

The year 2008 is ours! How will 2008 be for you? What will you be doing in 2008? I don't mean your personal life—I mean your professional one. Since you're reading these lines, you must have an interest in the best business computer ever built in the world. You know which one I mean—the System i, of course—at least that's the name we were using at the time I wrote these lines. If you follow the news, or if you attended any of **Dr. Frank Soltis'** presentations during his Canadian "System i Direction Tour" in early October and late November, you will know that many things are brewing at the midrange level at IBM, and they are just about to boil over and hit the market.

Just to name a few of those highly potential events, as Dr. Soltis was eluding to in his last presentation, IBM is just about to merge the System i and System p into one hardware product. Knowing that Power 6 has already been announced for the System p, it is natural to assume that the System i is the very next to be ported to that fantastic new technology. It has been a "well known secret" for a long time already, and it should not be a surprise for most of our readers.

What is already a "fait accompli" is the split of the System i technology team into two different business units, the POWER Systems unit and the Business Systems unit. "The POWER Systems unit is in place to focus on the needs of the larger customers, with responsibility for the high end models i570 and i595. The Business Systems unit will focus on the needs of the Small and Medium Business (SMB) customers with responsibility for the lower end System i models i515, i520, i525 and i550." (See **Kathy Gregson's** MoM Review in the *TUG magazine*, November 2007.) How will this affect the System i penetration of the market? The future will tell. But keep that in mind when analyzing the outcome of all of the events related to the System i that happened recently or will happen during 2008.

At this time, you should ALL be aware of the new i5/OS release planned to be officially announced and available in the first quarter of this year. Will this have a big impact on the platform itself? You bet it will! It will be so important that IBM preferred to create a new version (i.e., V6R1) instead of continuing the numbering in the V5 level (like V5R5). With the few other things that recently took place at IBM and others to come soon, obviously something is really going on at IBM, and I feel that the year 2008 will be exciting for all of us really looking after the best interests of the best business system of the world.

2008 will be a year when you will really have to pay special attention to what happens to the System i, and I believe we could be in for quite a ride. To stay informed about those events, you will have to read a lot, network with your colleagues, and take some courses along the way. TUG is a great place for that, with its magazine, its Meetings of Members, its annual TEC conference, etc. Our first MoM of 2008, on January 30th, will be the best place to learn about the **Rational** strategy and its WDS products. Being held at the IBM

Toronto Lab (on Warden Avenue) it is an event not to be missed. It will be a full afternoon meeting with many of the famous IBM speakers, from Toronto and Raleigh, NC, under the direction of **George Farr**. There will be presentations and discussions. An "Ask the Architects, Developers, and Managers" session will close that meeting.

Bring your questions—you may get some surprising answers. It will be your best chance to interact with the people who develop the tools that you use daily at work.

A lot has already been revealed about the new i5/OS release planned for delivery in 2008. To help you find out about those plans, a link to IBM's i5/OS V6R1 preview has been set-up on the TUG website. Check it out! It is amazing to see what is planned for 2008. Now we just need to wait until it is officially announced. What will be retained and when will it be available? Stay tuned, we'll know soon!

A lot of good things are popping up around our System i world, and TEC 2008 (on April 22, 23 and 24) will help you shed some light on them. "**Join the POWER WORLD—Where Educated People are the Real Power.**" By that time, most likely i5/OS will have been announced, and may be available to the public. What a great opportunity to learn more about it! Check www.tug.ca/tec to see the topics that will be covered during those three days.

I am really excited about 2008 and I could tell you more about the reasons for that, but space for this column is limited, so I will tell you more next time.

Again, believe me, 2008 will be a great year. I hope you will agree when you see the events unfolding. I hope you will be at the station when the train arrives and that you will embark for its next journey. I hope you won't just look at it passing by. I hope you will sit in the "First Class" section and take advantage of all of the capabilities the System i has to offer you. Green is a great colour but there are 16,777,215 others in the spectrum, and you know System i is quite comfortable with all of them in GUI environments. The "Economy Class" is fine as well but you would be missing so many things, so many features. TUG can really help you get that upgrade and move you towards the "First Class" section.

See you all on January 30th at IBM—and make arrangements for attending TEC in April!



Vaughn Dragland