

CASE STUDIES

White Rabbit Express Order Fulfillment Case Study



White Rabbit Japan

Using Aspose.PDF .NET to streamline order fulfillment operations

Max Hodges, CEO, January 18th 2016

About White Rabbit Japan

We run White Rabbit Express, a Tokyo-based proxy buying service. We've helped tens of thousands of people in over 100 countries buy-and-ship Japanese products which are difficult to get outside of Japan.

Our order fulfilment operations were very inefficient and manual labor intensive. This was especially painful during Black Friday and Cyber Monday events which increased orders by several times our normal volume resulting in delays and an overworked staff.

Taking cues from Toyota's process management principles, we were able to eliminate huge amounts of waste by allocating roles differently, creating custom software to manage the workflows, integrating barcode label printers and scanners, and reducing wasteful motions by replacing keyboards and mice with touch-screen monitors throughout the department.

Problem

Aspose.PDF .NET came to our aid in two key areas: programmatic printing of PDF documents and automatically adding signatures to those documents.

Part of our shipping process involves submitting data to a Japan Post API. The API returns several shipping documents--dispatch note, customs declaration, and commercial invoice--in PDF format. Printing these documents from our web application is time-consuming for users, who need to open the PDF in a new window, open the print dialog, click print, then close the tab. Since this activity is highly mechanical, it was clearly something we wanted to reduce.

Once these documents are printed, our shippers need to sign as many as seven pages per shipment using a ballpoint pen. We decided to see what could be done to get signatures digitally inserted into the shipping documents.

Solution

We built a .NET application using C# to handle the printing of PDFs using Aspose.PDF .NET. Our application runs as a web server on the local machine, listening on a localhost port. PDF

documents are posted from our Meteor web application to the localhost port where the .NET application receives them and handles the printing. There are no print dialogs, no extra buttons to click, and no browser tabs for the user to close.

Next we took a photo of a signature and saved it as a PNG image file with a transparent background. Using Aspose.PDF .NET [search tools](#) we programmatically iterate through each page of the PDF documents looking for keywords which indicate a signature is required field. The signature [image file is then inserted into the PDF](#) before we resave and print it.

