Raising the bar in barcode printing

Printronix launches next generation barcode printers

Industrial printing specialist Printronix Inc. has launched a new line of industrial-grade thermal label printers for customers in manufacturing, retail distribution, transportation & logistics.

The T8000 Thermal Printer series features a completely new architecture, developed over two years at a cost of $3 million, that, according to Printronix, exceeds the requirements of the most demanding users.

An important aspect of the new printer is an optional, fully integrated Online Data Validator (ODV) that can be fitted to the printer to verify 1D and, soon, 2D barcodes.

Printronix Thermal Products General Manager Plamen Petkov says that barcode validation can save businesses significant sums of money.

"Many customers are required either by mandate or by the internal compliance requirements of their customers to verify every single barcode before it ships. We have built a fully integrated unit that allows us to read that barcode, verify the data, strike out a barcode if it's non-readable and reprint it," he said.

He added: "Most retailers are subject to charge-backs of $3-$5 if a barcode on their goods is not readable. In the case of a large retailer, a small percentage of non-readable barcodes can add up very quickly to huge amounts of fines and fees."

Next generation architecture

The T8000 series is underpinned by a new architecture based on an ARM A9 processor that offers 40% faster print speeds (14 IPS); up to five times greater

Plamen Petkov, Thermal Products General Manager, Printronix

IT staff can control printers anywhere in the world via their PC screen.

processing power for a quick first label out; improved integration with other applications; and eight times more memory capacity than previous products.

Petkov says that the one of the most impressive features of the new architecture is its ability to maintain print quality even at high speed.

"Many companies can claim high print speeds, but what they don't often mention is the fact that print quality deteriorates as speed increases. Printronix can print a label that is as good at 8 IPS as it is at 14 IPS. We have received incredibly positive feedback from customers saying 'We couldn't believe that the printed quality is as good at 14 IPS, the highest speed, as it is at 6 and 8 IPS'," he said.

Ease of use

Allied to the T8000's enhanced performance is a new industrial design that combines greater ease of use with rugged, reliable operation, from the full metal enclosure to an optional rugged printhead for humid or dusty environments that costs a little more than a standard cartridge but lasts twice as long, giving a clear TCO benefit.

Helpful features include the side-loading of consumables, a large viewing window for supplies monitoring, a snap-in printhead and a large 3.4in colour display with easy navigation keys.

IT administrators are able to monitor and manage printers remotely from a central IT console. A virtual panel replicating the operator panel on a remote device enables them to control printers anywhere in the world via a PC screen.

Plug and play

For plug and play simplicity, the T8000 series supports seven emulations, including, for the first time on a thermal barcode printer, PostScript and PDF from any ERP environment. This means that any enterprise with a mixed environment of printers, including laser and inkjet devices in warehouse environments, can swap an existing printer for a T8000 and not have to install middleware or modify their software or applications in any way.

Other noteworthy enhancements include the ability to print in temperatures of -5°C to 0°C without the need for a heated enclosure – an accessory that normally costs around $1,000; and the option of mobile power carts with twice the battery capacity of third party solutions for printing flexibility in large warehouses and manufacturing environments.

Summing up the benefits of the T8000, Petkov said: "We are introducing the best thermal barcode printer in the market, with the highest level of performance. We are introducing the first thermal barcode printer that can print PostScript and PDF and connect as a true plug and play device into any ERP environment, without the need for middleware and extra integration. We are introducing the first thermal barcode printer that can scan 2D barcodes with an enhanced Online Data Validator. And we are introducing the best enterprise suite in the marketplace, with a virtual panel that allows IT professionals to set up a printer remotely and manage it as if they were right there on the manufacturing floor."
www.printronix.com

Barcode printing on the move

In addition to launching the T8000, Printronix has moved into a new product area with the introduction of its first portable thermal printer. A natural extension to Printronix's stationary printers, the M4L meets demand for on-the-spot label printing in logistics and warehouses. For example, when breaking down pallets, new barcode labels will need to be printed to reflect changes made. Instead of going back to a central station, the M4L lets workers print labels on the spot, saving time and increasing productivity. The M4L is available in Bluetooth and Wi-Fi versions, with a dual antenna for increased range. It can be carried by hand or mounted on a forklift and has 30% more battery capacity than competitor products.