



Lightning TIFF

User Guide

v3.0



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Introduction

About Lightning TIFF


Lightning TIFF is a high performance TIFF output plugin for the Harlequin RIP that is designed to replace the standard TIFF plugin provided. As well as providing a significant number of additional features, its main benefit is its lightning fast performance; users should see anything up to a 4x (or more) overall improvement in performance and throughput when it is used, depending on output mode, compression mode, resolution, screening, job content and platform.

The high performance that Lightning TIFF achieves is obtained through a unique method for implementing CCITT compression, along with a significant number of code optimisation techniques that have been applied to all the various compression modes. In addition, Hamillroad engineers have built in the use of advanced multi-threading software techniques which when used with the latest multi-core CPUs, such as the Intel Core 2 Duo or Intel Core i3 / i5 / i7, provide a near linear additional increase in performance.

Support for the latest Harlequin Multi RIP (HMR) 10 and 11 is also included, both 32-bit and 64-bit, with the 64-bit version having been fully optimised to take advantage of 64-bit CPUs.

The results of this are the creation of TIFF files at extremely high speed, allowing for both greatly increased throughput and faster last minute production of time critical plates.

Conventions used in this reference manual

- Instructions may be indicated by a numbered paragraph or a (•) bullet point.
- The  icon is used to identify important information.
- Screen Shots are always laid out with the Windows version preceding the Macintosh version.

Differences between Mac and PC versions

While every effort has been made to keep the PC and Mac versions the same, there are some minor differences that cannot be avoided.

This manual will always explain the procedure for both platforms where they differ from the above.

Type of Files output by Lightning TIFF

Lightning TIFF produces TIFF files which are compatible with TIFF revision 6.0; Bilevel Images (Section 3), Grayscale Images (Section 4), RGB Full Color Images (Section 6) and CMYK Images (Section 16).

All typically used compression formats are supported; PackBits Compression (Section 9), Modified Huffman Compression (Section 10), CCITT Bilevel Compression (Section 11) - including T.4 1D, T.4 2D and T.6, LZW Compression (Section 13) and (new to version 3) Flate (ZIP).

As well as supporting standard striped images (see Section 3 – Location of the Data), tiled images (Section 15) are also supported.

System Requirements

Operating system:

PC	Windows XP / Vista / 7 / 8 / 10 or later
Mac	OS X - 10.2 to 10.10 or later

Hardware:

PC	Pentium-4 2GHz Processor, or Core 2 Duo 1.66GHz Processor, or Core i3 / i5 / i7 2GHz Processor 512Mb RAM 10Gb free disk space CD-ROM Drive
Mac (Intel)	Core 2 Duo 1.66GHz Processor, or Core i3 / i5 / i7 2GHz Processor 512Mb RAM 10Gb free disk space CD-ROM Drive

Harlequin RIP:



A Harlequin RIP version 5.0 or later is required.



PowerPC Mac RIPs are no longer supported as of Lightning TIFF v2.0.

Installing and Activating Lightning TIFF

Installing Lightning TIFF

Installing Lightning TIFF on your Harlequin RIP is as simple as ripping a Postscript job.

- From the first menu on the RIP's screen, select the **Print File** option.



The menu's name will vary depending on the RIP vendor.

- If your Harlequin RIP is on a PC, then depending on your RIP version print one of:

Install Lightning TIFF (Win-Hqn9).ps

Install Lightning TIFF (Win-HMR10-32).ps

Install Lightning TIFF (Win-HMR10-64).ps

Install Lightning TIFF (Win-HMR11-64).ps

- If your Harlequin RIP is on a Mac (OSX), then depending on your RIP version print one of:

Install Lightning TIFF (Mac -OSX).ps

- Once the job is complete you must reboot the RIP.

Lightning TIFF can now be accessed from the Edit Page Setup dialog when creating new Page Setups, although jobs cannot be output with it until it is activated.

Activating Lightning TIFF

Automatically

Activating Lightning TIFF on your Harlequin RIP is as simple as ripping a Postscript job.

- From the first menu on the RIP's screen, select the **Print File** option.



The menu's name will vary depending on the RIP vendor.

- Print the Lightning TIFF Activation File you have been supplied with (to a Page Setup that uses Lightning TIFF):

Lightning TIFF Activation - 12345-67.ps


Where '12345-67' is the security number of the Harlequin RIP you want to use Lightning TIFF on.

- Once the job is complete you must output the page it produces (in the Output Controller / Monitor).

Once the job is output, you will see in the RIP's Monitor window the following message:

```
! Lightning Plugin (TIFF)
```

```
MESSAGE: Activated Lightning TIFF.
```

and a flashing  icon in the Output Controller / Monitor. This indicates that Lightning TIFF has successfully been activated.

If there is a problem with the Activation Key, then you will see in the RIP's Monitor window the following message:

```
! Lightning Plugin (TIFF)
```

```
ERROR: Invalid Product Key.
```

and a flashing  icon in the Output Controller / Monitor.

Manually

To activate Lightning TIFF on your Harlequin RIP you need to enter the 25 digit Activation Key (including '-'s):

- From the first menu on the RIP's screen, select the **Device Manager** option.



The menu's name will vary depending on the RIP vendor.

