

Big Dummies Guide To The As400



Big Dummys Guide to the AS400 is designed for anyone looking to understand the AS400 system, also known as IBM iSeries or IBM System i. Whether you are a complete novice or someone with a background in IT, this guide will help you navigate the complexities of the AS400 environment. The AS400 is a powerful midrange computer system that has been a staple in many businesses for decades, known for its reliability, security, and integrated database capabilities. In this guide, we will explore the AS400's architecture, key features, programming languages, and why it remains relevant in today's technology landscape.

Understanding AS400 Architecture

The AS400 architecture is built around a robust operating system and a unique hardware configuration. Understanding its components is crucial for effective utilization.

Core Components of AS400

1. **Hardware:** The AS400 is composed of various hardware components including processors, memory, storage, and input/output devices. It often uses a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) architecture which enhances performance.
2. **Operating System:** The OS/400 (now known as IBM i) is the operating system that runs on AS400. It is designed for enterprise-level applications and offers a high degree of integration with the hardware.
3. **Database Management:** DB2 for i is the integrated database within the AS400 environment. It is designed to work seamlessly with the operating system and supports SQL.
4. **User Interface:** Traditionally, the AS400 uses a text-based interface known as green screen. However, modern applications can be developed with graphical user interfaces (GUIs).

How AS400 Works

The AS400 operates on a client-server model where multiple users can access the system simultaneously. The key processes include:

- **Job Management:** The AS400 uses a sophisticated job management system that prioritizes tasks and allocates resources efficiently.
- **Security Features:** With built-in security protocols, the AS400 ensures data integrity and protects against unauthorized access.
- **Backup and Recovery:** The system provides robust backup and recovery options to safeguard data against loss.

Key Features of AS400

Several features make AS400 a popular choice for businesses:

- **Reliability:** AS400 systems are known for their uptime and reliability, making them ideal for mission-critical applications.
- **Scalability:** Businesses can start with a small configuration and scale up as their needs grow.
- **Integrated Database:** The integration of DB2 allows for efficient data storage and retrieval.
- **Security:** It provides multiple layers of security, including user authentication and access control.
- **Multi-Platform Support:** AS400 can run applications written in multiple programming languages.

Programming Languages Used in AS400

Programming on the AS400 can be done using various languages, each suited for different tasks. Some of the most common languages include:

1. RPG (Report Program Generator)

RPG is a high-level programming language designed for business applications. It has evolved significantly over the years, with RPG IV being the most commonly used version today.

2. COBOL

COBOL is another popular programming language in the AS400 environment, especially for legacy applications. It is well-suited for business data processing.

3. CL (Control Language)

CL is used for scripting and command execution in the AS400 environment. It

is essential for automating tasks and managing system operations.

4. SQL

SQL can be used for database queries and manipulation within the DB2 database. It is widely used for reporting and data analysis tasks.

Getting Started with AS400

If you are new to AS400, here are steps to get started:

1. **Familiarize Yourself with the Basics:** Understand the core components, architecture, and functionalities.
2. **Learn RPG and CL:** Start with RPG for application development and CL for managing system tasks.
3. **Access Documentation:** IBM provides extensive documentation and resources for AS400 users.
4. **Join Online Communities:** Engage with forums and communities dedicated to AS400 for support and knowledge sharing.
5. **Practice on a Test Environment:** Set up a test environment to experiment with programming and system management.

Why AS400 is Still Relevant Today

Despite being introduced over three decades ago, the AS400 still holds a significant place in the IT landscape for several reasons:

1. Legacy Systems

Many organizations still rely on legacy systems built on AS400. The cost of migrating these systems to newer platforms can be prohibitive, making AS400 a continued necessity.

2. Modernization Efforts

Businesses are not abandoning AS400; instead, they are modernizing their applications to integrate with modern technologies, such as web services and cloud computing.

3. Ongoing Support from IBM

IBM continues to support and enhance the AS400 platform, ensuring it remains secure and up-to-date with current technology trends.

4. Niche Applications

Certain industries, such as finance and manufacturing, have niche applications that are best served by the AS400 due to its reliability and performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the **Big Dummies Guide to the AS400** aims to demystify this robust system for new users and seasoned professionals alike. By understanding its architecture, features, programming capabilities, and ongoing relevance in today's business environment, users can leverage the strengths of the AS400 effectively. As technology continues to evolve, the AS400 remains a critical player in enterprise computing, offering stability and performance that many organizations depend on. Whether you are developing new applications or maintaining legacy systems, the AS400 has the tools and capabilities to meet your needs.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the AS400 and why is it important?

The AS400, now known as IBM i, is a mid-range computer system developed by IBM that is known for its stability, security, and integrated database. It is widely used in business environments for enterprise resource planning and managing critical applications.

What are the fundamental components of the AS400

system?

The AS400 system consists of hardware, the IBM i operating system, a database (DB2), and various integrated tools for programming, networking, and system management.

How can I get started with programming on the AS400?

To start programming on AS400, you can learn RPG (Report Program Generator), CL (Control Language), or SQL for database interactions. Familiarizing yourself with the IBM i environment and using tools like RDi (Rational Developer for i) can also help.

What are common tasks performed on the AS400?

Common tasks include managing user permissions, running batch jobs, monitoring system performance, developing and maintaining applications, and performing backups and recovery.

What is the significance of the integrated database in AS400?

The integrated database, DB2 for i, is critical for data storage and management, providing seamless access for applications and ensuring data integrity and security within the AS400 environment.

How does the AS400 support modern technologies?

The AS400 supports modern technologies through APIs, web services, and integration with cloud platforms, enabling businesses to modernize applications and connect with other systems.

What are some best practices for maintaining an AS400 system?

Best practices include regular system updates, monitoring system performance, conducting backups, ensuring security protocols are in place, and documenting system changes and configurations.

Where can I find resources and communities for AS400 learning?

Resources for learning AS400 include IBM's official documentation, online courses, forums like Stack Overflow, and community groups on platforms such as LinkedIn or Reddit dedicated to IBM i users.

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