

The POWER WORLD

Where Educated People are the **Real** Power

By Glenn Gundermann, Chair TEC 2008

It's hard to believe but TEC 2008 has come and gone. It was TUG's 15th annual conference, for which I have been fortunate to be chair of the conference for the last 9 years.



It was another incredible conference and would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the TEC 2008 Committee: **Bob Lesiw, Ed Jowett, Glenn Gundermann, Harry Hastilow, Jay Burford, Kumar Rajendra, Léo Lefebvre, Stephen Quan, Stephen Bingham, Vaughn Dragland,** and **Wende Boddy.**

Special thanks also to our volunteers: **Aziz Saleh, Garth Tucker, Ken Davis, Lindsay**



There are many things that help make TEC a success. One of these is our sponsors. In an effort to keep costs down and make our conference more environmentally friendly, we limit the number of handouts we print for each session. When a session gets more attendees than handouts, we need to print additional copies—and due to timing restraints, we need to get the handouts printed fast and preferably in a duplex format. This year, we were fortunate to have a new sponsor for our event. Océ Business Services, Inc. The loan of the model im3512 printer allowed us to meet the needs our attendees in a timely fashion. To this end, we would like to thank the following people: **Mark Shapiro** of Océ Business Services Inc, Mississauga for the loan of the printer, and **Karen Magill** of CGI Group for her assistance in arranging the loan of the printer. For more information on Océ printers, visit www.ocb-innovation.com.



Stephen Bingham & Océ printer at TEC 2008 registration office

Sutherland, Russell Pangborn, and Seneca College students **Mansoor Najarian** and **Yang Wang.**

Day 1

For our attendees, there were some tough decisions to make, choosing from seven great tracks. Topics included RPG programming, software development, operations, professional development, plus a lot more.

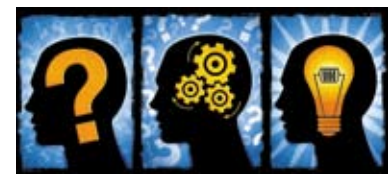
For the IT executives, we had an Executive Breakfast, featuring **Todd Britton** and **George Farr** from IBM's Rational group, talking about Accelerating Software Innovation on IBM i.

Our Vendor Showcase had a room full of vendors offering great products and services, along with our complimentary lunch. Our Hors d'oeuvre Table & Cash Bar opened for the last two hours of the Showcase.

The last session of the day was a thought provoking Panel Discussion on "Your Future and the System i Future: Are they the Same?" The panel was moderated by **Trevor Perry** and included the well respected **Alison Butterill, George Farr, Jon Paris, Larry Bolhuis, Susan Gantner,** and **Todd Britton.** (See Ken Davis' review, later in this issue.)

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Stephen Bingham is a TUG VP, who works for CGI in Mississauga. He can be reached at stephen.bingham@cgi.com.



Day 2

This was another full day for our attendees, with more tough choices from the seven tracks and five time-slots of 1:15 each.

Our Keynote Luncheon featured speaker was **David Burnett** from End to End Networks Inc. (www.endtoend.com). David gave a very inspiring talk drawing on his life experiences from



David Burnett

his time in the war, retreats, ski racing as a blind athlete, plus many more. The main message from David: If you're not in the game, get in the game. If you're in the game and it's not right, make it right. If you're in the game and you realize you shouldn't be, get out. If you're in the game and you play your best but you lose, don't dwell on it.

Day 3 – Lab Day at the IBM Toronto Lab

Although we didn't have as much lab space as we had a year earlier, we made the best of it. On IBM's side, **George Voutsinas** did an outstanding job accommodating us. More people kept on arriving long after we were full, and George kept his cool. We had a total of 44 attendees in the morning in a room designed for 25. The afternoon offered a little more breathing space as some people left for their flights home.

Léo Lefebvre



The people at the IBM Toronto Lab as always do an incredible job and welcomed us with open arms. A lot of the IBM developers were there offering their assistance. We are so lucky to know these people. **Nazmin Haji** and **Don Yantzi** were both there. They are two of the senior developers on the RSE development team. Nazmin told me she wouldn't miss this day because she is there for her customers! Some users don't realize it, but these developers are writing tools and languages for us, and they really do care. (As a side note, be on the lookout for Nazmin's and Don's new book titled *The Remote System Explorer*, from MC Press ISBN 978-158347.)

Besides the seven regular tracks, we also had a lineup of five Vendor Sponsoerd Sessions:

IBM Toronto Lab - Lab Exercises

Part of the excitement for TEC 2008 was the recently announced updates by IBM. You can see below from the titles that not only was the IBM Toronto Lab busy developing, but also they were busy updating their course materials:

