

iSeries Access for Web: A peek at the future!

Written by Carole A Miner

9/5/2003

iSeries Access for Web, a member of the iSeries Access Family, provides browser access to end users who want an easy-to-use GUI to work with their iSeries resources. Access for Web runs on the iSeries and uses industry standard protocols (HTTP, HTTPS, HTML). iSeries Administrators have full control of installation and configuration of Access for Web, and can identify exactly what functions a desktop user can access. Best of all, there is nothing to install or manage at the desktop -- the end user simply starts up a browser and keys in the url address of their iSeries. It has become a very exciting solution for iSeries customers because it offers a full-function solution so users can work with their many iSeries resources (such as host applications, database, printers, printer output, integrated file system, etc).

Now, after a short 2 years in the marketplace, Access for Web is getting even better! You can now get a peek at what will be made generally available in 2004 by using its new beta version; this can be downloaded from the web at www.ibm.com/eserver/iseries/access/web. This will give you an opportunity to get familiar with all the new capabilities and determine how these will improve your users' productivity and increase your iSeries reach. Below are highlights of the capabilities that have been added:

5250 emulation

A 5250 emulator was added to Access for Web in its V5R2 version. It enables users to work with OS/400 screens and host applications, and includes functions such as:

- Can start multiple sessions to a single or multiple iSeries servers from a single url address
- Since the whole Access for Web product connects via either an HTTP or HTTPS port, the 5250 emulator does not require a 5250 TELNET opening into the iSeries web application server
- Ability to define a specific workstation id, including unique wildcard support
- Screen auto-switches to 132 columns as needed
- Ability to use the keyboard, including the Function Keys, Page Up/Down, etc
- Macro support (ability to save a series of cursor position commands and user input and play automatically) – this can be used to set up a single sign-on environment.
- Ability to position the cursor at non-input fields for cursor sensitive applications and get help information
- Keypads which can be positioned anywhere on the screen
- And much more...

. Now the following additional capabilities are provided in the beta version:

- In the V5R2 version of Access for Web (5722-XH2), all functions (except 5250 emulation) can be controlled and customized for end users by the iSeries administrator. In the beta, the 5250 sessions are also fully customizable by the administrator through the use of Access for Web 'Preferences' and 'Policies' functions.
- A new function called 'initial macro' is a macro that can be played immediately after a session is started. It is a way for users to bypass the OS/400 sign-on screen and perhaps have

a specific host application started in their behalf. The initial macro can be specified on the Start Session page or as a configured session setting.

- Shortcuts to session configurations and macro definitions can now be created. Shortcuts to either a session configuration or to a macro allow you to share your configurations and definitions with other users/groups. This would enable you to pre-configure what another user or group of users can use for sessions and macros. You could then take away their ability to create sessions and macros (through Customization) and enable them to use only the ones you have created. To create a shortcut, a name and access value is specified. The access value identifies the user or group profile who is able to access the shortcut.
- Active sessions can now be shared with other users and groups. This can be useful from a Help Desk perspective to be able to view what the end user is viewing. The user who starts the session maintains full control of it—including ability to enter input or change session settings. The Help Desk could restart the session, with the end user in view mode, and now make changes to the shared session without them being seen by the users.
- You now have the ability to position the cursor at an exact location within a field. This is useful when an application requires the cursor to be at an exact location within a field for context sensitive operations. This setting only takes effect if the 'Enable Cursor Positioning' setting is enabled.

Support for WebSphere Portal for iSeries

New in the beta, Access for Web can now run as a portlet when using the WebSphere Portal for iSeries product on your iSeries.

- 5250 emulation can run in a portlet window.
- The other functions of Access for Web can individually be assigned to a portlet window as well. For example, one might have the 'Database' function in one window and 'Print' function in another windows.

You use the CFGACCWEB2 CL command to deploy the portlets to WebSphere Portal for iSeries. If you need assistance configuring these functions, contact the development team at <http://www.ibm.com/servers/eserver/iseries/access/web/betafeedback.html>.

