



Adding PitStop Preflight to your Job Onboarding process

Questions & Answers

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PitStop Library Container

Pitstop Library Container, in short PLC, is Enfocus' answer to the need of providing a PDF preflight and correction solution that is Cloud-ready, platform and OS independent, and scales when production peaks changes. It integrates easily with web applications using REST API as the interface, and you're in control where and how you deploy PLC.

Below you will find answers to questions that you may find useful. These questions were raised during a recent "Unveiling the Power of the Enfocus PitStop Library Container" webinar session, extended with other answers to questions that you may have, and we received separately.

In case you've more questions or would like to get in touch with one of our local reselling partners, then please fill out our webform found under www.enfocus.com/contacts.

Questions & Answers

Q: What functionality does PLC provide?

A: PLC integrates Enfocus' renown PitStop Library engine, which is used for over 25 years in our best-selling PitStop Pro plug-in for Adobe Acrobat, and in our hot folder/CLI supported PitStop Server application.

PLC's main task is to preflight and correct PDF files, using PitStop Preflight Profiles and Action Lists, of which both can be created using PitStop Pro.

PLC can generate one or all of the following preflight report types: a PDF report (either containing hyperlinks to the problem areas, or only containing the most relevant info, or even a report that you can customize to your company branding by adding a logo and specific colors), an XML report, or a JSON report. The report can provide extensive details of the problems within a PDF file. Each preflight report type has its usage. For example, you can mail your client the PDF report, while a JSON report can be parsed by the back-end of your web-application. Essential messages and warnings can be pulled from the JSON report and posted to your client in the web interface of your web-application, providing instant feedback after the PDF was uploaded and processed.

PLC can also be used to generate JPEG or PNG images of the PDF files in the resolution that you desire, using the PDF2Image library. For example, you can generate low resolution thumbnail preview files for your web application or generate proof files in a higher resolution that you share with your client. The main difference with an open-source library such as ImageMagick is that you can execute Action Lists before the image generation is done. For example, you can modify the page boxes to only display the trim box and hide any crop marks or color bars. You can also use variables to specify a specific page range for which you want to generate the images.

Q: What is a Volume License and what happens if I process more PDF files than what is covered by my Volume License?

The Volume License is an annual subscription license. It defines the "threshold limit", which is the maximum number of PDF files that you're allowed to process annually. Volume Licenses are provided to allow 100k PDFs, 250kPDFs, 500k PDFs, 1000k PDFs and +1000k PDFs to be processed annually.

You don't need to worry when you process more PDF files than what is covered by your annual Volume License. Notifications are sent when you approach your threshold limit. PLC will continue to



work when you pass the threshold limit. However, you will be required to upgrade to at least the next available Volume License.

We don't penalize you for each additional PDF file that you process. You simply upgrade to a higher Volume License and pay the difference between the license that you've purchased already and the license that you're going to purchase.

At renewal time of your subscription, you can decide to renew the new Volume License or downgrade the license to a lower Volume License. Your local reselling partner will assist you during this process.

Q: In case I need to upgrade my Volume License, how is this being charged?

A: The volume upgrade price is a fixed price and doesn't change. In other words, the upgrade price doesn't pro-rate in function of the remaining time left between the date you went over the threshold limit until the end of the subscription term of your license. The end date of the subscription term doesn't change and therefore also the renewal date remains as is. Regardless if six months of your subscription term remains or just only one month, the upgrade price is always the same price. The reason is that we only charge the difference between the price paid for your current Volume License and the price of the Volume License you will be upgrading to.

Q: Will I be informed when reaching my annual Volume limit?

A: Yes, notifications will be sent in advance to inform you when you're reaching your annual threshold limit. You don't need to worry when you go over your limit. PLC will continue to work. The last thing that we want to happen is that your production is interrupted. However, we do require that you immediately upgrade to at least the next available Volume License.

Q: Can I downgrade a Volume License when it becomes apparent that a lower Volume License will work fine for me?

A: Yes, a downgrade of a Volume License is possible, but only at the end of the current subscription term.

The actual downgrade is accomplished by simply purchasing another, lower, Volume License at renewal time of your subscription.

Q: Does PLC support usage-based pricing, or is it based on file processing tiers?

A: PLC is kind of usage-based, but takes annual volume processing into account. Instead of being charged a fee per processed PDF, we charge an annual fee for the anticipated volume. The advantage is that your annual cost is known upfront, and you don't need to worry about any unforeseen fees. In case you don't know exactly what your annual volume is, you can start with a lower priced Volume license. When you reach your volume limit during the subscription term, you'll be notified to upgrade to (at least) the next available Volume license. The upgrade price is the difference between the license that you're using and the one you'll be upgrading to.

Q: Will usage-based pricing be offered eventually?

A: This is something that may be considered for the future but we've no timing for this.



Q: What are transactions? Each download, upload, preflight, Action List run separately, or is one processed file calculated as one?

A: Each PDF that's being processed in PLC is counted as a transaction. A preflight session is counted. An Action List that is run to correct or make changes to a PDF and therefore creates a new PDF result, is counted, and also creating preview images for thumbnails or proof files are counted.

Q: How is usage counted? Is it a 'click' per Action List and/or preflight profile?

A: To elaborate on this question. A PLC license defines the maximum allowed number of PDF files that may be processed annually and how many PLC instances may run. E.g., a 100K Single instance license determines that a maximum of 100.000 PDFs may be processed within the subscription term (which is one year) and only one PLC instance may run. When a PDF is submitted to PLC then this is seen as a job and counted as one. If this job was configured to run a preflight operation and several Actions (to correct or make changes to the PDF content), then this is still counted as one (one click, when referring to the question). When the new resulting PDF is pushed again through PLC to run another set of Actions or a preflight, then this operation is a new count (or click). When PLC generates thumbnails or low-resolution proof files, then this action is also separately counted.

Q: How does PLC log the transactions/usage?

A: The logging or counting of the number of PDF files processed is done using a transaction logging service over Https.

Q: What happens if the transaction logging is blocked due to an Internet communication issue?

A: The job will fail if logging is not possible, e.g. when there's no Internet connection. Of course, jobs shouldn't fail when the logging of a transaction wouldn't be successful due to a temporary Internet disconnect. For this reason, we've implemented a grace period mechanism that will monitor the Internet disconnect, track the transactions that occurred in the meantime, and will update the transaction logger in the back-end as soon as the Internet connection is reestablished again.

Q: I see that the actionList URLs is an array, when I use multiple Actions in this list, will it count as multiple usage?

A: No, multiple Actions can be executed during one pass of the PDF file in PLC. In such case the transaction is counted as one. However, when the result of running the Action is a new PDF file that is again submitted to PLC to perform another preflight process or run of Actions, then this second pass is a separate transaction count.

Q: Can I run multiple Action Lists in one call? And if so, would that use one or multiple transactions?

A: Yes, you can combine multiple Action Lists in one request, and this will be counted as 1 transaction.

Q: Wouldn't seasonal peaks be a good use case to provide short-term licenses?

A: This is why we offer a Multi instance version of the Volume License. It allows a user to run an unlimited number of PLC instances on multiple servers or within a cluster. When there're seasonal peaks, even unforeseen ones, simply spin-up additional instances as required.



There's no need to worry about having to go through a purchase process when there's a need for additional processing power. This will only cause unwanted delays, and not something you want during weekends, evenings, or holiday season periods. The Multi instance volume license embeds this flexibility from the ground up, and you control when to spin-up additional PLC instances.

Q: Are Developer License included as part of a Volume License?

A: We separate the Developer Licenses from the Production Licenses because for each you can decide if you wish to purchase a Single instance or Multi instance license.

Q: What is the difference between a Developer License versus a Production License?

A: A Developer License is a lower priced license and is used for development and testing purposes of PLC on other servers than the Production server. The Production License is used for production and its usage is monitored by the transaction logging. We recommend the purchase of a Developer license because our PLC release cycles are every 6 weeks, made available through AWS ECR. When you download the new version, you don't want to deploy this immediately on your Production server. Instead, you deploy it on your test/development environment first, double check everything works fine, test your Preflight Profiles and Action Lists, and then deploy it on your Production system.

Q: So when would the Production version be updated? Every 6 weeks as well?

A: There is only one PLC deliverable, and its license type determines if it's for Development use or for Production use. In other words, every 6 weeks we release a new version that you can immediately use for your Developer setup and for Production.

Q: What are the limits of the "Developer License"?

A: There are no limits, except that you're not allowed to use it for production. We monitor the usage to ensure that the license is correctly used. It's always best to refer to the End User License Agreement, which states how a specific license may be used.

Q: Will PLC ship with default Preflight Profiles and Action Lists?

A: Preflight Profiles and Action Lists will not ship with PLC. Instead, you can use the Preflight Profiles and Action Lists created with PitStop Pro (our plug-in for Adobe Acrobat) and/or PitStop Server.

Q: How does the Switch automation solution fit in this setup?

A: There is no technical limitation to integrate our Switch automation solution with PLC. We actually developed a free Node.js script called "pitstop-library-container", which is available as an NPM package on our GitHub account <https://github.com/EnfocusSW>. However, remember that PLC is designed for the Cloud while Switch in many cases is installed on-premises. When Switch needs to utilize PLC for the preflight and correction of PDF files then you will have to consider the latency (time it may take) to push the PDF file from Switch into the Cloud, have PLC process the PDF file, and receive the PDF file back again. PLC can be installed on-premises as well, which will reduce the Internet upload/download latency, but still, the integration isn't as tight as when using PitStop Server. When a lot of PDF files are also created in-house and do not arrive via a web-submission, you could consider adding PitStop Server for the on-premises preflighting and fixing of PDF files.