- **Rational Developer for System i (RD*i*)** – Maintain an ILE RPG application using Remote System Explorer (RSE) Edit, Compile, and Debug
- **Rational Developer for System i (RD*i*)** – work offline with i5/OS Projects
- **Rational Developer for System i SOA V7.1 (RD*i* SOA)** – Setup and calling i5/OS Programs (RPG, CL, COBOL) from EGL
- **Rational Developer for System i for SOA Construction V7.1 (RD*i* SOA)** – Building a WebService from an RPG program using i5/OS WebServices tools
- **Rational Developer for System i for SOA Construction V7.1 (RD*i* SOA): EGL** – Create a web application using Enterprise Generation Language (EGL) and the Data Access Application Wizard
- **Rational Developer for System i for SOA Construction V7.1 (RD*i* SOA): EGL** – Creating and consuming Web Services
- **Introduction to IBM Rational HATS for IBM i (5250)**
- **Creating a Web Service using IBM Rational HATS for IBM i (5250)**
- **Web-enable a 5250 application using the IBM WebFacing Tool**



Aziz Saleh



Speakers Larry Bolhuis (above) and Trevor Perry (left)




Léo Lefebvre

TEC 2008 Day 3 – The IBM Toronto Laboratory in Markham

- **Day 1 – 09:45 Information Builders** – iWay: Because Everything Should work together (**Doug Morden**)
- **Day 1 – 1:30 Seagull Software** – Good Green vs. Bad Green: Considerations for System i Application Modernization (**Robert Young**)
- **Day 1 – 2:55 Tango/04 – 1-2-3: Infrastructure, Security & Applications. The New Trend in Monitoring Strategies** (**Jim Valkerburgh**)
- **Day 2 – 09:45 EXTOL** – Essential Integration for Resource Constrained Companies (**Brian Bennett**)
- **Day 2 – 11:10 Information Builders** – WEB Focus: Because Everyone Makes Decisions (**Jackie Jansen & Chris Banks**)

A big warm thank you to **George Voutsinas, Nazmin Haji, Don Yantzi, Claus Weiss, Jiayun Zhu, Xuan Chen, Howard Lau, Brian Farn, Roshane Silva, Kevin Doyle, Ricky Ngan**, and the many others that helped putting this day together. THANK YOU!

Now that TEC 2008 is behind us, it's almost time to start preparing for the next cycle—TEC2009! If you are interested in helping to get that organized, let me know. 

Glenn Gundermann is an independent consultant, specializing in RPG IV programming.

Glenn also instructs at IBM and customer sites in North America, with a repertoire that includes RPG IV, SQL, WDSC, WebSphere Application Server, Operations, BRMS, WebFacing, HATS, CL Programming, DB2, iSeries Navigator, Query, Performance Analysis & Capacity Planning, Security Concepts & Planning, plus more. Glenn can be contacted at ggundermann@tug.ca or (416) 317-3144.



Aziz Saleh



The IBM i booth at TEC 2008 (L-R): Barry Pow, Elaine Mcfarlane, Kathleen Chiovitti, Stephen Quan, and Kathy Gregson



IBM was proud to team with TUG at this year's TEC Conference. This was a particularly special TEC for us as it marked the first TEC under IBM's new unified Power™ Systems platform. The importance of the event to IBM was underscored by the presence of senior IBM i brand/marketing management in the IBM i booth at the Vendor Showcase, led by "i gurus" **Kathy Gregson, Barry Pow, and Julie Scott**. Visitors were thus able to receive expert answers on this exciting new platform, "straight from the source". **Elaine Mcfarlane** once again was responsible for IBM's presence and as always did a fantastic job organizing and managing our showcase environment and booth, as well as overseeing IBM's mailing campaign in support of the TEC conference itself. **Kathy Gregson** also effectively promoted TEC to customers across Canada.

Kathy and Elaine thus were able to allow IBM's biggest Canadian user group conference to receive nationwide attention. Also a big thanks to Elaine and Kathy for those environmentally friendly blue cloth IBM bags sported at the conference by everyone. There is no doubt IBM is clearly committed to "green" computing! IBM Education also had a presence at the booth in the form of **Kathleen Chiovitti, Peggy Love, Mark Walsh, and Luie Bellis**, allowing us to inform TEC attendees about our vast array of educational offerings.


IBM Software's booth was situated right beside that for IBM i. TEC attendees were able to receive outstanding technical guidance here from **Howard Lau, Jiayun Zhu, John Fellner, Kushal Munir, Tina Tang, Hania Abd-El-Razi, Gilman Yu, and Nazmin Haji**. Nazmin did a great job leading the booth team this year.

Our friends at the IBM Lab also generously supplied in many time slots the majority of the

speakers for the sessions: **Claus Weiss, Dmitry Baev, Kushal Munir, Barbara Morris, Xuan Chen, Jiayun Zhu, Satish Gungabeesoon, Don Yantzi, Brian Farn, George Papayiannis, Lila Aravopoulos, and Nazmin Haji** all presented at TEC. Other IBM presenters featured the familiar **Linda Cole** (thanks for securing the Thursday labs!) and **Alison Butterill**.

IBM Mainframe and Power Systems Techline manager **Phil Searles** provided support for TUG TEC in the finest IBM tradition, giving the conference the security of a full service IBM presence for emergencies and any other TUG requirements as needed.

TUG was most honoured to have IBM Rational Director **Todd Britton** make the trip all the way from Raleigh to present an insightful and informative Executive Breakfast with **George Farr** on "Accelerating Software Innovation on the System i." George and Todd also teamed up with Alison Butterill on the panel discussion at the end of Tuesday, engaging in an informal exchange of ideas with our TEC attendees on, "Your Future and the System i Future: Are they the same?"

