DHL Business Customer Portal

Manual for the polling function (version 1.1.0) in the ”Ship“ function

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Version 1.1 / 15th December 2016

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1 Introduction

The DHL Shipment Polling Software (hereinafter referred to as the "polling software") is an application for Windows operating systems. The polling software allows users to print shipment label to local printers, create and print shipments automatically in "Ship" and export an end-of-day report from "Ship" directly via the "Ship" function in the DHL business customer portal (hereinafter referred to as simply "Ship").

The function of importing shipments in "Ship" is what gave the polling software its name. The application continuously monitors directories configured by the user to determine whether shipments in the form of CSV files are available to import. If there are, the polling software retrieves these files (polling) and creates shipments from them in "Ship" (import).

This document is aimed at users of the polling software and system administrators. The following chapters will explain what the requirements are for installation, how this is carried out and how the polling software is used.
This document refers to version 1.1.0 of the polling software.

2 Installation

Installation is carried out using an installation wizard. You are guided through the installation process in a few steps.

2.1 Hardware and software requirements

The polling software is a Windows application and therefore requires a Windows operating system. The minimum requirement is Windows XP with at least 512 MB of RAM.
To ensure that the functions can be used to their full extent, the computer on which the application is to be installed should have access to the Internet. This is how the application communicates with "Ship".
You will also require an updated web browser (Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer) if you wish to print shipments from "Ship" out on your polling software. The polling software requires an updated java runtime environment.

2.2 Access requirements

The windows administrator rights are required for the whole installation and configuration process. After successful installation and configuration of the polling software you’re able to work with the usual windows rights.

2.3 Performing installation

Installation is launched by double-clicking on the installation file. In just a few steps, a dialog box will guide you through the installation process. All you need to do is select the installation directory.

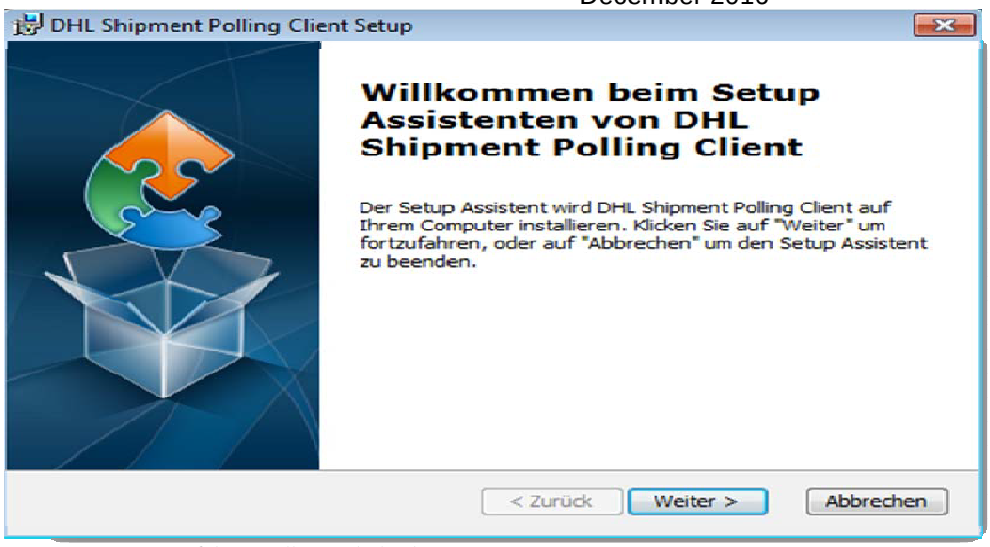

Figure 1: First step of the installation dialog box

The installation directory is selected after clicking "Weiter".
You can choose any installation directory, however we recommend selecting the directory suggested unless you have been given other instructions.

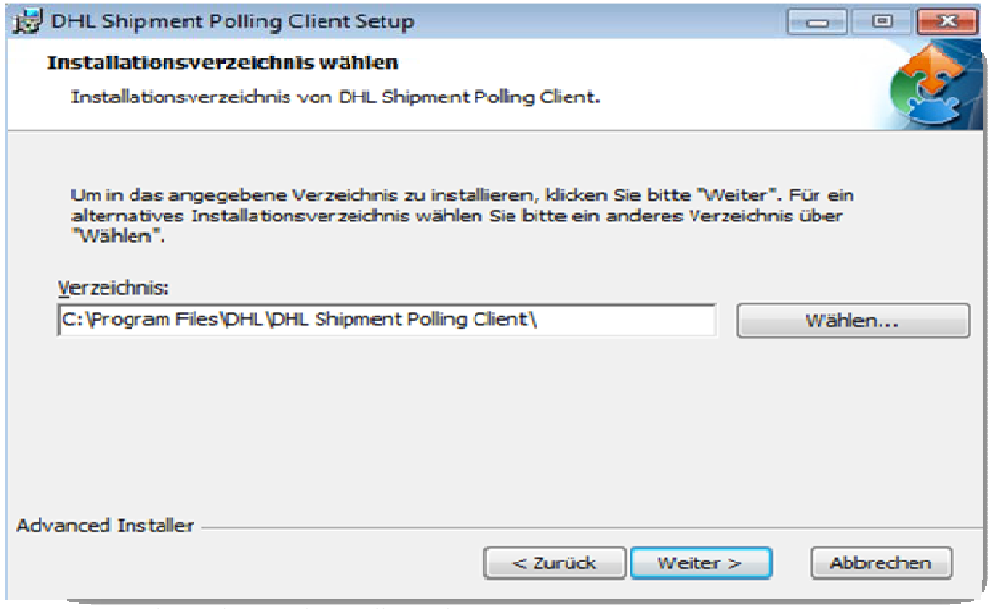

Figure 2: Second step: choosing the installation directory

Once you have selected a directory and clicked "Weiter", you will be prompted to confirm installation. To do this, click "Installieren".

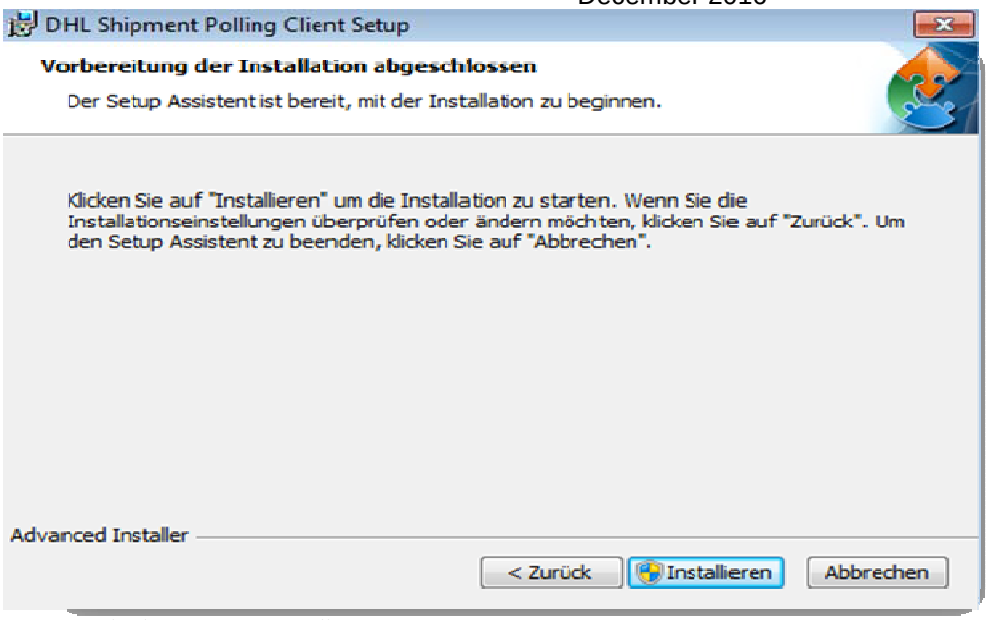

Figure 3: Third step: starting installation

Before installation starts, Windows issues another security prompt (Figure 4) to ask whether you are sure that you want to install the application. Confirm this dialog box with "Yes". Installation now begins.

