



Application Notes

Variable Data



Variable Data

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Introduction

Some jobs require printing the same design (image, background, object, etc.) with personalized text or (consecutive) numbering. For instance, mugs for different products of the same company with personalized background, company logo, product logo, and product slogan require the same company logo, different background images, different text, and different product logos.

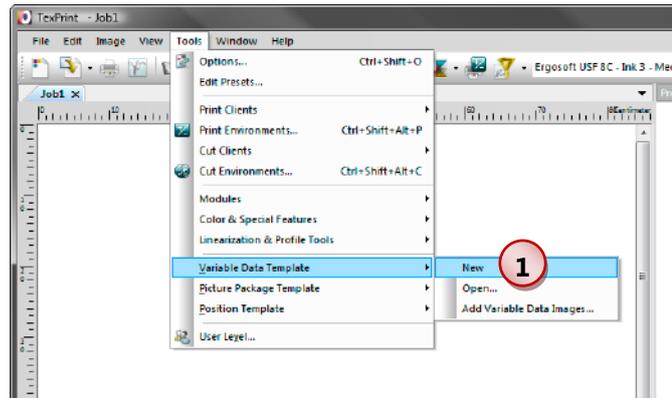
Such a job can be done by creating the complete mug as one image per product which would be a lot of work depending on the number of products you need the mugs for. Or you can create the basic mug and add the background image, product logo and the text using functions included in the RIP such as creating overlays and using AddOns. But this would require manual positioning and text editing when creating the job.

The easiest possibility to deal with such a job would be to create the basic mug as an image and store the personalized data in a text file. When creating the RIP job, the basic image and the personalized data should be mixed. Such a workflow would also make it easy to replace broken mugs or to create new ones.

This is exactly what the *Variable Data* function allows to do: Instead of creating a separate image for each combination you create a template with just the fix part of the object and let the variable text and images be automatically added when the template is used.

Designing a Variable Data Template

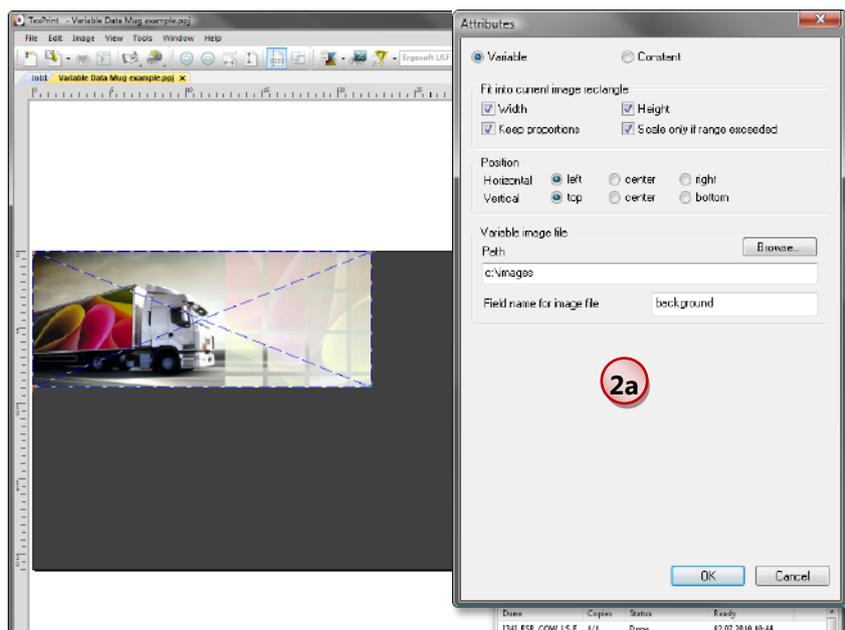
1 Select menu *Tools* > *Variable Data Template* > *New* to create a new **Variable Data** template. A new, empty job with gray background and label "Variable Data Template" will be opened.



Selecting a media size is not required but it helps in positioning. For the mug example, ISO A4 landscape is selected to limit the available job size. The printed part on the mug is supposed to be 23x9 cm.

The mug example will use a main customizable background image (2), a customizable product logo (3), a company logo at two possible positions (4), a gradient with customizable colors for filling room (5), and a customizable text slogan (6).