Finally, we'd like to extend a special thank you to our partner companies Infoprint and Lenovo once again for their generous loan of printers and ThinkPads for the registration process. A special thank you to **Edwin Chittilappilly** and **Dave Tsujimura** of Infoprint, whose responsiveness was exemplary, and to **Steven Stronach** of Lenovo, whose professionalism is never anything but first rate. IBM is already looking forward to a great TEC 2009! 

Stephen Quan, MBA, is a Senior IT Specialist with IBM Canada Ltd., and the IBM Liaison for TUG. He can be reached at squan@ca.ibm.com



TEC i-future panel: Trevor Perry, Susan Gantner, George Farr, Todd Britton, Larry Bolhuis, Jon Paris, and Alison Butterill

You and “i”

By Ken Davis

Day One of TEC 2008 was rounded out by a Panel discussion: “*Your Future and System i: Are they the Same?*” (Someone pointed out that the title is outdated since the System i is now called simply “i”.) Panelists were **Alison Butterill, Susan Gantner, George Farr, Jon Paris, Tod Britton, and Larry Bolhuis**, with **Trevor Perry** acting as Host and Moderator. The audience included management, programmers, analysts, IT newcomers, and IT retirees, all with questions on the future of our industry. Four main topics were covered, with RPG receiving the lion’s share of attention. Audience participation was lively.



RPG

The first question was, “**What do you believe is the future of RPG?**” Susan quipped, “Whatever **Barbara [Morrison]** wants it to be!”, and the discussion was on... RPG is a robust language well suited to the needs of the business user. Other languages can be used in an IT shop as well, and these can round out the role of RPG. Unfortunately, many programmers and shops still insist on using column-style RPG code instead of the modern RPG/free format. This is alien and unattractive to younger programmers who are used to the free style in other languages. Because RPG from thirty years ago still runs perfectly on IBM i, companies are discouraged from upgrading their code; however, this will have to happen eventually—we are only hurting ourselves and our companies by resisting. And we cannot blame IBM for this resistance, because IBM has not only upgraded the language over the years, but also the development tools, with RD*i* (Rational Developer for i) being the latest tool. There

is no need to break working systems just to put them together again in a new format, but upgrades can be done as maintenance is performed. RPG is not a dinosaur; but using it only to create green screens makes it look that way. If we want to make RPG more attractive to younger programmers, then it’s up to us to use it in a modern way. The only thing that might not happen soon is a native GUI for i. At the moment it would not return much value. Current interfaces such as EGL work fine with it, and in fact, incorporating EGL into the RPG language might be a future option.

Education

“**Some Schools still teach SEU; how can we get the new methods taught to the younger programmers in attractive ways?**” IBM has the Education Initiative which actively recruits schools to create programs that incorporate the very latest technologies. In addition, schools could offer more internships for students to get real world experience. IBM will be offering courses later in the year as well, plus COMMON has a program for Young iSeries Professionals (YiPs) which is developing many courses. Finally, even summer schools could offer RPG/free in their programming courses.

The “i”

“**Will i be abandoned?**” Trevor said IBM i is not a lost child, and Alison confirmed that IBM i is very much alive. In fact the reorganization of IBM into four hardware groups and four marketing groups will allow the company to better serve the business community, with better targeting of each area of business size and needs. Moreover, with Power Systems: AIX, Linux, and *i* can coexist in the same box, because the new microcode will allow it. IBM will not dump any Business Partner, because now both “p” and “i” can be marketed together. We are no longer a niche hardware-based group, but are now included in the overall

Power Systems group (a part of something much larger.) **Should users groups and conferences include the p-guys?** It is up to the user groups themselves to decide what they want to do regarding their make up and inclusions. IBM will always be there to help, but the i-people (being the most cohesively organized) may have to lead the way, since AIX and Linux groups seem to be less structured. Likewise future conferences may need to be opened up to the other groups whose systems can reside on the same hardware. In fact there have already been some joint conferences which have proceeded fairly smoothly.

Summary

The RPG programming language is very much alive, and the latest and future enhancements ensure that it will always be the best language for business purposes. But current older departments and programmers need to learn the newest enhancements and development tools if we are to attract younger programmer to the field. RPG will never be a dinosaur, especially if education in the most modern technologies is encouraged. (But no more green screens!) Furthermore, the old “AS/400” no longer exists, and we must learn to refer to it as *i*. Likewise, our user groups must now face the prospect of a future with AIX, Linux, and possibly other groups sharing not only our basic platform, but our conferences and meetings, as well. Actually, there is a lot of cross-over knowledge of the former groups that would be useful to each other.

We will all benefit from the Power of *i*.



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TEC 2008 Sponsors



L-R, Back Row: Bob Lesiw, Ed Jowett, Stephen Bingham, Jay Burford, Stephen Quan, Harry Hastilow, Kumar Rajendra, Seated: Léo Lefebvre, Lindsay Sutherland, Glenn Gundermann, Wende Boddy, and Vaughn Dragland