

Product Launch Point: An ISPF Tool to Simplify Local ISPF Menus

Product Launch Point is a table-driven ISPF menu that you can easily update and maintain while providing your users with a searchable, scrollable and enhanced ISPF menu.

How many times have you installed a new product — either vendor or in-house developed — and needed to add it to an ISPF menu only to be frustrated because the menu panel was full (or was written in Dialog Tag Language [DTL])? Wouldn't it be nice if you could define the information in a table, save the table, and have your users start using the updates immediately? Well now you can!

BACKGROUND

The Product Launch Point (PLP) is a dynamic ISPF Menu application that I developed to standardize five different local application menus in three different sysplexes. In reviewing the menus, it was obvious that each menu had its own look and feel as well as its own unique mix of applications. Any change would mean that someone would complain unless the change retained the look and feel that they were used to. The maintenance challenges of keeping the new standardized menu current became another issue, as my site installs product updates on a regular basis, which requires a menu change to reflect the update. Overall, this was a daunting task.

After making a list of all the applications that needed to be included on the menu, the idea of using an ISPF table came to mind and the Product Launch Point was born.

To save time in coding, I was able to use the ISPFPROD REXX exec (see the September 1998 issue of *Technical Support* for the article "Installing ISPF Applications the Easy Way") in this application. It was easy to take this exec and incorporate it directly into the Product Launch Point. Now the PLP table could contain the application name, description, how to start it, as well as all of the libraries necessary to start it. I could then avoid having to develop a local startup CLIST or REXX exec for each application.

OVERVIEW

PLP is a table-driven ISPF menu that you can easily update and maintain while providing your users with a searchable, scrollable and enhanced ISPF menu.

Using an ISPF table allows the menu to retain the same look and feel for each sysplex, while allowing the contents to be unique for each sysplex. Within the table, it is possible to keep information about the required CLIST or REXX library, any STEPLIB, and the necessary ISPF libraries. The system uses that information when the user selects an application to dynamically allocate (using ALTLIB and LIBDEF) the appropriate libraries before invoking the application. If a dynamic STEPLIB product is available, then the STEPLIB can be activated as well. Be aware that the TSOLIB command does not work within ISPF, so it is not supported by PLP. Changes to the ISPF Primary Options Menu (ISR@PRIM) and to the ISPF ISPCMDS command table are required for full implementation.

The result was that everyone had to change to a new standard interface while still being able to have a local list of applications. Users moving from one environment to another would be familiar with the interface and could then easily find the tools they needed to do their job. Another plus was the added flexibility provided with the Group and the User menu options.

WHAT DOES PLP DO?

PLP is easy to use, assuming it is installed with the updates to the ISPF ISPCMDS command table. If that is the case, then entering the PLP command on any ISPF command line will bring up the PLP menu, as shown in Figure 1. This menu is a scrollable ISPF table with several commands to assist the user in finding the application that is of interest. The table

supports point-and-shoot, meaning that you need only move the cursor to the desired row and press Enter to start an application.

The menu commands are:

- **Find:** searches for the specified character string anywhere in the application name and description and then locates the cursor on that row.
- **Locate:** searches for the character string only in the application name and the string must be found starting with the first character of the application name. Thus, the Find command is more flexible; however, the Locate command is there for those who are more comfortable with this option.
- **Start:** starts the specified application without moving the cursor to the row where the application is defined.

The Line selection options are:

- **Select:** starts the application defined on the row where the Select option is entered.
- **Browse:** opens in ISPF Browse a documentation member that provides more information on the application defined on the row. This is optional and requires that the PLP Administrator create the documentation member. Refer to the section “Managing Product Launch Point” for more on the documentation member.
- **Info:** displays a panel similar to that shown in Figure 2, without the update ability, so the user can see how the application is defined.
- **Launch:** starts the application in a new session. By default, ISPF supports up to eight sessions, although only two can be visible at a time. The first time this option is used a short tutorial explains how to use the ISPF commands SWAP LIST and SWAP NEXT as well as how to change their default function keys. When an application is launched, the session is named the same as the application, thus making the session easier to find in the SWAP LIST window.

