



HCSS File Manager



HCSS Education Ltd

Using Aspose.Total for .Net to implement printing in a document management system

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Product Background / Overview

HCSS Education is the market leader in the provision of budgeting software to schools in the UK, an accomplishment achieved through our flagship software package: FPS.Net.

Our close working partnership with our clients has enabled us to identify the requirement for our newest product, the HCSS File Manager.

The central functions of the HCSS File Manager are:

- ✚ It's ability to create and maintain links to documents and files across a single system, network and the internet.
- ✚ To organize these links in a user defined, hierarchal structure.
- ✚ To then conglomerate all these separate files into a single well presented and indexed PDF document when required.

Requirements Scenario

To achieve this aim, we began looking for an SDK or component to sit at the heart of the printing function, that would:

- ✚ Enable us to directly convert MS Office documents to PDF, using either the existing Office interop assemblies or it's own custom structure.
- ✚ Handle the processing and formatting of images files into PDF.
- ✚ Not install a PDF printer to the client's machine, as this may cause security access problems when installed, and also be open to modification or deletion outside of our application's control.
- ✚ Be a managed .NET component rather than COM.
- ✚ All of the above to fit within our budget limitations!

Solution Implementation

After trying many different packages, we came upon the Aspose Total suite. Whilst every other potential solution forced us into some form of compromise by satisfying one requirement at the expense of another, the Aspose suite stood out because it not only fulfilled, but exceeded each of our requirements above.

At the time of writing we use Aspose Words, Cells, Slides and PDF to convert Excel,

Word, PowerPoint, Image files directly to PDF.

We then use the Aspose PDF Kit product to concatenate each of these converted files into a single PDF document, to generate a customized Title page and table of contents for the document and to apply page numbering and header and footers to give the document a consistent look and feel.

Benefits

We are very pleased with the Aspose suite, in particular:

- ✚ Aspose provides more than the expected basics of PDF and MS Office document manipulation. Their comprehensive and insightful API design means that many common tasks are already automated for the most part, greatly reducing development time.
- ✚ The OEM licensing model allows us to supply an affordable product with hi spec capabilities, and avoid adding a large licensing cost onto the price of our software.
- ✚ Direct integration between each component in the range was a massive help when converting office documents directly to PDF without entering into a long convoluted procedure.
- ✚ The direct support and user forums are both excellent, providing a real sense of being part of an interactive community that and helps and guides each other through shared knowledge and experience.

Future Implementations

The Total suite provides a great deal more functionality than we have so far utilized. We have plans to entirely replace Excel report generation in our flagship software package with the Aspose reporting product, primarily because it will open up multiple report output options for our users, but also because we feel Aspose provides a more hassle-free API with which to develop solutions.

Also in time, we wish to remove all Office interop dependence in favor of the Aspose products, which we feel are markedly superior to the Microsoft versions.

Conclusion

After a long search for a solution, we have been very impressed with what Aspose can provide. Converging multiple document types into one PDF file is very fast and

simple, removing the dependency on Microsoft Office COM references. The direct integration between the components and the wide range of features in particular has provided a considerable advantage.

Screen shot of HFM showing template window and print button:

