

RNEWS: An ISPF News and Announcement Tool

This article examines RNEWS, a tool the author created to enable administrators to easily and effectively send news to ISPF users.

How many times have you wanted to announce something to your ISPF users and they ignore the TSO Broadcast news or you do not have an effective means to make the announcement?

This was the case at my previous employer, and my solution was to take advantage of the facilities available within ISPF. Using OS/390 REXX, I built a tool that is easy to use by both the administrator and the user. This article will explain how RNEWS (the R is for my employer where I developed this tool) works. There are several other REXX execs to simplify the use of RNEWS (e.g., knewsck and kpnews).

This is another in a series of articles about ISPF tools that I have created to enhance the ISPF user's experience. This free tool is available for download (without guarantee or warranty) at www.geocities.com/lbdyck or from the NaSPA Web site as filename DYCK0102.ZIP. To access, go to www.naspa.com, click on "Technical Support" and "Coding Examples from Articles." In addition to RNEWS, my site contains other tools I developed including XMITIP, which is a tool to send email messages with optional file attachments from OS/390; FTPBatch, which is an ISPF dialog to simplify the use of FTP on OS/390; and

FIGURE 1: ONCE PER DAY NEWS TABLE DISPLAY

```

  HP-IT NEWS AND INFORMATION                               Row 1 to 16 of 97
  Command ==>
  Command Options: Find xxx   Search xxx
  Line Options:   S -Select  U -Unread  X -Ignore  P -Print

  Sel Date      Status  Subject
  --
  11/28/01 New    117: Language Environment Migration
  11/05/01 New    116:LE Batch Implementation scheduled on 11/30 for A/B/C
  11/01/01 New    115: SAS R8.2 IMPLEMENTATION
  10/31/01 New    114: File-AID/WVS 8.8.0 Available for testing
  10/26/01 New    111: New Expiration date for Abend-Aid will be in on 11/
  10/26/01 New    110: Obsolete old Easytrieve libraries on 11/01/2001
  10/19/01 New    109: Compuware ECC (CSS & LMS) will be upgraded on 10/25
  10/03/01 New    108:EMS Info/Mgmt System V1.1.0
  10/03/01 New    107:SAS R8.2 INSTALLATION INFORMATION
  09/04/01 New    106: EDITPAGE and update to SDSFPAGE
  09/04/01 New    105: New Tool - CSVEDIT - Convert data to import into Ex
  08/31/01 New    103: SYS1 (BSYS) upgrade
  08/17/01 New    102: LE runtime library in DSYS/ESYS LMKLST as of 08/20
  08/10/01 New    LE has been implemented to production CICS regions
  07/31/01 New    100: Update to XMITIP - New Batch JCL Option
  07/12/01 New    99: FileAid 8.6.0 In Production
  
```

FIGURE 2: NORMAL NEWS TABLE DISPLAY

```

  HP-IT NEWS AND INFORMATION                               Row 1 to 16 of 97
  Command ==>
  Command Options: Find xxx   Search xxx
  Line Options:   S -Select  U -Unread  X -Ignore  P -Print

  Sel Date      Status  Subject
  --
  11/28/01 Unread  117: Language Environment Migration
  11/05/01 Unread  116:LE Batch Implementation scheduled on 11/30 for A/B/C
  11/01/01 Read    115: SAS R8.2 IMPLEMENTATION
  10/31/01 Unread  114: File-AID/WVS 8.8.0 Available for testing
  10/26/01 Unread  111: New Expiration date for Abend-Aid will be in on 11/
  10/26/01 Read    110: Obsolete old Easytrieve libraries on 11/01/2001
  10/19/01 Unread  109: Compuware ECC (CSS & LMS) will be upgraded on 10/25
  10/03/01 Ignored  108:EMS Info/Mgmt System V1.1.0
  10/03/01 Ignored  107:SAS R8.2 INSTALLATION INFORMATION
  09/04/01 Ignored  106: EDITPAGE and update to SDSFPAGE
  09/04/01 Read    105: New Tool - CSVEDIT - Convert data to import into Ex
  08/31/01 Unread  103: SYS1 (BSYS) upgrade
  08/17/01 Read    102: LE runtime library in DSYS/ESYS LMKLST as of 08/20
  08/10/01 Unread  LE has been implemented to production CICS regions
  07/31/01 Read    100: Update to XMITIP - New Batch JCL Option
  07/12/01 Unread  99: FileAid 8.6.0 In Production
  
```

enhancements to SDSF to print or email selected pages.

OVERVIEW

RNEWS is an ISPF application I wrote using standard ISPF facilities available in OS/390 REXX. This tool will display a table of new and unread news items once a day when the user first enters ISPF, as shown in Figure 1, or will display all news items when called from an ISPF menu selection, as shown in Figure 2. The user must either read the news item, use row selection command X to ignore a specific item, or press PF3 to ignore the unread items on the display. These unread items will be displayed again the next day when the user enters ISPF; thus, the user cannot completely ignore the news item.

