

Rational Developer for System i (RDi)

By George Farr

IBM i customers have long asked for a more lightweight tooling that focuses on the work at hand. Shops have reported that WDS*c* and WDS*c* AE are too big, contain features they are not using, and cause a slow start-up time. The new lightweight Rational Developer for System i (RDi) tool offers significant enhancements to let System i customers improve their application development. IBM's Eclipse based answer to ADTS is RDi! (The product ID on the configurator is 5733RDi, and on passport advantage is 5724T82.)

Like all other strategic IBM tools, RDi is based on the Eclipse platform and is exceptionally light with minimal resource requirements. It is certified to run on a desktop machine with as few as 512 MB of memory. IBM has focused on the needs of RPG, COBOL, and CL developers and is offering high-performance edit, compile, and debug capabilities along with access to i5/OS resources and facilities. In case you have never used the Remote System Explorer (RSE) which was included in WebSphere Development Studio Client, now RSE is included in RDi and offers you many powerful functions compared to the existing CODE/400 product as well as ADTS.

New features of RDi include:

- **Full RPG and COBOL syntax checking and program verification** allows you to test compile your members locally without generating an object and reports the errors through the Error List view. You can then with a click of the mouse imbed the errors in the source member at the location they occur for easy fixing.
- **Content Assist** allows you to display help anywhere in your source member. For example, if you are on a D specification and want to get a list of keywords that are allowed to be entered, you simply key Ctrl+Space and that will display the list of allowable keywords. In a column oriented language such as RPG, Content Assist comes very handy.
- **Outline View** allows you to display the structural elements of the source

member that is currently open in the editor. For example, for an ILE RPG source member, the outline contains all the structures, fields, subroutines, procedures indicators and so on. This comes in real handy as you modernize your large monolithic applications

- You now have the ability to **display copy members** by simply moving the mouse over the "/copy" statement and issuing a command.
- You can also go to any **file specification** for an externally described file. Right click the mouse, and select to see the details of the file. In a view, you will now see all the records and fields defined in the file.

RDi 7.1 also comes with many major new enhancements:

Application diagram was first introduced in version 7.0 and helped shops visualize their applications using capabilities such as call graphs showing subroutine, procedure, and program calls. To see an application visually, you select resources by right clicking and selecting Visualize Application Diagram. You can select any native members that includes programs (*PGMs), service program (*SRVPGMs), IFS files, local files on your machine, and iSeries i5/OS project resources.

If you happen to have the source member open in the LPEX editor, you can also do the same command by right clicking the mouse and selecting Visualize Application Diagram.

Application Diagram helps you to modernize by expediting the turning of existing RPG applications into service programs and letting users participate in SOA. The new application diagram in RDi brings additional capabilities, such as:


- **Functional zoom**, which is the ability to start with top-level resources and drill down to see lower-level details as desired.
- **Program call support**, which is represented as a connection from the calling subroutine or procedure node to the called program.

- **CL support** by way of application diagram.

In addition, RDi includes the second phase of the screen designer to use for 5250 screen design directly in RDi. All the functionality of the screen designer and the application diagram that originally was available in WDS*c* AE is now available in RDi.

RDi 7.1 comes with more new enhancements. It offers V6R1 language support for RPG, COBOL, and CL; Remote Systems LPEX Editor with language parsers, syntax checkers, program verifiers, and RPG content assist and wizards; online language help; error list view enhancements; outline view enhancements; and new find-date in the editor.

RDi will not contain the Web development tools or other features previously included in WDS*c*. This tool is built specifically for RPG, COBOL, and CL developers. In addition, RDi is user-priced so that you can buy as many or as few copies of the product as you need. RDi integrates with other Rational products, giving additional features and functions. The key to this is the fact that you add these features as needed.

Don Yantzi and **Nazim Haji** will explore this subject at the TUG Meeting of Members on September 17. 

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