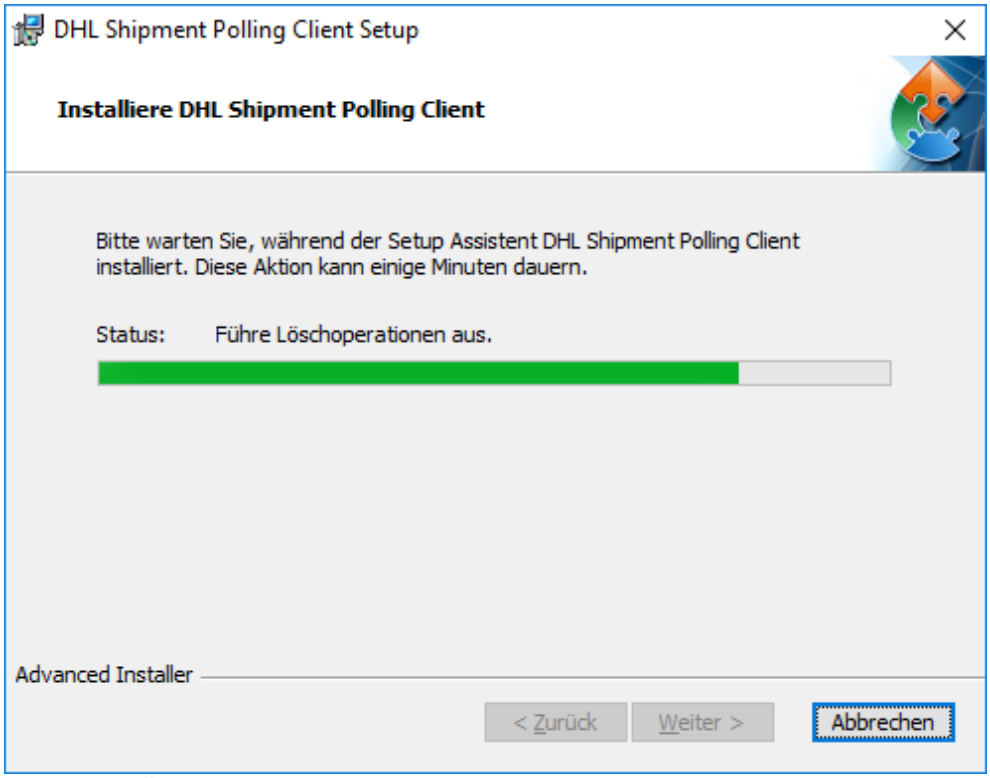

Figure 4: Installation is running

If you are prompted to enter a password, you do not hold sufficient rights to install this program. Talk to one of your system administrators if this happens.

The program is now installed. After installation, the last page of the installation appears. Click "Finish". You can now find the program on the path you have specified. A link is also created on your desktop.
A new folder can now be found in C:\Users\#Own username#\Documents
entitled "dhlvlspc", in which the log files and configuration file for the polling software are

stored.

2.4 Start the polling software

Start the polling software by double-clicking on the corresponding desktop icon or application file: DHL Shipment Polling Client.exe within the installation directory. After initial launch, the application and configuration dialog box open on your computer. To be able to use the functions of the polling software, basic settings must first be made (see Section 4 Configuration).

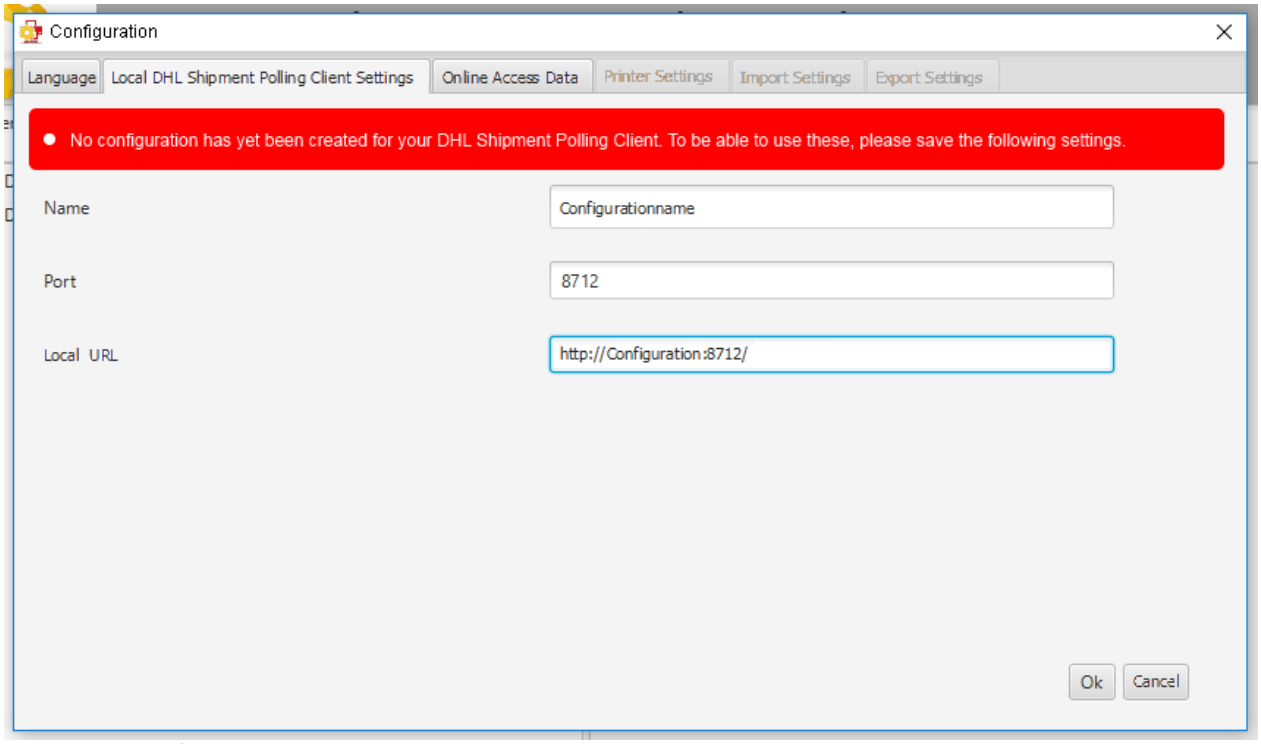

Figure 5: First configuration

2.5 Exit the polling software

The application is closed by selecting the menu item "Exit" (under "Application") or by selecting the relevant menu item in the tray icon menu (see Section 5.4 Tray icon").

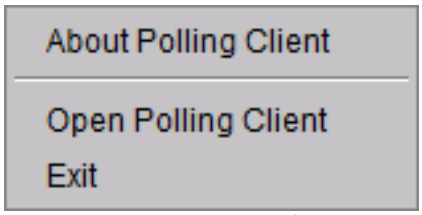

Figure 6: Ending the polling software via the system tray menu

Please note that clicking on the close window symbol in the top right-hand corner of the polling software simply hides the application, although it continues to run in the background. Its functions can then be accessed via the icon in the system tray, e.g. restore or exit the application.

2.6 Automatic updates

The polling software searches automatically every 12 hours for updates. If an update is found, it is output as a log message. The update is then launched by selecting the menu item "Check for updates" (under Help).

Figure 7: Starting the search for updates

If an update is available, you will be prompted to confirm the installation of the update. If you do this, the polling software is exited, the update downloaded and installation then started. The update installation process essentially corresponds to a reinstallation of the polling software. The newer version keeps all configurations parameter except parameters which are not more available in the newer version of the polling software.

2.7 Technical details

The polling software runs on 32-bit and 64-bit systems.

The installation wizard is a 32-bit application, however it also runs on 64-bit systems.

3 Main window

The application's main window essentially comprises four areas:

1. Menu bar
2. Messages area
3. Logging area
4. Document print preview

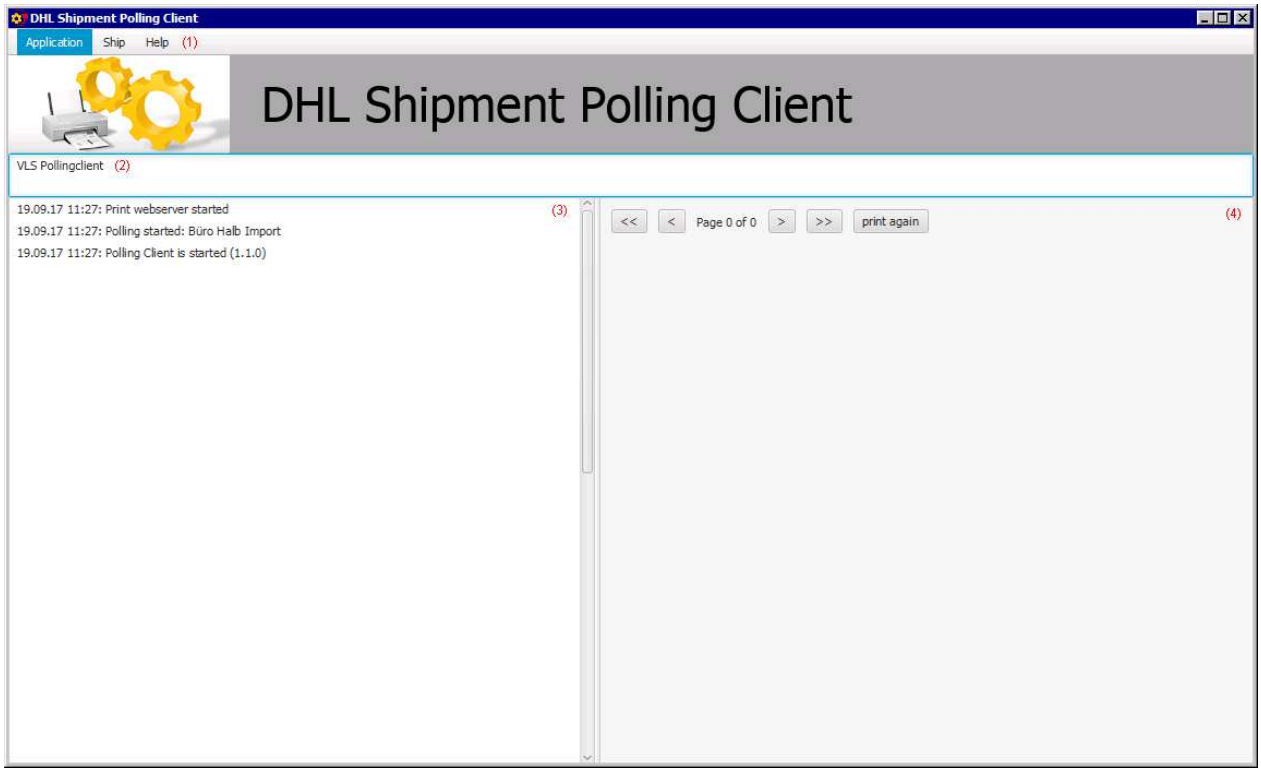

Figure 8: Main window of the polling software

3.1 Menu bar

Located under the Application menu item are the menu items "Configuration", "Close window" and "Exit". "Configuration" takes you to the configuration of the polling software. The configuration options are described in the following section.
"Close window" merely hides the main window. The application is not exited, however. To exit the application, select "Exit".

