Product news:

Mercury V7 now with SAP certification

Link to SAP via the BC-XOM interface

Secure printing via Follow"2"Print from SAP environments including SAP GUI integration

Overview and market benefits:

A comprehensive SAP BC-XOM interface will be integrated for the first time within the scope of the product launch of Mercury version 7. It supports direct, secure printing from SAP systems via the Mercury output management system through to the output device. The communication between the individual entities is secure and bidirectional. This enables the user to view the status of his print jobs within the Mercury queue, as well as the necessary printer status, from within the SAP application.

All the requirements for secure printing from the SAP environment are met here. At the same time, Mercury can now also be used directly within the entire printing environment of SAP applications in addition to classical host and AFP/IPDS applications. The area of application of the Mercury DMS solution is also extended significantly once again by this.

In particular, another key advantage of the Mercury SAP interface is that all the other modules within the Mercury solution can be used directly within this interface, given the inherent modular structure of the Mercury system. This means that, among other things, an SAP print job can be transmitted directly to a Follow"2"Print queue within the Mercury system. The user can then retrieve his print job securely by inputting his code on the device or via his RFID card. The different operational steps are reported back in the SAP user interface and can be viewed by the user.
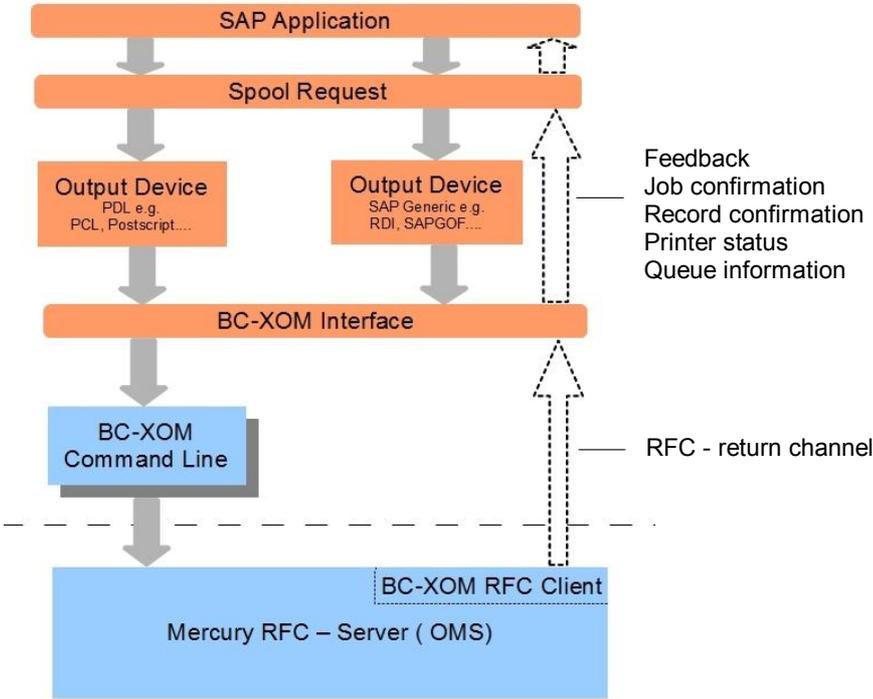
The user can also link directly to the Mercury bar code or form modules. This ultimately serves to create a unique workflow between proven Mercury technology and the SAP BC-XOM interface, without any doubt a unique selling point for the Mercury solution.

Technical implementation:

SAP features its BC-XOM interface to enable the user to receive data from the SAP system or to be able to process it further. This allows a close link between an output management system (OMS) and the SAP spool system. There is a return channel here for job or device status information, either by polling from the SAP system or by callback via an RFC (remote function call) client in the OMS system. The RFC technology has been selected and integrated here within the Mercury system.

