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Getting started with your IBM i transition



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Problem

If you're an IT manager, you will likely have responsibility for constantly analysing and revising your IT systems; making sure that users have the application functionality that they need, removing anything that has become obsolete and replacing and/or enhancing systems that are needed so the business operates flexibly and reliably.

Many organisations still rely on IBM i applications written and maintained in RPG or 2E. If these applications have been custom written and have extended life (measured in decades) it is likely that they are now causing a number of issues:

The cost of maintaining these applications is likely to be rising, particularly in the face of a declining level of development and support resources. Possibly there will be a backlog for application development; and often no or poor documentation will result in increased risk and decreased turnaround times.

In these circumstances organisations face decisions to modernise, replace or, "bear the burden". With respect to modernising or replacing often the first step is to understand in detail the scope and complexity of the application(s) and database(s) to enable an assessment of the likely implications of change including clarity of the scope of functionality which might be lost.

A further key consideration and reason for analysis and documentation of what exists today is an assessment of the likely impact of removing the application. Given that applications of this nature are typically highly integrated the task can be complex.

Solution

SAS^{IT} is a Managed Services Provider (MSP) specialising in managing mission critical systems for our customers. Our extensive knowledge and experience running IBM mid-range systems combined with our cloud systems skills provided the essential prerequisites to being efficient at managing hybrid cloud environments. However, managing environments is relatively straightforward when compared to the process of modernisation.

When modernising or undertaking an impact analysis prior to replacement the first step is analysis. SAS^{IT} uses a number of tools to automate the process as much as possible. We have partnered with Fresche Solutions who is the leading global manufacturer of software tools designed for this purpose.

Using Fresche tools we are able to quickly get a clear view of the complete application environment: the number of lines of code, the number of programs, sub routines, function

calls, external calls, and variables used. Importantly, every database object, including its subfiles, logical views, and links to other database objects, is described. Every object is automatically documented and the documentation is constantly maintained.

Using the Fresche X-Analysis suite of tools we are able to generate detailed analysis and interactive diagrams that enable an in-depth understanding of RPG, COBOL, and 2E (Synon) applications and data.

The output is documentation that describes systems in a simple manner that can then be shared throughout the organisation, even with members who are not technical. We are able to extract business rules, audit code quality, and perform impact analysis.

Whether the transition goal is modernisation, impact analysis prior to replacement, or simply to obtain greater systems understanding to steer development direction, SASIT can assist.

For more information

Contact SASIT to discuss your specific transition requirements and to determine if we can deliver the outcomes that you are seeking.

Please email ian.hight@sasit.co.nz for further information.



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