vpp – View and (selectively) Print
PDF and POSTSCRIPT

Wybo Dekker
`wybo@servalys.nl`

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1 Introduction

VPP displays a PDF document or a POSTSCRIPT document (after conversion to PDF) using GV, XPDF, or ACROBAT READER (in that order of choice), or perhaps another PDF viewer. One can use the viewer to print the document but, alternatively, leave the viewer and use VPP's facilities to print selected pages to a one- or two-sided hardcopy or an A5-booklet: see the section 'Page selection' for the details.

If *file* if not found, VPP looks for *file.pdf* or *file.ps*. If both are found, VPP dies, saying that it can't make a choice, if one of the two is found it is used instead of *file*.

If *file* lacks, standard input is used.

2 How it works

For the printing of PDF files, VPP makes use of CONTEXT's TEXEXEC utility, except when you simply print one-sided and without scaling: in that case VPP just offers your PDF file to the print spooler.

For twosided printing, VPP first selects the odd pages into a temporary PDF file and sends it to the print spooler, and then prompts the user for an <Enter> key-press, selects the even pages and prints them:

```
# odd pages:                      # even pages
texexec --result=tmp.pdf \        texexec --result=tmp.pdf \
        --pdfselect \                     --pdfselect \
        --selection=odd \                 --selection=even \
        input.pdf \                       input.pdf
lpr tmp.pdf                        lpr tmp.pdf
```

For a booklet, VPP first lets TEXEXEC rearrange and scale the pages, and then prints both sides as before:

```
texexec --result=tmp.pdf \        texexec --result=tmp.pdf \
        --pdfarrange \                    --pdfarrange \
        --paper=A5A4 \                    --paper=A5A4 \
        --print=2UP \                     --print=2UP \
        --pages=odd \                     --pages=even \
        input.pdf                         input.pdf
lpr tmp.pdf                        lpr tmp.pdf
```

3 Options

vpp comes with several options. Table 1 shows an overview.

Options are shown in logically identical pairs, with the full version in the first column and the minimum shorthand (without the parameters) in the second. Options marked with a star are boolean options. Default values are shown in the last column. You can set boolean options to false by prefixing the option with 'no', for example: **––noquiet** or **–noq**.

Before evaluating any options, vpp will try to read a system rc-file, a user rc-file, and, finally an rc-file in the current directory. The default values for ⋆-marked options and for string options can be set in these files. See the section 'RC-files' for more information.

You can also set option defaults in an alias. For example:

```
alias vpp='vpp --noquiet'
```

––help Prints help information and lets you type 'm' to display the complete man page or anything else to quit.

––version Prints name and (cvs-)version and then quits.

––quiet Suppresses messages about the progress vpp is making. This is the default.

––rc *rc-file* Read specified rc-file before processing. The contents of the rc-file may override options specified before the **––rc** option, therefore it is a good idea to have the habit of specifying the **––rc** option first.

––batch *printing command string* Prevents the **––print** option to interrogate the user about pages to be printed. Instead the document is printed according to the mandatory *printing command string*. Also sets viewing off. Thus the command

```
vpp --batch '2-3 x3' test.pdf
```

prints 3 copies of pages 2 and 3 of *test.pdf*, without viewing.

––print Present the print prompt. This is the default. This option is normally used to suppress the print prompt, for example when using vpp from other scripts that generate PDF or POSTSCRIPT documents that have only to be displayed or printed without even being displayed.

––view Run the file viewer. This is the default. This option is normally used to suppress starting the viewer, for example when using vpp from other scripts that generate PDF or POSTSCRIPT documents that have only to be printed.

4 Page selection

When you select the **––print** option, and you did not also use the **––batch** option, vpp interrogates you about the pages you want to print. To that end the following prompt appears:

Table 1: vpp options

	Options	Short	Defaults:
	−−**batch=***selection*	**–b**	
★	−−**print**	**–pr**	true
★	−−**view**	**–vi**	true
★	−−**quiet**	**–q**	true
	−−**rc=***rcfile*	**–r**	
	−−**help**	**–h**	
	−−**version**	**–ve**	

```
vpp command (h for help):
```

upon typing 'h' vpp displays examples of possible commands:

```
Examples of print commands:
  5        to print page 5
  5-       to print pages 5 through the end
  5-7      to print pages 5, 6 and 7
  -7       to print the first 7 pages
  5-7,19- to print pages 5, 6, 7 and 19 through the end
  a        to print the whole document
  a x3     to print 3 copies of the document
  x3       the same
  5 x3     to print 3 copies of page 5
  t        print the whole document twosided
  t 2-     print twosided starting at page 2
  b        to print the whole document as an a5 size booklet
  b -12    to print the first 12 pages as an a5 size booklet
Other commands:
  h        display this help
  ?        display this help
  q        quit
vpp command (h for help):
```

With these examples, no further explanation should be necessary, except that, when twosided ('t') or booklet ('b') printing is selected, printing will be performed in two shifts, one for the front side and one for the backside. Between the shifts, another prompt appears:

```
printer ready?  then turn stack and type return
```

You will have to arrange your printer such that, with the printed sides up, the first page printed will be at the bottom of the stack, and the last page printed will be on top. Normally you will then have your output come out the back of your printer. 'Turn the stack' then means: rotate it over the long side of the paper and feed it back into the printer for the other side to be printed.

5   RC-files and customization

Unless the environment variable NORC has been set, three rc-files are executed, if they exist, before reading the command line options, in the following order:

1. `/etc/vpprc`: the system rc-file

2. `$HOME/.vpprc`: the user rc-file

3. `./.vpprc`: the local rc-file

You can use these rc-files to set the default values for the options, by setting the Perl variable named after the long version of the options. For example:

```
$quiet=1; # run in quiet mode
```

So if you usually like vpp to work quietly, you can indicate so in your rc-file and change your mind in some cases by using the −−**noquiet** (or perhaps **−noq**) option.
   One other variable that can be set in the rc-files is:

```
$viewer = 'gv'; # set the viewer
```

gv is the default viewer for both postscript and pdf. If you normally use pdf and have set, say, xpdf as your viewer, you would get in trouble when handling a postscript file. In such cases, therefore, vpp tries to switch to gv.

6   Examples

Since vpp can read from standard input, it can be used to print (parts of) manpages:

```
man -t ls | vpp
```

If you don't need a preview, because you have seen the man page already, you can print it immediately as an A5 booklet with:

```
man -t ls | vpp --batch=b
```