Email Support

If you have a mail server in your network, you simply tell the Access for Web 'Customize' function the address of your SMTP mail server and provide user email addresses. Then your users will be able to send output (for example, from results of a database request or CL command or printer output that has been converted to .PDF) anywhere in the world. Your mail server can be running any hardware/software as long as your iSeries has network access to it. New in the beta we now also offer:

- Integration with Lotus Sametime - if your shop is using Lotus Sametime (an add-on of Domino) then users can be notified via a Sametime popup when something has been added to their personal folder. Additionally an Access for Web user running the 5250 emulator can also receive a break message from Sametime. This would be useful if you wanted to inform all users of a timely notice, for example, sign off the system or to check their email for some important note, etc.

Print

Access for Web provides an easy-to-use GUI to work with iSeries printers and printer output (spoolfile). It also provides the ability for users to view their printer output in the browser, and more exciting to users is that with simply a 'click' the printer output can be converted to a .PDF document and stored or added as an attachment to an email. These functions require no other products to be installed on the iSeries, nor any special configuration -- as this is base function in Access for Web (see article written by Susan Funk). Enhancements included in the beta version of Access for Web are:

- PDF enhancements
 - PDF Printers - is a new category under 'Print' tab (see Figure 1). A PDF printer is an iSeries printer that automatically converts AFPDS or SCS spooled files into PDF documents when a spooled file is routed to the output queue for that printer device. Users can then view PDF documents for a specific PDF printer by selecting the PDF Printer from the list. To use this new PDF Printers function, the IBM Infoprint Server for iSeries (5722-IP1) must be installed on the iSeries server.
 - PDF Printer Output - is a new category under the 'Print' tab. PDF Printer Output will display a list of PDF documents that have been converted by any of the PDF printers that you have access to. With the V5R2 version of Access for Web, the end user needs to go to the 'Printer Output' tab and click on the link to convert the document to PDF, and then from another screen must select what to do with the PDF conversion. Now a user can go straight to the 'PDF Printer Output' tab and click to view the output, email it, copy it to a file or Personal Folder, or delete it (see Figure 2). To use this new PDF Printer Output function, the IBM Infoprint Server for iSeries (5722 IP1) is needed to place converted output on the PDF Printer Output queue. If you do not have the Infoprint Server product, you can use the 'Printer Output' tab, then select the PDF action to convert printer output to PDF (which uses Access for Web internal PDF conversion tools).
- Internet Printer enhancements
 - Internet Printer support is available with the V5R2 version of Access for Web, but the function was slightly misnamed as the list actually shows Internet Printer Shares. In the beta, this function is now renamed 'Internet Printer Shares'. The tab called 'Internet Printers' now displays a list of Internet Printers that are configured on the iSeries. To configure an Internet Printer you must use the IPP Server for iSeries administration function. Start your browser, point at your iSeries and Port 2001, ie, <http://myiseries:2001> (see Figure 4).
- The interface for working with the 'Printer Output' tab has been improved (see Figure 3).
 - The 'Action' and 'Preview' column links have been consolidated and new actions added to the 'Action' column. The new 'Action' link offers:
 - The "Work with" link consolidates the previous Hold/Release, Print Next, Change and Delete actions onto a new page. New actions added are: Move printer output to another printer or output queue, Send printer output to another server, and Copy printer output to a database file.
 - The "View" link displays the printer output using the preferred viewer configured with new Customize Print preferences.

- The "View as" link consolidates the function of the old Preview column links (GIF, TIFF, PCL and AFP Viewer). Selecting the View as link provides a page where the user selects the desired format to view the printer output. GIF has been renamed to PNG to reflect the implementation used.
- The "View PDF" link is a rename of the PDF link previously under the Action column. The View PDF output setting page has been simplified and a new destination (Output Queue) has been added.