2 To create the element holding the background image, select **Import Image** from the *Job context* menu and import a sample image. Scale and position the image as you like.



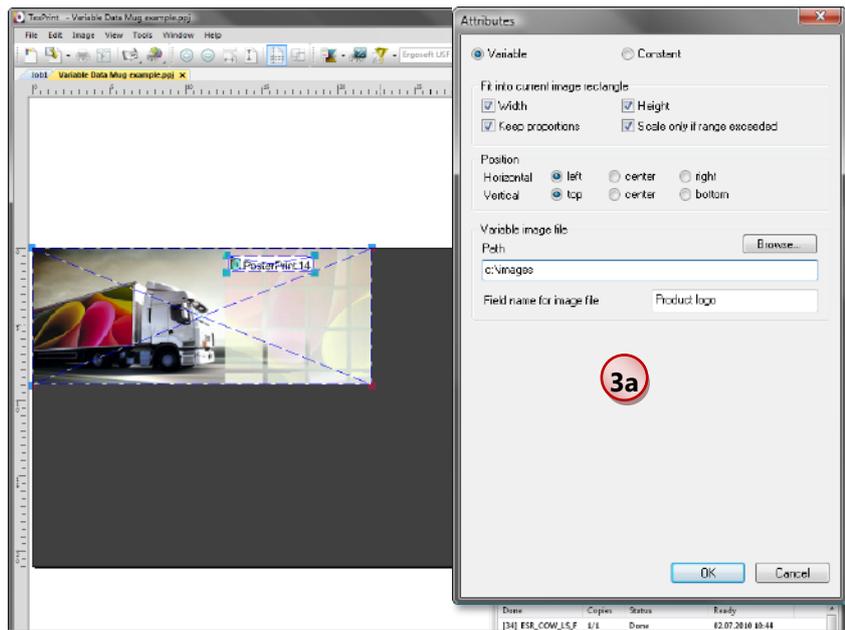
2a To configure the image attributes, select **Attributes** from the *Image context* menu and configure the image element:

- Select that the image is **Variable**.
- The image should fit into the rectangle created to hold the sample image. Thus, check all **Fit** options.
- For better layout, the **Position** of the image in the rectangle should be the upper left corner.
- Specify the **Path** in which the images will be stored and enter a **Field name** ("background") for the image file.

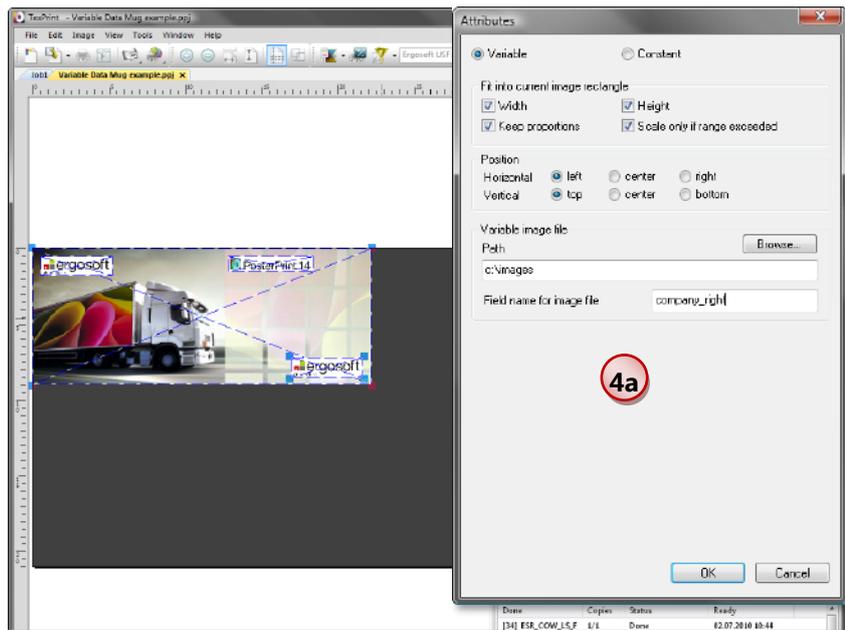
3 To create the element holding the product logo, select **Import Image** from the *Job context* menu and import a sample product logo. Scale and position the product logo as you like.