-
- From the "Plugin" popup, select **LightningHIFF.i32 (Hqn89 & HMR10/32)**, **LightningHIFF.i64 (HMR10/64 & HMR11/64)** or **LightningHIFF (Mac (OSX))**.
 - From the list below, either double-click the **Lightning TIFF** entry or select the **Lightning TIFF** entry and click **Edit**.
 - The **Device Manager Edit** screen will launch.
 - Enter your 25 digit Activation Key (including '-'s) into the Address field, preferably copy-n-pasting it from the file name of the supplied Activation Key Certificate.

Lightning TIFF can now be accessed from the Edit Page Setup dialog when creating new Page Setups and jobs can also be output with it.

Configuring Lightning TIFF

General

To use Lightning TIFF you need to configure a Page Setup in your Harlequin RIP to use it:

- From the first menu on the RIP's screen, select the **Page Setup Manager** option.



The menu's name will vary depending on the RIP vendor.

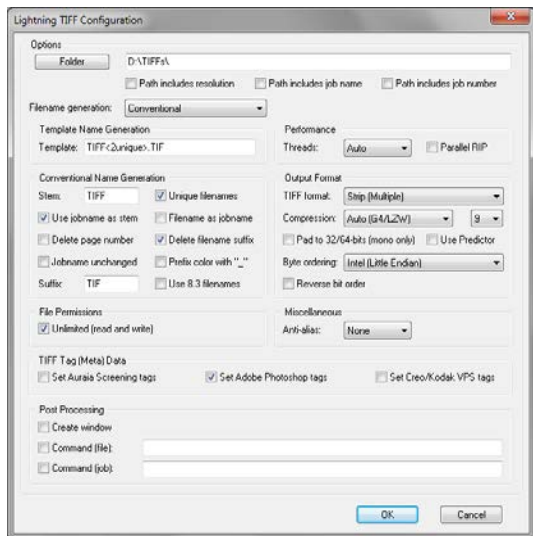
- Click on **New**.
- The **Edit Page Setup** screen will launch.
- From the Device section, select **Lightning TIFF** from the **Device** popup menu.
- You may now select the usual set of options from the rest of the Page Setup dialog.

To configure Lightning TIFF:

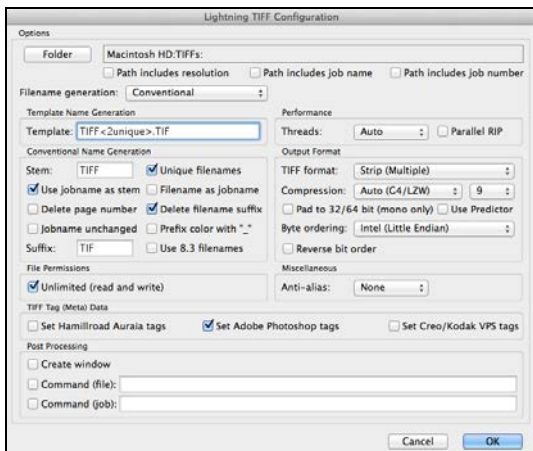
- From the **Edit Page Setup** screen, select the **Configure device** button.
- The **Lightning TIFF Configuration** screen will launch.
- You may now modify the various options.

Dialog Layout

PC



Mac



Options

Output Folder

The output folder is the location where the TIFF files will be output. This can be either on a local disk, or on a remote computer via a mounted share.

To select the output folder:

- Select the **Folder** button.
- The **Select Folder** screen will launch.
- Browse to the required folder and select **OK**.

Alternatively, enter the full path name of the folder in the box.

Path includes...

In addition to selecting the output folder where the TIFF files will be written, the user can also select from any of three further options which augment the selected output folder:

1. Path includes resolution:

This option appends the (horizontal) device resolution of the job to the chosen Folder.

For example if the folder was "D:\TIFFs\" and the device resolution was "1200" dpi then the folder used would be "D:\TIFFs\1200\".

2. Path includes job name:

This option appends the job name of the job to the chosen Folder.

For example if the folder was "D:\TIFFs\" and the job name was "Job1" then the folder used would be "D:\TIFFs\Job1\".

3. Path includes job number:

This option appends the (unique) job number of the job (as allocated by the Harlequin RIP) to the chosen Folder.

For example if the folder was “D:\TIFFs\” and the job number was “123” then the folder used would be “D:\TIFFs\123 \”.

The most useful of these are option 2 and 3, where all the TIFF files from a given job will be output into their own individual folder.

File name generation

The file name that each TIFF file is given depends on whether template base name generation or conventional name generation is chosen. The former allows for very sophisticated and precise control over exactly how the file name is composed; quite often a requisite of many workflows. The latter allows for much simpler creation of file names, following a small number of easily understandable rules.

Template Name Generation

Template name generation uses a mixture of literal text (used as is) and variables (which are replaced) to create the resulting file name.

A simple example of a template is "TIFF<2unique>.TIF"; this simply creates files named as "TIFF00.TIF", "TIFF01.TIF", "TIFF02.TIF", etc... In this example, the initial "TIFF" and final ".TIF" are both literal text (used as is) and the middle "<2unique>" is a variable that is replaced with a unique number that is (at least) two digits long.

All sorts of complex names can be created, and furthermore, names can include sub-folders, allowing for accurate control over where files are written. To specify a sub-folder on the PC use a "\" and on the Mac a ".".

For example "<jobname>\<page#>_<colorname>.TIFF" will put all files for a given job into it's own sub-folder (named after the job name), naming each file with the page number (e.g. 123) and color name (e.g. "Cyan").

There are two types of template naming possible, Standard and Extended. Standard Template naming uses a standard set of template variables, compatible with those used in Harlequin TIFF. Extended Template naming uses an extended set of template variables that provide significantly more and powerful options.

For further details on all the possible variables that templates can use and what they each do, please see the chapter on Template Variables.

Conventional Name Generation

Conventional name generation, as mentioned before, uses a small number of options to specify exactly how each TIFF file name is constructed.

All conventionally named TIFF files start off with a stem prefix, followed by a period "." and end with a suffix; a simple example is "1Job.TIF". In this example, the initial "1Job" is the stem and the final "TIF" is the suffix.

Stem (edit box)

A fixed stem can be chosen by entering whatever is required in the Stem edit box.

For example if "TIFF" is entered (and "Unique filenames is enabled), then the TIFF files produced will be created as "TIFF00.TIF", "TIFF01.TIF", etc...

Use jobname as stem

Instead of using a fixed string for the prefix, when it is difficult to see which files belong to which job, the "Use jobname as stem" option when enabled replaces the fixed string with the job name.

For example if the job name was "Job", then instead of producing TIFF files named "TIFF00.TIF", "TIFF01.TIF", etc..., the TIFF files produced would be named "Job00.TIF", "Job01.TIF", etc...

However, because of the way the Harlequin RIP works, the job name as seen by Lightning TIFF always contains the page number at the beginning and the color name (of the separation) at the end.

Taking our previous example, where the job name was "Job", then the job names used by the Harlequin RIP for the four separations of a single page job would be "1. Job (C)", "1. Job (M)", "1. Job (Y)" and "1. Job (K)", and the TIFF files

produced would be named “1JobC00.TIF”, “1JobM00.TIF”, “1JobY00.TIF” and “1JobK00.TIF”¹.

Delete page number

If “Use jobname as stem” is enabled and the initial page number is not required, then this can be removed by enabling “Delete page number”.

Taking our previous example, the TIFF files produced in this case would then be “JobC00.TIF”, “JobM00.TIF”, “JobY00.TIF” and “JobK00.TIF”.

[Use] Jobname unchanged

As mentioned previously (see foot note), illegal characters are always removed from file names before trying to create a file. That’s fine for job names that use single byte characters, but for job names that use double byte characters, this can remove part of a valid 2-byte character that can in turn result in an unreadable file name.

The “[Use] Jobname unchanged” option can be therefore be useful if job names are written using double byte characters. However, care should be taken when using this option, as it is possible to create file names that are invalid on the operating system and so TIFF files fail to get created.

Unique filenames

In the case where we set the stem explicitly (and the TIFF files were named “TIFF00.TIF”, “TIFF01.TIF”, etc...), we also had “Unique filenames” enabled too. Without this the TIFF output would fail on the second and subsequent files, as

¹ The initial “1. ” is reduced to “1” and the final “ (C)” is reduced to “C” because illegal characters for a file system are always removed (and “:”, “ ”, “(” & “)”) are all illegal characters in file names on the PC.

they would all be named “TIFF.TIF”. Therefore if using an explicit stem to name files, “Unique filenames” should always be enabled.

However, if “Use jobname as stem” is used (instead of an explicit stem), then (assuming the job names are always unique) the “00” that is always at the end of the prefix is quite unnecessary, unless you want to generate multiple revisions of the same file (for example after making changes). In this case “Unique filenames” can be disabled.

[Use] Filename as jobname

Instead of using the job name, which is not always known by the user or set sensibly in a job (for example if a customer supplies a job), it is sometimes better to be able to use the file name instead.

This provides more flexibility, since the operator can rename the file from whatever it is to a known name and the output will be guaranteed to use that name.

Enabling the “[Use] Filename as jobname” therefore replaces the job name with the file name.

Taking our previous example, if the filename was “File.pdf”, the TIFF files produced in this case would be “FilepdfC00.TIF”, “FilepdfM00.TIF”, “FilepdfY00.TIF” and “FilepdfK00.TIF”.

Delete filename suffix

If “[Use] Filename as jobname” is enabled and any trailing file name extension is not required (such as “.pdf” or “.ps”), then this can be removed by enabling “Delete filename suffix”.

Taking our previous example, the TIFF files produced in this case would then be “FileC00.TIF”, “FileM00.TIF”, “FileY00.TIF” and “FileK00.TIF”.

Prefix color with “_”

Sometimes for a given file name it is not clear which part of it is the job name and which part of it is the color. Although obvious for CMYK, it is not so obvious for other names such as Pantone 123 CVC (which could be C for Cyan).

If “Prefix color with ‘_’” is enabled, then the color part of the name is prefixed (and separated from the job name) by “_”.

Taking our previous example the TIFF files produced in this case would then be “File_C00.TIF”, “File_M00.TIF”, “File_Y00.TIF” and “File_K00.TIF”.

Use 8.3 filenames

With the advent of long file names in Windows, this option is rarely used. However, it remains an option for backwards compatibility.

If this option is set, then the resulting file name stem is truncated to 8 characters and the resulting file name suffix is truncated to 3 characters. This therefore results in a file name that is 8.3 characters and valid on a DOS file system.

Suffix (edit box)

Finally, for a conventional name, we need to specify the suffix. This is typically “TIF” (PC) or “TIFF” (Mac) if the TIFF specification is followed.

Unfortunately, some operating systems such as Windows detect TIFF files (from their suffix) and try to produce thumbnails for them. This is fine for small TIFF files, but for large TIFF files it consumes a huge amount of CPU time which is a complete waste, especially if the TIFF files are due to be output and then deleted. In such a case, one might want to use “RIP” or some other suffix. However before doing so, one should check that other software used in the workflow can accept TIFF files with non-standard suffixes.

Performance

As mentioned previously, Hamillroad engineers have built in the use of advanced multi-threading software techniques which when used with the latest multi-core CPUs provide a near linear additional increase in (output) performance.

As you make use of more and more threads though, the memory requirements do go up (each thread needs its own local memory to work in) and since you are only speeding up the output times, the overall speed increase is less. There is therefore an issue of diminishing returns, where other cores might be better used to service other software (for example other modules in a workflow system). Using two threads is certainly a very good idea, as is anything up to four. Above that, it is recommended that the user considers carefully what else might be running on the computer.

If the computer on which Lightning TIFF is running does not have multiple CPUs (or cores), then this option is disabled (only the “None” option is available).

If running the RIP on a workstation which is also running other workflow modules, then it might be sensible to disable this (or use a smaller number of threads than CPUs/cores), so that the other workflow modules get more CPU time to do their work.

Threads

The options available in this popup menu depend on the number of CPUs (or cores) available. If there is only 1 CPU available, then the only choice here will be “None”. If there is more than 1 CPU (or core) available, then there will be a number of options:

1. None:

This option disables the multi-threading capabilities.

2. Auto:

This option enables the multi-threading capabilities (on computers with more than one core) and uses a carefully selected number of threads based on the number of available cores. This leads to a high level of output performance, but without consuming too many resources on the latest Intel Core i7 CPUs that can have up to 12 cores (6 cores with 2 hardware threads per core to be precise). The exact formula is $\min(\max(2, N / 2), 4)$.

3. Max(N):

This option enables the multi-threading capabilities (on computers with more than one core) and uses as many threads as there are cores. This leads to the best possible output performance, but for large band sizes and/or a large number of cores can cause memory issues (requiring you to also increase your Printer Buffer and the memory available to each RIP thread).

4. N - 1:

This option enables the multi-threading capabilities (on computers with more than one core) and makes use of a single thread for output (in addition to that of the RIP). It therefore overlaps the rendering of the job (in Single mode) or the reading of the page buffer (in Multiple mode) with the output.

5. N - 2:

This option is the same as the previous one, but two threads are used for output.

6. N - #:

This option is the same as the previous one, but # threads are used for output (where $\# > 2$).

Parallel RIP

This option when enabled causes the RIP to render (and so screen) separations in parallel, whilst still producing separate TIFF files. It is only used if the RIP is set to produce separations in the Page Setup; for example if the “CMYK Separations (Halftone)” (or similar) “Separations, Screening & Colour” is used.

This option is intended to be used to improve the performance of screening in version 7 of Auraia which was released at the end of 2015.

It can also be used to optimise the RIP performance when jobs contain transparency (or masked images), enabling the RIP to handle these types of job much faster (in some cases significantly faster).

Output Format

These options determine how data is stored in the TIFF file.

TIFF Format

The available options for the TIFF format are:

1. Strip (Single):

This option is one that users should be wary of using and is **not** a recommend option to use. It is only included for compatibility with the TIFF plugin.

It generates a TIFF file as a single continuous stream of (compressed) data. If the TIFF file is compressed, this provides no random access to the data whatsoever; some software might have problems reading this type of TIFF file, either failing completely or producing a memory error (as it tries to read the entire TIFF file into memory).

2. Strip (Multiple):

This is the default/standard option and should not be changed unless advised to do so by an 'expert'; doing so might cause your entire system to stop working, so do not experiment with this setting unless advised to.

This generates TIFF files with multiple strips, where each strip is approximately the size of a band as specified in the RIP's "Configure RIP" dialog.

3. Tiled (256x256), Tiled (512x512) & Tiled (1024x1024):

These options should only be used for specific applications that required tiled TIFF. Depending on what is required, either small (256 pixels square), medium (512 pixels square) or large (1024 pixels square) tiles can be generated.

Compression

A large number of compression methods are available in Lightning TIFF. Of these, the group of CCITT methods are in particular highly optimised, using unique algorithms along with a significant number of code optimisation techniques to achieve extremely fast performance.

The available options for compression are:

1. None:

This option is in general not recommended, as it performs no compression whatsoever and simply writes the image data out.

For high resolution output this can lead to extremely large TIFF files on disk and in some cases might actually be slower than compressing the data and writing (a much smaller amount) to disk.

2. Auto (G4 / LZW):

This option is the default. For 1-bit data it uses CCITT G4 and for 8-bit data it uses LZW. You can therefore use this setting for a Page Setup that can produce either 1-bit or 8-bit TIFF files and it saves you from having to change this option if you change the Page Setup from generating 1-bit to 8-bit data.

