

novaPDF SDK Review

Those who have a possible or definite need for a PDF Printer Driver, but limited time to test all the apparent options, may wish to note the results of my extensive evaluation of the novaPDF product – and other products with a related aim.

For years I have had a need - not critical, but highly desirable – to produce some of the output from my flagship application (GFCARS - Garage and Forecourt, Control Accounting and Reporting System) in a PDF format, in some cases simply as an interim or alternative to paper printing and, in others, for archival use for later printing or reference, only if required for audit etc. Adobe Acrobat (the full product) produced exactly what I wanted, but at great expense, and with enforced manual intervention which I wanted to spare my clients.

With Adobe, there was limited program control over the output (particularly in relation to the output folder and filename), and their technical support in this area was absolutely useless. Wpdf and Gnostice are undoubtedly fine for their intended purpose, but did not come even remotely close to meeting my requirements in terms of the appearance of the final (finely detailed, pixel precision) output, involving a mixture of graphics and text. Note that those products do not claim to produce a fine equivalent to Adobe in all circumstances.

novaPDF appeared at first trial to be at least an acceptable equivalent of the Adobe result, but I could not test it fully straightaway, with its C++ emphasis. Some of you may have noted my earlier request in this NG for closer integration with Delphi, including samples. That request was met, in spades, with the release announced above. The samples are relevant, thorough, and well documented. I had a day or so extra notice and have now confirmed that this driver faithfully reproduces the same output as Adobe Acrobat, and with a considerably greater degree of control and flexibility. I did have a couple of minor problems, both of which I was able to establish workarounds for, and which, very reassuringly, support@novapdf.com immediately took on board to address actively (with one already fixed, using a solution that further enhances related capabilities). At the same time as notifying the problems, I made a few suggestions for further refinements to capabilities that Adobe do not support at all. All of those suggestions were also accepted, and are in course of being implemented. Full fixes for the minor problems and implementation of the suggestions are scheduled for the next release (version 2.1) which they anticipate being out in a week or so.

You may need to be in one of several particular situations (like a small number of target computers, or a limited number of main applications and a large number of target computers) to gain *maximum* financial advantage from the license terms. But, if your application produces good output directly to a printer at the moment, novaPDF will certainly provide an alternative of the same, or better, quality but to PDF. And there is a capability of full programmatic control over the naming and destination of that output - as well as the same option as is the only option with Adobe of leaving the user in full control.

The application license (and Pro version of the driver on its own) also allows for full

encryption, and the product supports multiple format conversions (although I did not test those aspects in depth).

Generally, I feel that support in the Third Party Delphi community is first class and, so far, novaPDF have demonstrated that they are right up there with the best of the best.

So, in summary, novaPDF meets all my PDF output needs every bit as well as Adobe in terms of quality and accuracy of output, and much cheaper, and with considerably more program control. Wpdf and Gnostice, I believe, have a different purpose and certainly a different way of addressing my needs, but did not come close (although I stress they do things to which they are more targeted very well).

I have no connection with Softland, other than as a very recent and very satisfied customer, but I unreservedly recommend novaPDF and its development and support team to those with a need for a PDF driver.

There is also a special offer on at the moment, but you will have to make your own judgement on whether that is genuine short-term sale, or a gentle marketing ploy.

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