuring a uniform load of each RIP.

The present version of RipControl supports up to three RIPs.

RipControl may be installed as stand-alone or as an integrated part of the ControlCenter Enterprise workflow system. In the latter case RipControl will have access to production data in the ControlCenter database and will look up job details for each job arriving to RipControl. Based on production data job priority, colors-perpage and format information RipControl will determine the best order and RIP page setup in the job scheduling process.



RipControl is meant to run unattended watching input folders for incoming PDF, PS or EPS files. A set of input folders on RipControl are mapped to folders on each RIP.

The RIPs are tracked for activity. RipControl observes that the RIP is started, that input spoolers are enabled and that ripping is taking place. Each job is tracked also, allowing status feedback to the ControlCenter database.

1.1 Prerequisite

RipControl needs network connection to each RIP. The installation folder for each RIP must be accessible for RipControl in order to track the Harlequin log-files.

This manual will not describe how to configure the rip Page Setups and RIP Input spoolers. Refer to Harlequin user manual for details.

An optional progress plug-in can be installed on each RIP. This will provide more detailed progress on the on-going job (like progress bar indicating ripping progress). Note that the progress plug-in will not influence the basic operation – it is merely informational.

By default the input works on hot-folders only. In case incoming jobs are sent using published printers, an extra utility called RedMon must be installed (located on the CD). RedMon (Redirect Monitor) redirects print streams to spool files eg. for published Windows or AppleTalk printers.

2 Operation

2.1 The User Interface

Operation is very simple once the RipControl has been configured. Simple launch the program and the RIP balancing will start – using available and online RIPs.

L InfraLogic RipControl		
File Configuration Help		
Job list Waiting jobs	RIP1	Job Time
ID Time Job 128 08/08/2001 16:02:04 ME152_001.pdf 129 08/08/2001 16:02:04 ME152_001.pdf 130 08/08/2001 16:02:26 ME152_002.pdf 132 08/08/2001 16:02:26 ME152_002.pdf 133 08/08/2001 17:10:28 ME152_k101.pdf 134 08/08/2001 17:10:28 ME152_k101.pdf 136 08/08/2001 17:10:28 ME152_k101.pdf	Off Off Queued: 0	SID 10 (PAGE 1) Completed 16. FEBRUAR BORSEN-MAIN-A-5.8.10.2_11_3K
138 08/08/2001 17:19:16 MB152, k104, pdf 139 09/08/2001 11:40:36 MB152, k131, pdf 141 09/08/2001 11:40:40 MB152, k135, pdf 142 09/08/2001 11:40:40 MB152, k105, pdf 143 09/08/2001 11:40:40 MB152, k105, pdf 144 09/08/2001 11:40:40 MB152, k105, pdf 145 09/08/2001 11:40:40 MB152, k105, pdf 146 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 145 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 146 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 147 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 146 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 147 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 148 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 149 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf 149 09/08/2001 11:40:44 MB152, k105, pdf		Job Time MB 33-C Completed with warning 4 ANUAR 200 MB 33-C completed with warning 4 ANUAR 200 MB 33-C completed with warning
147 09/08/2001 11:40.44 MB152_X057.pdf 148 09/08/2001 11:40.46 MB152_X057.pdf 149 59/08/2001 11:40.46 MB152_X053.pdf 150 99/08/2001 11:40.50 MB152_X053.pdf 151 99/08/2001 11:40.50 MB152_X058.pdf 152 99/08/2001 11:40.58 MB152_X058.pdf 153 99/08/2001 11:40.58 MB152_X058.pdf 153 99/08/2001 11:40.58 MB152_X058.pdf	MB IS_NUS.pdf 33% Queued: 0	Hold B3-K Completed with warning JANUAR 20(GEDCAPITAL 24-01 Completed with, JANUAR 20(GRATIS & BETAL KUPONG Complet. JANUAR 20(JANUAR 2
	Not used	
Auf Job Time AIP Job 1 1 1 3 3 4 2 MB152_0021.pdf 08/08/2001 13:39:44 2 3 3 3 4 2 1 3:39:50 2 1 3:39:50 2 MB152_0028.pdf 08/08/2001 13:39:50 2 1 3:40:00	Path wt/Broadsheet/MB152 wt/Broadsheet/MB152 0% Queued: 0	
Error state	Clear Clear	Job Time
ncoming jobs Jobs queued t		lobs done

RipControl main GUI

RipControl is meant to run unattended watching input folders for incoming PDF, PS or EPS files.

File	LinfraLogic RipControl					
⊂Job list						
	Time	Job		Setup		
	06/03/2001 19:03:16 23/06/2002 05:39:00	ai sid 1.pdf sun-5.pdf		Broadsheet Broadsheet		
	13/01/2003 21:00:09	ME-2	R.	ich joh		
			- NU			
			Ki	ll job		
			M	ove up		
			M	ove down		

Pop-up menu accessed when right-clicking in the Waiting job list

The left hand side lists the incoming jobs waiting to be queued on the RIPs. The list (top left) will be processed in a first-in-first-out fashion with the top item being the next job to process. The operator may overrule this using the right-click menu (see next section).

