

by Trevor Eddolls

A guide to sources of information for IBM mainframers

Newsletters, magazines, user groups, and social networking information resources for the z/OS environment

Although there are now relatively few publications focusing specifically on the mainframe, there are plenty of ways to gather information and comment on large systems. Apart from traditional magazines, there are numerous e-zines, blogs, discussion groups, and other online resources, and this guide offers a personal selection for readers to sample. A list of the main mainframe user groups is also included, which are one of the best sources of information available. Please feel free to suggest other sites/titles for inclusion in the next edition of the Yearbook (email arcati@itech-ed.com).

Enterprise Tech Journal

Whereas its predecessor, *zJournal*, was purely mainframe focused, this journal describes itself as being for IT technicians in the world's largest multi-platform enterprises. The associated Web site at enterprisesystemsmedia.com contains articles, news, jobs, events, and a store.

enterprisesystemsmedia.com/magazines/enterprise-tech-journal/



Journal, the Enterprise Systems Web site provides some interesting articles and discussions on mainly non-mainframe platforms. It claims to provide high-end datacenter and server solutions. It does advertise webcasts.

www.esj.com

IBM Systems Magazine, Mainframe Edition

IBM Systems Magazine also comes in AIX, IBM i, Linux on Power, and Power versions. The content is online with regular e-mail newsletters.

www.ibmssystemsmag.com/ibm-z/magazine

Enterprise Executive

Formerly *Mainframe Executive*, this is the sister publication to *Enterprise Tech Journal*, and is aimed at IT managers in the world's largest multi-platform enterprises. It is a less technical, but no less informative, than *ETJ*, and both are available as flipbooks.

enterprisesystemsmedia.com/magazines/enterprise-executive/



IBM Data Magazine & Analytics Hub

In the spring of 2015, IBM Data magazine was consolidated into the IBM Big Data & Analytics Hub. There are headings for Industries, Analytics, Technology, and Events.

www.ibmbigdatahub.com/technology/

Mainframe Market Information Service (MMIS)

Through Arcati's MMIS subscription service, Barry Graham keeps users up to date with mainframe hardware and software pricing trends and helps them to negotiate the best deals. The full MMIS service includes the detailed quarterly Mainframe Market Monitor as well as phone/e-mail support. The monthly e-mail Mainframe Market Bulletin is also available separately.

www.arcati.com/mmis



Database Trends and Applications Magazine

This bimonthly magazine describes itself as the Journal of Information Integration and Management.

<http://www.dbta.com/>



Enterprise Systems

Based on the once-celebrated Enterprise Systems

SHARE's Five Minute Briefing: Data Center

Database Trends and Applications publishes a number of Five Minute Briefing newsletters, but the Data Center title should appeal directly to mainframers. Published in conjunction with user group SHARE, the newsletter provides an excellent weekly round-up of relevant announcements.

www.dbta.com

SearchDataCenter

TechTarget publishes a range of Web-based newsletters, and under the 'Topic' drop-down

menu, you can find a number of datacenter topics, but nothing specifically for mainframes any more. searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/

IBM Redbooks

IBM Redbooks publications provide a wealth of real-world installation, configuration, and usage insights into myriad technologies with a multitude of titles. It is categorized by IT Infrastructure, Software, Storage, and Training.

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/>

Mainframe social media

In addition to the ever-growing number of blogs focusing on mainframe-related topics, it's now possible to interact with mainframe-minded people on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media.

IBM has its IBM IT Infrastructure blog at: www.ibm.com/blogs/systems/topics/mainframes/, which covers topics such as Big data & analytics, High-performance computing, Hybrid cloud, DevOps, Security, AI, Data centers, and Blockchain. There are CICS blogs at CICS Developer Center: developer.ibm.com/cics/blogs/. And there are IMS blogs at the zSystems Developer Community: developer.ibm.com/zsystems/category/ims/.

