

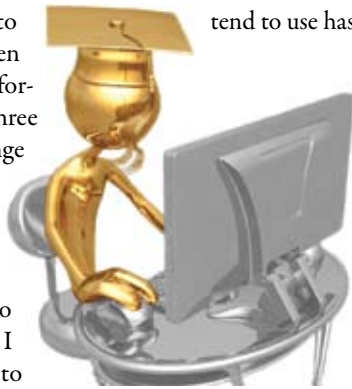
# “Oh, I’ll get by with a little help from my grads ...”

By Russell Pangborn

We had just upgraded our operating system to V5R4 and there were a few problems. I did not realize at the time that a connection was going to be made between several Seneca students of our Computer Studies program in resolving this dilemma. This line would connect a couple of our graduates and a current student. They were all going to get involved in troubleshooting this change from V5R3.

First, I am embarrassed to admit we should have been at V5R4 a while ago. Unfortunately there are only three times a year when a change can be done. It is not popular with teachers and students to make a change in the middle of the semester. The time to do this is between semesters. I missed one opportunity to initiate a request for the summer semester and our busy staff missed another opportunity at the start of the fall semester. There is a small window where our technical support staff needs to deal with upgrades. In addition to upgrading the larger machines, they must try to fit all the software that professors decide to teach on an image that needs to be put on all the PCs at the campus.

I am willing to bet most of you do not start up your desktops and make a decision



on one of four operating system choices. There are several options when starting a computer in a Seneca lab. To give our students the best experience, we provide Vista, XP, Linux, and bring your own hard drive boot up selections.

So, throw everything but the kitchen sink into a machine and ensure that it all works as promised. And—this must be working as the latest version. With my area, the request for the PCs would be to have WDSC 7.0 installed and working with Windows XP. I do not select Vista because the software I tend to use hasn’t all been made compatible.

After the System i upgrade, I noticed my SQLRPGLE programs were not compiling. The system, which is always very good with error messages, was striking out this time. There was no listing generated. Instead I got five spooled files with no clear message as to the problem. Here is a

sample of the feedback I was getting:

```
QDSPJOB indicated: No MLB attributes list available.  
QSRVDMP indicated: Receiver value too small to hold result.
```

An RPGLE program would compile, but there was a problem when I tried to embed SQL statements into a program and compile it. This needed to be fixed so our advanced Database course could be delivered properly in a few days. Also, there were a few students working on late labs that suddenly could not get their work out of the way before the next semester started. Our tech support person, **Ravi Arruliah**, a Seneca grad from the 1990’s who had taken one of my AS/400 subjects was stumped. He had solved problems in the past for me (for example he helped me get Domino up and running on our System i). We both knew it was time to call in some help from IBM. The call was placed and what a surprise! Our savior from IBM turned out to be another of my ex students, **Venugopan Shanmuganathan** who had recently graduated and was now a Software Specialist/ Remote support Specialist on the IBM Global Technology Services,

Canada team. He advised us to reinstall some software. Ravi had to re-install the compilers including the following:

5722SS1 \*ERROR Extended Base Support

5722SS1 \*ERROR Extended Base Directory Support

Also, a Group PTF that was around 10GB in size kept him up until 3:00 am using catalog image. He finds this a great function that IBM has for the System i. He was able to do this from home using remote desktop to the console. Ravi emailed me, “If I had the CDs of the PTF which was around 12 CDs, I would have to be in the server room putting them in one by one. With catalog image that I had downloaded directly from PTF central IBM, I was able put fixes directly to the AS400 system.” He finds this the fastest and most effective way to install a PTF.

It was very gratifying to have two Seneca grads helping out the teacher. I have occasionally gotten a call and was able to help a working grad with a System i problem. Now the help was coming from the other direction. The reinstall enabled the SQLRPGLE programs to compile. We thought everything was solved, but there was more advice to come. This came from one of my current students.

One of my exercises in an early DBT544 lab involves listing the installed DB2 products on our machine. I look to see if a student has included the SQL Development Kit. To do this they usually type “Go Software” and take a menu selection to “Display software resources”. The Display Software Resources display shows the name and maintenance level information for installed software resources. My students were doing this and writing out a list that included the Kit 5722ST1 \*BASE 5050 DB2 Query Manager, and SQL Development Kit for iSeries.

I don’t have a problem if some of them write up a list after running the command and check with each other to see if they have covered everything. They are interacting with the system. I don’t like it when the occasional student just blindly copies down another person’s answer without employing any system commands or bothering to know how the information was researched. On the other

A few days ago my old college, Sheridan, was in lockdown mode with the report of a suspected gunman. Police were seen leading a student out of the college in handcuffs. It turned out to be a false alarm. Someone saw a person carrying a cylindrical container and had their imagination get the better of them. They called the police. My last TUG column was about Sheridan College, a gun, and a SWAT team.



That is certainly an odd coincidence and gave me a surreal feeling when listening to the news and teachers’ accounts. (Maybe my next column should be on the sudden epiphany at IBM on how to effectively market the System i...)




hand, I really enjoy it when someone comes up with a contrary answer with good reasons.

There were lots of things to do in this lab and I tend to be very detail orientated. A student will show me a lab and there may be four or five things that need to be redone: "That SQL statement isn't working", or "You need to check on the system for something else", etc. Sometimes word spreads across a row in the lab. In this case, it could have been "He's looking for the SQL Development Kit on your list" for question 27. I usually approach a student at a terminal and ask them to run a few commands from the lab and go over their written answers. **Ioan** (one of my students) had neglected to include the SQL Development Kit on his list of installed DB2 products. He told me with a confident tone that it wasn't installed properly so it should not be on the list. On being asked how he knew this, Ioan selected the Display Installed Licensed Programs from the Software Menu and pointed to the following:

5722ST1 \*Error DB2 Query Mgr and SQL DevKit.

[Pangborn: "The last meeting was about the next release of the operating system — so here is a column on our upgrade. In the next issue of TUG I will discuss how well our students did in an IBM contest and the recent CBC news feature on our department."]

The Display Installed Licensed Programs display shows a list of licensed programs, optional parts of the licensed programs, and IBM-supplied user libraries installed on our system. It included status information. This student had a point! I got in touch with Ravi and Venu and we determined another partial re install was required. So, with the help of three of my students who I had taught over a ten year span, we finally got the upgrade finished properly.

There was a recent TUG meeting highlighting the next release of the OS. With all of this practice on what can go wrong, it is time to put in a request to my tech support area for this latest upgrade. I am not going to wait so long this time to be current. 

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