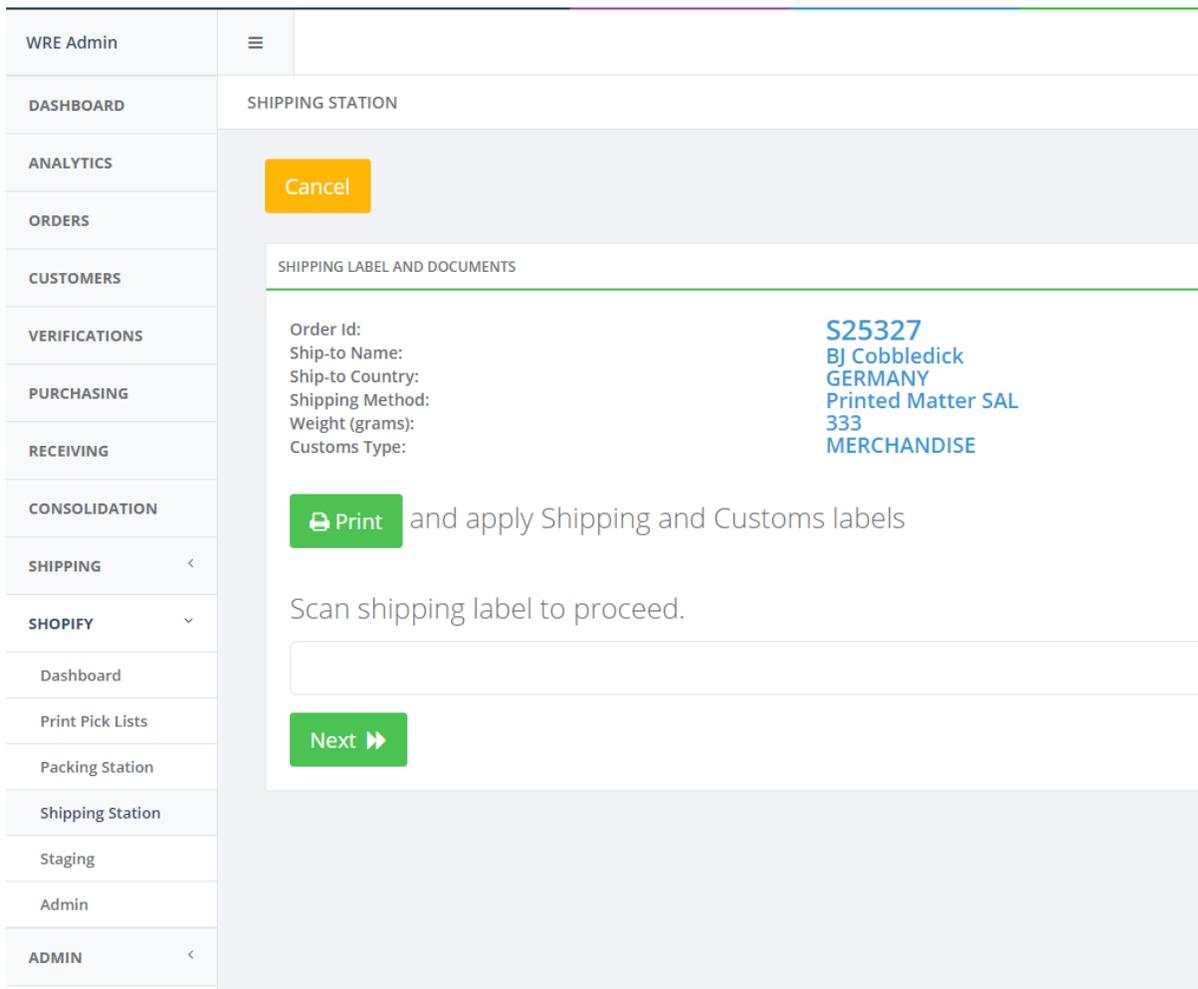


Figure 1: Our in-house order fulfilment web application. Shipping document files in PDF format are passed to a .NET app running Aspose.PDF components.



送り状 (Dispatch Note) 物品用 (For goods)

* E L 0 3 4 2 0 6 *

JAPAN

開封により開くことがあります
May be opened officially



JAPAN POST

お問い合わせ番号

(item number) EL 034 206

From (Sender) Name & Address		受付年月日 Date mailed 年 (Year) 月 (Month) 日 (Date) 2016 01 13		受付時刻 Time mailed 時 (hour) 分 (Minute)		郵便料金 28	
WHITE RABBIT JAPAN 3-21-28 IKEJIRI 9TH FLOOR SETAGAYA-KU TOKYO		Total gross weight 1035 g		To (Addressee) Name & Address		合計金	
Postal Code 154-0001		JAPAN		SOUTH AUSTRALIA		Postal Code 50	
TEL (81) 30-6450-7109		FAX		Country AUSTRALIA			
内容品の詳細な記載 Detailed description of contents		HSコード HS tariff number	内容品の原産国 Country of origin of goods	内容品の個数 Number of items contained	止重量 Net weight	内容品の価格 Value	TEL
BOOK				1		USD12.00	FAX
STATIONARY				2		USD6.00	次の場合は口に> Insert a cross (x)
STATIONARY				1		USD5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 贈物 a gift
BOOK				1		USD11.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 商品 merchan
BOOK				1		USD17.65	<input type="checkbox"/> 身の回り personal
FOR DETAILS, SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT						日本円換算合計 Total Value	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 上記内容品は危険物に該当しないことを確認済です I checked that contents above are not dangerous goods.		<input type="checkbox"/> 20万円超 申告対象郵便物		この郵便物は Number of this pieces 番目 / 個中 Total number of pieces		ご注意! この用紙は送り状 専用バウチに入れ (To Post and Customs) This is EMS Dispatch No of delivery attached on 1	
ご署名 Signature of the sender Max Hodges							

Fold in half and enclose in the pouch

Figure 2: Signatures like these are inserted on shipping documents automatically before being sent to the printer.

Experience

Finding a solution: We evaluated several solutions before selecting Aspose.PDF .NET. Acrobat Reader lacked an API and was hard to remote control. GhostScript was very low-level, so required a lot of work to do simple things. PDFSharp was basically a wrapper for Adobe Acrobat.

Implementation: Using a trial version of Aspose.PDF .NET I was able to start printing PDFs programmatically in minutes, and has a working solution deployed within half-a-day. The signature image merge feature was implemented in about 3 hours of work. The code examples in the online programmer's guide at aspose.com were very valuable in helping us quickly build our solutions.

Outcome: We believe making many small improves to a process can result in large improvements. Speeding up a process by just one minute when shipping 10-20K packages results in several hundred hours of time saved. Aspose.PDF .NET allowed us to very rapidly deliver an automated solution, freeing our team from the manual grind of repetitive tasks.