3. CCITT G4 / CCITT Fax Group 4:

For 1-bit data this is the recommended option to use. Especially in Lightning TIFF, where some of the highest compression ratios are achieved with extremely fast performance.

4. CCITT G3 (2D) / CCITT Fax Group 3-2D:

This option is similar to CCITT G4, but produces slightly larger files. It only makes sense to use if the target application needs this type of compression.

5. CCITT G3 (1D) / CCITT Fax Group 3-1D:

This option is similar to CCITT Huffman, but produces slightly larger TIFF files. It only makes sense to use if the target application needs this type of compression.

6. CCITT Huffman:

This option is slightly faster than CCITT Group 4 at compressing data and in some cases can produce smaller files (for example with stochastic screening). In those cases it is a recommended option.

7. Flate (ZIP):

For 8-bit data this is a good option to use. It produces files that are very highly compressed (more so than LZW), but does take time to do so (being slower than LZW).

8. LZW:

For 8-bit data this is the recommended option to use. It produces files that are nicely compressed without taking too much time to do so. For 1-bit data, it is a good option to use instead of either CCITT Group 4 or CCITT Huffman.

9. Packbits:

This option is in general not recommended, as it produces very large files, often 100s of megabytes.

Although it is very fast at compressing files, it typically does not compress files that much (other than areas of white space or areas of a flat tint) and so can lead to extremely large TIFF files on disk. In some cases it might actually be slower than compressing the data and writing a smaller amount to disk using LZW or another option.

Pad to 32/64-bits (mono only)

This option is another one of those that is rarely used, but included for compatibility. The standard option here is to generate TIFF files “of the correct expected width”; that is this option should usually be disabled and it should be rarely enabled, unless advised to do so by an ‘expert’.

If it is enabled, it should not normally be a problem, as all it will do is result in an image that is slightly wider than anticipated. If that image is just being output, then it will (should) not cause any problems. However, if the image is (for example) rotated and stitched together with another, then the extra white space (up to 31/63 pixels) on the right hand side could lead to problems with ‘gaps’ appearing.

Use Predictor

This option is one that can sometimes reduce the size of the compressed file (by anything up to 20%). It does so by differencing each pixel of a given color component with the pixel (of the same color component) to the left; that is it subtracts the pixel on the left from the current pixel, before then compressing the result. In some cases depending on the type of image produced it can actually make the resulting file larger, so a few tests should be done to see if it is beneficial to the type of image being produced.

Note that most TIFF readers do not support this for 1 bit data, so it only works if 8-bit data is being produced.

Byte ordering

This option is one that is usually set to that of the native platform; that is “Intel” on an Intel PC (or Intel Mac) and “Motorola” on a PowerPC Mac. This setting has no effect on the image data itself and only affects the storage of the TIFF header information (and tags). Since virtually all readers and writers can cope with either setting, which one is actually

used usually doesn't matter, but it is best to simply leave this option set to that of the native platform.

Reverse bit order

This option is another one of those that is rarely used, but included for compatibility. The default/standard option here is to generate TIFF files in "natural bit order"; that is this option should usually be disabled and it should be rarely enabled, unless advised to do so by an 'expert'.

If it is enabled, it should not be a problem, since most TIFF readers should be able to handle it correctly. However, software that reads TIFF files is usually not tested quite as much on data of this type.

File Permissions

By default, Lightning TIFF produces TIFF files with permissions set to that of the current user (and their group). This typically allows the current user (and members of their group) to read or write (delete) the file, but not anyone else.

Unlimited (read and write)

If unlimited file permissions are required, then this option can be enabled. This can be useful if the RIP is running on a mixed network; for example if the RIP is on a PC but all the users are on Macs. This simplifies the setup of the system so that you don't have to create a common user/group between the PC and Macs.

Miscellaneous

Anti-Alias

This option when enabled allows the RIP to produce anti-aliased output for contone data; that essentially smooth's out any jaggies that might appear in the image.

There are essentially two settings for this - "None" (off) and "NxN" (on), where the larger the value (for N), the more anti-aliasing is done and so the smoother the output looks.

1. None:
This option disables any anti-aliasing.
2. "2x2":
This option enables anti-aliasing over a 2x2 area. The quality here is certainly an improvement, but the output is not the best quality possible.
3. "3x3":
This option enables anti-aliasing over a 3x3 area.
4. "4x4":
This option enables anti-aliasing over a 4x4 area.
5. "6x6":
This option enables anti-aliasing over a 6x6 area.
6. "8x8":
This option enables anti-aliasing over an 8x8 area. The quality of image produces is the best possible, but the memory requirements and rendering times will be the largest.

The way the RIP does its anti-aliasing is to scale the job by the appropriate factor and then sample the output data back down (before outputting it). One should therefore be aware

that higher values of N increase the resolution that the job is being rendered at, which can lead to increased memory usage and a substantial increase in rendering times.

If producing contone output, the best option to use is one that produces images that are of an acceptable quality and don't take too long; that is you are advised to experiment with a few jobs and settings and check the output to see what you think is acceptable quality.

