

LOAD BALANCING

Load balancing enables a specific hotfolder to be monitored by multiple EFI XF Servers. Print jobs placed in that hotfolder are then processed by the first idle workflow that becomes available.

Load balancing is a standard feature of EFI XF 3.1 and later and is described in the manual provided with the product. However, in EFI XF 3.0, load balancing is not an officially supported feature and can only be achieved by manual ticket editing.



Manual ticket editing is only recommended for experienced users.

This document describes the steps necessary to achieve load balancing in EFI XF 3.0.

NOTE: This method of load balancing cannot be applied to versions of EFI XF prior to 3.0.

What is load balancing?

Load balancing ensures that print jobs are always output as quickly as possible. It does this by evenly distributing the workload so that, for example, if one workflow is busy processing a large-volume print job or if one Server encounters a problem, the print job will automatically be diverted to another workflow. Once a print job starts being processed, it is deleted from the hotfolder, thus ensuring that it is not processed by more than one workflow.

The advantage of load balancing is that it utilizes all the available system resources as efficiently as possible.

Setting up load balancing

TO SET UP LOAD BALANCING

- 1 In System Manager, go to the Input bar.
- 2 On the Hotfolder tab, set up a hotfolder for the workflow for which you wish to enable load balancing.
- 3 Stop the EFI XF Server.
- 4 Open the folder ...\\EFI\\EFI XF 3.0\\Server.
- 5 In the Server folder, create a subfolder with any desired name, e.g. Private.
- 6 In the Private folder, create a subfolder with any desired name, e.g. Hot1.
- 7 Open the folder ...\\EFI\\EFI XF 3.0\\Server\\Tickets.

8 Using a text editor, open the workflow ticket of the workflow you want to prepare for load balancing.

NOTE: Workflow tickets have the file name WRK_xxxx.xml, where xxxx is a consecutive number. Ticket WRK_0000.xml refers by default to the linearization workflow, WRK_0001.xml to the default workflow. User-defined workflows are assigned a consecutive number starting with 0002.



In version 3.0 of the software it is possible to alter the order of workflows in System Manager. Take care, therefore, that you edit the right workflow ticket. You can check the name of the workflow by opening the workflow ticket and searching for <Name type=. The workflow name is located in the section <Workflow>.

**9 In the section <Workflow>, add the following line:
<PrivateHotFolder type="string">\$(INSTALL)/Private/Hot1</PrivateHotFolder>**

NOTE: The folder names Private and Hot1 are just examples and might be different in your case.

10 Repeat steps 1 to 9 to enable load balancing for further workflows.

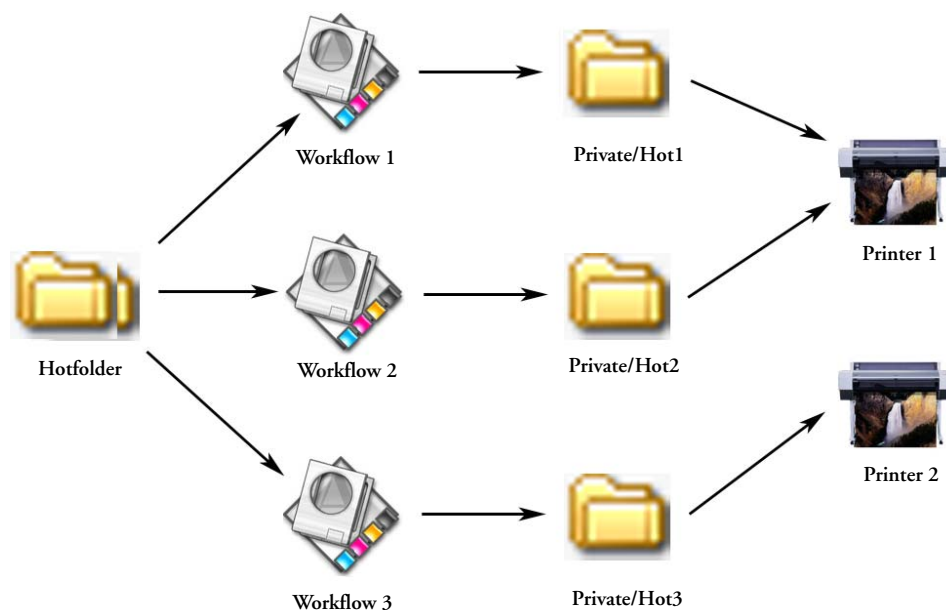


It is a good idea to create subfolders with different names, e.g. Hot1, Hot2, Hot3, etc.

11 Restart the EFI XF Server.

Load balancing in EFI XF 3.0 works by distributing jobs from the hotfolder defined in EFI XF to a second hotfolder for processing. The first hotfolder acts as a collection point for print jobs. As soon as a workflow becomes available, it grabs the next print job and moves it to the second hotfolder for processing. The following diagram illustrates the process more clearly:

Example of how load balancing works



Things to watch out for

- Workflows printing via the same hotfolder may not necessarily be configured identically. This can result in unsatisfactory color results if the workflow settings are different or if a different printer is connected.
- Load balancing cannot be applied to print jobs in multi-file format jobs, e.g. one-bit, DCS, Scitex, Tiff/IT or delta lists. However, one way around this problem is to process files via a workflow set up for file output, e.g. using the PDF or TIFF Output Option. This ensures that multi-file format jobs are combined to one single file when they are output to the hotfolder.