

Gregory Melle's AS/400, Power Systems, RPG, COBOL and DB2 Experience

The Power Systems is IBM's current name for its range of mid-sized business computer servers. This system was formerly known as the AS/400 and then the iSeries; and those remain the names by which it is still called by many users.

While IBM has been promoting their Java and Linux offerings, a massive amount of business, accounting and engineering software is still being created and maintained in older languages such as COBOL and RPG.

My year-long software programming education in 1985 and 1986 included both COBOL and RPG. About 2/3 of our programming assignments were created using COBOL. I also completed two week courses in RPG II and JCL.

In 1988, I worked for 8 months using RPG II on the IBM System/36. This was contract work for Group West systems in Burnaby, BC. At this job I mainly did maintenance RPGII programming on J.D. Edwards and BPICS software packages.

In 1990 I did several months of intensive work on the IBM AS/400. This was for several clients of Azcom Systems in Vancouver, BC including the local Blue Cross and Girl Guides.

I learned to control the computer using the OS/400 operating system and CL (Command Language) programming. I did a complete system set-up; installing software, PTF upgrades and physically attaching terminals and printers. I studied system and language manuals and used the IBM computer based training.

I used and studied a variety of utility programs that include SDA, SEU, RLU, Implementer and MicroFocus Workbench. I worked with OS/400 OPENQRY and DB/2 SQL. I programmed applications with RPG/400 and COBOL/400.

During my Year 2000 remediation employment, I used software packages such as ADAMS/400 and MicroFocus Cobol for data analysis and conversion. I travelled to the IBM offices in Oakbrook, Illinois for one week of training.

In early 1997 I did some work in the Saskatchewan headquarters of CrownLife Insurance. We created reports using COBOL/400 and integrated SQL (DB2).

In October 1997 I started a software contract in Jackson, Mississippi. We used conversion software to do a major RPG remediation project on an AS/400 database. This was completed in July 1998. At that time I moved to Northern California.

In June 1998 I started work for EA Consulting in San Francisco. During my first 4 months there I worked in the offices of DFS Duty Free Stores. I programmed in RPG IV and a little Java.

In February to March 2006 I did 6 weeks of programming at Western Forest Products in Duncan, BC. I created new programs and reports using RPG IV (RPG ILE). Much of this involved embedded DB2 SQL statements. I analysed database modifications and modified CL control programs. I updated my AS/400 knowledge and skills.

In April to July 2006 I worked on a RPG development contract with Accenture and the BC Hydro electric utility in Surrey, BC. I created new programs using RPG ILE and did much low level program maintenance and debugging. I solved several inter-server communication issues.

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