TIFF Tag (Meta) Data

Set Hamillroad Auraia tags

This option when enabled adds some extra tags in the TIFF file that provide information to a CtP device on Hamillroad's Auraia (and Bellissima) Digitally Modulated Screening (Auraia / Bellissima DMS). This information allows a CtP device to optimise plate exposure in certain circumstances.

Note that the extra tags only get set if a DMS screen is used.

Set Adobe Photoshop tags

This option when enabled adds some extra tags in a composite TIFF file as defined by Adobe Photoshop. This information defines any spot colors (over and above CMYK) by setting Photoshop code 0x03EE (which provide the extra colorant names, for example "Orange") and 0x03EF (which provide the RGB view equivalents in a DisplayInfo structure).

Note that enabling this option changes the InkSet tag value from 2 to 1 (removing the corresponding InkNames tag entry) and is only applied if the colorants also include CMYK.

Set Creo/Kodak VPS tags

This option when enabled adds some extra tags in the TIFF file as required by Creo / Kodak CtP devices.

Post-processing

When integrating a Harlequin RIP into a workflow, it is often necessary to perform an action on the TIFF files after they have been output - for example one might want to notify another part of the system that all the TIFF files from a job have arrived, or one might want to backup and archive all the TIFF files to DVD, or one might want to print all the pages of a job to a proofer, etc...

This is where the post-processing in Lightning TIFF comes in to its own. You have the option to perform a post-process operation both after each file has been output, and at the end of a job. The former is especially useful if you use the options to include the job name or the job number in the output path.

The post-process operation consists of running a DOS command (or script), to which you can supply various arguments. These arguments can either be literal text, or special substitution code variables which get replaced by their values.

Create Window

This option when enabled causes a Windows DOS box to be created. This allows you to see any text output that might appear, such as warning or error messages. It is mainly useful when writing and debugging scripts.

The DOS box goes away when the command completes, so to see any error message when creating/debugging your script, you might want to add a pause at the end of the script.

Command (File)

This option gets called at the end of outputting a TIFF file.

All of the substitution variables can be used to pass arguments to the command or script.

Command (Job)

This option gets called at the end of outputting all the TIFF files in a job.

The substitution variables which refer to individual TIFF files ('c', 'f', 'j', 'p' & 'z') can NOT be used to pass arguments to the command or script; they will either be blank (empty strings - "") or set to the value from the last TIFF file produced.

Substitution Code Variables

All substitution code variables can have a number between the '%' and the variable code. This number is used to restrict the maximum number of characters in the result.

The substitution code variables are:

Code	Value
%c	The separation color, default length 1 (e.g. "C" for "Cyan").
%d	The current date, default length 6, in the form YYYYMMDD.
%e	The job exposure as entered in the Page Setup dialog.
%f	The output TIFF file name (e.g. "1BrochureC00.TIF").
%g	A fixed job name; without the leading number prefix and with all non-alphanumeric characters removed.
%i	The input file name (e.g. "MyJob." - any suffix is removed).
%j	The page buffer name as shown in the RIP's Output Controller / Monitor (e.g. "1. Brochure (C)").
%n	The current job number (as assigned by the RIP).
%o	The output folder; without any sub-folder added as a result of one of the "Path includes..." options.
%p	The current page number (as assigned by the RIP).
%r	The job resolution (as set in the RIP).
%s	A fixed job name; without the leading number prefix, with all parenthetical expressions removed, with all characters before any delimiter character removed (these being ":", ";", "@", "-" and all control characters) and with non-alphanumeric characters removed ¹ .
%t	The current time, default length 6, in the form of HHMMSS.
%x	The current file name suffix (e.g. "TIF").
%z	The output file stem (e.g. ""1BrochureC00" or "TIFF00" depending on the options set).

¹ If this results in an empty name, then we effectively start again and only non-alphanumeric characters are removed.

Template Variables

Standard Variables

Standard variables are those which are compatible with Harlequin TIFF.

<colorant> variable

This generates a string of either “DeviceCMYK”, “DeviceRGB” or “DeviceGray”, depending on the output color mode of the Harlequin RIP.

<colorname> variable

This generates a string containing the full color name of the separation, or the string “Composite” for a composite page.

For example: “Cyan”.

<date> variable

This generates a string containing the current date in the form YYYYMMDD.

For example: “20070530”.

<exposure> variable

This generates a string containing the job exposure as entered in the Page Setup dialog, with a default length of 2.

For example: “100”.

<job#> variable

This generates a string containing the current job number (as assigned by the RIP), with a default length of 3.

For example: “012”.

<jobname> variable

This generates a string containing the job name, without the leading number prefix and with all illegal characters removed.

For example: "Brochure (C)".

<jobname1> variable

This generates a string containing the job name, without the leading number prefix and with all non-alphanumeric characters removed.

For example: "BrochureC".

<page#> variable

This generates a string containing the current page number (as assigned by the RIP), with a default length of 3.

For example: "001".

<prefix> variable

This generates a string containing the prefix from the job name, including the period and space.

For example: "1. ".

<prefixonly> variable

This generates a string containing the prefix from the job name, excluding the period and space.

For example: "1".

<realpage#> variable

This generates a string containing the real page number (as detected by the HqnPageCounter procset¹), with a default length of 3.

For example: "001".