IBM Destination z has now become part of the IBM Z and LinuxONE Community Web site. It still has a variety of blogs. You can find the blog at community.ibm.com/community/user/ibmz-and-linuxone/groups/destinationzhome.

Planet Mainframe publishes blogs each week. It describes itself as, "The world's premiere resource for leading-edge mainframe technology". You can find the blogs at: planetmainframe.com/blog/.

There's the Millennial Mainframer blog, which they describe as a fresh look at all things mainframe.

It's primarily aimed at college students and early mainframe professionals interested in IBM mainframe technologies. That's at www.millennialmainframer.com.

And don't miss the Trevor Eddolls' IT Toolbox blog at it.toolbox.com/users/content/TrevorEddolls.

There's always something interesting in the Broadcom blog at broadcom.com/sw-tech-blogs. They seem to cover quite a wide range of topics.

And, not to be missed, Craig Mullins' DB2 Portal blog at db2portal.blogspot.co.uk/.

Alan Radding describes himself as a 20-year IT industry analyst and journalist covering mainframe, midrange, PC, Web, and cloud computing. His DancingDinosaur blog – Mainframe computing in the 21st century – can be found at dancingdinosaur.wordpress.com.

Other interesting blogs include: Irving Wladawsky-Berger by Irving Wladawsky-Berger at blog.irvingwb.com/blog/, and James Governor's Monkchips site at www.redmonk.com/jgovernor. It says of itself, an industry analyst blog looking at software ecosystems and convergence.

IBM pages can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IBMZ for just IBM mainframes: at

www.facebook.com/IBManalytics empowering you to make smarter business decisions through every stage of the analytics journey, spanning every kind of industry; at www.facebook.com/IBM.Information.Management.System/ for IMS; and www.facebook.com/IBMCICS for CICS.

The Virtual CICS user group is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VirtualCICS. And the Virtual IMS user group is at www.facebook.com/VirtualIMS.

There are mainframe-related discussions on LinkedIn. For example, there's: **Mainframe Products & Services: Announcements, Events, Training, Promotions, Blogs, etc** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2915689/; **Mainframe Operators and Programmers** at www.linkedin.com/groups/3688300/; **Mainframe Users** at www.linkedin.com/groups/3699921/; **Mainframe Performance & Optimization: News and Opinion** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2318931/; **System z Advocates** at www.linkedin.com/groups/155723/; **MainframeZone** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2196066/; **Mainframe Audit** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2352119/; **Mainframe Experts Network** at www.linkedin.com/groups/55779/; **Mainframe Security Gurus** at www.linkedin.com/groups/36083/; **IBM Z and Events** at www.linkedin.com/groups/3053018/; **SHARE** at www.linkedin.com/groups/1803278/; **z/OS** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2085015/; **z/OS Operating System Education** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2109186/; and **Mainframe Professional Network Group** at www.linkedin.com/groups/1912637/.

If you're interested in Db2 there's **Db2 Professionals** at www.linkedin.com/groups/45375/; **IDUG: International Db2 Users Group** at www.linkedin.com/groups/46747/; **Db2 for z/OS** at www.linkedin.com/groups/1171547/; and **Db2 for z/OS DBAs** at www.linkedin.com/groups/2008475/; amongst many others.

There's the **CICS Special Interest Group** at www.linkedin.com/groups/1534227/; **IBM CICS** at

www.linkedin.com/groups/4304249/; and the **Virtual CICS user group** at www.linkedin.com/groups/3847862/.

For IMS there's **IMS Global** at www.linkedin.com/groups/1949922/; and the **Virtual IMS user group** at www.linkedin.com/groups/3792561/.

In future, LinkedIn might consider using vanity names like Facebook does.

On Tumblr there's **Mainframe Tumblr** at mainframe50.tumblr.com/. They say that the **Mainframe Tumblr** is your hub for exploring IBM mainframe-enabled innovation. Follow us for stories, insights, videos, and datagrams that celebrate a different System z theme each week and show how the mainframe is empowering big opportunities in both new and familiar areas.