Database enhancements

Access for Web enables you to work with the iSeries database through a pure SQL interface. Access for Web provides wizards for building the SQL request, wizards for directly updating a database table, or drop database output into an Excel spreadsheet, and much more. Most useful is that the iSeries administrator can create database requests, and then through OS/400 user/group profiles enable end users to run only the database requests that they have been granted access to. [\(see article written by Janet Weber\)](#)

New in the beta version of Access for Web are:

- Prompted Requests - the V5R2 version of Access for Web enables one to build an SQL request, save it, and rerun it -- as well as making it available to others to run. With the beta Access for Web one can now build a request that will prompt the end user for one or more conditional values (such as customer number, part number, telephone number, etc) when the request is run. The results of the request can be viewed in the end user browser, attached to an email, shown in an Excel spreadsheet, or put in a file or Personal Folder. The Access for Web SQL Wizard has been enhanced to build these prompted requests (see Figures 5-7). You can also use the 'Run SQL' action to manually create statements with parameter markers (Note: values for the parameter markers must be supplied using an HTML form or URL parameters when the request is run).
- Support for the XML spreadsheet format used by Microsoft Excel 2002 – both the Run SQL and Copy Data to Table now support this.
- 'Extract Server Data' – is a new action under the Database tab. Extract Server Data can be used to retrieve information about objects on the iSeries server, and then store the results in a database table. General object information can be retrieved for any iSeries object type. Object specific information can also be retrieved for the following object types: Directory entries, Messages, Software fixes, Software products, System pool, User profiles (see Figure 8). For example, I could easily build a query to find out what users have used more than 100 MB of storage in the IFS, or I might want to know what users have had more than 2 invalid signon attempts in the past three months. This very powerful capability lets you look at your iSeries information in any manner that is of importance to you.

My Folder

The 'My Folder' function is on the Access for Web navigation panel. By default, all Access for Web users have their own personal My Folder. Its concept is somewhat like an inbox, for example, you and others can place items in these folders simply by selecting the name of the user(s). The following types of items can be send to a personal folder:

- SQL output generated by Run SQL
- PDF output created from Printer output
- Command completion status generated by Run Command (can only be sent to the user's own personal folder)

You can also configure 'My Folder' to send you e-mail notifications when new items are added to your personal folder. The My Folder link in the navigation pane also has an icon to indicate when the personal folder contains any items, and an icon to indicate when the personal folder contains new unopened items. The following are new capabilities in the beta:

- Maximum folder items and size – in the V5R2 version of Access for Web, there is no interface to enable the iSeries administrator to control the number of items a user has in his personal folder, nor the ability to control the amount of disk space used. In the new version, policies have been added so administrators can set the maximum number of items a user can have as well as setting the maximum amount of disk space that can be used by a user's personal folder.
- Additional notification options - Preferences have been added to allow users to be notified when the number of items in their personal folder reaches a percentage of the maximum items allowed, or be notified when the total size of the items in their personal folder reaches a percentage of the maximum size allowed. These notification options take effect if the administrator has set maximum folder items or maximum folder size policies for the user. Folder notifications can now be sent to a configured Lotus Sametime user name in addition to a configured e-Mail address.
- Two new 'Folder' actions have been added: Copy and Copy to File. Copy allows a user to copy Folder items to another user's personal folder. Copy to file allows a user to copy the contents of the folder item to a file in the integrated file system.

Files

This function gives you the ability to save and work with PC stream data stored in the Integrated File System (IFS) without needing to map drives or understand the concept of network drives.

Two functions are available:

- Browse files – lets you navigate and browse the directories located on your iSeries server IFS, as well as view and upload files to the IFS in a file manager-like view
- File shares – browse the NetServer file shares and navigate the directories from the file share list, and view and upload files to the IFS in a file manager-like interface.