<time> variable

This generates a string containing the current time in the form HHMMSS (using the 24 hour clock).

For example: "172405".

<unique> variable

This generates a unique number, with a default length of 3.

In any one template, the unique number used will be the same, unless the Extension Variables are enabled, in which case the number increases each time.

<xres> variable

This generates a string containing the (integer) horizontal job resolution (as set in the RIP), with no default length.

For example: "1270".

<yres> variable

This generates a string containing the (integer) vertical job resolution (as set in the RIP), with no default length.

For example: "1270".

¹ Note that this procset does not work very well in v5.5 of the Harlequin RIP, so this variable is not recommended for use there.

Special Variables

Special variables are also compatible with Harlequin TIFF, but are used for specifying the particular platform file name requirements that the TIFF file is being created for. If the resulting file name would be invalid for that particular platform, then an error is produced. Additionally, the platform type is used when removing illegal characters from the file name; the platform type should therefore appear at the beginning of any template.

None of these variables (apart from <dot>) produce any output.

<dot> variable

This variable produces a string containing “.”.

Furthermore, this variable is used to indicate which part of the file name consists of the prefix (everything before this) and which part of the file name consists of the suffix (everything after this). This then allows the lengths of the prefix and suffix to be checked against any platform requirements.

<dos> variable

This variable indicates that the file name will be created on a DOS file system. The prefix is checked to be no longer than 8 characters in length and the suffix to be no longer than 3 characters in length.

Illegal characters that are removed include “””, “*”, “:”, “\”, “|”, “/”, “?”, “<”, “>”, “ ”, “.”, (tab), (line feed), (carriage return) and any control characters (less than 32).

<mac> variable

This variable indicates that the file name will be created on a Mac (HFS) file system. The prefix and suffix total length are checked to be no longer than 31 characters in length.

Illegal characters that are removed include “””, “*”, “.”, “\”, “|”, “/”, “?”, “<” and “>”.

<macosx> variable

This variable indicates that the file name will be created on a Mac (OSX / HFS+) file system. The prefix and suffix total length are checked to be no longer than 256 characters in length.

Illegal characters that are removed include “”” and “*”.

<unix> variable

This variable indicates that the file name will be created on a Unix file system. The prefix and suffix total length are checked to be no longer than 256 characters in length.

Illegal characters that are removed include “””, “*”, “.”, “\”, “|”, “/”, “?”, “<”, “>”, “ ”, (tab), (line feed) and (carriage return).

<win32> variable

This variable indicates that the file name will be created on a Windows NTFS file system. The prefix and suffix total length are checked to be no longer than 256 characters in length.

Illegal characters that are removed include “””, “*”, “.”, “\”, “|”, “/”, “?”, “<” and “>”.

Extended Variables

The extended variables are ones that have been added in addition to that of Harlequin TIFF, providing extra functionality.

<colorcode> variable

This generates a string containing the standard letter designating the color name of the separation (for the standard colors of Red, Green, Blue, Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black), or the full name of the color in all other cases (which will be the string “Composite” for a composite page).

For example: “C” - Cyan, “K” – Black, etc...

<filename{XYZ}> variable

This generates a string containing the file name, without any trailing suffix and with all illegal characters removed.

If any additional text is present at the end of the variable name {XYZ}, then this is searched for in the file name. If the text is found, then it and all subsequent characters are removed.

<filename1{XYZ}> variable

This generates a string containing the file name, without any trailing suffix and with all non-alphanumeric characters removed.

If any additional text is present at the end of the variable name {XYZ}, then this is searched for in the file name. If the text is found, then it and all subsequent characters are removed.

<page#fromjobcomments> variable

This generates a string containing the real page number (as detected by the HqnPageCounter procset), with a default length of 3.

It is equivalent to using <realpage#>

<page#fromfilenameXYZ{+n}> variable

This generates a page number from the file name by searching for it in the file name. The additional text at the end of the variable name (XYZ) is used as the search string which must precede the page number.

If the (optional) “+” is present, this indicates the difference in page numbers between pages. Negative differences may be used. Lightning TIFF will then use the page number for the first page, and add the difference to this for each subsequent page.

For example if you print pages 5, 7 & 9 of a job, you could call the file name “job_Page5.pdf” and use the variable “<page#fromfilenamePage+2>”.

The file name may also explicitly contain the page numbers of all pages in it, as a comma separated list (including ranges). In this case the option “+0” should be used.

For example the file name might be “job_Page1,2,9-11,15,22-30.pdf”, in which case the variable should be “<page#fromfilenamePage+0>”. This will therefore produce page numbers of 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.

<page#fromjobnameXYZ{+n}> variable

This works in the same way as <page#fromfilename> but uses the job name instead.

Variable Modifiers

These are used to modify any of the string or integer strings that are produced. They must appear after the initial “<” and before the variable name.

String modifier

All string variables can have a number “max” after the initial ‘<’ and before the variable name. This number is used to restrict the maximum number of characters in the result; if a string is longer, it is truncated from right-to-left.

For example: “<2colorname>” with “Cyan” produces “Cy”.

Number modifier

All number variables can have a “min:max” after the initial ‘<’ and before the variable name, where either of the two numbers (min/max) (and ‘:’) are optional.

The first number defines the default (minimum) number of characters used to represent the result, with ‘0’ characters being added (on the left) if insufficient exist.