If you go to YouTube (www.youtube.com) there are numerous short videos about mainframes and mainframe-related topics. IBM has a number of YouTube channels, including youtube.com/user/IBM.

On Twitter, **Craig Mullins (@craigmullins)** recommends the following each week: **@IBMZ @PlanetMainframe @mastermainframe @myzcommunity @ajzander @t_eddolls @mainframemag @zCostM @mainframed767 @SHAREhq @MainframeGuyBS @GregLotko @Interskill @zster @Allthingsmainf1 @tinatarq @rossmauri @Maintec_Tech**

Other good tweeters to follow include: **@IBM, @IBM_CICS, @IBMDB2, @IBM_DB2, @IBM_IMS, @IBM_Infomix, @IBM_InfoSphere, @IBMdatamag, @IBMSTG, @ajzander, @ARCserve_Europe, @BarrySchrager1, @Bcrusso, @BigData_paulz, @BMCMainframe, @BMCSsoftware, @BobThomas_ESM, @CMainframe, @CAUKI, @cristianmolaro, @crshnburn, @DTurnerBlogs, @GlobalKnowledge, @IDUGDB2, @Isaac_Yassin, @jodiraquel, @JoshARhoads @LyndaKershaw@Macro_4, @MainframeBaby @MainframeDebate @martinpacker, @microfocus, @mitzihunte, @**

PlexSpy, @RegHarbeck @russellbonner, @Sheena_Sequin, @seasoftsocial @susvis, @Syncsort, @TeamARIN, @termalabs, @ToolboxforIT, @VirtualCICS, @VirtualIMS, and @WarrenWhitlock.

It may not be a definitive list, but it's a good place to start!

In addition, there are now mainframers using Instagram (eg @ibm, @ibmsports, @ibminterconnect, @t_eddolls).

Other online information

Wikipedia

Although not a newsletter or journal, Wikipedia is a great online encyclopaedia that is written and maintained by its readers. The editors work hard to make sure that valuable content is not vandalized, and the site contains a surprisingly up-to-date range of mainframe-related definitions.

en.wikipedia.org/

IBM Z Favorites

zFavorites for z Systems is a collection of links to helpful z Systems Web sites. It has links to various interest categories, such as products, product documentation, software and solutions, support and more. Use the navigation bar to the left to select your area of interest.

www-01.ibm.com/servers/resourceLink/svc00100.nsf/pages/ibm-z-favorites?OpenDocument

IBM Knowledge Center for z/OS

IBM Knowledge Center is IBM's strategic platform for delivering technical content. z/OS The V2R3 main page has links to where you can find information about how to install, maintain, and use IBM z/OS.

www.ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/en/SSLTBW_2.3.0/com.ibm.zos.v2r3/en/homepage.html

IBM-MAIN listserv

The IBM Mainframe discussion list has been maintained for many years by the University of Alabama, and continues to be well supported. Unlike the high-level blogs, this is the place for very

specific technical discussions. Subscribers can sign up to receive useful summaries of message threads.

listserv.ua.edu/archives/ibm-main.html

IT Knowledge Exchange

For the latest data center news and trends at itknowledgeexchange.techtarget.com/itblogs/.

Relevant Z

It claims that the world needs the mainframe now more than ever.

<http://relevantz.ibmssystemsmag.com/>

You can also find information on Google Groups at: groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bit.listserv.ibm-main

RACF-L

A discussion group that focuses on RACF.

listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=RACF-L

Assembler-List

A discussion group that focuses on Assembler.

www.lsoft.com/scripts/w1.exe?SL1=ASSEMBLER-LIST&H=LISTSERV.UGA.EDU

IMS

A discussion group that focuses on IMS.

<http://imslistserv.bmc.com/scripts/wa-BMC.exe?A0=IMS-L>

CICS

A discussion group that focuses on CICS.

<https://listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=CICS-L>

Mainframe-related apps

There are now mainframe-related apps available that you can download from Google Play on Android devices and the App Store on Apple devices. So, what comes as an app?

