

**CCSS Releases New Best Practice Guide for
Achieving Lights Out Automation in IBM i Systems Environments**

July 28, 2011 – **CCSS**, the systems management solution provider for IBM i environments, today releases their Best Practice Guide to help IT Managers implement a 'Lights Out' automation status on their systems. 'Lights Out', a term used to describe a 100% automation status, is often viewed as the theoretical ideal state of systems management given the massive cost efficiencies and total elimination of human error incidences that this would afford. In reality, environments that can implement a Lights Out state on a selective or extensive basis still benefit substantially from this real-world compromise, yielding more productive time for their staff and fewer problems in the immediate and long term.

The CCSS Guide to Lights Out Automation suggests that IT Managers should begin their assessment of the system by examining the dependence of their users on key applications, processes and system events, especially those that are under further stress or threat of disruption due to their linked or sequential position relevant to essential business operations. Where these events, jobs or processes exist, automation can reduce the impact of unforeseen circumstances that might otherwise quickly throw all subsequent processing, tasks or events into disarray and leave an already stretched team trusted with their management to cope with the consequences. The Guide explores examples of such situations that are taken from the real-world and includes the circumstances of a large retail organization which must upload their daily price lists to the system. Where this one event does not start or end on time, the impact can resonate throughout the organization affecting every aspect from stock replenishment to distribution.

Ray Wright, CEO for CCSS explains why the quest for Lights Out remains the 'Holy Grail' for system managers today, "Part of the Lights Out challenge is to look beyond the systems environment and identify areas of vulnerability. It may be that a specific job must be started by a manager from the finance team, warehouse staff or some other division but if there is a delay that coincides with a shift change, or perhaps even an external delay then these problems, which in themselves are relatively small, can set in motion a chain of delays which quickly add up to a serious situation. Add to this an out-of-hours element where on-call staff are needed to help resolve the problem, or even an unnoticed problem that prevents users from working, and it can quickly become a very, very expensive issue. Avoiding that type of needless expense is absolutely essential for IT Managers today."

Whilst the vision of Lights Out in its most extreme form may be unattainable for most IBM shops, the accessibility of a 'Lights Dimmed' status together with the economic advantage and cumulative impact of automating distinct areas, processes, events and procedures, is well within the reach of most System Managers. In addition to critical areas, such as monitoring that

tasks such as 'end of day' have started and finished on time so as not to impact other dependant jobs or processes, Managers can automate the vast majority of operational daily checklists and non-essential system generated messages to free up the time spent on these tasks by operators. When exception conditions do occur, tailored escalation procedures which send alerts according to staff availability, priority, shift patterns and other requirements, across various devices (Email/mobile phone etc) ensure these have no opportunity to be overlooked or slip through a busy environment without detection.

CCSS's own QMessage Monitor solution has been built with the Light's Out objective in mind. Wright says, "Many of our QMessage Monitor customers have come to us with the specific goal of achieving a Lights Out status either partially or to a widespread degree." QMessage Monitor helps to implement a pro-active approach to systems management by monitoring, filtering and automating response to important messages. The benefits to customers include a reduction in the number of after-hours IT support calls, and an increase in early morning productivity which previously suffered due to being held up by overnight issues waiting to be resolved the following morning.

To download the guide in full, please visit:

<http://www.ccssltd.com/resources/documents.php>

Or join the CCSS Linked In Group:

<http://www.linkedin.com/company/ccss-usa-corp>

For more information on CCSS, Lights Out Automation and QMessage Monitor, please visit:

<http://www.ccssltd.com/products/qmessage-monitor/features.php?id=lights-out-automation>

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About CCSS

CCSS develops, supports and markets IBM i (on Power Systems & System i servers) performance monitoring and reporting, message management and remote management solutions. An Advanced IBM Business Partner, CCSS develops powerful solutions to support some of the world's most demanding IBM i environments across many industries including insurance, banking, pharmaceutical and manufacturing. Existing customers that rely on CCSS's feature-rich solutions include leading organizations such as Volvo, Mattel, Newell-Rubbermaid, The Royal Bank of Scotland, and Siemens Healthcare.

CCSS is headquartered in Gillingham, Kent, UK with key regional headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA and Bonn, Germany together with a global agent network spanning Austria, Portugal, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden.

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