3.2 Messages area

Up-to-date information about the polling software and "Ship" are displayed in the messages area. This receives the application from "Ship".

3.3 Logging area

The polling software notifies you continuously of all ongoing operations via log messages. Log messages are sorted chronologically and displayed in the logging area. Ahead of the actual message is the time stamp, i.e. the time at which the log message was created.

In the event of an error, these messages are used to identify the problem.

3.4 Document print preview

The document print preview shows you all the documents that you have already printed via the polling software. At the top edge are the control elements, which are used to navigate through the list of printed documents, and a button for restarting printing.

Note: your data will also always be recorded in the DHL business customer portal for 6 months in the "Ship" function and can also be retrieved from there.

A detailed description of the functions can be found in Section 4 Document preview.

Please note that when reprinting, all documents are printed that have already been printed together with the document that is currently displayed in the preview. If you have printed a shipment with a shipping label and a return shipping label via the polling software, for example, and you are looking at the shipping label in the preview, the shipping label and the returns shipping label will be printed if you reprint it.

4 Configuration

The polling software is configured using the configuration dialog box. This dialog box can be called up via the menu item "Configuration" (under "Application"). Please note that, while the configuration dialog box is open, the polling software is unable to create any shipments in "Ship" and it is not possible to print shipments via the polling software either.

If you start the polling software for the first time on your computer, the configuration dialog box is displayed automatically. This also applies to situations in which the configuration has become invalid since the last start.

The configuration settings are sorted by theme and can be accessed via the tabs.

4.1 Language

The polling software supports the languages of German and English. One of the two languages can be selected in the configuration under the tab "Language”. Close the configuration dialog box by clicking the "OK" button and the language of the polling software is changed to the selected language. No restart is required.

4.2 Local DHL Shipment Polling Client Settings

In the "Local DHL Shipment Polling Client Settings" tab, enter the name of your configuration, the port and the local URL. The default port is 8712. Change the port if another application on your computer requires this port.

The local URL is made up of the network name of your computer and the selected port. This value is determined automatically by the polling software, however it can be changed, e.g. by using the IP instead of the network name.

The local URL is used by "Ship" to send print data to your polling software installation.

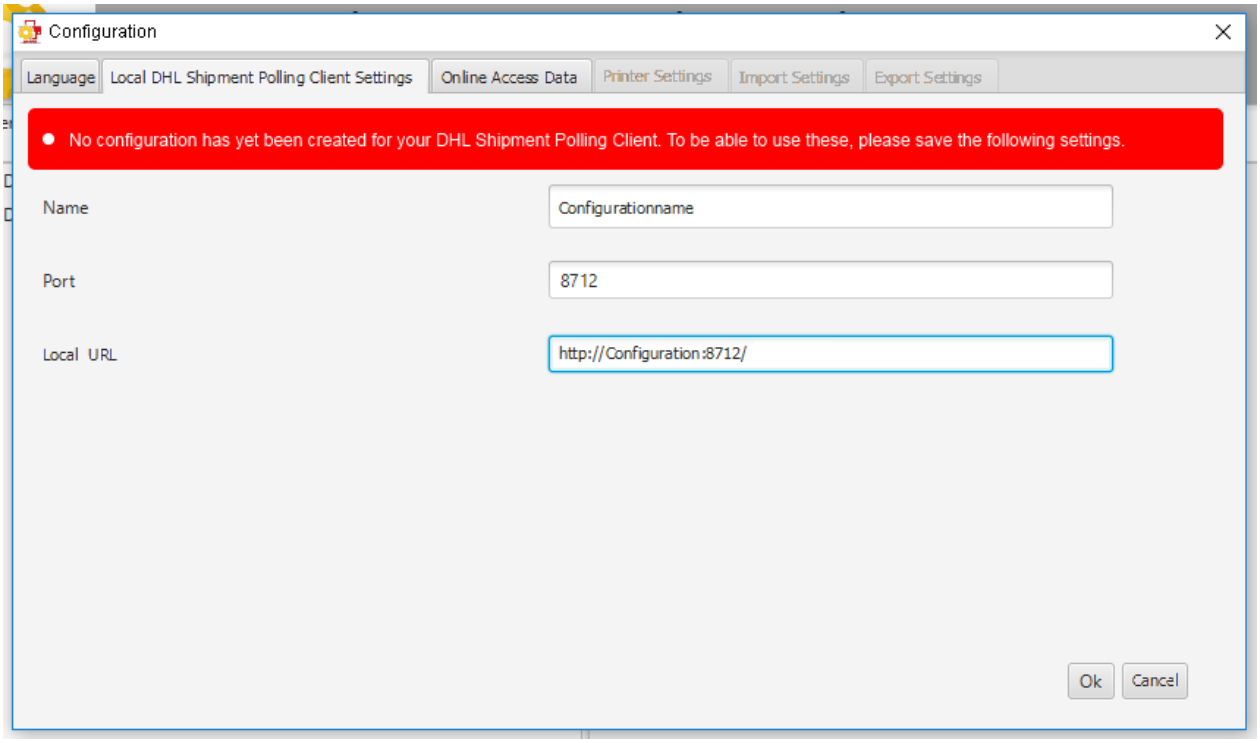

Figure 9: Local polling setting of the polling software

4.3 Online Access Data

In the "Online Access Data" tab, enter your user name from the DHL business customer portal and associated password and click "Login". If you receive an error message, first check the user name and password and your internet connection.

This information is required so that the polling software is able to communicate with „Ship“. The password for your user access is saved in encrypted form on your computer.