The second number defines the maximum number of characters in the result; if a number is longer, it is truncated from left-to-right. The second number must be larger than the first number (or the default).

For example: “<2page#>” with page #1 produces “01”
and with page #100 produces “100”.

For example: “<3:page#>” with page #12 produces “012”
and with page #1234 produces “1234”.

For example: “<:4page#>” with page #12 produces “012”
(default length is 3) and with page #12345
produces “2345”.

For example: “<2:3page#>” with page #1 produces “01” and
with page #12345 produces “345”.

Extended Variable Modifiers

These are used to modify any of the job name or file name strings that are produced. They must appear after the initial "<" and before the variable name.

[123-456] modifier

This is used to indicate a range of characters to keep. The first number indicates the first character to keep and all characters up to and including that indicated by the second number are used.

Both numbers must be non-zero.

[123&456] modifier

This is used to indicate a range of characters to discard at the start and end. The first number indicates the number of characters to remove at the start and the second number indicates the number of characters to remove at the end.

Either number may be zero.

[abc/def] modifier

This is used to indicate two sequences of characters in the name; all characters up to and including the first sequence are discarded, as are all characters from and including the second sequence.

Either sequence may be 'empty'.

Troubleshooting

Lightning TIFF has been designed to take care of most processes automatically, however, if any errors do occur you will be kept informed with appropriate error messages.

These will appear in the RIP's Monitor Window prefixed with the string "! Lightning Plugin (TIFF)". If the RIP is running in Multiple Mode, then an error icon and message will also appear in the Output Monitor / Controller, however, due to the restricted space there, this message will only indicate that there has been an error and the message in the RIP's Monitor Window should be checked.

The following table shows all the error messages that Lightning TIFF will produce and gives a short explanation of what they all are.

Problem	Solution
File Exists: %s	This is most likely caused by not using any uniqueIDs in the file name. Add some.
File Post processing command failed	The error here depends on the command or script being used. In this case, check with your supplier or the person who wrote the script.
Job Post processing command failed	The error here depends on the command or script being used. In this case, check with your supplier or the person who wrote the script.
TIFF Writer Aborted	The user aborted the job or the output.
Memory Allocation Failed	Not enough memory was available to the plugin. Increase the amount of virtual memory on the system, or decrease the amount of memory given to the RIP.
File Creation Failed	Could not create the TIFF file. This could be due to illegal characters in the file name, a file already existing with that name, insufficient access permissions, etc...

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File Open Failed	Could not open the TIFF file to write to it after creating it. A very rare error.
File Seek Failed	Could not seek in the open TIFF file to write to it. A very rare error.
File Write Failed	Could not write data to the TIFF file. Most likely caused by either a disk getting full, or by a remote file connection being dropped.
File Close Failed	Could not close the TIFF file and flush any remaining data to it. Most likely caused by either a disk getting full, or by a remote file connection being dropped.
File Delete Failed	Could not delete the (temporary) file. Most likely caused by a remote file connection being dropped.
File Rename Failed	Could not rename the (temporary) file. Most likely caused by either the target file suddenly existing, or a remote file connection being dropped.
Illegal CCITT Compression for 8 bits/pixel	An internal error when the compression method is not valid.
Compression ran out of temporary memory (Internal Error)	An internal error when the compression method runs out of memory. This should not happen with a 64-bit RIP (or even a 32-bit RIP).
Could not create a Unique File	The conventional or template method used could not generate a unique file that doesn't already exist. Make sure that the file name includes unique ids of sufficient size for your jobs.
Resulting File Name already exists	The conventional or template method used generated a file name that already exists. Make sure that the file name includes unique ids of sufficient size for your jobs.
DOS File Stem too long	The length of the file name stem exceeds 8 characters. Change your template to reduce its length.
DOS File Extension too long	The length of the file name stem exceeds 3 characters. Change your template to reduce its length.

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Mac File Name too long	The length of the file name exceeds 31 characters. Change your template to reduce its length.
File Name too long	The length of the file name exceeds 256 characters. Change your template to reduce its length.
Malformed Template	There was an error in the template – for example a right bracket “]” was missing. Check and fix the template.
Unknown Template	The template variable name is unknown. Check and fix the template.
Template too long	The template results in a file name that is too long. Shorten the template.
Conventional File Name too long	The conventional name results in a file name that is too long. Either enable the “Use 8.3 filenames” or use a template name instead.
Unknown PostProcess Substitution character	The post process operation encountered a substitution character that was not recognized. Check and fix the post process string.
Post-Process Command too long	The resulting post process string is too long. Shorten the post process string.
Double Type Not Supported (Internal Error)	An internal error when the TIFF writer encounters a double. This should never happen.
Post-Process Command failed	Execution of the post-process command failed. The error here depends on the command or script being used. In this case, check with your supplier or the person who wrote the script.

Glossary

TIF file	A Tagged Image File as per the TIFF 6.0 specification.
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Contact

Use the following contact details if you wish to contact Hamillroad Software.



E-mail technical support will be provided to registered users free of charge for a period of 60 days from date of registration. Thereafter a charge may be levied.

Technical Support	support@hamillroad.com
General	info@hamillroad.com
Website	www.hamillroad.com