ARCAD-Transformer RPG SUCCESS STORY

> "Transforming our existing application revitalizes our investment, allowing developers with Java & Windows skills to maintain and extend our IBM i code effectively into the future."

Jason Feng, Application Development, Letsos Company

Letsos Company
transforms its core applications into RPG Free Format, enabling efficient software maintenance without additional staffing & training.

The Customer

The Texas-based Letsos mechanical contracting company use the TrueLine ERP to manage their accounting tasks, hosted on IBM i written in a mix of RPG III and RPG IV. For greater security, and in order to be more reactive to errors in the system, Letsos have purchased the TrueLine RPG source code. The full application consists of several thousands of objects, and still requires occasional maintenance and updates.

The issue: modernizing legacy source code

Management of TrueLine fell under the responsibility of IT Manager Jason Feng, experienced in Java and Microsoft languages under .NET. Accustomed to graphical development environments, whenever errors arose in the TrueLine package, Jason struggled understanding the fixed column RPG and working from a green screen with PDM / SEU.

To correct bugs in the ERP or handle new requirements, Jason needed a tool to help him understand the legacy RPG source and locate errors efficiently. He was reluctant to spend time learning "stabilized" tools, and wanted a graphical IDE similar to those he had used with Java and .NET.

The solution: ARCAD-Transformer RPG

Since IBM i 7.1 TR 7, all current RPG IV features are now supported in RPG Free Format. This advance is considered a game-changer in the IBM i community. Free Form syntax frees developers from fixed column entry allowing natural left-to-right indented logic similar to most other languages today (such as Java or C# for example). This improves coding efficiency and the readability of sources, making RPG accessible to all developers and extending the lifetime of IBM i assets.

With the **ARCAD-Transformer RPG** solution IBM i organizations can benefit immediately from Free Form RPG. ARCAD-Transformer RPG automatically converts any RPGLE code into Free Format with near 100% accuracy - including calculation specifications (C) and declaration specifications (H, F, D, P), and even goto statements.

Goals behind the project at Letsos

The main goal behind the use of Free Format RPG and ARCAD-Transformer RPG at Letsos was to become more reactive to bugs found in their ERP. They were also driven to become more productive in ERP maintenance, and avoid unnecessary costs of learning "stabilized" tools and technology.

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How was the solution implemented?

Jason started by downloading a free trial of ARCAD-Transformer RPG from the ARCAD Software Website, to directly compare with another third-party product on the market.

With the free trial, Jason successfully converted several RPG programs that were causing problems. As the program logic was much easier to read, he could more easily make corrections, and save the converted RPG Free Format source ready for compilation in the next application build.

Jason found ARCAD-Transformer RPG easy to install. Also, in comparison with the other product he evaluated, Jason preferred ARCAD-Transformer RPG because of **its integrated plug-ins to the Eclipse-based Rational Developer for i (RDi) IDE**. With the combination of RDi and ARCAD-Transformer RPG, he could easily convert programs "as needed", locate bugs, and recompile. Another advantage was that he could gradually modernize the TrueLine application, leaving a mix of both old and new RPG code in place.

Benefits achieved

With ARCAD-Transformer RPG and Rational Developer for i (RDi), Letsos found that existing staff with no prior IBM i experience could proactively and efficiently maintain and enhance their legacy RPG-based accounting applications, using modern development tools. This combined solution brought several benefits to Letsos:

- Protects their application investment, avoiding purchase of a new ERP
- No additional hardware or staffing was required
- Software maintenance can be performed by non- IBM i experts
- Expedites software updates

By shortening the time needed to fix bugs, ARCAD-Transformer RPG has also helped keep end-users satisfied.

Conclusions

Developed in collaboration with RPG compiler team at IBM, ARCAD-Transformer RPG is a tool that extends the lifetime of IBM i assets by making RPG source code easily maintainable by non-IBM i experts.

For more information or to download a trial, visit our Website: www.arcadsoftware.com

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