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4204 IBM STG Power IBM i Multimedia Expert Reference Series – As Produced Transcript

"Best of Frank Soltis"

Frank Soltis, IBM AS/400 Chief Architect

Text Callout: It started as a simple idea

It started as a simple idea to create an application system for mid-sized businesses.

The idea was to bring together the system 36 and the system 38 into a single new system.

The strength of the system 36 was in the user interface. It was a system that was designed to be easy to use – people would purchase applications rather than developing their own..

The system 38 on the other hand was very different in that was a developer system.

We worked after hours and on weekends to actually take a system 38 and run system 36 applications on top of it. We called it Silverlake, it eventually became the AS/400 and, of course, the rest is history.

Text Callout: IBM took a risk on a revolutionary system

IBM was willing to take a risk on a rather revolutionary system. I am not sure that there was any other vendor in the industry that was willing to take that much of a risk.

The system was designed from the very beginning to be independent of the underlying technology, and of course within the AS/400 we made the major change to a RISC processor which by the way nobody in the industry has ever achieved of literally ripping out a complete processor and putting in a completely different one and not even having to recompile applications.

So by being independent of the underlying technology everything else could change but the applications would be preserved.   We would protect the investment of our customers.

Text Callout: Integration is like capitalism or democracy

Integration is like capitalism or democracy, simple to talk about but very difficult to achieve.

Integration when done properly means that you deal with your business rather than your computer.

… the idea behind integration of course is to put everything that a business needs into that system together.

you would not have a business system without a relational database and so it made a lot of sense for us just to simply integrated right into the system itself.

…many other vendors today are talking about integration, virtualization, ease of use. We delivered that 25 years ago with the AS/400 and we continue to deliver it through today's IBM i. Today most other vendors are just aspiring to achieve the same level that we had been delivering for the last 25 years.

Text Callout: The IBM i user community is fabulous.

The IBM i user community is absolutely fabulous.

When people ask me what I personally believe is the most important aspect of the IBM i, I always say it's the total satisfaction that customers have with this system.

When we first introduced the AS/400 we were asking our customers to take a chance on this system … we were asking customers to essentially bet their business on this computer system. Over those years we have managed to deliver on all of our promises and today we have a very loyal base of customers…

…when you're meeting with IBM i user group they're generally not talking about the problems that they're having, they're talking about how happy they are with the system.

Text Callout: IBM Power Systems and IBM i

Converging to Power Systems was very, very important for IBM i, …

And the reason was to put IBM i onto the strategic hardware platform that IBM was going to be using for the distant future.

Power today is used in everything from Watson, supercomputers, commercial systems, it has tremendous capabilities, tremendous flexibility and fundamentally it's everywhere...

...none of us really know totally what's going to be the case, you know, 10 years in the future, 25 years in the future as far as technologies but we can be confident that the IBM i – the fundamental architecture of the system – is designed to take advantage of those technologies...

And so therefore I'm extremely confident about the future of IBM i for the next 25 years just as it has been for the last 25 years.