3a To configure the image attributes, select **Attributes** from the *Image context* menu and configure the image element:

- Select that the image is **Variable**.
- The image should fit into the rectangle created to hold the sample image. Thus, check all **Fit** options.
- For better layout, the **Position** of the image in the rectangle should be the upper left corner.
- Specify the **Path** in which the images will be stored and enter a **Field name** ("Product logo") for the image file.



4 In order to print the company logo at one of two possible positions, both positions must be configured to hold the company logo. Just when using the template, only one of the fields will be filled with a file name while the other one will hold a blank only. To create the element holding the company logo, select **Import Image** from the *Job context* menu and import a sample image. Scale and position the image as you like.

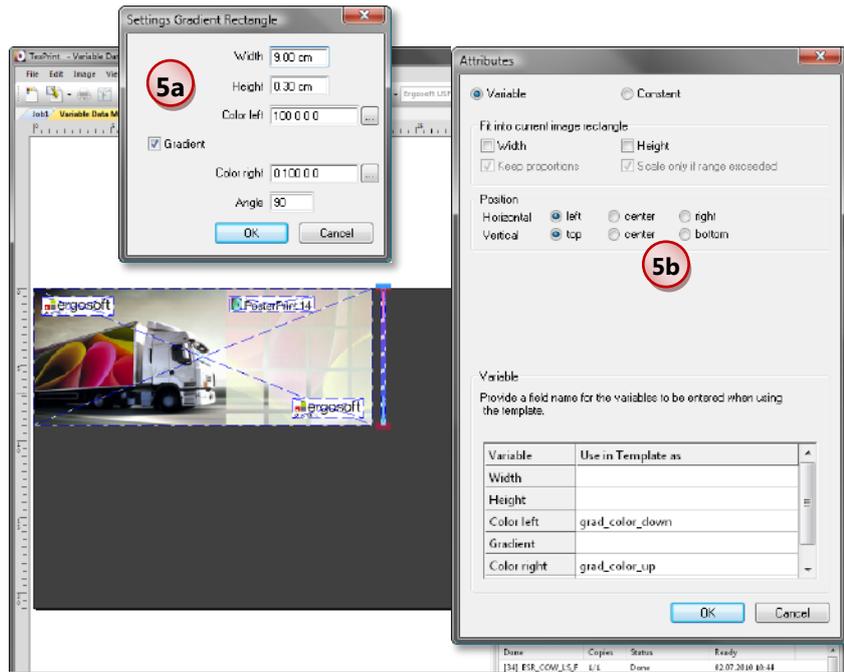


4a To configure the image attributes, select **Attributes** from the *Image context* menu and configure the image element. The configuration for both company logos is identical except for the field name:

- Select that the image is **Variable**.
- The image should fit into the rectangle created to hold the sample image. Thus, check all **Fit** options.
- For better layout, the **Position** of the image in the rectangle should be the upper left corner.
- Specify the **Path** in which the images will be stored and enter a **Field name** ("company_left" for the left company logo and "company_right" for the right one) for the image file.

5 To create the filling gradient, select **Generate** and object type **Gradient Rectangle** from the *Job context* menu.

5a Enter the dimensions and layout of the gradient. Since the color is customizable, it does not matter which colors you select. To get a gradient from top to bottom instead of from left to right the gradient must be rotated by entering an angle.



5b Next, you have to specify the attributes for the gradient:

- Select that there are **Variable** attributes for the gradient rectangle.
- **Fit** and **Position** do not matter because the gradient rectangle will have a fix size.
- Specify the configuration parts of the gradient rectangle that are customizable by entering a name in column **Use in Template as**. The used names are "grad_color_down" for Color left and "grad_color_up" for Color right. Since the other elements will not be variable, there is no need to enter a name for these items.

6 To create the element holding the product slogan, select **Generate** and object type **Variable Text** from the *Job context* menu.

6a Enter the dimensions and layout of the text element. Since the text and the font color are meant to be customizable, it does not matter which text you enter or which color you select.

