Join the Digital Forms Revolution with SDSI's UnForm

by Allen Miglore, SDSI President

Five or 10 years ago when a low-end laser printer cost several thousand dollars and barely competed with line printers for speed, laser-printed forms were a hard sell to the small-business end user. Early pioneers in laser-form software found they need ed to focus on high-volume, paper-intensive businesses to justify the technology investment. The typical customer was an insurance company, a defense contractor, or some other business that dealt in (or with) bureaucracy. Small business continued to deal with boxes of preprinted forms or plain paper forms printed in monospace characters and artfully decorated with dashes.

Times change, however, and today, laser printers can scale from six to 50 or more pages per minute, with amazing paper-handling capabilities. They can be purchased at almost any price point, from $500 to $5,000 depending on the capabilities needed. Tod ay, laser-printed forms make sense for small businesses, even those with low volumes of printing. In the near future, laser printing will be joined by electronic documents as the way most business forms are produced and distributed.

The primary measurable benefit of laser forms is the simple replacement of preprinted forms with plain paper. Laser forms cost about two cents per page. Preprinted forms are typically around 10 cents per page and are printed in large quantities that ca n be wasted when new designs are needed.

A secondary but very real benefit of laser forms is in work-flow improvements. No more loading and aligning forms. Form copies can be pre-bursted and sent to different bins or different printers. Copies can be faxed. Data from the job can be archived o r used to perform other tasks in a single print run. Forms can be printed with bar codes. Electronic versions can be e-mailed or presented on a Web site. There are endless possibilities because a software-generated form is as flexible as the software with which it is written. In the case of UnForm, that software is BBx®.

The session I'll present at TechCon99 will focus on how to integrate UnForm seamlessly with your BBx application, how to develop forms and highly customized form applications, and how to use UnForm to generate new interest in your applications and serv ices.

Allen Miglore is the author of several popular BBx software products, including General, Filix, BB-Web and UnForm. His company, Synergetic Data Systems Inc., has published, marketed and supported these products since 1988.