



Wishing you a
Merry Christmas
and a very
Prosperous New
Year from
everybody at CCSS.



The CCSS offices will be open over the festive period, except the national public holidays. Should you need any sales or technical support please call the contact numbers below: -

CCSS (Europe) Ltd - +44 (0)1634 370444

CCSS (USA) Corp - 919 256 8271

CCSS (Deutschland) GmbH - +49 (0)228 9168 207

COMPANY NEWS

QSystem Monitor's Unique Cache Battery Monitoring Capability Saves IBM System i Operators from Disruption and Downtime

Dec 17, 2007 – CCSS, announces the launch of a new cache battery monitoring capability for QSystem Monitor, their IBM ServerProven performance monitoring and reporting solution. Unique to the market, the cache battery monitor means Systems Managers can save considerable time in checking the existing life for every cache battery in the system and any associated downtime linked to replacing them.

During the course of typical processing, before data is written to disk, it is stored in the cache which is backed up by specialist batteries to keep the data viable in the event of unexpected downtime. When the batteries are near end of life, the system issues a message to alert operators to check the battery status and make an appointment for an IBM engineer to replace them. If this message is missed or ignored, for example when the message is issued out of hours or to a particularly stretched management team, batteries may fail and cause the system to begin writing data directly to disk. This process can cause system performance degradation, impacting users and even causing system failure, what's more the last data collection stored on the cache will be lost.

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TECHNICAL TIP - By Kurt Thomas How to Not Lose a Backup

If you think that backups are a necessary but tedious task, trust us, you are not alone. Sure, it makes sense to keep a copy of your data for situations when things go massively wrong, but fun it is not. That work that you do have to spend on configuring, running, and monitoring backups you want to keep to a minimum.

So do you want automation for your backup? Of course you do. Do you want to be notified if your next backup is bound to fall over? Wait, that's a tough one... you do. Do you need to be notified on your mobile phone? Quite possibly, if the problem occurs when you are not at your desk.

Now, and I say this in all the modesty that I can feign, we just may have something that could help you. Quick, who amongst you uses BRMS? You do? Well, no surprise, because we have found that many of you, our customers do.

One of the companies that use our products world-wide, asked if we could monitor the number of tapes in the BRMS scratch-pool. You will recall: The scratch pool, in BRMS, is a virtual group that contains all tapes (or backup media, as we pros call them) that are eligible for BRMS to write on. These comprise both squeaky-new tapes as well as used tapes whose contents have expired after a set time of, e.g., a month. In other words, the scratch pool is a list of those tapes that BRMS can use for the next backup.

Now, in a perfect world, the scratch pool will always contain enough tapes for the next backup. But of course, in a perfect world, there would only be love and peace and the fuel prices would not skyrocket. But I digress. In a non-perfect world, i.e., the real world, every now and then there are not enough tapes in the scratch pool. Someone may have taken a tape out of the tape library and forgotten to replace it. The number of tapes may not be enough for the expiration interval, and so forth. That's why you want to keep an eye on the number of tapes in the scratch pool. Now out of the box, QSM can do many things, including things related to HA, such as journal status and journal lag. But it does not allow you to monitor the number of tapes in the BRMS scratch pool.

But as the customer had requested this functionality, we wanted to oblige! We aimed to satisfy! And after a little digging, a little coding, and some testing on the customer's site, we had the solution: A user-defined element that can monitor the BRMS scratch pool. (For those who know him, it was Paul Ratchford who hand-crafted the code.)

The new element returns a simple value: The number of tapes remaining in the BRMS scratch pool for the selected system and BRMS media group. Once that value is set up as an element within QSM, the full power of QSM can be leveraged: Online monitoring, Thresholds, Filtering, to only display the element when the number of tapes drops below a threshold, Notifications, History.

And when you add QMessage Monitor and QRemote Control into the equation, you get even more: Messages, Time-dependent notification, Notification to your mobile phone.

The newly added element allows the customer to keep track of the scratch pool in 3 main ways: By viewing the element on screen; by being notified only if the element's value becomes critical; and by viewing the development of the value over time. Why would you want to keep track of the pool over time? Because it would allow you to see if there is a regular shortage of tapes on certain days, or after a particular date.

Needless to say, the customer that requested the BRMS scratch pool monitoring is already making good use of it, as well as other customers who have also implemented it.

Do you think that functionality could also be useful to you? At the moment, it's a user-defined element based on an external program. If more of you would like to use it, we would consider adding it into the product as an integrated element. If you want to see that happen, drop us a note at support@ccssltd.com.

That's all for this instalment of the Tech Tip. See you next time—and may all your systems run well.

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CUSTOMER REMINDER



Keep your iSeries system up to date with the latest critical support updates, features and security updates. Upgrade all CCSS products to the latest releases available through the secure technical support section of the CCSS website. For any technical assistance please contact.

support@ccssltd.com

[QSystem Monitor Version 11 - Release 140](#)

[QSystem Monitor Version 12 - Release 006](#)

[QMessage Monitor Version 6 - Release 066](#)

[QRemote Control Version 2 - Release 061](#)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In line with IBM support of i5/OS, as from 1st January 2008 CCSS will no longer be able to support i5/OS versions lower than V5R1.

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As an existing customer of CCSS, you will continue to receive our regular email newsletter. If you would prefer not to receive future copies, please send us an email to news@ccssltd.com with the word UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject heading.

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