News

iSistance news

The technical bulletin from Quattro Consulting, the UK's leading independant technical consultancy for iSeries & AS/400

Quattro Consulting

Quattro Consulting is one of the leading independant iSeries technical consultancies in the UK. Formed in 1997, the directors of Quattro realised that most iSeries related service providers were not specialists on the technical aspects of iSeries, with their own expertise in software development, marketing and support. Quattro Consulting offer a unique service, assisting users to enable their iSeries to operate at full capacity and capability, irrespective of the application being run. Quattro's three founding directors have been involved with the iSeries since its release in 1988 and subsequently have amassed over 50 years collective OS/400 experience between them.

Products & Services Include

Performance/Application Tuning
iSeries Access / iSeries Navigator
Capacity Planning
Systems Management
Operations
CISC/RISC Upgrades
Integrated xSeries Server
Domino Integration
TCP/IP
Network Printing
Backup and Recovery
Web Configuration and Intergration
ILE RPG/COBOL/C Programming

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Some of our cconnectivity skills include

iSeries to iSeries
iSeries to ISPs
iSeries Dial-in using SLIP and PPP
iSeries to Linux
iSeries to Unix
iSeries to Mainframe
iSeries and 5x94 controllers
iSeries to PC
iSeries and EDI
iSeries and BACS
iSeries Remote Dial-in
Virtual Private Networking (VPN)

For more details on the services Quattro Consulting can provide visit:

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Quattro forms Life partnership

Quattro Consulting is pleased to announce the formation of a new partnership with Life IT, the Cheshire based IT support specialist. Life IT provides tailored support services for Lotus Notes, RPG and iSeries support. Quattro Consulting will enhance Life IT's Technical iSeries and Domino offerings, combining its technical skills and experience with the Life IT support infrastructure and nationwide administration capability.

SysChecker gains market share

SysChecker, the automated monitoring tool from Quattro, gains popularity on the platform. Quattro developed SysChecker to check all critical functions 24x7, notifying the user as soon as deviations from the specified criteria are captured. Unlike other products, SysChecker does not simply wait for the system to issue messages, it actively monitors and reports problems as it detects them.

Some of the objects SysChecker can monitor include communications lines, controllers, jobs, subsystems, distribution queues, in fact just about every operational object can be monitored against user-defined statuses 24 hours a day, or at specific times and on days of your choosing. Files can be checked to see when they changed, or if they contain more or less records than you specify.

SysChecker can be installed in minutes. New objects can be added instantly, thanks to the user-friendly drop down lists and common sense approach. Within the hour SysChecker can be monitoring your system, safe in the knowledge that should the unforeseen happen, you and your operators will be continuously warned about the problem until it gets fixed, or you ask SysChecker to stop checking.

Quattro Web Enable AP senior Management

AP Driveline has signed a 12-month iSist support contract with Quattro to provide technical support and on site services for OS/400 and Linux technologies. As part of the continued growth of the business and IT infrastructure at AP Driveline, Quattro have been selected to lead the implementation of web based mail access, VPN, firewall management and OS/400 product support.

AP Driveline, already a user of Lotus Domino on AS/400, had a requirement to enable WebMail for a number of users who are often travelling between the UK, Spain and China. AP's AS/400 model S20 has been upgraded from V4R3 to V5R1 and Lotus Domino R5. An upgrade to Domino R6 is planned for later in 2003.

Quattro has also implemented a new firewall using SuSE Linux as the basis for the Firewall operating environment and as the standard for roaming laptop users requiring secure connectivity back to the Leamington Spa headquarters using VPN technologies.

Automotive Products has been a manufacturer of clutches and brake products since the 1920's with the first AP clutch fitted to a Humber 12hp back in the early 1930s. Having originally been known as Borg & Beck, today Automotive Products Driveline Technology is a first tier supplier to most European motor manufacturers and its products used in every type of vehicle from a farm tractor to a Ferrari.

http://www.apdriveline.com

Feature article

iSeries Navigator and iSeries Access Application Administration

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Feature article

iSeries Navigator & iSeries Access

Application Administration

The Problem

iSeries Access and its close cousin iSeries Navigator provide a great deal of flexibility, access and functionality to your iSeries systems right from the desktop. A strong security policy will prevent users from accessing the parts of the system you need to protect, but many sites choose not to install iSeries Navigator on the user desktops at all: if they haven't got it they can't use it and do any damage. This can be frustrating to both end users and developers who could become more productive with some of the advanced functions made available in iSeries Navigator and iSeries Access.

I have visited a number of sites that have, in my opinion, over complicated their iSeries Access and iSeries Navigator implementation. In some instances there are a number of different iSeries Access images depending on the functions different users require e.g.

• **User** PC5250 only • **Manager** PC5250 & Data Transfer

• **Operations** PC5250 & some iSeries Navigator

• **Power Users** All functions

Although this can work, it can also cause confusion and create more work than is really required.

When I suggest using the default IBM image for all workstations and installing all options I am usually greeted with a sharp intake of breath through gritted teeth. "What? Give all users all functions, just think of the damage they might do." or "Oh no! The users will be playing around with my system, I'm not having that."

I would never recommend anything that allowed any user to damage or play around with any system, so I explain how my strategy can work using the flexibility of the Application Administration function available in iSeries Navigator. Computers are meant to make tasks and processes easier and faster, the Application Administration function certainly does this yet it seems to be one of OS/400's best-kept secrets. A number of misconceptions and misunderstandings are common in respect of the use of this functions and its implementation. The next few sections will help to dispel any myths and give you the facts on how you can use and implement Application Administration.

Why should I give iSeries Navigator to my users?

In the last couple of years the functionality and performance of iSeries Navigator has improved. As such, there are more and more functions appearing in OS/400 that do not have a 5250 command line interface. The Operating System has also become more complex requiring operators and technicians to learn more commands and techniques in order to get the best out of the system.

In many instances, iSeries Navigator can drastically simplify management and configuration of the system by using graphical images/icons and removing the need to execute multiple commands by bringing everything together in to a GUI interface.

Figure 1

One of the best examples of this is the database function of iSeries Navigator. If I click on a database file and select Properties, I am presented with a tab display that allows me to view and/or amend:

• Field definitions   • Key Constraints
• Index information   • Referential Constraints
• Triggers   • Column Level Check Constraints

In 5250 mode I would need to use around six or seven different commands to gather all this information. Whenever I have shown this to developers, their jaws have dropped and their attitude to iSeries Navigator changes; suddenly it's a useful tool.

From a user perspective, being able to view a list of spool files in a graphical format is easier and friendlier than the 5250 Work with Spool Files display. The ability to drag and drop a spool file on to the Windows desktop and attach this to an email is really useful too.

So, how do we provide the users and developers with these tools without opening up the system(s) to abuse?

The Solution

Application Administration is a standard function within iSeries Navigator that allows you to define which iSeries Access, i.e. PC5250 and Data Transfer functions and iSeries Navigator functions, are available to the user community.

You can decide which functions are available:

• To all users by default

• To users with ALLOBJ authority

• To a subset of users by group profile
  and user profile

You can also exclude users and groups of users explicitly.

Application Administration is configured via the iSeries Navigator interface and the configuration information specified is stored on the iSeries. A common myth is that the configuration needs to be done for each client workstation, this is not true.

Using Application Administration

To use Application Administration, fire up iSeries Navigator and right-click on the icon representing one of your iSeries systems. In the pop-up menu that is displayed, you should see Application Administration near the top. Click on this and you will get the main Application Administration panel as in Figure 1. In order to amend access to the functions you will need Security Administrator authority. If you don't have this level of authority, the selection boxes will be 'greyed' out and you will be unable to amend the access controls.

The three tabs at the top of the panel allow you to show the functions available to secure in iSeries Navigator, Client Applications (e.g. PC5250 and Data Transfer) and Host Applications. There are a number of APIs available that allow you to register your own host and client based applications with the Application Administration function. These would appear in the last two tabs and can be administered from this interface.

Looking at the iSeries Navigator tab panel, you can see that there are three Access columns. Default Access can be likened to *PUBLIC. Deselecting items from this panel prevents users from using these functions in iSeries Navigator, in fact the function will not even appear in iSeries Navigator even though the function may have been loaded on to the client PC.

All Object Access provides the same level of security as Default Access but for users with *ALLOBJ authority. Yes, this means that you can prevent *ALLOBJ users from using the QSYS.LIB file system in iSeries Navigator or from using Data Transfer. Figure 2 shows me disabling all access to the QDLS file system.

If you select one of the functions in the first column, the Customize button will be enabled. Click on this to personalise your security for the selected function from the Customize Access panel shown in figure 3.

In this panel you can grant and revoke access to the selected function by individual user profile or group profile. This allows you to tailor the

security in Application Administration just as you would with any QSYS.LIB object. My only complaint here is that IBM doesn't provide us with the ability to secure using authorisation lists. I would like to be able to create an authorisation list of users that can access QDLS and use this to secure the function. Once your customisation is complete, hit the OK button and continue customizing more functions as required.

How does this help me?

Remember I said previously, this information is stored on your iSeries server, not on the client. So now you can ease your iSeries Access and iSeries Navigator implementation by installing ALL options on all workstations without giving access to all the functions actually loaded on to the client workstations. Here's an example of what happens now.
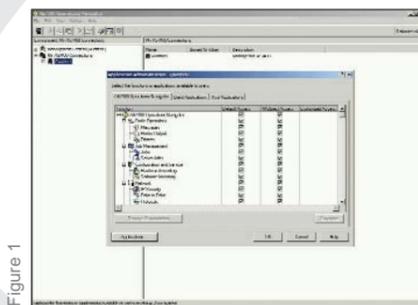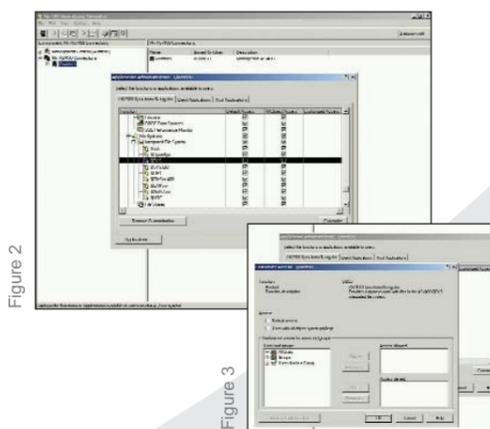

Figure 2

Figure 3

User JULIE is prompted for her OS/400 User ID and password (or is auto-logged on) after starting iSeries Navigator. Once entered and validated, OS/400 will determine which of the iSeries Navigator functions she has access to according to the customisation you have configured. User JULIE will only see and be allowed to use, the functions you have specified. However, if you, as a system administrator, sign on to iSeries Navigator as yourself on the same workstation that user JULIE uses, you will see and be able to use, all the functions that have been enabled for you.

So, now you can see how easy it is to administer iSeries Access and iSeries Navigator via Application Administration. At V5R1, about 90% of system functions can be performed through iSeries Navigator, so it is a fairly safe bet that we will all need to become familiar with this interface. iSeries Navigator provides us with an extremely powerful yet simple interface to our system but, as with all functions used to access a computer system, make sure you have secured it before you allow people to use it.

Written by: Glenn Robinson, Managing Director of Quattro Consulting