The following new capabilities are included in the beta version:

- Directory contents view - the directory contents is now displayed in the current browser window. Previously, directory contents were displayed in a separate browser window. A preference setting is available to maintain the previous behavior.
- Sort links -- are now available for the Name, Size, Type and Modified column headers when displaying directory contents. Clicking the link for the column header redisplay the directory contents sorted on the column data.
- File actions - additional actions can now be performed on files and directories when using the Browse files and Browse NetServer file shares functions. The new actions are edit authority, change object owner, change primary group for object, change authorization list for object, and zip/unzip operations.

Customize ‘window’ to the iSeries

A completely customizable front page (‘window’) to the iSeries that can be set up easily using nearly any tool (such as, WebSphere Studio development tools, Microsoft FrontPage, Adobe GoLive, Macromedia Dreamweaver, or simply Notepad or whatever your website designer is comfortable using). Since Access for Web is built upon OS/400 user profiles, an administrator can create different ‘windows’ for different group of users. For example, an administrator might want one view and set of functions for the Marketing department, but something entirely different for the Accounting department. He may want to give one user access to one specific host application, while some other user may need access to a different host application and perhaps his printer output. Add your company logo? Add a link to another site? These are all easily accomplished using the customization capabilities built into Access for Web. Additionally, the ability to use any particular function of Access for Web (such as work with iSeries database, printers, integrated file system, etc) is controlled by the iSeries Administrator.

Customize user access to iSeries functions

As important as it is to provide as many functions as possible to work with the many resources on the iSeries, we understand it is just as important to provide controls for iSeries administrators to control and limit an end user’s ability to use particular functions, such as adding, updating, or deleting database information. Thus, as every new function that get included in Access for Web, has a parallel policy that can be set by the administrator to prohibit a specific user, groups of users, or all users from using the function. Managing and maintaining these policies is done through easy to use GUIs in the Access for Web ‘Customize’ and ‘Preferences’ functions. The following enhancements have been added to the beta in this area:

- Additional help text – is now available from help links in the Customize function that includes more detailed descriptions of preference and policy settings. General usage help is also available from help links.
- Navigation menu changes - the ‘Customize’ tab in the beta version has combined the User Profiles, Group Profiles and Selected Profile menu items into one new menu item named Policies. The new Policies page enables the administrator to select the iSeries profile to customize. In addition, links to the user profiles list and group profiles list are provided.
- Settings function - is a new function in the ‘Customize’ tab. Settings are configuration values that will be applied to all users. Additionally the Connection Pool menu item that is included in the ‘Other’ tab in the V5R2 version of Access for Web is in now included under the Settings function, and the name has been changed to Connection Pool Status. This setting displays the current status of the connection pool.
- Report View – is a new function in the ‘Customize’ tab that enables the administrator to view all the current policy settings for a specific user our group of users. A printer friendly link is available to generate a view that can be sent to a printer.

Other

The above are just a few examples of what can be done with Access for Web. Users can also work with OS/400 JobQueues,, Message Queues, send and receive system messages, use wizards to find and run CL commands, and much more. As you can see in the beta, Access for Web will

be even more useful in your environment than it is today. If you are wondering what is needed to run the beta version, here is some basic information. You can run the beta version of Access for Web with:

- OS/400 V5R1 and V5R2 and a web application server. You can use any of the following: WebSphere Application Server versions at V4 or V5 or Apache Software Foundation (ASF) Tomcat that is part of the HTTP Server (5722-DG1).
- If you install the beta version of Access for Web in the same partition on your iSeries as you currently have the V5R2 version of Access for Web, you will overlay the V5R2 version – as they both have the same product number (ie, 5722-XH2).
- The beta version of Access for Web is provided in three national language versions: English (2924), English Uppercase DBC (2938), and English DBC (2984)

For more details see the FAQs on the web page at www.ibm.com/eserver/series/access/web.

iSeries Access for Web is quickly becoming the ‘hottest’ way to access your iSeries information. If you haven’t looked at it, get a jump on the new version by downloading the beta and find out how it can improve your ebusiness!