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UK FIRM'S SYSTEM MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE GETS BUNDLED WITH i5/OS

UK iSeries systems management specialist CCSS has won something of a coup as its software will now be included with every new release of i5/OS on a "try and buy" basis.

"Our software, QSystem Monitor and QMessage Monitor will be distributed with the operating system, i5/OS, as from April 2005 onwards," explains CCSS's proud managing director Ray Wright, who founded the firm fourteen years ago. "Physically, it will be located on the i5/OS V5R3 installer CD for what is deemed as 'non-IBM software'."

Wright says that this deal is the fruit of a long association with Rochester's technical team. Five years ago, CCSS joined IBM's System's Management Partner Group and he says that, uniquely, all three of his products were deemed worthy of inclusion by IBM. From that, IBM led CCSS into working with the high availability big names and this led to QMessage Monitor being given ClusterProven status, the only specific message monitoring software to do so. That, in turn, led to Rochester's benchmark centre testers asking CCSS to help on three major projects.

Another string to the Gillingham, Kent-based firm's bow has been its association with IBM's Large User Group. "Through involvement of with IBM's Large User Group, which takes place in Rochester, we've become quite well known with many of the members as they are our customers anyway, and they subsequently have passed the features and benefits and the things they have gained with our products not only on to IBM, but also on to other customers that subsequently, because of internal referral, have become our customers."

Wright points to, among other things, his products' success with large multiple system environments and the inclusion of long-standing "hot-backup" capabilities (that work whether a site is running HA software or not) have led to such word of mouth recommendations. He also points to the fact that his team have always responded to customer's requests. "The truth of the matter is that, in most cases, we can put a name to most of the new enhancements and features that come along and it's invariably a customer suggestion."

Only a very limited number of solutions have been invited on board this bundling initiative and developers have to prove that their solutions have features that are unique and not available from their competitors or, indeed, IBM. They also have to show that their products benefit all users, from entry level right up to the users of model 595 behemoths. To date, only Bytware's StandGuard anti-virus offering has achieved such status.

Not only that, the developer needs a sponsor within Rochester to get on board. CCSS's own sponsor could not be higher in the Minnesota division's technical team; Mike Smith is distinguished engineer, iSeries system chief engineering manager.

Smith says of the deal: "IBM is pleased to provide simplified monitoring capabilities from CCSS. QSystem Monitor and QMessage Monitor provide the ability to monitor multiple items on multiple systems, allowing an administrator to easily monitor the system status from one place and respond to system events. As part of the IBM Try-and-Buy programme, these capabilities will be of great interest to many iSeries installations."

Both products are active and ready to go, shipped on said 'try and buy' basis. "The customer would load the products, request a temp code over the internet — that's how we record their details — and away they go," says Wright. "All being well, once the prospect customers have tried it, they will buy it."

—Seamus Quinn, editor