

Operating Systems/Middleware

IBM Retail Connectivity Option

Sales reference guide



Summary

IBM Retail Connectivity Option (RCO) provides a way for retailers to access data and files on the IBM 4690 OS platform from in-store processors (ISPs) or host systems operating on the same network. This access enables better support and remote operation for diagnostics, report generation, realtime sales totals, data access and file updates. Retailers that need to add new applications to their stores may take advantage of RCO to share data between 4690 systems and new applications running on Microsoft® Windows® or AIX®. Most important, RCO provides a cost-effective way for retailers to protect their investment in existing IBM solutions while adding new capabilities to improve store operations.

Key messages

1. IBM RCO offers versatile functionality

RCO enables utilities and user-written application programs to read and write 4690 disk files, access 4690 PRS pipes, and initiate 4690 background tasks. Print jobs can be routed between the 4690 and the ISP and a variety of 4690 system status information can be interrogated.

2. IBM RCO helps improve access to the 4690 and minimize impact on the 4690 platform

Multiple applications access 4690 concurrently, so the software only requires a single 4690 background task. Also, ISP applications are developed independently of the communications protocol used.

3. The most commonly used feature of IBM RCO is access to 4690 files

The software includes utilities for file transfer and an API for record-level access to 4690 files. During record-level access, RCO can also automatically handle the translation between data types for 4690 and data types that are more appropriate for the ISP.

4. IBM RCO can be implemented in virtually any network environment

It is available in two versions, depending on the ISP platform; retailers can choose from RCO for AIX, Windows NT® or Windows 2000, or RCO for SCO UNIX®. It can be supported on a variety of network topologies, including T/R, Ethernet, SDLC and ASYNC. Plus, RCO is available for a variety of ISP platforms and communications protocols, including AIX (TCP/IP, Async, SNA, Netbios), Windows NT (TCP/IP, Async), Windows 2000 (TCP/IP, Async) and SCO UNIX (TCP/IP).

There is a subset of Version 2.4.1 of RCO available via PRPQ called IBM 4690 Connectivity with RAIS for AS/400®. It works with the Retail Application Interface Suite (RAIS) offered by the IBM AS/400 Services group. This PRPQ provides the APIs needed to interface to the 4690 controller from the ISP (AS/400), so customers do not have to write their own, and it enables them to access 4690 files. It includes utilities for file transfer and an API for record-level access to 4690 files. During record-level access, RCO can automatically handle translation between 4690 data types and data types more friendly to the AS/400 ISP. The PRPQ also offers RCO-like access to the 4690 in a manner more easily integrated with other AS/400 processes.

5. IBM RCO addresses all four imperatives of retail on demand

Because RCO makes it easier to add new applications that help improve the store, it can help retailers transform the customer experience, take out costs (related to integration and data management), enable their people (to access data more easily throughout the store) and operate with secure resilience.

Learn more

For more information, an RCO user's guide can be found at: www.ibm.com/industries/retail/store/support/html/pubs.html.

Additional utilities and services are available from the IBM National Retail Services Center (NRSC), including the RCO Toolkit, a set of utility programs that use the RCO API to provide batch loading and unloading of 4690 data files from the ISP; RCO T-log Trickle and Translate, a utility to retrieve T-log data from the 4690 and translate it to a form more easily processed by ISP applications; RCO education, such as custom onsite classes to assist in installation and use of RCO; RCO clients for other ISP platforms (including UNIX); and custom development of applications to meet specific requirements.



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