



"it's your move"

## SNAPSHOT/400

AS/400 Systems Management

[www.snapshot400.com](http://www.snapshot400.com)

**SNAPSHOT/400**

# magazine article iSeries Magazine



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**The graphs are nicely scalable. And I have visual access to nearly every variable I could ever need to watch. The modelling tool is nice, but make sure you have enough data for it to be effective. That means at least two days preferably more.**

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Don Rima, iSeries Magazine  
Technical Editor**

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand WRKACTJOBs – Snapshot/400 By Don Rima

### "I know it when I see it..."

I know that when U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens spoke those words, he wasn't talking about analyzing performance on an iSeries or AS/400 server. Nor did he have a clue what a non-database fault meant. But, if you've ever had to track down or monitor anything performance-related on a system, I can wager that you can relate to the justice's words.

Face it, we're being spoiled by pictures. We no longer need to really look at the numbers and think.

As long as we don't blindly accept what is dished to us by a machine as gospel, I think that some of these performance-related tools are going to be quite helpful. Besides, it's becoming heresy to even suggest that there is life after GUI.

One tool I've recently examined deals specifically with system monitoring and performance. Primarily a graphical presentation format, this package allows you to monitor, all on one screen, most of what one needs to keep an eye on when watching for resource hogs or roadblocks. And when problems occur on your system or network, this package will immediately alert you.

Enter Snapshot/400 from Mid-Comp International <<http://www.midcomp.com.au>>. (Note: Mid-Comp is the company that produces SnapShot400. The solution is distributed in the U.S. and Latin America by Team400 Inc. <<http://www.team400.net>> and in Canada by Access Path Software Solutions Inc. <<http://www.accesspathsoftware.com>>) [and in Europe by Integrated Data Services Ltd <<http://www.idata.co.uk>>]

### Installation

The installation is a fairly painless two-step process. First, do a LODRUN from your CD drive. Then load part two of the software from an attached PC. The installation documentation is fairly straightforward. Just follow the bouncing ball. Please get the nickel tour. Yes, the manual is handy, but it's nice to have tech support walk you through what this product can do. You'll be able to use more functionality sooner. Plus, they're pleasant folks.

### Ease of use

I experienced a few rookie-to-the-new-software gotchas. There are a few things to be kept in mind. Make sure you save any graphs you add; otherwise, you can't select and view them. You can adjust the scaling factors of the graphs on the fly easily enough, but if at first glance you don't see what you're expecting to see, check your scaling.

### Documentation

Nicely done. It's easy to follow and provides good examples, screen shots and samples.

### Certifiability

Not a problem. This is one of the easiest certifications I've given in a while.

### Functionality/usefulness

Now for the sweet stuff. When you bring up the main screen, one of the icons is a map. Unless you're dealing with multiple CPUs, drop the map from your main screen. This gives you more space to play with. If you are dealing with multiple systems, then the map lets you track each site, as well as the time lag between sites. You can see fairly quickly whether it's taking an inordinate amount of time for that pesky general

ledger listing to get from Naples to Rome because of communication line problems.

Snapshot/400 also allows you to add selectable graphs and list boxes that will display most everything from disk activity to the top 10 resource-hogging jobs. It won't breakdown the activity by auxiliary storage pool (ASP) yet, but that functionality is in the works. You can easily customize your desktop to contain as many or as few of the areas you want to watch, scale accordingly and set sample-time intervals. Then just sit back and watch the world go by or minimize and come back for a periodic look.

I wish it offered real-time monitoring, but current system-side limitations don't allow that.

Also behind this is some nice drill-down capability. You can take an event down to the job that's causing the anomaly. Unfortunately, you can't go down into the job log or other job information to see the information you would from a normal work with active jobs (WRKACTJOB) screen. This flexibility is a bonus, but you can live without it.

Once the data has been gathered, the product provides reporting and analysis tools that can export data to other Windows\*-based tools (Excel, Word, WordPerfect, Foxpro etc.). A well thought-out feature. Also, if you're concerned from a marketing standpoint (yes, this is an interesting marketing tool) or an internal upgrade standpoint, you can do system upgrade modeling fairly easily. This isn't "the configurator", but the tool gives you a good idea of what you should be planning.

## Support

It was nice to talk with a tech support person who was knowledgeable about and comfortable with his product. Team400's tech support folks were pleasant, confident and competent.

What I'd Like To See In the Next Release  
Realtime data—Because of how the data currently is gathered, there's a time delay. DASD utilization by ASP-Watch for this in a future release.

Make the number of jobs available for display on the monitoring screen software-configurable—Right now you're limited to 10. The top 10 jobs may not be the ones you want or need to watch. Or you may want to watch more than 10.

Allow job information to be displayed—When you encounter a problem, it would be helpful to see a job log, invocation stack, etc., to get a handle on just what is going on and why. You also could service or debug an active job on demand to monitor why an anomaly (runaway spool or endless loop, for instance) is occurring.

Allow the graphics to rotate in 3-D—Some of the data I looked at got lost behind other parts of the graph, and a minor bug prevented me from moving some of the graphable items around in the display. This problem has since should been addressed. Installation as a one-step process from an attached PC—There's no need for a multi-step process when a network and PC can do it all for you from one spot.

## Summary

So why did I like this package? Simple. Ease of use and flexibility with the sources, uses and presentation of the data. And I could see most of what I needed on one screen.

Further, I can perform a simple extract function to retrieve, either quantitatively or graphically, data to be used by other processes.

The graphs are nicely scalable. And I have visual access to nearly every variable I could ever need to watch. The modeling tool is nice, but make sure you have enough data for it to be effective. That means at least two days, preferably more.

This is definitely worth a download. If nothing else, those who don't regularly watch each disk arm move across the platters will learn some useful information about their machines.

### The Report Card: Snapshot/400 – Honor Roll

Category	Points	Weighting	Overall Score
Certifiability	4.0	0.10	0.400
Installation	3.8	0.15	0.570
Ease of use	3.8	0.15	0.570
Documentation	3.8	0.15	0.570
Functionality	3.8	0.15	0.570
Usefulness	3.8	0.15	0.570
Support	3.8	0.15	0.570
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.8</b>		<b>3.820</b>