

# FOUR HUNDRED *Stuff*

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## Shield's FTP Client Addresses Problems with CCSID Configurations

**S**ystem i users who have found it difficult to properly configure the IBM i OS FTP functions to render information that isn't garbled upon transmission to a PC platform may find a solution with the latest release of Shield Advanced Solutions' FTP Client. With version 6.1, Shield says it has taken care of disparities in default CCSID settings in IBM i OS that tend to turn information into garbage at the other end of the FTP pipe.

There are a number of ways that the IBM i OS platform is different from its "open systems" counterparts. For starters, almost everything about it is proprietary. (How's that for different?) From the underlying Power processors to the TIMI "microcode," from the EBCDIC character set (descended from punch cards and shared with the System z mainframe) and the i operating system itself, things just don't work quite the same on the System i platform as the more mainstream Windows or Unix platforms that most IT pros are accustomed to using.

Sometimes, that difference gives the System i server a big advantage over Windows, which still can't match IBM Rochester's design for stability and reliability. Other times, however, the different ways of doing things lead to perplexity and frustration on the part of IBM i OS users.

The integrated FTP functions in IBM i OS fall into the latter category. While it's great to have FTP functions built into the OS, the i OS implementation leaves something to be desired. This, in turn, gives third-party software vendors like Shield an opportunity to improve upon the i OS status quo.

Shield's FTP Client doesn't replace the FTP functions integrated into i OS. Rather, it builds upon them by providing a menu-based user interface, and eliminates the need to use a command-line based system and to remember specific commands and options to access i OS FTP functions.

Customers who use FTP Client have a more Windows-like FTP experience, according to Shield. And while the user interface is still a green screen, FTP Client users may find it more intuitive to work with directories and defined links they can see on the screen, as opposed to accessing IBM i OS FTP functions via the command line.

And with the recent launch of FTP Client 6.1, Shield brings one more advantage to perplexed i OS users: automatic reconciliation of coded character set identifier (CCSID) discrepancies that often turn information transmitted from System i servers to PCs into garbage.

Due to the way that many applications were written and the specific CCSID they use, it may be impossible for an application or function (such as FTP) to accurately translate information from the i OS native EBCDIC character set into the ASCII set used on PCs (and nearly every other computer in the world except for mainframes and System i servers. Ah, diversity!). This has caused many a headache for System i administrators, who must track down the problem and change the CCSID setting or find another solution to the garbage-output problem.

With FTP Client 6.1, Shield will automatically take care of any CCSID discrepancies, and render System i directory information correctly when running FTP Client on a Windows PC.

"FTP Client carries out all of the connection and transfer settings automatically on link activation," says Chris Hird, president of Shield, which is based in Ontario, Canada. "This version also recognizes the IBM i servers which have been configured with the default \*LIB,\*CURLIB,\*DFT settings that produce garbage LIST output on most PC-based FTP Clients."

FTP Client 6.1 is available now. For more information, visit the company's Web site at [www.shield.on.ca](http://www.shield.on.ca).