- **Useradd:** brings up a panel, as illustrated in Figure 3, that allows the user to change the application name and optionally add specific options to be used when starting the application. This application will then be added to the PLP User menu. In this example, we are adding the File-Aid/MVS application, changing the name to FA34 and setting an option of 3.4. The user can then issue from the ISPF Primary menu the command Z.FA34, or from most other panels =Z.FA34, to go directly to File-Aid/MVS option 3.4 (assuming that option Z is implemented as suggested). The Command field on this panel is read-only, so the user cannot change it.

The User menu shown in Figure 4 is a handy option for users who want quick access to a limited set of applications while insulating them from changes in the application’s libraries and entry point. The User menu is always entered in management mode (see

FIGURE 1: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT SAMPLE DEFAULT DISPLAY

```

Product Launch Point Menu PLP - Row 1 to 16 of 61
Command ===>
Scroll ===> CLR

Commands: F xxx Find string L xx Locate prefix @ app opt Start app
Line:    @ Select @ Browse Information I Info on Cmd L Launch U User

Sel Application Description (press PF1 for help)
--
ABENDAID AbendAid Output Processor
--
AFPS KFSP Application System
--
AFPTCAL Appointment Calendar Command
--
BCOM BCOM ISM----Tandem File Transfer
--
BSCUTIL BSC IMS and VSAM Utilities
--
BSCOMMR IBM BoskManager Read/WVS Softcopy Library
--
CAPTURE Capture DBNames for migration to other LPARs
--
CAVIEW CA-View (formerly SAR) Menu
--
CAUSER CA-View ISPF Interface (improved)
--
CA1 CA-1 Tape Management System (TMS)
--
CA11 CA-11 ISPF Interface
--
CA/BATCH CA-7 Environment (Batch)
--
CA7ONLIN CA-7 Environment (Online)
--
CHGIMAS Change Implementation Management
  
```

FIGURE 2: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT SAMPLE APPLICATION ENTRY

```

Product Launch Point Management
-----
Command ===>
*Application Name FILEAID_ A unique application name 1-8 characters
Application ID FAXE 1-4 characters for application id
*Description File-Aid/MVS
Step Library or
ISPF Load Library
ISPF Message Dataset 'SYSL.FILEAID.ISPMLIB'
ISPF Panel Dataset 'SYSL.FILEAID.ISPFLIB'
ISPF Skeleton Dataset 'SYSL.FILEAID.ISPSLIB'
ISPF Table Dataset 'SYSL.FILEAID.ISPTLIB'
Clist Library 'SYSL.FILEAID.CLIST'
REXX EXEC Library
*Application Start (select one)
Command
Program Perm
ISPF Panel IPARUDI_ Panel option
  
```

FIGURE 3: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT SAMPLE USER ADD

```

Product Launch Point Management
-----
Command ===>
Enter, Verify, or Change (* = required)

*Application Name FA34 A unique application name 1-8 characters
*Description File-Aid/MVS

*Application Start
Command %PLPISPF FILEAID
Options: 3.4 Changeable
  
```

FIGURE 4: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT SAMPLE USER DISPLAY

```

Product Launch Point Management User Menu 1 to 11 of 11
Command ===>
Scroll ===> CLR

Commands: F xxx Find string I Insert L xxx Locate prefix @ app opt Start app
Line:    @ Delete or Report
         A B C D E I L R S (see help for more information)

Sel Application Description (press PF1 for help)
--
CAV CA-View User Dialog
--
F Fileaid/MVS
--
FA34 File-Aid/MVS
--
SDSP System Display and Search Facility
--
ST750 Startools 7.5.0
--
SYSTEM Paul Gillis's System Status Command
--
TXT2HTML Text to HTML Conversion
--
USS User Clist
--
USS User Panel
--
VMAP Fileaid/MVS
--
ZFTP ftp dialog
-----
Bottom of data
  
```

the “Managing Product Launch Point” section), since the individual users own it and the tables are saved in the user’s ISPF Profile data set.

The first time you use the PLP application a tutorial that provides some basic information on the use of the PLP menu system will be displayed. You can access this tutorial at any time by using the Program Function Key 1 (Help).

INSTALLATION AND SETUP

PLP is easy to install, requires little customization, and is documented in the installation PDS and the PDF formatted documentation that comes with the package. As far as key local customization goes, you must allocate a partitioned data set in which the PLP tables will reside and update the PLPISPF REXX exec with the name of that data set.