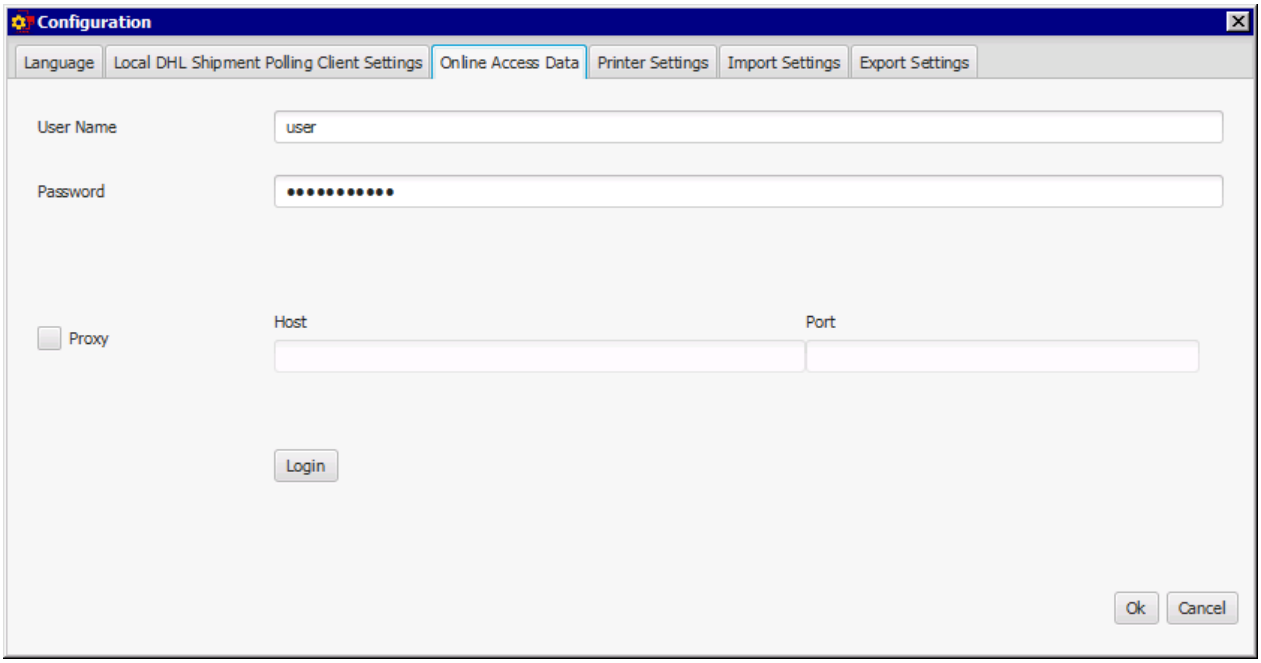

Figure 10: Access and connection data for „Ship“

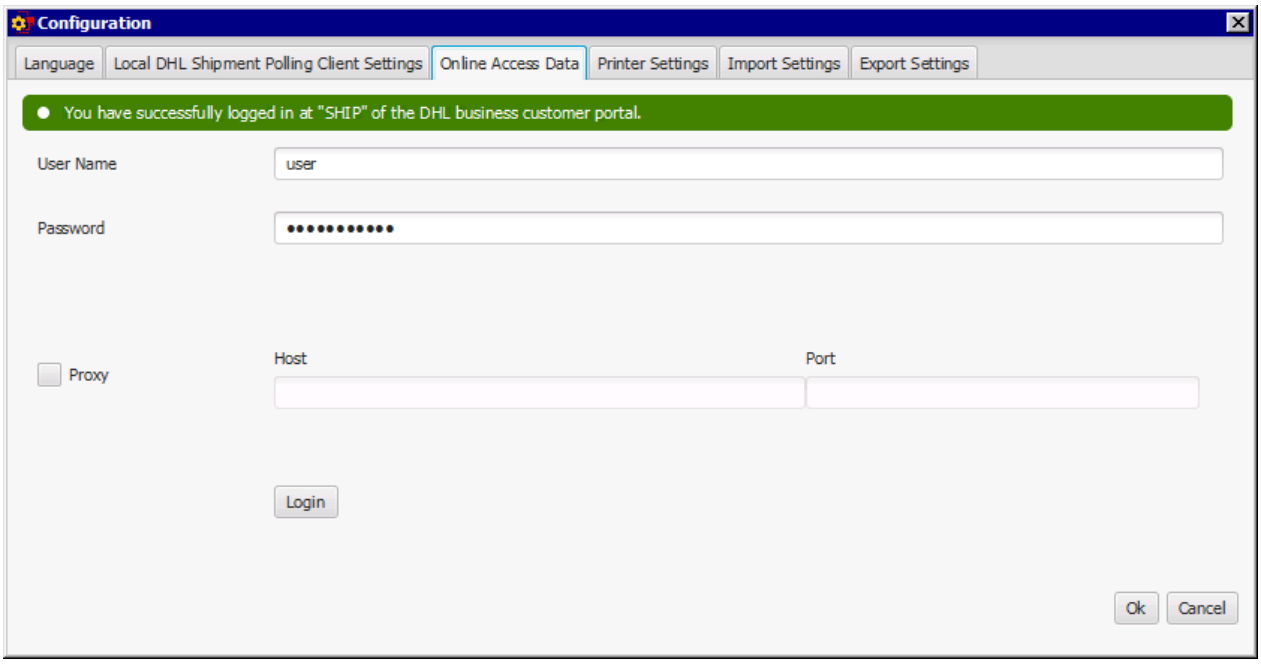

Figure 11: Successful connection

If access from your network is only possible via a proxy, you can also enter the proxy here that you wish to use.

4.4 Printer Settings

Printer configuration defines which printer and which printer settings are to be used for the document in question (e.g. shipping label). This applies to printing on the polling software from "Ship" (see Section 5.1.1 Choosing the printer configuration in "Ship"), as well as automatic printing during a shipment import (see Section 4.5.3 Poll Mode).

You can create as many printer configurations as you wish, and they can be selected after you have saved them in "Ship". Add a new printer configuration by clicking the

"Add" button. A new window opens.

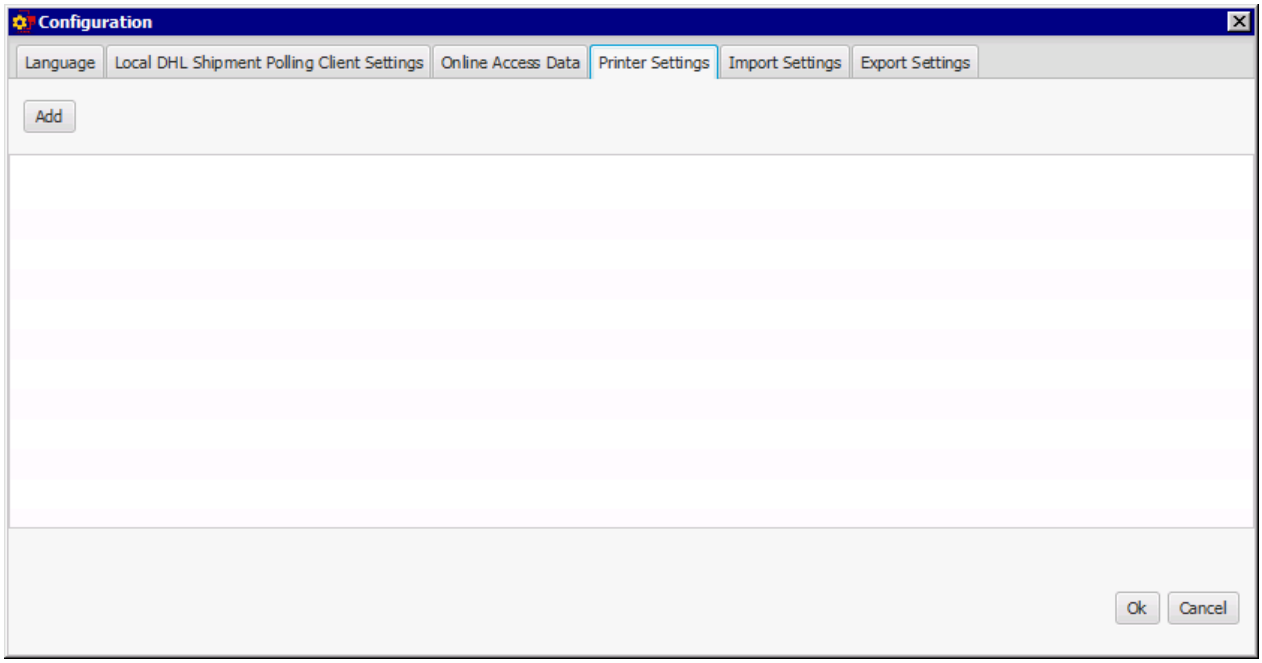

Figure 12: Summary of printer configurations

4.4.1 Advanced settings

Every printer configuration requires a name and each type of document have to be assigned to a printer. Then you can define directly to which printer which document is to be printed.

The drop-down boxes allow you to select every printer that has been installed on your computer. Locally connected printers (e.g. via USB) or network printers can be selected.

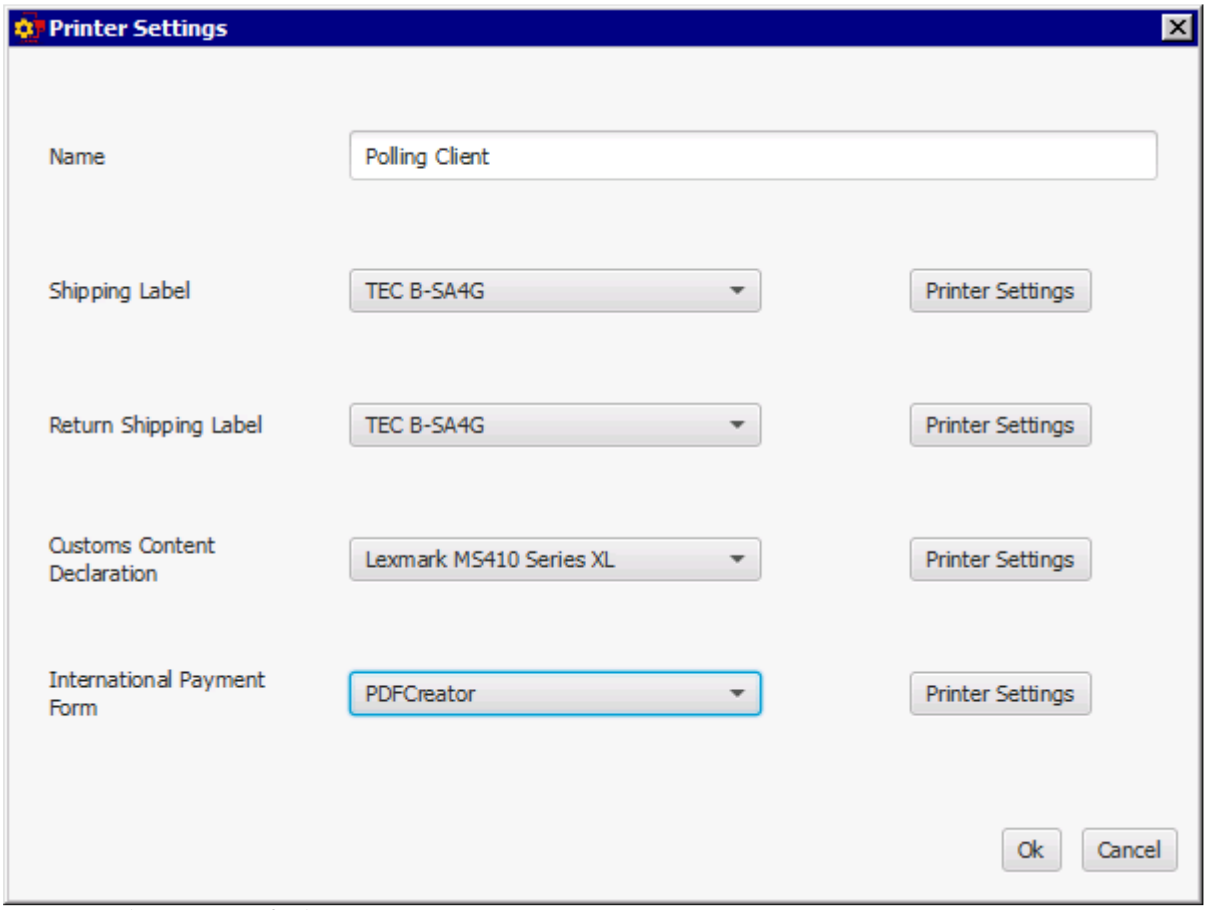

Figure 13: Selecting printers for documents

More advanced printer settings can be made for every type of document, such as the choice of paper tray. To open the relevant configuration dialog box, select the "Printer settings" button next to the required document type.

Confirm your settings by clicking the "OK" button or reject the changes by selecting the "Cancel" button. If you have selected "Cancel", the advanced printer settings you made previously will also be rejected.

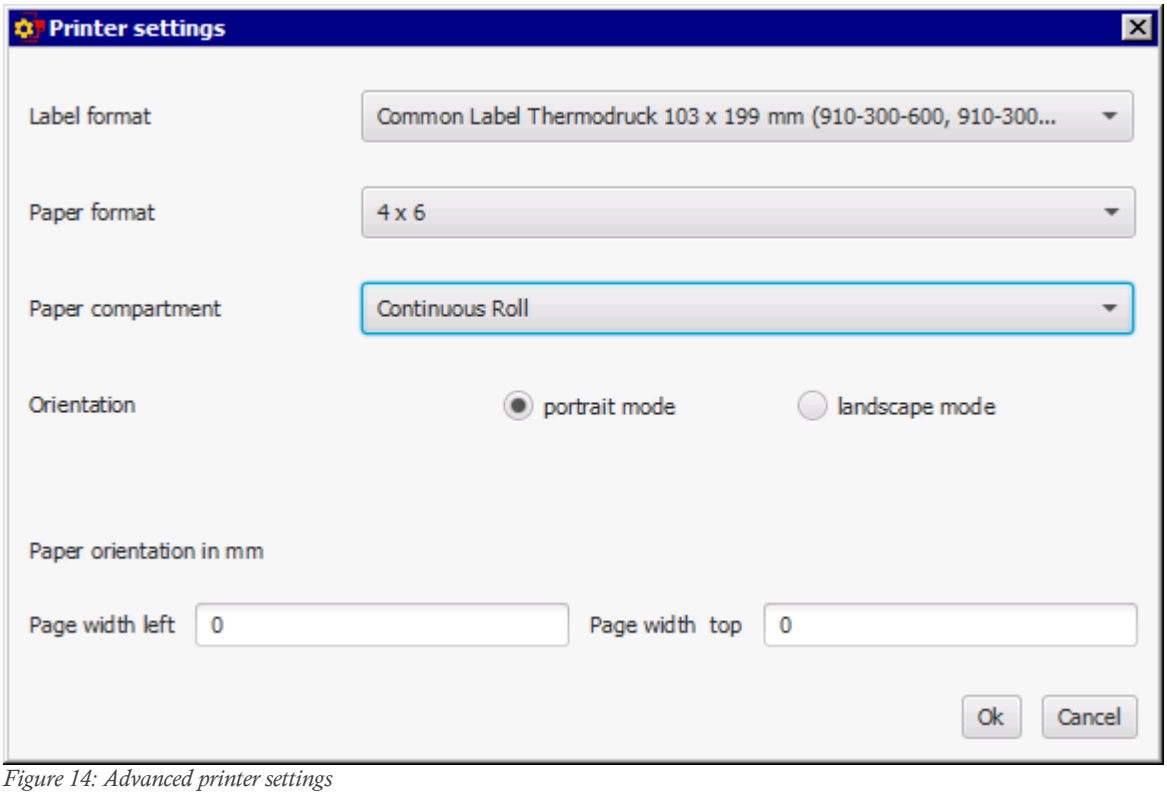

Figure 14: Advanced printer settings

The label formats available define how (size of the label, etc.) the documents are to be printed.

In the paper format, select the form of the paper if it is different from the label format. This may occur, for example, if you have selected "Common Label Laser Printing 105 x 205 mm (910-300-700, 910-300-750) as the label format but wish to print on DIN A4.

Choosing the paper tray allows you to determine which paper tray on the selected printer is used to take paper out of for printing. If no value is selected, the printer drive installed on the computer decides which tray paper is to be taken from. The polling software has no influence over this.

Please note that the values available are provided by the printer driver to the polling software. If the wrong paper compartment is used, please check that the installed printer driver is up to date.

Orientation allows you to determine whether the documents are printed in portrait or landscape format.

The paper orientation in mm specifies how much distance is to be left from the left and top edges. If a page width of 0 millimetres is specified, printing takes place with the smallest possible side width that the printer supports.

Confirm your settings by clicking the "OK" button or reject the changes by selecting the "Cancel" button.

If you have created a printer configuration, this appears in the summary page.

4.5 Import Settings

In the import settings, you can define as many polling configurations as you wish. Create a new polling configuration by clicking the "Add" button. A new window opens.

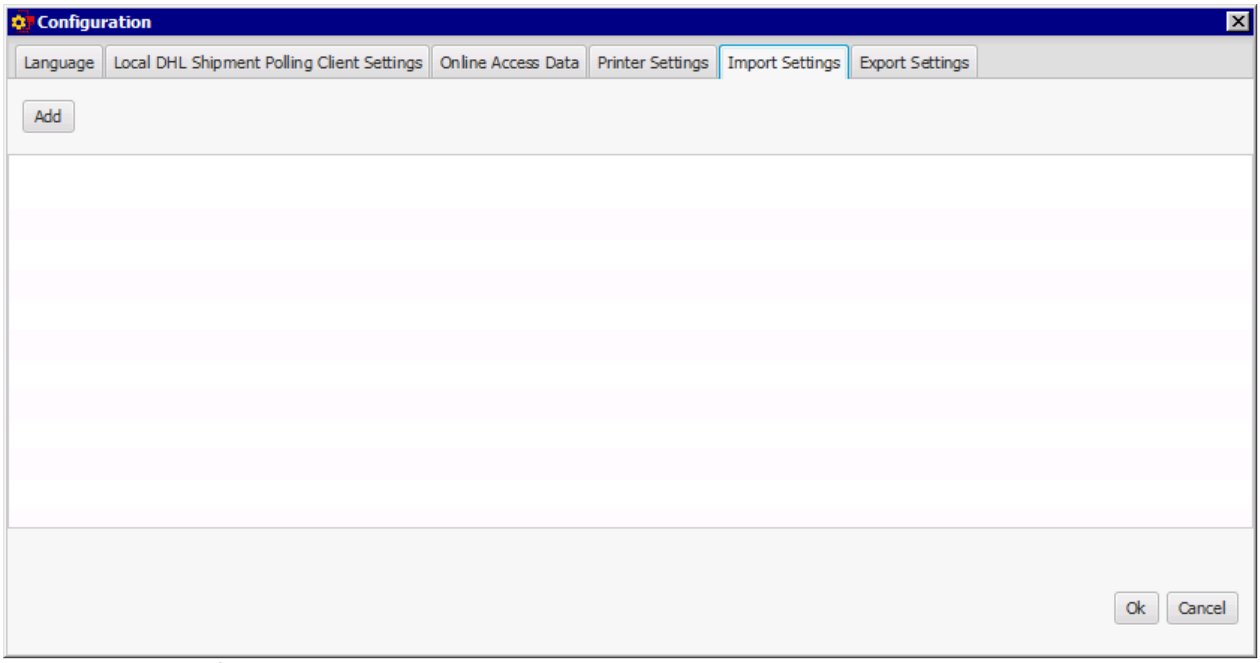

Figure 15: Summary of import settings

Every polling configuration can also be edited or deleted at a later point in time. An "Change" and "Delete" button is available for every entry in the summary.

Polling configuration essentially comprises the specification of a directory in which the polling software is to search for shipment data that is imported into „Ship“.

