

[0004] Further, although printer functionality may be built into a program at design time, different types of data files or settings can enable existing programmed functionality, but cannot add new. Moreover, programmed application can only be designed for a limited number of situations. When new functionality is added, the whole program must be replaced and the printer restarted. This is time-consuming and, accordingly, expensive.

SUMMARY

[0005] In the prior art, there is no ability to customize or otherwise modify label/tag printer software without changing the printer's firmware source code, and without expensive development tools.

[0006] Accordingly, a method and system is provided for modifying functionality of a printer. The printer is provided with firmware and programming code that interfaces with the firmware for controlling printing operations. The programming code includes at least one placeholder. Second programming code is provided that, when executed on a processor readable medium, interfaces with the first programming code to provides new or different printer functionality. The second programming code is executed as a function of the at least one placeholder.

[0006a] In accordance with a first aspect, there is provided a method for modifying functionality of a label and tag printer that is provided with firmware and first programming code that interfaces with the firmware for controlling printing operations, the method comprising: developing the first programming code that, when executed on a processor readable medium, interfaces with the printer firmware and provides first functionality for the label and tag printer, wherein the first programming code includes at least one placeholder; developing second programming code that, when executed on a processor readable medium, interfaces with the first programming code and provides second functionality of the label and tag printer that is different from the first functionality; providing and executing the first programming code on the processor readable medium and interfacing the first programming code with the firmware to provide the first functionality; providing and executing the second programming code on the processor readable medium

and interfacing the second programming code with the first programming code to provide the second functionality, wherein the second programming code is executed as a function of the at least one placeholder; and providing a set of printer extensions formatted as printer application programming interfaces to enable interaction and manipulation with printer firmware.

[0006b] In accordance with a second aspect, there is provided a system for modifying label and tag printer functionality, the system comprising: a label and tag printer having the label and tag printer functionality; firmware provided with the label and tag printer that, when executed on the label and tag printer, controls printing operations; first programming code that is executable on a processor readable medium, wherein the first programming code includes commands to provide first functionality of the label and tag printer and further includes at least one placeholder; second programming code that is executable on the processor readable medium, wherein the second programming code interfaces with the first programming code to provide second functionality of the label and tag printer that is different than the first functionality; and a processor readable medium on which the first programming code and the second programming code is executed, wherein the second programming code is executed as a function of the at least one placeholder and a set of printer extensions formatted as printer application programming interfaces to enable interaction and manipulation with printer firmware.

[0007] Other features and advantages according to embodiments of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of the invention that refers to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there is shown in the drawings a form which is presently preferred, it being understood, however, that the invention is not limited to the precise arrangements and instrumentalities shown. The features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of the invention that refers to the accompanying drawings, in which: