

More ISPF V4 Potpourri

BY JIM MOORE

ISPF V4 has introduced a wealth of improvements that by themselves don't require an entire column to explain. However, I've collected a number of these tips and I'd like to pass them along to you. This month, I'll examine the VSAM improvements at Options 3.2 and 3.4, the COMPARE edit interface to SuperC, the ACTIONS primary command, and a good use for the SAREA (Status Area) primary command.

VSAM IMPROVEMENTS AT OPTIONS 3.2 AND 3.4

Until ISPF V4, native ISPF really didn't provide a utility to view information about VSAM files. The option of using IDCAMS has always been available. Also, many MVS sites have licensed File-Aid from Compuware Corporation. File-Aid has provided an excellent VSAM ISPF interface for many years. The interface to VSAM that IBM has provided in ISPF V4 is essentially IDCAMS-based. Access it from either Option 3.2 by selecting "V" — VSAM Utilities, or from Option 3.4 with the "I" line command. To familiarize yourself with the interface, start by selecting an existing VSAM file. You should be presented with the "List Catalog Information" panel. Note that you have the option of editing the generated IDCAMS syntax. Also, you have the option of creating a special profile dataset at this panel. Choose the "Function" action bar choice. From the drop-down, choose "Save". The dialog will prompt you for a DSN. If the DSN doesn't exist, it will be allocated for you.

The final output of the VSAM ISPF interface is a browse of an IDCAMS SYSPRINT. While not as slick as File-Aid's VSAM panels, the VSAM interface in ISPF V4 is certainly easy to use. Note that you can select additional IDCAMS options like HISTORY, VOLUME and ALL. Or, you can actually add these

parameters if you choose to edit the generated IDCAMS syntax.

Thanks to Randy Wright of Cooper Automation for bringing this information to my attention.

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THE COMPARE EDIT INTERFACE TO SUPERC

I am a heavy user of SuperC. It is a very powerful file compare utility that has gobs of settings and parameters. SuperC can be run in batch and now it can be invoked right in edit. How? By issuing the COMPARE command. COMPARE, when entered with no parameters, will display the "Edit Compare Settings" panel. The COMPARE command is primarily intended for comparing source code. If you have more esoteric types of files that you need to compare, stick to Options 3.12 or 3.13.

As a simple experiment, try these two uses of the COMPARE command:

1. Enter into edit on any member that you like. A small piece of JCL will work just fine. I will assume that the member name is JCL.
2. Enter the following in the command line:

```
COMPARE (JCL)
```

You should see the short message "Files are the same" appear in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. Of course they are the same! You compared the file that you were editing to itself. Now try this little exercise:

1. While still editing the JCL member, locate another JCL member in the same PDS that you are editing. Any JCL member will do. I will assume that this second member is named JCL1.
2. Now enter the following command:

```
COMPARE (JCL1)
```

Hopefully, you didn't select members with lots of lines. What you should see is a mixture of special lines and normal lines. Many of the normal lines will be marked with unique labels that begin with ".O" (for old). The special lines are the lines that can be removed by issuing RESET. Go ahead, issue a RESET. Do you see any normal lines that are not marked with a label? These are lines that matched. Labeled lines are lines that are only in the member you are editing. The special lines that you removed via RESET were all the lines that were only in the other member. Oh, don't forget about the MD (Make Data) line command. MD will convert special lines into true data lines.

The COMPARE edit interface offers some very clever ways to get external data into a current edit session. I suggest reading more about it in the tutorial. Simply enter COMPARE from any edit session and then press PF1 from the "Edit Compare Settings" panel.

THE ACTIONS COMMAND

How does the "typical" ISPF user work every day in ISPF? Are they using older

3270 type devices with no mouse interface? Do they work in emulators like Extra!, Rumba or TN3270? Personally, my recent work experience has been entirely in emulators. These nifty software packages all have a pretty good mouse interface. That is, I can rapidly move the cursor around in the emulated 3270 window and right (or left) click when I want to stop the cursor. When working in CUA mode with action bars, this capability is important.

If you don't like using the mouse, or don't have a mouse or other pointing device connected to your terminal, try using the ACTIONS command to quickly select an action bar choice. You may have noticed that all of the action bar choices in ISPF have one letter underlined. Usually, it will be the first letter. This is a CUA standard. It is present in all GUI interfaces from Windows to OS/2.

The ACTIONS command really must be equated to a PF key to be of any value. So, choose a PF key and set it to the word "ACTIONS". **Note:** I am assuming that you are working in KEYLIST OFF mode and are using a consistent set of 24 PF keys throughout all of IBM's ISPF environment.

Now, from any panel with an action bar, type in the single underlined character from the choice you want to select. Press the PF key that you have assigned to the ACTIONS command. The drop-down should immediately appear. The cursor will be in the proper position to enter your choice.

If I ever have work on a terminal that is lacking mouse control, you can be sure that

I will use this command. Incidentally, another ISPF setting selected at Option 0, "Tab to point-and-shoot fields", is also related to whether or not you have mouse control. Why tab to these fields when you can simply roll the mouse there?

If you find ACTIONS useful, thank Damon Anderson of Anixter Incorporated.

A GOOD USE FOR SAREA


I love the calendar utility of ISPF. So many times throughout a typical work day I need to know about such date-related items as what Gregorian date is represented by a Julian date? What day of the week was a particular Julian date? Next month, I will devote my entire column to the calendar utility.

First, set your Status Areas (SAREA) to the calendar utility. To do this, simply enter the SAREA command from any ISPF panel's command line. Select the Status action bar item from the SAREA pop-up. Set it to 3, calendar. Note that you will have to do this at least once on every logical (split) screen. Once set, the settings will be saved from session to session.

Browse a load module. Turn HEX ON. In the link-edited load module, you will see a very short record that begins with hex 8011 (X'8011'). This is the linkage editor's date stamp record. Recent releases of the IEWL program (now known as the binder) place both the date *and* time that the object code was link-edited (not compiled or assembled, but link-edited). In any event, look near the end of the short record for a packed-decimal Julian date with an F sign.

Now enter the SAREA command. The calendar utility should appear in the pop-up. Tab or mouse down to the "Day of Year" text and press enter. The "Day of Year" text is point-and-shoot enabled. This will launch the "Standard Date" pop-up. Type in the day and year of the link-edit. Zip! There's your Gregorian date which includes the day of the week.

CONCLUSION

Sometimes I feel like a kid on an Easter egg hunt when exploring the new ISPF. I get all excited when I find these great little software eggs. Next month, I will examine the super handy calendar utility of ISPF in detail. 



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