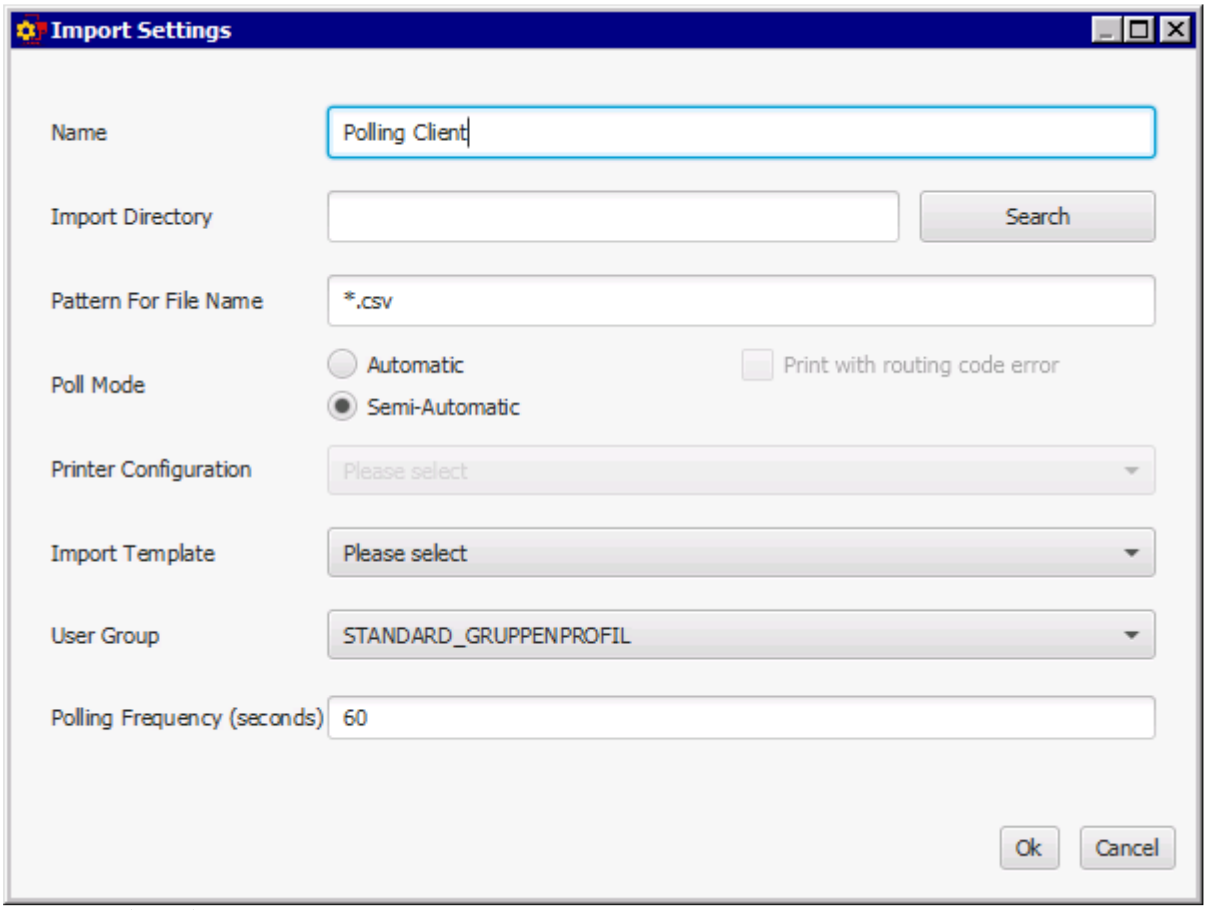

Figure 16: Advanced import settings

4.5.1 Import Directory

Assign any name. This appears in the summary of import settings in a row in the table. An import directory must also be specified from which the polling software reads the data. Click "Search". A directory dialog box opens via which you can select the required directory. You can select local directories as well as network directories.

4.5.2 Pattern For Fil Name

With the filename pattern, you can define which files in the selected directory are to be taken into account for the shipment import. If the directory contains files with the suffix "txt" and "csv", for example, but only the files with the suffix
"csv" contain shipment data, use "*.csv" as the filename pattern. This means that only files with that suffix are taken into account.

Please note that unnecessary error log messages can occur if you import files that do not contain any shipment data. It is therefore important to set the filename pattern correctly.
An asterisk (*) is supported for any number of characters and a question mark (?) is used for precisely one character. The field is pre-populated with *.csv. The suffix per se can be anything.

Files in the format ".txt" and ".csv" are accepted.

4.5.3 Poll Mode

In poll mode, you can select via radio buttons between automatic and semi-automatic.

4.5.3.1 Automatic

If automatic is selected, shipments are imported into „Ship“ and, if the shipment does not contain any validation errors, are automatically printed.

During this selection process, you can use the check box to decide whether shipments that contain warnings (routing code errors) are to be printed automatically and therefore the warning is ignored

Please note: A routing code error indicates that the address detailed stored for this shipment cannot be route coded (no postal deliveries can be made to this address). The shipping label for this shipment can however be created and used. However an additional route code charge will become due, since the shipment cannot be processed by machine in the freight centre.

4.5.3.2 Semi-Automatic

If you have selected semi-automatic, the shipments are only imported into „Ship“, however they can be viewed and printed in „Ship“

4.5.4 Import Template

All of the shipment import templates are available as import templates that you have created for the selected user access. As in „Ship“, the template also specifies how the shipment data is to be interpreted. If only one exists at the time of configuration, this is already adopted by default.

If you do not have an import template to choose from when selecting the import template, you must first create one in „Ship“. Before the import template becomes available to select, you must close and reopen the configuration dialog box once.

4.5.5 User Group

By selecting a user group, you can restrict the billing numbers available to the import process. The standard group profile is selected by default.

4.5.6 Polling Frequency

With the polling frequency, you can define the period in which the polling software is to search for files in the selected directory. The time is specified in seconds. If a value of 60 is set, the polling software searches for new files every 60 seconds.

If you are creating a new import setting you can see it in the following overview:

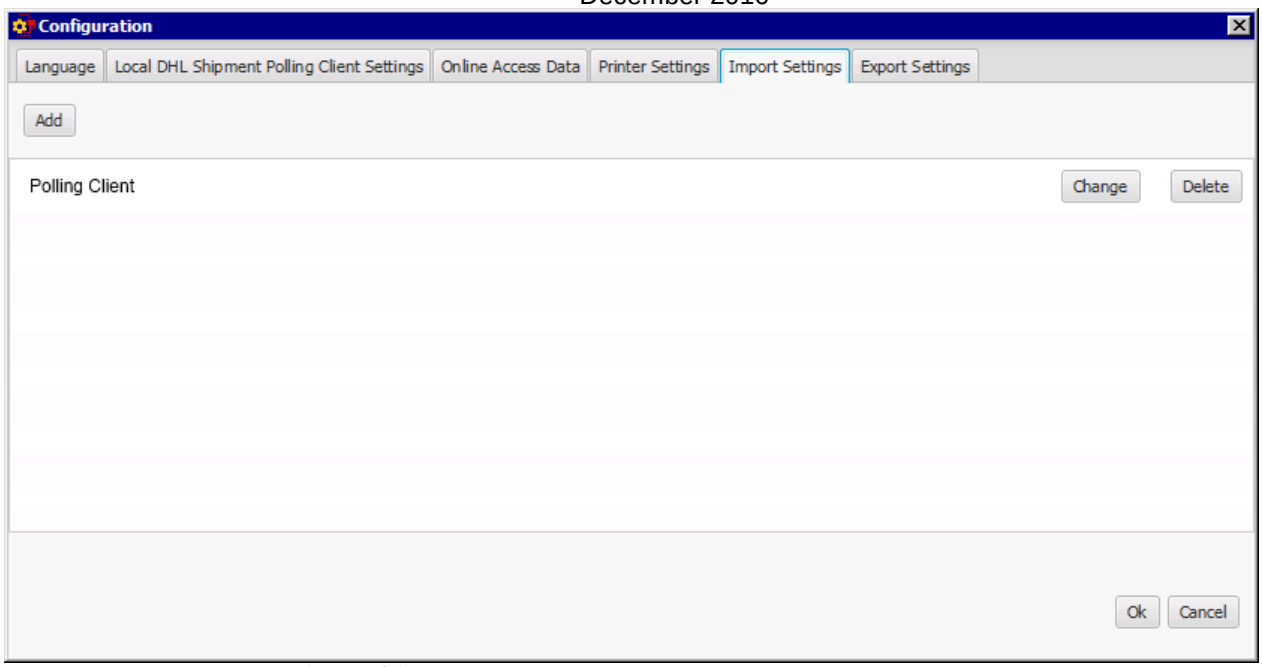

Figure 17: Import settings created successfully

It is possible to change or delete every import setting any time you want.

4.6 Export Settings

If you want to have completed shipments exported as a ".csv" and ".txt" file after the end-of-day procedure, put a check mark next to "Export shipments during end of day run", select any directory of your choice on your computer by clicking on "Search" and select an export template. The export templates are loaded automatically from your „Ship“ user.

After successful configuration the system is checking every 4 minutes for shipment data to upload in the export directory.