Just as a side note: when purchasing PitStop Server you receive Switch Core Engine as part of the license.



Q: Sounds like it would be better to use the PLC inside of Switch rather than PitStop Server, PitStop Server is always the biggest processing bottleneck.

A: This is a business and implementation decision, and depends if you require a lot of on-premise versus Cloud-based processing of the PDF files.

Q: Are there any plans for an app that will integrate Switch with PLC?

A: A Switch app is currently on our backlog and may become available in the future, but based on the Node.js script example referenced in the above answer, you could now already create your own script to integrate PLC with Switch.

Q: Will the Docker image be available in Docker Hub?

A: No, PLC is only made available through AWS ECR (elastic container registry).

Q: Can you force a worker to only preflight PDF files and other workers to generate images for preview/thumbnail viewing? Time is essential, can I prioritize the preview generation?

A: As both the PDF preflight and PDF2Image (image generation) runs in the same PLC Docker Container, the only way to ensure that an operation is prioritized is to dedicate a server to this operation. In other words, one PLC instance would be used to perform the preflight of PDF files and another PLC instance performs the image generation.

Note however that you require a Multi instance license to run multiple PLC instances on different servers or within a cluster.

Q: I would like preview images generated as fast as possible for customer experience. So thumbnail images can be prioritized before preflight?

A: Yes.

Q: Does PLC provide the preview image also when the preflight passes without problems so that you can show it to the customer for final approval?

A: Yes, it will. You have the choice to create thumbnails or larger preview files as part of the preflight process. You decide on the image type, PNG or JPG and the resolution, for example to generate a larger proof file that you wish to supply to your customer.

Q: Can we use variable data sets?

A: Absolutely! Whenever you call the job request to preflight a PDF or the PDF2Image request, you can pass a variable set URL to PLC. Therefore, Preflight Profiles and Action Lists can use dynamic data while executing. The main difference though, is that you may need to create the variable set file before executing the request.

This is where the free PLC Node.js script can come in handy. You can download it from our GitHub place at following location:

<https://github.com/EnfocusSW/pitstop-library-container>

This Node.js script simplifies many processes when working with PLC, including generating variables set files.



Q: Is there a limit to the number of workers on a single instance of PLC?

A: There's the theoretical limit and the practical limit. In theory you can run as many workers, which are PitStop Library executables, in parallel at the same time within a PLC instance. However, the actual performance really depends on the hardware, number of CPUs/Cores used, and the complexity of the PDF file itself. Our rule of thumb is to take the number of CPUs/Cores minus 1, and the resulting number is then the maximum number of workers that you can configure. Do remember that with a Volume License you can deploy multiple PLC instances on different servers or within a cluster, and each PLC instance can be configured to run x-number of workers. This flexibility gives you the greatest performance and fault tolerance.

Q: At the moment an AWS Switch instance does the PLC job - could we remove this by purchasing PLC and make all the decisions of the flows using script?

A: PLC is not designed to replace Enfocus Switch. It's a solution that perfectly fits web applications as it can bring immediate preflight report or image generation as explained in our answers above. PLC won't do all the operations offered by Switch, like sorting files, unzipping, renaming, archiving, imposition, etc.

Note that you can combine the best of both worlds with a PLC. Ensuring preflight during the PDF file submission process, and have the PDF file sent to a Switch flow for further processing, including sending an approval request using Enfocus Review.

Q: In a lot of cases the original PDF file contains info outside the trim box. Is it possible to only give feedback about the content inside the trim box, and in cases the trim box is missing, can it be detected automatically based on for example the cropmarks?

A: These are two questions in one. The answer to the first question is yes. You can limit a preflight to the trim box using a restriction. More on restrictions here:

https://www.enfocus.com/manuals/ReferenceGuide/PP/23/enUS/home.html#en-us/common/pr/concept/co_about_restrictions.html

The answer to the second question is also yes. You can use the existing marks to define page boxes if not present, see:

<https://www.enfocus.com/manuals/Extra/Actions/23u1/home.html#en-us/common/act/concept/342.html>

Q: Will you have this available as a true Cloud service as well? You are talking about Docker, which is great, but when can I simply access the same thing in the Cloud via an API?

A: To put the question differently. When does Enfocus provide a Cloud-based preflight service that can simply be accessed using an API, instead of deploying Docker instances myself?

The answer is that this service is indeed being planned, however, a schedule of when this will be available can't be communicated yet. Our focus was first on PitStop Library Container, because there was a high request for this solution.

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