CSE 265: System and Network Administration

- Printing and print services
  - Printing policies and architecture
  - Printing terms
  - Types of printers
  - LPD, LPRng, CUPS
  - Adding a printer
  - Common printing software
Print services

- People depend on print services
  - for contracts
  - for proofreading
  - for quizzes
  - for reading long material that is less pleasant to read on-screen

- Print is a utility
  - It should always work
Where should printers be located?

- Some want a printer on their own desk
  - Very convenient but expensive
- Some want to be able to print to any printer, no matter where it is
  - Flexible, able to borrow specialty printers as needed
- Finance people want to centralize everything
  - A single high-speed printer, single high-quality printer, and one color printer per building (most cost-effective)
- Others want to charge every expense
  - Regardless of how much is out there, those who use it, pay for it
Real world

- People need to be able to print to any printer they have permission to use
- Centralized printing services can save money
  - Ten people who might otherwise buy slow, low-quality personal printers for $50-150, without support contracts, can buy a single high-quality, fast shared printer with long-term maintenance
  - Plus the sysadmin only has to support one printer driver/printer rather than 10
Print architecture

• How centralized will printing be?
  - How many people will share a printer for general printing?
  - Who qualifies for a personal printer?
  - How will they be networked?
    • Networked printers require a central print-spool
      - Also provides access control
  - How will they be maintained?
  - How will they be paid for?
Print architecture (cont.)

- Who orders supplies and resupplies the printers?
  - Are the printers re-supplied when they are out (and users complain), or does someone visit them regularly?

- What kinds of printing technologies will be supported?
  - Postscript/PCL
  - Duplex printing
  - Laser vs. InkJet
  - LPD over IP/NT's SMB/AppleTalk/USB or parallel, etc.

- How will the printers be named?
  - You don't want people printing to the wrong building or wrong country (!) by mistake
Print system architecture

- Peer-to-peer
  - All hosts spool jobs directly to the destination printer
  - Simplest, but all clients must know current printer IP/name
  - Cannot route around broken printers
  - Limited by printer spool memory

- Central funnel
  - Hosts send print jobs to a central server which distributes
  - Can convert formats
  - Can collect per-page billing
  - Can intelligently select printers
  - Single place for printer drivers
Printing terms

- **spooler** – Daemon that receives print jobs, stores, prioritizes, and sends them sequentially to be printed
- **PDL** – Page Description Language, usually device and resolution independent – PostScript, PCL, PDF
- **bitmap** – JPEG, TIFF, GIF
- **RIP** – Raster Image Processor – Accepts PDL input, generates bitmap appropriate for a particular device
- **filters**
- **PostScript** – Most common PDL – also a full programming language
Printing terms

- **spooler**
  - Daemon that receives print jobs, stores, prioritizes, and sends them sequentially to be printed

- **PDL**
  - Page Description Language, usually device and resolution independent
  - PostScript, PCL, PDF

- **bitmap**
  - JPEG, TIFF, GIF

- **RIP**
  - Raster image processor
  - Accepts PDL input, generates bitmap appropriate for a particular device

- **filters**
  - Modify print jobs on their way to a printer

- **PostScript**
  - Most common PDL – also a full programming language
Types of printers

- Classified by connection interface
  - Serial and parallel printers
    - USB faster and the default today for personal printers
  - Network printers
    - Contain network interfaces
    - Accept jobs via one or more printing protocols
      - including via LPD, CIFS, IPP, HP JetDirect

- Classified by type of data
  - PostScript is well-supported under Linux/UNIX
  - Non-postscript printers require special software to convert to unique PDL (vendor supplied, or ghostscript)
LPD, LPRng, CUPS
Print Server Packages

• LPD is the old standard
  – Not found on current distributions

• LPRng
  – Designed for backwards compatibility with Berkeley and System V printing systems
  – Was common ages ago (default for Red Hat 7.3), but is now replaced by...

• CUPS – Common UNIX Printing System
  – Standard on modern distributions (our focus)
client utility: lpr

- Invoked to submit a print job
  - typically use `-P printer` to choose which printer, default printer used when none is selected
    
    `% lpr -Phowler-lw -#2 thesis.ps`

- All apps use it (even things like enscript and Acrobat)
- Checks `/etc/printcap` for info about printer
- Under LPD it creates two files in `/var/spool/lpd/printername`
  - One is a control file with handling info (like username)
  - Second is data file
- Then tells the print daemon about file
lpq and lprm

- `lpq -P printer`
  - Examines the queue of jobs waiting to be printed on the particular printer
  - Shows the job id as well as owner, filename, size

- `lprm jobid`
  - Deletes one or more jobs, erasing the stored data files
  - Can delete with job id, or by username
  - Typically must be on machine where job was generated and must be same user (or root)

- Both work across a network (most of the time)
lpc/lpadmin: make admin changes

• Can be used to
  - Enable or disable queuing for a printer
  - Enable or disable printing on a printer
  - Remove all jobs from a printer queue
  - Move a job to the top of a printer's queue
  - Start, stop, or restart the lpd daemon
  - Get printer status information

• lpadmin much more powerful
Filters

Filters are typically shell scripts that run on spooled data before sending to the printer.

Can

- Fix various non-printing sequences
- Write out accounting records
- Convert to a printer-supported PDL
- Add banner pages
CUPS

- Common UNIX Printing System
  - Latest rewrite of the printing system
- Also supports secure printing (SSL, etc.)
- Implements IPP: Internet Printing Protocol (HTTP-based)
- Supports load-balancing across a class of printers
- Supports automatic network configuration
- Standard in most Linux distributions
Adding a printer in CUPS

- From command line:
  - `lpadmin -p fezmo -E -v socket://192.168.0.12 -m laserjet.ppd`
  - `lpadmin -p groucho -E -v parallel:/dev/lp0 -m pxlcolor.ppd`

- From browser: [http://localhost:631/admin](http://localhost:631/admin)

- From Red Hat/Fedora
  - Command line: `system-config-printer`
  - GUI: System->Administration->Printing
CUPS Administration

- Provides a Web-based interface for administration
HP Web Interface, Protocols
Other common printing-related software

- **ghostscript**
  - Free PostScript interpreter to view PS files onscreen
  - Also used to drive raster devices (cheap printers) by rendering the PS in the format needed
  - Powers front-ends like gv, ggv, KGhostView

- **mpage**
  - Re-formats text or PostScript to have multiple logical pages per physical page

- **enscript**
  - Similar to mpage, also has nice page headers, many options (installed on sunlab machines)
Viewing print files

- Ghostscript
  - Front-ends like gv, ggv, KghostView
- Acrobat reader (acroread)
- evince
- xpdf
- display (ImageMagick)
Resources

- http://www.linuxfoundation.org/collaborate/workgroups/openprinting
  - Successor to linux-printing.org
- http://www.cups.org/
  - And if CUPS is installed, http://localhost:631/
- http://www.lprng.com/