6b Next, you have to specify the attributes for the text element:

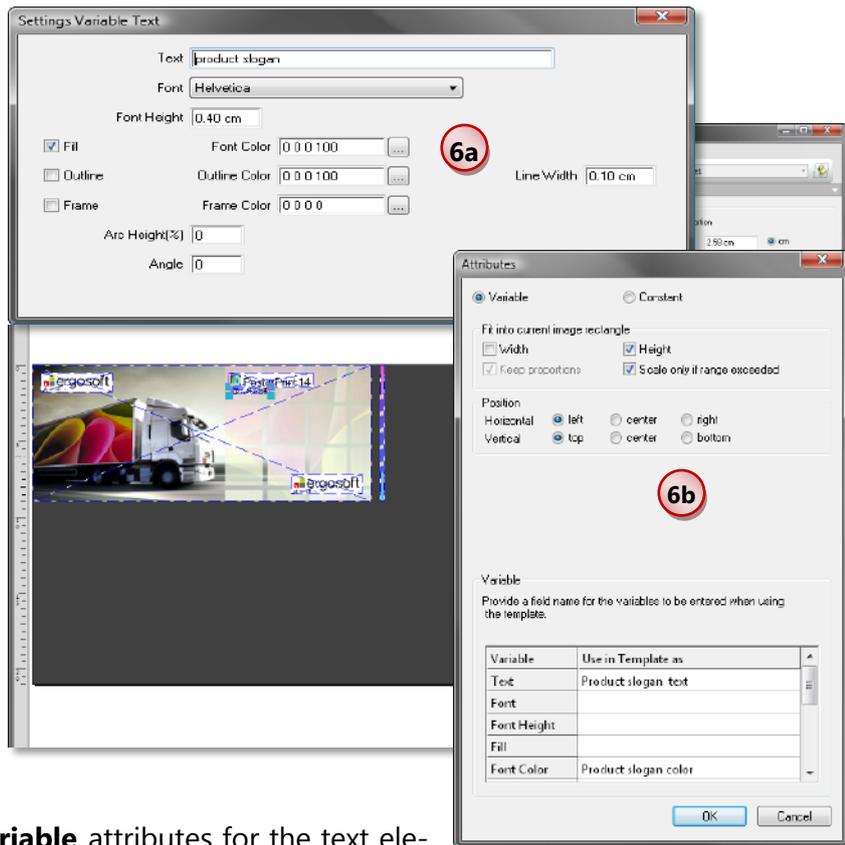
- Select that there are **Variable** attributes for the text element.
- The slogan should fit into the height of the rectangle created to hold the sample text. Thus, check **Height** in the **Fit** options but do not check **Width**.
- Since the text will be scaled to the height of the text element, the text should be positioned in the upper left corner of the rectangle.
- Specify the configuration parts of the text element that are customizable by entering a name in column **Use in Template as**. The used names are "Product slogan text" for Text and "Product slogan color" for Font Color. All other values are not meant to be variable.

When all settings are done, the *Variable Data* template can be saved and closed.

7 To modify the attributes of the selected element, select **Attributes** from the *Image context* menu.

8 To modify the settings of a **Generated** element, select **Edit Parameters** from the *Image context* menu.

9 The elements in the *Variable Data* template are positioned layer-style. Use the **Arrange Order** functions from the *Image context* menu to arrange the elements in layer mode just as in design programs.



Using a Variable Data Template

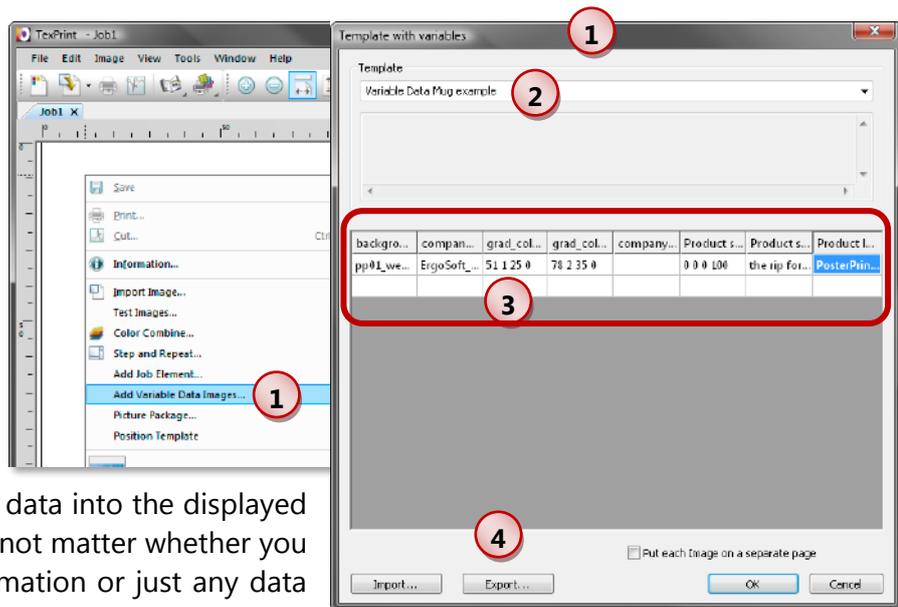
Creating the Data File

There are two possibilities to create the data file: You can either create the data file yourself considering the require structure of your **Variable Data** template and save it as .txt file. The easier way to get the correct structure is to use the **Variable Data** function to create a basic data file and add more data to this file using e.g. spreadsheet software and save it as .txt or .csv file. The following description explains the usage of the **Variable Data** function to create the basic data file.

1 Open a new job. From the *Job context* menu select **Variable Data**.

2 Select the **Variable Data** template to be used. In the example, it is named "Variable Data Mug example".

3 Enter one row of data into the displayed columns. It does not matter whether you enter the correct information or just any data you can use for testing the entries.



In the mug example, the columns must be filled as follows:

- "background" requires the name of the background image file without path but including the file extension (e.g. "pp01_web_0106.jpg").
- "company_right" requires the name of the company logo image file to be printed at the right side of the mug, without path but including the file extension (e.g. "ErgoSoft_logo_main_black_100601.pdf").
- "grad_color_up" requires the color values of the color on top of the gradient. The entry is built by entering the CMYK values separated by a blank (e.g. "51 1 25 0" for 51%C, 1%M, 25%Y and 0%K).
- "grad_color_down" requires the color values of the color at the bottom of the gradient. The entry is built by entering the CMYK values separated by a blank (e.g. "78 2 35 0" for 78%C, 2%M, 35%Y and 0%K).
- "company_left" requires the name of the company logo image file to be printed at the left side of the mug, without path but including the file extension (e.g. "ErgoSoft_logo_main_black_100601.pdf").
- "Product slogan color" requires the color values for the product slogan. The entry is built by entering the CMYK values separated by a blank ("0 0 0 100" for 0%C, 0%M, 0%Y and 100%K).

- "Product slogan text" requires the text of the product slogan to be entered (e.g. "the rip for digital graphic print production").
- "Product logo" requires the name of the product logo image file without path but including the file extension (e.g. "PosterPrint14_S_Black_100528.pdf").

Additional hints for entering data:

- When using checkboxes as variables, entering "0" means that the box is not checked while "1" means that the box is checked.
- Not entering values into a field means that it is left empty and not used.
- Be careful to enter valid data into the fields in order to run the *Variable Data* function correctly. Invalid data will cause the rest of the data set to be ignored.

4 Click the **Export** button to save the entries in a data file. Enter a name for the file and note the path and name in order to locate it for editing in e.g. spreadsheet software.

5 If you like you can test the structure of the entries and create a job with the data by clicking the **OK** button. Otherwise, close the dialog by clicking the **Cancel** button.

6 Edit the data file in your favorite software. Take care not to destroy the file structure:

- The first line must be the header line holding the field names you specified in the *Variable Data* template in the elements attributes.
- All following lines hold the data.
- The data fields (columns) are separated by Tabs.
- Take care to save it in .txt or .csv format.

Using the Data File

1 Open a new job. From the *Job context* menu select **Variable Data**.

2 Select the **Variable Data** template to be used. In the example, it is named "Variable Data Mug example".

3 Click the **Import** button and select the file with the data. Then, the data is automatically filled into the table.

4 Click the **OK** button to create the job using the selected data. Each line of the data file (table) will create a separate object. The object is automatically created using the Overlay functionality of the **ErgoSoft RIP**.

5 Format the objects as any image overlay when needed.

6 Print the job as usual.

7 Command *Variable Data Template > Open* allows opening and editing a **Variable Data** template.