The right hand side shows the state of the RIPs. An on/off button may enable or disable RIPs from the load balancing.

Three lamps next to the progress bar show the running state of the RIP:

First lamp green	RIP program is running
Second lamp green	RIP Inputs (hot-folders) are enabled
Third lamp green	A job is ripping

The right hand list shows jobs already processed. The green, yellow and red indicators show if a particular job is ripped successfully, with warning or with error.

Changing job queue

To optimize load balancing RipControl makes sure RIPs are kept busy with jobs. However, to avoid overstressing one particular RIP, only a few jobs are queue per RIP at any given time. Therefore a number of jobs will be waiting in the left hand side list before being assigned to a particular RIP. In case a certain job is important it can be moved up in the queue. Highlight the job(s) and select **Move up** or **Rush job** to move the jobs forward in the queue.

Error handling

Folder access errors (e.g. due to network errors) will be shown in the error box. Optionally an audio alarm can be issued. To clear the error message press the **Clear** button

A user defined command can be issued in case an error occurs. The command could be an external script issuing an email message or an sms message.

😝 Error state	
Unable to access RIP2 SW folder Y:\RIP421\SW	Clear

Errors will be shown in red in the bottom left corner

3 Configuration

Configuration dialogs are accessed from the main menu **Configuration** item. Configuration is divided into database connection setup, RIP access configuration and input configuration.

3.1 Database connection setup

RipControl uses an ODBC DSN for accessing the ControlCenter database. The ODBC is automatically set up during installation but may be changed using the *Configuration->Setup database..* menu.

Workflow database connection					
Database connection Configuration of ODBC and event reporting					
ODBC Connection Database type ControlCenter Data source name CC User name sa Password ****** ✓ Keep connection open (recommended) Workflow status properties ✓ Update external status (requires database link) Status value on success ③ Status value on failure 4	ODBC Backup Connection Data source name CCBU User name sa Password (leave blank to disable) Notification server (leave blank to disable) Notification port 0 Workflow log properties (ControlCenter only) 126 Log errors Error event code 127 Log success Success event code 120				
Status poll interval 5 sec	E-mail notifications				
✓ ОК	Cancel				

Enter login parameters and test the connection using the **Test** button.

In case a backup ControlCenter server is also installed set the ODBC for the backup machine also.

For tight ControlCenter integration RipControl can report and log to the ControlCenter production database.

Error notification						
Error notification E-mail configuration						
Notifications Image: Send e-mail on database communication error Image: Send e-mail on network error Image: Send e-mail on RIP job error Image: Send e-mail on RIP warnings Image: Prevent flooding Do not sent consecutive e-mails Image: The send error						
E-mail setup						
From addr	From addr RipControl@controlcenter.net					
To addr	To addr RipBoss@controlcenter.net					
CC addr	CC addr					
Subject RipControl error notification mail						
	Send test mail					
V OK K Cancel						

3.2 E-mail notification

If required RipControl can be configured to automatically send mails of events such as RIP errors or warnings. Click the **E-mail cotifications..** button in the database setup dialog and set mail-server, recipient list (separate multiple recipients with semi-colon), CC recipients etc.

3.3 RIP configuration

The location of the RIPs must be entered into the system. Enter computer name (used for logging) and the path to the SW subfolder for each available RIP

Also check the types of events that should be logged to the ControlCenter system

In the General preferences box a number of important settings must be set:

Maximum outstanding jobs on each RIP

Internally a harlequin RIP can handle up to two jobs simultaneously. The minimum number of jobs which should be fed is thus two (if jobs are available). To cope with potential lag in the copy process into the RIP folder, a good number is 3 or 4.

Stable time for incoming jobs

Even if RipControl ensures that incoming files are not processed before they are fully build up, certain file sources may build up the files gradually opening and closing the files. Set stable time to indicate when the file is completely written. Stable time is an interval in which the file size and last-access time is not changing.

Files/extensions to ignore

A semi-colon separated list of file masks which should be ignored – e.g. temporary files or house-keeping files created by the server.

10	
💽 General settings	
Configuration of RIP install folders	
RIP definitions RIP 1 setup Computername RIP1 SW folder C:\HQ\SW\ V Use current user for login	RIP 2 setup ✓ Enable RIP tracking 2 Computername RIP2 SW folder \\RIP2\HQ\SW\ ✓ Use current user for login
Username Administrator Password	Username Administrator Password
RIP 3 setup Enable RIP tracking 3 Computername RIP3 SW folder \leskonetrip3\sw Image: Sw folder \leskonetrip3\sw Image: Sw folder Use current user for login Username Administrator Password	RIP 4 setup Enable RIP tracking 4 Computername RIP4 SW folder \[\eskonetrip4\sw Iv Use current user for login Username Administrator Password
Generel preferences Maximum outstanding jobs on each RIP 3 Maximum jobs in RIP done lists 100 Stable time for incoming files 2 sec ✓ Bypass lock test on incoming files	Files/extensions to ignore *.tmp;*.000;thumbs.db (Separate by commas) Stop on network error Beep on network error
🖌 ок	K Cancel

3.4 Input queue configuration

Input queues link the input folder to the two or three hot-folders on the available RIPs.

