The ISPF Workplace

BY JIM MOORE

In my opinion, ISPF is a great place to work. So what about this new Workplace? How can you use it to make your job easier? Does it have a place in your work day? This month's column will cover some basic tips on using the Workplace. I'm still moving about slowly in this new utility, but I'm gaining valuable expertise as I use it more and more.

OPTION 11

IBM has assigned Option 11 to the Workplace from the ISPF primary menu. This is the first meaningful primary menu addition to ISPF in several years. If your site has a customized ISR@PRIM menu, make sure that the required syntax to invoke Option 11 has been added to the customized ISR@PRIM panel. I know of one site that inadvertently omitted it on their in-house ISR@PRIM. Be sure to get everything you pay for!

A good way to ease into the use of the Workplace is to use it in place of edit, Option 2. That is, anytime you might issue an =2, use =11 instead. Why would you want to do this? One reason is just to become accustomed to seeing the Workplace screen. Also, the Workplace supports Enhanced Member Lists. Plain old edit does not. This is how I have been justifying Workplace usage: Enhanced Member Lists.

The main screen of the Workplace is not difficult to get used to: It looks like many other ISPF screens. You can customize the appearance of the screen by using the View Action bar item. I tend to stick with the default Data Set View which is quite similar to the DSLIST utility view. However, there is one little difference that drives me crazy: The default view has a cursor scroll amount field. You know, the SCROLL⟹ field that appears on any ISPF panel that can move. The reason this is bothersome to me is that I find myself overtyping whatever scroll value was last there. I use the Tab keys a lot and I'm not a touch typist. Many times, I want to type in an Object Name so I punch the right Tab key from the Action line and start typing. Whoa! I'm typing in the scroll amount field.

Why is there a scroll amount field on this panel anyway? Well, if you are a heavy user and have created many of your own RefLists, I suppose the screen might contain a long list of them. A nice enhancement might be to suppress the scroll amount field until the number of RefLists overflows the first page.

REFLISTS AT THE WORKPLACE

Speaking of RefLists, you might want to try this simple operation:

1. Tab down to the middle of the screen where the default RefList name appears.

2. As an action, enter DL and press enter. You should be presented with a DSLIST screen of datasets that you have accessed recently. Note, however, that they will not be sorted in most recently used order. Instead, they will be sorted in dataset name order. This is because the names from your default RefList are actually transferred into the DSLIST utility. DSLIST always sorts the list in dataset name order by default. If you want to see a RefList in its normal sequence, use the Open List choice as an Action. This is a slash.

If you have created your own customized RefLists, these too can be transferred into the DSLIST utility by entering a DL in front of them and pressing enter.

Note that there is no RefList choice on the Action bar at Option 11. You can pull dataset names and masks out of your RefList by entering a number (one through 30) in the Action column for RefLists. You can also use the Fast Path method if you like. This requires that you issue *REFLISTD number* (where number is the relative position of the dataset in the list).

There is one more little oddity about RefLists at the Workplace that you may notice. The REFLISTD (Dataset RefList) contains the most recent 30 dataset names that have been referenced from **all** of ISPF. It can also contain DSLIST style masks. When you transfer this RefList into the DSLIST with the DL action, you may have more than 30 datasets or you may have less. Here's why this happens: If a dataset is no longer cataloged, the Workplace will ignore it when transferring a RefList to a DSLIST. If you have a DSLIST type mask in your REFLISTD, it will be expanded during the transfer.

There may even be other reasons that dataset names are dropped or added when transferring a RefList to a DSLIST. To

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Tip of the Month

When using the new pop-up help screens in ISPF V4, if you have KEYLIST OFF and you see the "More: + -" indicator in the upper right-hand corner of the pop-up window, use PF10 to move backward ("-") and PF11 (or Enter) to move forward ("+").

reconcile differences, just use the Open List choice to see the complete RefList.

WORKPLACE OPTIONS

From the Options drop-down menu, select the Workplace Settings choice which is assigned the number 1. A pop-up will appear that closely resembles the DSLIST Settings pop-up of ISPF Option 3.4. Read about these in the tutorial. Figure 1 shows the settings that I use. For the View options (the ones to the right), you must select a number. For Member List View, choose 2, Extended (Enhanced) Member Lists. Briefly, here are explanations of the more interesting options:

Autosave On (Personal Lists): This applies only to your own RefLists, not ISPF's automatic ones. If you haven't turned this option on, you must explicitly issue a save from the Open List choice.

Exclude Volume on retrieve: Keep this selected. It improves performance.

Keep member field value: This only applies if you are using the Library view. Try it. I wish this were an option throughout all of ISPF!

Show Workplace Action bar: I would keep this selected until you become familiar with the many Fast Path commands.

Smart Action Retrieve Entry: When you de-select this, the text on the main screen changes to Smart Action Ex. It functions like the RefMode setting elsewhere in ISPF: Execute or Retrieve on a RefList pull back. For example:

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Figure 1: Recommended Workplace Settings

    Display Edit/View entry panel         (off)
/   Autosave ON (Personal lists)
/   Update ON (Reference lists)
/   Exclude Volume on retrieve
/   Keep member field value
/   Member List for M,C,G, Actions
/   Show status for M,C,G, Actions
/   Confirm member delete
/   Confirm Data Set delete
/   Show Workplace Action bar
    Frame ISPF Referral list area         (off)
    Smart Action Retrieve Entry           (off)
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1. From the Workplace Settings pop-up, select the Defaults action bar item.

2. Select choice 1, Default Enter Action. Initially, go with the default, Smart Action.

3. Press your PF1 key at this pop-up to read about how ISPF determines the Smart Action.

4. Finally, select the Smart Action item from the Default Enter Action pop-up.

5. Then select choice 1, Set additional Smart Action defaults. The pop-up that appears allows you to customize what action is to be taken against certain objects. Note that there is also a Repeat Action choice. This is used when no previous Smart Action has been entered.

CONCLUSION

There is a lot to the Workplace. Begin to use it as just an edit replacement, then advance to typing in DSLIST-style masks as objects. Use the File action bar item until you become familiar with the Fast Path commands

(Smart Actions). The edit Smart Action is the letter E. The DSLIST Smart Action is DL. All of the Smart Actions are explained in the tutorial under the hyper-linked topic "Specifying an action." As I mentioned previously, you can use Enhanced Member Lists at the Work-place. This feature alone has encouraged me to use it more and more. **ts**

NaSPA member Jim Moore is the president of Concentrated Logic Corporation, a Glendale Heights, Ill.–based software development firm specializing in TSO/ISPF/PDF and database design. He can be reached at conlogco@ix.netcom.com.