The actual print data is transmitted via the RFC server or via a command line module which has to be installed on the SAP system but constitutes part of the Mercury solution. The advantage of the command line module is that it can be certified by SAP, thus offering the user the utmost operational reliability. This SAP certification for Mercury will be performed as part of the Mercury V7 launch and is thus part of the Mercury SAP/BC-XOM solution.
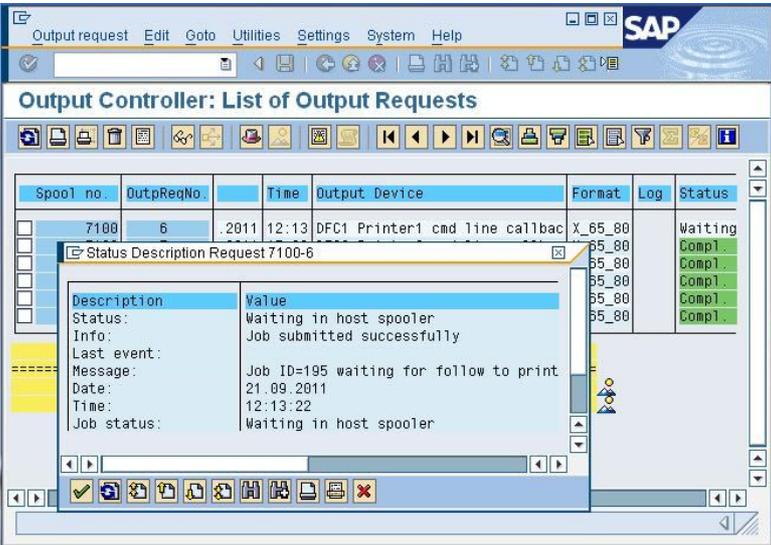
The figure below illustrates the system structure of the SAP BC-XOM interface in connection with the Mercury output management solution. It shows the individual SAP modules (orange), as well as the interaction between the Mercury BC-XOM modules (blue). Bidirectional communication as a requirement for secure printing is also visible. Within the Mercury system, communication with the output device also involves the use of a return channel, which is also known as streaming mode.

The Mercury BC-XOM interface as viewed by the SAP user:

The Mercury system is integrated seamlessly into the SAP system with this interface. The user can view the status information in his usual SAP environment (for example, the SAP GUI). He receives detailed job and device status information. Responsibility for this lies with the callback (RFC client) within the Mercury system. It returns all the status information to the BC-XOM interface, easing the burden on the actual SAP system.

The following SAP GUI screenshot shows the current print job/printer status, as well as corresponding status feedback signals from a Follow"2"Print queue.

The SAP/BC-XOM interface in conjunction with the Mercury DMS modules:

The Mercury document management solution was first unveiled on the market in 1998. The Mercury server originally acted as a solution which was used purely for converting incompatible print data into standardised output formats. The Mercury product has been steadily refined to reflect wide-ranging customer requirements and within the scope of a large variety of installations; nowadays, it constitutes a comprehensive DMS/OMS solution. The strength of the Mercury concept lies in its modular structure.

Consequently, the Mercury SAP/BC-XOM interface is another module in the success story of the Mercury DMS. This new module can access and utilise all the features of the complete Mercury solution. It essentially involves the following modules, among others, which are available directly within the scope of the modular Mercury system:

- Streaming mode

Secure printing including job monitoring through to the output device.

- Bar code module

Any bar codes can be generated on the fly, without explicit control commands, and can be positioned anywhere on the print page.

- Follow"2"Print functionality

Print data which is generated via SAP can be retrieved directly from the output device via a pin code or RFID cards; the retrieval is secure. Bidirectional communication with the SAP host is retained. Relevant statuses are provided in the SAP GUI.

- Accounting

All SAP print data can be entered and processed via the Mercury Accounting module. This makes the corresponding printing costs directly transparent.

- PDF workflow

Similarly, the actual SAP print data can also be processed by other conversion modules. By converting the print data to PDF, among other things, archiving interfaces or automatic e-mail dispatch can be implemented via PDF.