The difference between passive and active communications is that the user can ignore passive communication but they have to take overt action to ignore active communications. RNEWS is an active communications tool.

RNEWS has the capability of supporting multiple news tables. The news table used depends upon the first positional parameter passed to the exec.

ONCE-PER-DAY IMPLEMENTATION

To implement this once-per-day option, you will need to do the following:

1. Change the ISPF Primary Options Menu (ISR@PRIM) to call the RNEWS exec, as shown in Figure 3 (this update is documented in the installation dataset member \$DOC).
2. The RNEWS exec must test an ISPF Profile variable to determine if it has

FIGURE 3: ISR@PRIM PANEL MODIFICATION

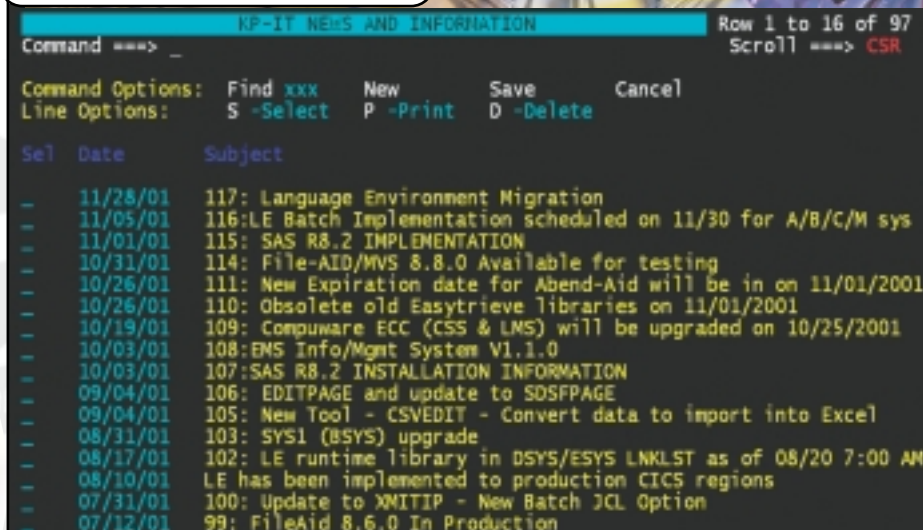
Code inserted into the)INIT Section:

```
IF (&ZSPLIT = 'NO')          /* Not in split screen          @1bd*/
  IF (&ZCMD = &Z)            /* No command pending        @1bd*/
    IF (&ZNEWSPAN = 'DONE') /* No NEWS displayed yet    @1bd*/
      &zcmd = NF              /* news command              @1bd*/
      .RESP = ENTER         /* Simulate enter            @1bd*/
      &ZNEWSPAN = 'DONE'    /*                          @1bd*/
      &ZCLEAN = 'NO'       /*                          @1bd*/
    IF (&ZCMD = &Z) &ZNEWSPAN = 'DONE' /* command pending @1bd*/
      VPUT (ZNEWSPAN) SHARED /*                          @1bd*/
  IF (&ZSPLIT = 'YES') &ZNEWSPAN = 'DONE' /* @1bd*/
```

Code inserted into the ZCMD processing area of the)BODY section:

```
NF,'Cmd(%knewsck) newapp1(isp)'
```

FIGURE 4: ADMINISTRATOR INTERFACE



been called "today" and either return or display the new and unread news items.

To determine if a particular user has read the news items requires that information on the news item status be saved in the user's ISPF Profile. A single row table is maintained with the format of nnn/status, where nnn is the news item number and status is read or ignored. This table is opened and read each time the RNEWS exec is executed and is updated when RNEWS ends.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

An administrator can invoke the RENEWS exec using the command *RNEWS table ADMIN*. The user's RACF Group is then checked to determine if he truly has administrative privileges. This authorization can be altered in the REXX coding to conform to the needs of the installation.

The administration interface shown in Figure 4 is similar to the user interface with a few extra options.

The news items, as shown in Figure 5, are created by the administrator in a working partitioned data set where the summary ISPF table containing the item number, author, and subject are stored along with a pointer to the member name where the news item's text is found. This allows the administrator to add new items without having to be concerned about locking the table from the general ISPF user. When the table is saved all updates are copied to the production ISPF table.

Note that there is no method to update or change a news item once it has been copied into production. There is no way to easily update all of the individual users' status tables to cause an item to be redisplayed. Thus, changes to an existing news item are implemented by creating a completely new news item.

When the table is saved, all of the subjects and text members are processed to build a search index that allows the RNEWS user to search for a word or list of words. This index is not very sophisticated but it does work.