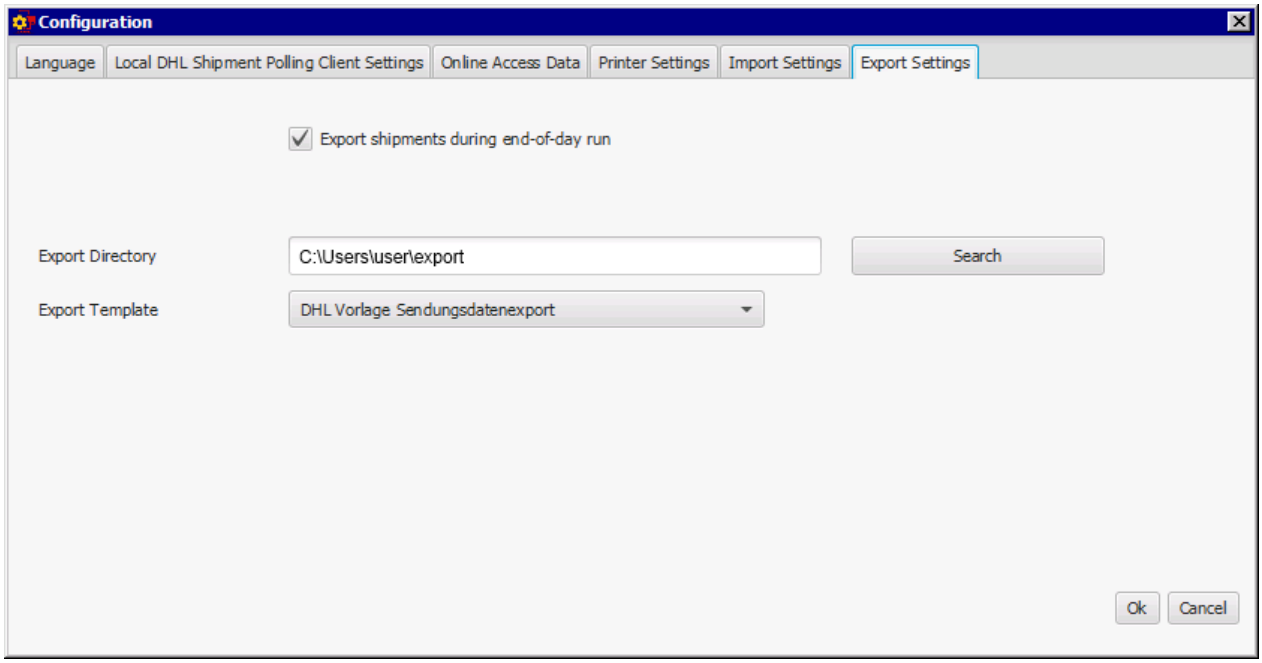

Figure 18: Export settings

4.7 Completing configuration

If you exit the configuration dialog box with "OK" and the configuration has been saved successfully, the polling software starts all the necessary background processes. A web server is started, for example, via which shipments from "Ship" are printed.

For every polling configuration, a background process begins which browses the selected directories for shipment files at a defined chronological interval (see Section 4.5.6 Polling Frequency).

5 Operation

5.1 Printing shipments

If you are using the automatic polling mode your shipments will be send to “Ship” automatically and after the shipments will be printed on your local printer. Additional settings in “Ship” are not required.

If you are using the semi-automatic polling mode your shipments will be send to “Ship” automatically, you can now decide if you want to use your configured polling software to print your shipping documents or to use the PDF download of the "Ship" function, which is standardized.

It is also possible to use the polling software printer configuration in the function “Ship” with other types of import. Necessary for this functionality is to use the printer configuration from chapter 4.4 Printer Settings in your “Ship”.

5.1.1 Choosing the printer configuration in "Ship"

By default, documents in „Ship“ are provided as PDF downloads. The polling software also allows you to print these documents out immediately without having to download a PDF file first.

To do this, in "Ship", go to the basic settings and then select the menu item "General". In the "Set up printer settings" area, you can select the polling software and the required printer configuration.

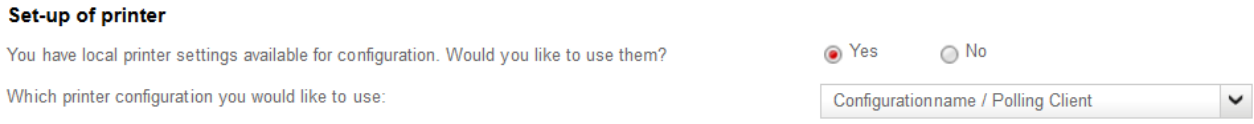

Figure 19: Selecting the polling software in „Ship“

The " You have local printer settings available for configuration. Would you like to use them?" option allows you to choose whether you want to print on the polling software or continue to receive shipments as a PDF download.

Please note that this choice is only available if a local printer configuration for your „Ship“ user has already been created!

Select "Yes" if the documents are to be printed locally. The choice of
" Which printer configuration you would like to use:" allows you to choose a printer configuration that you have created in the polling software (see Section 4.4 Printer Settings). The designations of the options available are made up of the name of the polling software (see Section 4.2 Local DHL Shipment Polling Client Settings) and the name of the printer setting. There is an option available for each printer setting you have created.

Once you have selected a printer configuration, save the settings.

5.1.2 Printing shipments using the GUI of “Ship”

Shipments can now be selected for printing as usual in „Ship“. Select one shipment or multiple shipments for printing.
If your polling software has been started and the correct printer configuration has been selected in the General Settings, a pop-up window opens in which the progress of the current print job is displayed. Printing is started and the pop-up closes automatically once printing is complete.

Please note that the pop-up window will not be displayed if your browser's pop-up blocker is enabled. In such instances, you will normally be notified by your web browser that a pop-up window has been blocked. The type of message and the process for allowing pop-up windows varies depending on the browser and pop-up blocker.

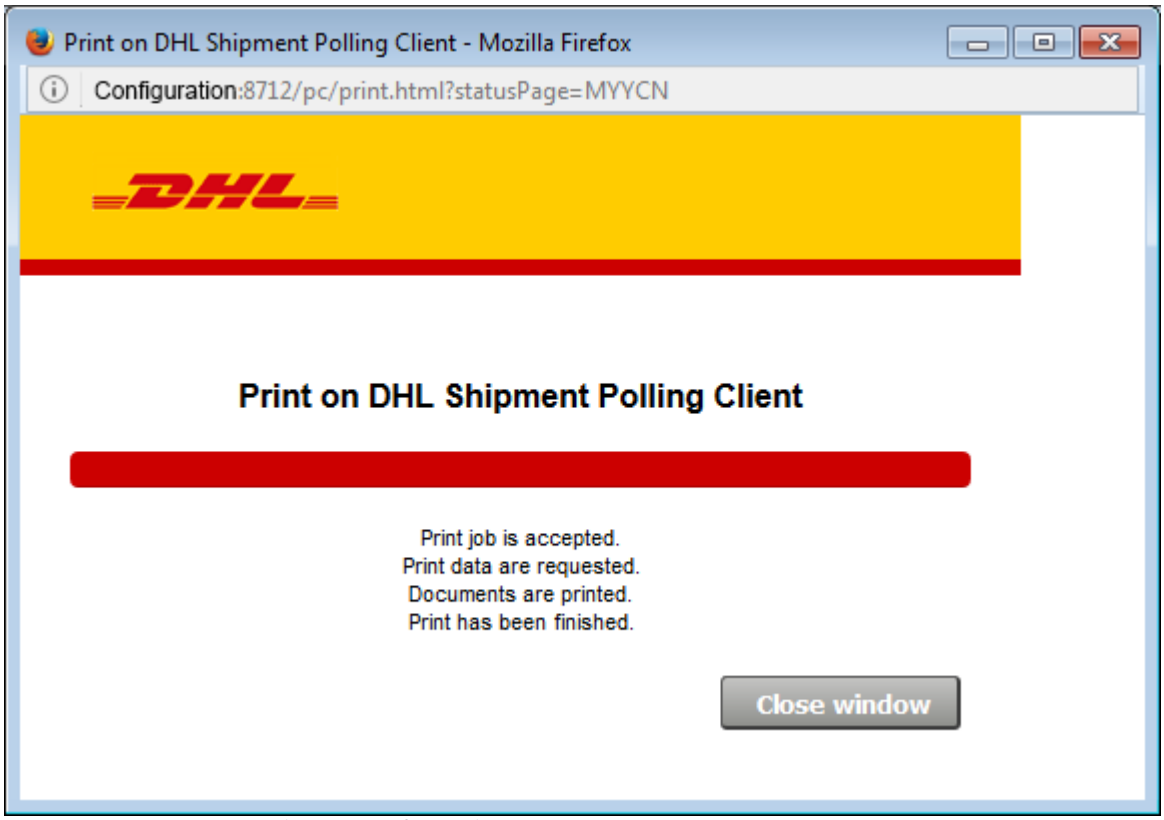

Figure 20: Printing progress when printing from „Ship“

If the polling software has received the shipment data from "Ship", the generated printing data is sent to the printer you have configured and printed by this printer as configured (see Section 4.4.1 Advanced settings). You can check this by displaying the print jobs (Windows offers this function for all printers).