Use Add, Edit and Delete buttons to maintain input queues.

Setup name

Enter a name for the queue (name not important)

Setup RIP spoolers									
Spooler configuration Define input folders and associated RIP input hot-folders									
Input queues									
Name Broadsheet Tabloid	Enabled Input On C:\pdfin\bro Off c:\pdfin\tabl	Rip1 C:\incoming c:\incoming	Rip2 \\RIP2\incoming\br \\RIP2\incoming\ta	oadsheet bloid	Rip3	Rip4 C:\RIP4Spo	Use DB O O	[
1	1 Net	v 🔰	Apply	🗋 Delete	▶ Enable		Disable		
Input-									
Solup pamo	Broadsheet			🔽 Lookup job	in database	Naming Conv			
Setup name									
Input spoolfolder	C:\pdfin\broadsheet								
Use current us	er for login	_							
Username	Administrator	Password							
Cutput (RIP input)-									
RIP1 spoolfolder	C:\incoming\broadsheet			Col RIP3 sp	oolfolder				- 61
Special mono f	older				oial mono folder				
				I ope					
RIPI mono folder	C:\incoming\broadsheet	mono		RIP3 m	ono folder				
RIP2 spoolfolder	\\RIP2\incoming\broads	heet		EIP4 sp	oolfolder				
Special mono folder									
RIP2 mono folder	\\RIP2\incoming\broads	heetmono		BIP4 m	no folder				
	1								
			×	ок 😫 с	ancel				

Input queue configurations. Relationship between RipControl input folders and RIP input folders are established.

Input spool-folder

Enter full network path to folder (mapped drive or UNC).

Use current user for login

Check this option when the same username/password combination is used for the local machine and the machine where the input folder is located

Username/Password

When not using the local account, enter user name and password to use for locking on to the machine having the input folder

Lookup job in database

Requires ControlCenter. Check this option and fill in the naming convention dialog (see next section) so that jobs can be recognized and looked up in the database. Lookup enables database-controlled prioritized ripping and auto-selection of color/mono page setups.

RIPx spoolfolder

Enter full network path to rip spool folder linked to page setup (mapped drive or UNC).

Special mono folder

Check this option in case a special RIP page setup is used for mono (greyscale) output.

RIPx mono folder

Enter full network path to rip spool folder linked to monochrome page setup (mapped drive or UNC).

3.5 Naming convention

Job naming convention is used for database-controlled operation. The job name recognition is required for job lookup in the ControlCenter production database. The naming convention is entered as a file mask using identifiers listed in the dialog.

Make sure to fill in the default values in case a certain identifier is not part of the filename.

Set naming convention	
Set naming convention File mask Naming convention %P-%D-%S-%E-%N.%X Naming convention attributes: %P for Publication %D for Date (set date format separately) %S for Section %E for Edition %I for Location Group %X for don't care Examples: %P%P%D%D%N%N (fixed - zero extended) %P%-%D-%N (separated name) Date format MMDD Example: DDMMYYYY Valid separators	Select default job ids for attributes not in filename. Make sure this corresponds to InputCenter poll input setup. Leave blank if attribute is not ambigeous. Publication Metro Section A Edition Main Issue Main Location Default
у ок	😫 Cancel

In case the name doesn't fit with the standard file naming scheme, a regular expression can be used to rename the file so it fits to the scheme. For regular expression syntax and usage, please refer to the *ControlCenter Enterprise User Manual* or the *ControlCenter Professional User Manual* (appendix A)

4 Common problems

Problem:

Jobs are ripping fine but there is no progress bars and the Current RIP job field is empty on RipControl.

What to look for:

This error has no impact on the load balancing performance. It is purely for visibility on the RipControl GUI. RipControl progress bar relies on a dedicated progress plugin in the Harlequin RIP. Refer to the Readme.txt file found in the Progress-plugin folder on the installation CD.

Problem:

Jobs are not progressing on a particular RIP.

What to look for:

Beware that the setting "Maximum outstanding jobs on RIP" counts files in <u>all</u> defined folders for the RIP. So if the setting is 3 this means that if the accumulated number of waiting jobs is three then no more jobs will be sent to the RIP until the count reaches 2 or less. If for any reason one of the input spoolers on the RIP has been disabled or is hanging when files may be stuck.

Observe the lower left window to see if jobs are stuck in certain spool folders for long.

Problem:

Often the RIP is reporting "Offending command" or similar errors on jobs which is ok when processed manually using the RIP File menu.

What to look for:

Most probably the incoming jobs are moved too early from the RipControl input folder to the selected RIP. The file is not completely build up and will thus fail to RIP.

Adjust the stable-time to ensure the file has time enough to stabilize.

Problem:

Some inputs are not arriving as files but through published printers. How can this be fed to RipControl

Solution:

A tool called RedMon (Redirection Port Monitor) is included on the installation CD. The tool can be configured to re-direct data sent to a published printer to a file which can be polled by RipControl.

Read the installation instructions for RedMon for details on configuration.