

## **Adobe-FedEx Kinko's: Convenience and collaboration, or collusion and security breach?** (TechRepublic, 2007)

Back in June, Adobe added a new print feature to the latest version of its popular Acrobat and Reader applications, version 8.1. Instead of printing right to your own home or business printer, users can click a button on the toolbar and send documents right to their friendly neighborhood FedEx Kinko's.

Convenient? Maybe if Kinko's is the only place you want to print to. Collaboration? If you're visiting from out of town and need to print to a nearby location, it might work. But by putting the button on the toolbar, doesn't that make it a little too easy to skip your organizational controls and send it to someone else's business, where you'll have to pay to bail out your printouts? And, speaking of paying, who's paying for the bandwidth for you to send your docs to the shop, anyway?

"A direct print link from any application that bypasses organizational controls raises security, policy and legal issues on a much higher level," says Ray Chambers, CEO of [Chambers Management Group](#) and a longtime director of in-plant (nonprofit) document management. "There could be Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act implications... not to mention Safe Harbor in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act." He adds, "Many of us have contractual agreements with other print providers, be they local franchises of national quick print providers or local commercial businesses. The FedEx Kinko's link, by facilitating printing to an alternative site, may put the organization at risk of contract violations and cause a breach of trust between the organization and a trusted supplier."

Earlier this month, Johnny Loiacono, senior vice president of Adobe's Creative Solutions Business Unit, announced that in "about 10 weeks," Adobe would remove the "Send to FedEx Kinko's" button from the toolbar as part of an update, dubbed version 8.1.1.

This change did not come easily. In fact, one might view it as a classic David vs. Goliath story, with David knocking out not one but two giants with a handful of rocks.

On July 17, a group of print industry leaders met with Loiacono and Adobe CEO Bruce Chizen. Faced with the reality of difficulties involving universities, corporations, small businesses, government agencies, and other providers, Adobe blinked — not on the grounds of unfair competition or inconvenience, but on the most basic issue: security.

"We made a commitment to all our customers to deliver the best, most secure product possible," said Loiacono in a [statement](#). "We plan to deliver... and it takes time." He added, "FedEx Kinko's... could have taken a tough line, because we do have a formal contract, but they showed a lot of class and understanding... I do want to say that FedEx Kinko's has a great vision for enabling worldwide remote printing to increase speed and convenience for their customers."

*Speed. Convenience.* Like walking across the room to one's own printer or not having to pay a second or third party for one's own printouts. Like not worrying about who is going to see potentially sensitive information, either over the Internet or off the rollers.

Meanwhile, Chambers, whose article in the trade magazine *Print Buyers Online*, "The Adobe-FedEx Kinko's Agreement: An In-Plant Manager's Perspective," and online petition in objection of the FedEx Kinko's-Adobe partnership helped spark the protest

that led to the July summit, says that Adobe has assembled a committee to explore the next Web-to-print innovation.

Despite the October update, it's not unreasonable to think that the story's not over yet. Did Adobe and FedEx Kinko's truly break a contract, no strings attached? If they can somehow guarantee 100 percent secure document transmission and output, will the button return? If Adobe eventually opens the door not only to FedEx Kinko's, how many sponsored "Send to..." buttons can one toolbar hold? And, in a more basic—or extreme—situation, where are our choices and our privacy?

"They got what they want, which is opening Web-to-print functionality to multiple vendors," says Chambers. "In-plant issues have not been addressed."