IBM Doc Buddy, currently on Version 2, is really useful for looking up mainframe error messages and seeing what they mean. The app says that with the IBM Doc Buddy mobile app, you can search messages and codes issued from IBM Z products online and offline. In addition, the app aggregates mainframe content including blogs, videos, IBM Knowledge Center topics, and Thought Leader opinions. So it's a handy resource to carry round in your pocket.

SHARE mobile app is for people who attend SHARE conferences, or wish they did. The app lets you build your schedule by adding sessions to your 'My Session'. It's also possible to export your schedule to your Outlook calendar and automatically sync your schedule to your mobile device. In order to have your schedule sync between your app and desktop, you must create a profile within the SHARE Desktop Scheduler. Once the app is downloaded, the next SHARE event should appear on the home screen, when the app is launched.

IBM zServiceAdvisor from is described as a smart System Z software maintenance solution that runs on a mobile app. It's designed to help maintain Db2 for z/OS and CICS software, and reduces the time and effort you spend doing maintenance tasks, and, more importantly, improves the overall health and stability of your System Z environment.

The benefits of the app are:

- It will save the resources and the costs spent on manually reviewing APARS in order to keep the system in a healthy and stable state.
- It will reduce the risk of outages or business impact because of not being able to install critical PTFs in a timely manner.
- It will save the resources on performing the system in a timely manner.

IBM Systems Magazine for mainframes lets you read the magazine on your phone or tablet.

Mainframe tutorial and refresher apps available include:

- **Mainframe Refresher** from Squee International is a quick reference and frequently-asked interview guide.
- **Mainframe tutorials** covers CICS, COBOL, IMS, Db2, JCL, and VSAM
- **Mainframe IQ** from Gap Developers is a collection of mainframe questions
- **Test your mainframe skills!!!** By Spriio.com is an application to help you assess your mainframe skills
- **Mainframe Interview Q&A** from Scenica gives interview questions.

And there are lots more like that. I've no idea how useful they are, but there must be a need for them or people wouldn't keep releasing them.

It's good to know that your mobile device can be a useful resource for working on a mainframe. And it's handy to know that while you're waiting for a plane or friends to show up, you can sharpen and hone your mainframe skills on an app on your phone or tablet.

Mainframe user groups

The IBM mainframe world has attracted numerous user organizations and special interest groups (SIGs). Most hold regular meetings and conferences, often with satellite groups and chapters throughout the world. Here are a few of them:

- **SHARE.** The oldest (1955) and probably most influential IBM user organization with SIGs focusing on various aspects of IBM software, hardware and security. Known as GUIDE/SHARE in Europe and Interaction in Australia.
share.org
gse.org
interaction.com.au
- **zNextGen** is part of SHARE, and invites people who are new to enterprise computing, in a new role with z Systems servers, or working as new z Systems professionals, to participate.
share.org/page/meet-the-znextgen
- **CMG.** The Computer Measurement Group is widely supported and specializes in capacity planning and performance issues (mainframe and increasingly distributed). There is a large network of CMG organizations worldwide.
cmg.org
- **IDUG – International DB2 User Group.**
idug.org
- **TPFUG – TPF User Group** (yes, it's still out there, handling 5000 transactions per second).
tpfug.org
- **Global WebSphere Community.**
websphereusergroup.co.uk/wug/

- **International zSeries Oracle SIG** for companies licensed for Oracle on z/Linux and/or z/OS.
zseriesoraclsig.org

There are also two large user organizations for data center managers with a focus on infrastructure (including mainframe):

- **AFCOM** (afcom.com)
- **7x24 Exchange** (7x24exchange.org)

Apart from the Virtual IMS user group (www.fundi.com/virtualims), regional IMS user groups include the long-established Dallas/Fort Worth group and a number of newer ones.

Canada has CIPS, Canada's Association of IT Professionals, which has been in existence since 1958 and can be found at cips.ca/.