To install PLP from the ZIP file, perform the following steps:

1. Unzip the plpispf.zip file.
2. Read the plpispf.pdf documentation (requires a copy of the Adobe Acrobat reader).
3. Upload the plp.xmit file to your OS/390 or z/OS system — be sure to use binary mode and upload into a data set with RECFM=FB LRECL=80.
4. Log on to TSO and issue RECEIVE inds(upload.dsn) and then EX received.dsn(RECEIVE).
5. Customize as indicated below in steps 1 and 2.
6. Copy the PLP.EXEC into your site's SYSPROC or SYSEXEC library.
7. Copy the PLP.PANELS into your site's ISPP LIB library.
8. Copy the PLP.SKELS into your site's ISPS LIB library.

Additionally, there are two recommended installation changes:

1. You should update the ISPF Primary Options Menu (Panel ISR@PRIM) to reference three basic PLP menu displays. Figure 5 shows a snippet from my ISR@PRIM panel.
2. You should update the ISPCMD5 ISPF Command Table using the suggested entries in Figure 6. Better yet, you should update the site commands table, as this table is separate and thus is insulated from IBM changes (see the *IBM ISPF Planning and Customization* manual for information on how to define a site command table).

You do not need to name the command PLP, as the ISPCMD5 command name can be named anything that makes sense for your installation. The only requirement is that you customize the variables listed in Figure 7 in the PLPISPF REXX EXEC (when in ISPF Edit do a find for *custom*):

The customization is currently contained within the PLPISPF REXX exec.

MANAGING PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT

As the administrator, when you first start PLP using the PLPISPF command with the parameter of ADMIN (e.g., tso %plpispf admin), you will be prompted to enter the first application into the PLP table. See Figure 8.

FIGURE 5: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT ON THE ISPF PRIMARY MENU

```

PLP PLP      Product Launch Point
G  Group    Group Application list
Z  ZipTo    Application Fastpath via User List
  
```

FIGURE 6: ISPCMD5 ISPF COMMAND TABLE ENTRIES

```

Verb  T  Action
PLP   O  SELECT CMD(%PLPISPF /SZPARM) SCRNAME(PLP) NEAPPL(PLP)
PLPS  O  SELECT CMD(%PLPISPF /GRP /SZPARM) SCRNAME(PLP) NEAPPL(PLP)
PLPS  O  SELECT CMD(%PLPISPF /SYD /SZPARM) SCRNAME(PLP) NEAPPL(PLP)
PLPU  O  SELECT CMD(%PLPISPF /USER /SZPARM) SCRNAME(PLP) NEAPPL(PLP)
  
```

FIGURE 7: PLPISPF CUSTOMIZATION

plpispf_table	the name of the partitioned data set that will be used for the PLP Tables and for the information members
save_limit	the number of backup copies of the PLP Table to save
steplib	define which dynamic STEPLIB command will be used, if any
racf_groups	the default RACF group names that are allowed ADMIN capabilities

FIGURE 8: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT APPLICATION ENTRY DISPLAY

```

----- Product Launch Point Management -----
Command ---->

Enter, Verify, or Change (* = required)

*Application Name      _____ A unique application name 1-8 characters
Application ID         _____ 1-4 characters for application id
*Description           _____
Step Library or       _____
ISPF Load Library     _____
ISPF Message Dataset  _____
ISPF Panel Dataset    _____
ISPF Skeleton Dataset _____
ISPF Table Dataset    _____
Clist Library         _____
REXX EXEC Library     _____
*Application Start (select one)
Command              _____
Program              _____
ISPF Panel           _____
ISPF Panel option    _____
  
```

FIGURE 9: PRODUCT LAUNCH POINT SAMPLE MANAGEMENT (ADMIN) DISPLAY

```

----- Product Launch Point Management PLP Row 1 to 15 of 41
Command ---->

Commands: F xxx Find string I Insert L xxx Locate prefix G app opt Start app
          Give Cancel Copy or Report
Line:    A B C D E I L R S (see help for more information)

Sel  Application Description (press PF1 for help)
-----
- ABENDaid  AbendAid Output Processor
- APPS      SMP Application Systems
- APPTCAL   Appointment Calendar Command
- BCSM     BCSM IBM-->Tarzan File Transfer
- BMCSTEL  BMC IBM and VSM Utilities
- BOOKMAN  IBM BookManager Read/MVS Softcopy Library
- CAPTURE  Capture Datasets for migration to other LPARs
- GAVIER   CA-view (formerly GAR) Menu
- GAVISDR  CA-view ISPF Interface (disposed)
- CAS      CA-1 Tape Management System (TMS)
- CASI     CA-11 ISPF Interface
- CATBATCH CA-7 Environment (Batch)
- CATMLIN  CA-7 Environment (Online)
- CHSMMAN  Change Implementation Management
  
```

From this screen, you can enter all of the information necessary to invoke the application. Figure 2 provides an example of defining File-Aid/MVS 8.8.0.

As you can see from Figure 2, it is possible to define all the necessary libraries so that File-Aid/MVS can be invoked directly without you having to write a REXX exec or CLIST to do the allocations, or having to put these libraries into your TSO Logon PROC.

Since the PLP table contains all the required system and ISPF libraries, you should not have to create a startup REXX exec or CLIST unless the application requires other allocations.

If you are already using a CLIST or REXX exec to start an application on your current ISPF menus, you can continue to do so

and just define the application name, description, and then place the startup CLIST or REXX exec name in the command field. This makes the transition very easy and you can convert to full table use later if desired.

The supported dynamic STEPLIB packages are: DYNA-STEP from Tone Software (www.tonesoft.com) and Gilbert Saint-flour's STEPLIB command (<http://members.home.net/gsf>).

Figure 9 provides an example of the PLP Management display. The available command and line selection options are different from the standard PLP display. The following commands are added in this mode:

- **INSERT** — inserts a new application
- **COPY** — both saves and copies the table into production
- **SAVE** — saves the table updates but does not copy the updated table into production
- **CANCEL** — cancels all updates, changes and exits
- **REPORT** — generates a very basic report of the contents of the PLP table

Why save and copy? The PLP Administrative application works on a copy of the table and only moves the updates into the production table when the COPY command is used. This allows you to update the table anytime without worrying about a table lockout that would occur if you were to attempt to update the in-use table while your users are allocated to it.

The line selection options added in this mode are:

- **Alias:** is used to assign an alias to an existing command in the table. In Figure 1 CHNGMAN has an alias of CMAN.
- **Change:** allows you to change the existing application information.
- **Edit:** creates and/or updates the documentation information that is a member of the same partitioned data set for the table. The member name is the name of the application.
- **Insert:** inserts a new application using the panel shown in Figure 8.

- **Repeat:** creates a new entry based upon the current row definitions.

Therefore, once you have entered all of the applications that you are interested in having in the menu, you need to use the COPY command and then exit PLP by hitting the PF3 (END) key.

PLPISPF COMMAND SYNTAX

The following command syntax for the PLPISPF REXX Exec demonstrates the full scope of the command:

```
%plpispf /xxx option
```

Valid options include the following:

- **ADMIN:** invokes the administration dialog
- **Other:** an application name plus any parameters
- **/xxx:** alternate table (e.g., /ABC)
- **/SYS:** for systems
- **/GRP:** for individual group tables
- **/GRPN:** this is used to review/update /GRP dsname
- **/USER:** for individual user table

The default is standard table.


THE GROUP MENU

The Group menu is different in that the first time the group table is used, the user, or administrator, will be prompted for the partitioned data set name in which the PLP Group table is to be found. All the other tables — except the User table — are found in the partitioned data set defined in the PLPISPF REXX exec.

If a user or administrator needs to change to a different partitioned data set, then he will need to use the /GRPN option instead of the /GRP. The user will be prompted as to whether he wishes to change the partitioned data set name.

SUMMARY

The Product Launch Point is a very useful tool that you can use to eliminate multiple local ISPF menu panels as well as provide your users with their own, easily man-

aged, personal ISPF menu. It is available free from the NaSPA Web site as filename DYCK0802.ZIP. To access, go to www.naspa.com and click on “Technical Support,” and “Coding Examples from Articles.” Additionally, this tool is available from my Web site at www.lbdsoftware.com. 



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