If your polling software has not been started or cannot be accessed by "Ship", an error message is displayed. The pop-up is not opened in this case.

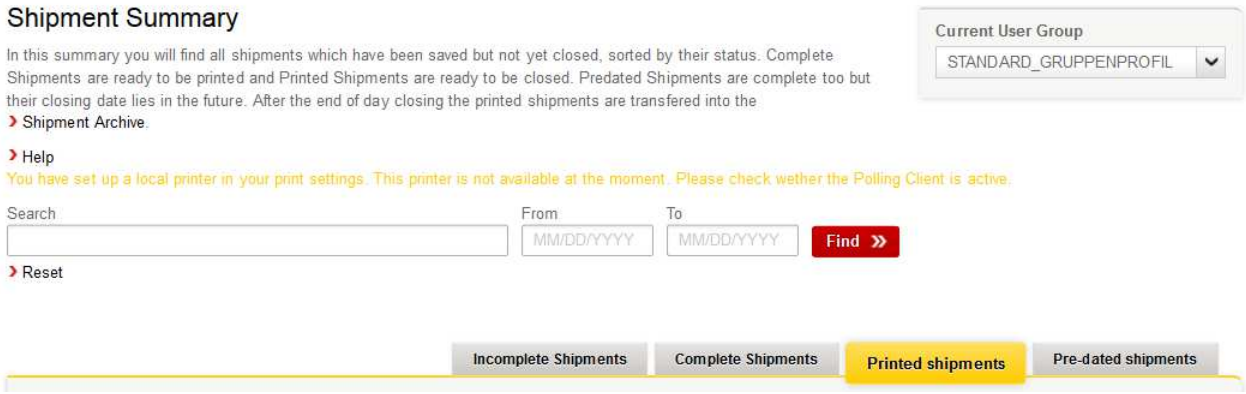

Figure 22: Cannot print, polling software cannot be accessed
Document preview

In the polling software's main window, the printed documents are displayed on the right-hand side. You can navigate through the documents using the buttons at the top edge of the preview window. This functions on a page-by-page basis, however it is also possible to skip to the end or start of the list of printed documents.

The functions specified can also be accessed via a context menu, which opens if you right-click on the preview window.

The documents can also be enlarged or made smaller. This is done on a mouse by scrolling the mouse wheel up or down.

5.2 Importing shipments in "Ship"

"Ship" as a web application provides the option of importing shipments via CSV file upload. As described in Section 4.5 Import Settings, the polling software can import such files automatically. For this to happen, full polling configuration and a shipment import template (in "Ship") must have been completed.

If the polling software finds shipments that can be imported, the import takes place according to the selected shipment import template. The generated shipment is then once again found in the „Ship“ shipment summary. In the "Type" column, these shipments have the value "Polling".

Please note that the files for importing must not exceed a certain file size. Currently the maximum permissible file size is 1 MB (equivalent to 1048576 bytes). Files larger than this will not be imported.

Files that the polling software determines are for import but which it cannot import remain in the configured directory and are assigned the suffix "vlstmp".

5.3 End of day export

If you have activated the end of day export in the configuration (see Section 4.6 Export Settings), an export file is generated after the end of day run for your shipments and saved in the directory you have selected. The form of the content corresponds to the export template you have selected.

5.4 Tray icon

When the polling software starts, a system tray icon is also placed in the Windows task bar. Double-clicking this icon displays the main window of the polling software if it was previously hidden. Clicking with the right-hand mouse button on the system tray icon displays its menu containing the following menu items:

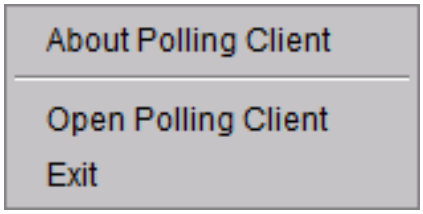

Figure 21: System tray menu

About the polling software: Further information about the polling software. Open polling software: Displays the main window of the polling software Exit: Exits the polling software after a security prompt.

5.5 Preview

In the preview on the right-hand side of the main screen, the polling software offers the ability to preview the labels to be printed.

5.6 Logging

Unwanted errors or events can occur within the polling software. These messages are displayed both in the main window on the left-hand side and saved in files in the "logs" folder of the polling software (C:\Users\#own username#\Documents\dhlvlspc\logs).
Error messages are also displayed as a message in the system tray.

6 Troubleshooting and FAQs (Frequency Asked Questions)

Export / import template not available	If you have started the polling software and want to select an import or export template, but none is displayed, it may be that you have not yet created a template in „Ship“. To do this, log in to „Ship“ with your username and password (which you also used in the polling software under online access details) and in the navigation go to "Import of Shipment data" or "Export of Shipment data" and check first whether any templates have been saved there. If not, you will need to create them. You must now restart the polling software so that it will load new templates from „Ship“.
Empty pop-up window when printing to a local printer from the online application	When printing to the polling software, „Ship“ first checks whether the polling software is available. If this check is unsuccessful, you will receive an error message and the pop-up does not open. In rare cases, this check may fail and a pop-up window opens, but no content is displayed. In this situation, check whether the polling software has been started. If it has, check whether the polling software can be accessed via the specified URL (does the network name or IP match).

Error in the pop-up window when printing to a local printer from the online application	If the pop-up window shows you an error if you are trying to print to a local printer from the online application, check whether: a. the polling software is active and b. configuration is closed and c. the printer is connected
Print web server port already busy	If you see the message in logging that the selected print web server port is already busy, please check whether other applications on your computer are using this port. If they are, change the port in your configuration to another free port on your computer. In rare cases, it may happen that the print web server cannot be shut down properly when saving the configuration. In this situation, the message "Print web server port busy" may also appear. Change the port to a free one or restart the polling software.

Error message: "Cannot move file"	This error appears if the file to be imported is open. Close the file. The file is processed with the next defined polling cycle.
No files are polled.	If you discover that no files are being polled in the defined cycle, although the file is in the defined import directory and is not being processed, check whether: a. the polling software is active and b. configuration is closed
continuing to work is not possible	With certain errors, it is not possible to continue working with the polling software. If this happens, search in logging for messages that have logged messages and which were logged at around the time when the polling software stopped working correctly. Note the time stamp and search within the log files for this time stamp. There you will find the more detailed log message containing further technical information. Send this information to customer services.
Is the update to the new version automatically available?	No, the update is not automatically available. Please uninstall the old version 1.0.18 and install the new Version 1.1.0 manually.
Is it possible to use the polling software on a server?	Yes, it is possible to use the polling software on a server.
Is it possible to use the polling software on a terminal server?	No, it is not possible to use the polling software on a terminal server yet.
I have problems to save the configuration of the polling software.	Please check if you own the windows administration rights during the configuration.
The paper layout which is necessary to print is not available.	All paper layouts are available which your printer driver provides. If you miss some layouts please try to update your printer driver.
The paper tray I want to use is not available.	All paper trays are available which your printer driver provides. If you miss some paper trays please try to update your printer driver.

Why do I find files with the ending „vlstmp“ in my import directory?	Files, which are not possible to upload for the polling software are getting the file suffix “vlstmp”. Reasons could be issues in the file. If you find files with this ending, please delete them.
The import of my files is not possible	Please note that the files for importing must not exceed a certain file size. Currently the maximum permissible file size is 1 MB (equivalent to 1048576 bytes). Files larger than this will not be imported. If the file is smaller than the 1 MB please try to import the file in the GUI of the function “ship” manually to see what errors occur.

7 Glossary

Term	Explanation
"Ship"	Shipping logistics function in the DHL business customer portal which can only be accessed via the HTTPS web server or the DHL business customer portal.
Document	A document contains shipping label, returns shipping label or international customs papers generated by „Ship“.
Printing settings	All of the document types, assigned printers and printer settings specified in the configuration of the polling software.
Export directory	Directory in which the exported shipments are stored following the end-of-day run in the form of CSV and TXT files. The directory must be accessible from the computer on which the polling software is installed.
Hard validation error	Errors that occur when creating shipments in „Ship“ that prevent the shipment from being printed. The shipment is created, however.
Import directory	The directory from which CSV or TXT files are read by the polling software and sent to „Ship“. The directory must be accessible from the computer on which the polling software is installed. There can be multiple import directories for each polling software.
Installation ID	Hash value made up of the host name and path to the polling software's configuration file (INI). Recognises the copying of a polling software configuration on another installation
Logging	In IT, logging refers to the process of storing messages from an application in a file or displaying them within the application.
Polling	Periodic checking of a file system directory in which CSV or TXT files can be stored by a third party. These are read by the polling software and sent via the web service to „Ship“. See also Import directory
Polling software	All of the software that a user installs on his or her own Windows workstation. Multiple clients per EKP / customer are possible
Polling directory	See Import directory
Pop-up blocker	Part of a web browser that prevents the automatic opening of unwanted windows known as pop-ups.
UUID	Unified Unique Identifier, a key that spans all objects and clients
vlstmp	Suffix for files that are destined for shipment import but which could not be imported.
Web browser	Application enabling web pages to be viewed