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DRV Tech Automates i OS Message Notification with New Product

SpoolFlex developer DRV Technologies last week unveiled a new product designed to ensure that important i OS system messages get in front of the eyes of operators and administrators, through e-mail or messaging software on the Web or a smartphone. Just as the company's flagship product, SpoolFlex, automates the distribution of spool files, the new MessageFlex product automates the distribution of errors and other messages generated by the system to help avoid downtime.

MessageFlex monitors all i OS message queues for important messages, such as a failed backup or a problem with DASD. When an important message arrives, MessageFlex automatically notifies a user or a group of users by sending an e-mail, a text message, or an instant message (IM). The software even has the capability to attach documents to e-mail notifications, such as a "how to" document to fix the problem, DRV says.

A filtering mechanism enables users of the green-screen product to fine-tune what it looks for and prevent it from highlighting non-critical messages. Users can filter messages by message ID, by message type, by keyword (such as "media error"), or even monitor for a message that occurs within a specific job stream, such as a backup job.

By combining different filters, users can get very specific about the messages they want to receive, thereby avoiding inundation by thousands of mundane messages, and insuring that important messages are acted on quickly.

"MessageFlex provides system administrators with proactive system management instantly as these messages appear, avoiding disaster before it happens," says Richard Voss, president of DRV Tech. "With this kind of instant notification, you will be able to find bugs before your users do."

Voss sees MessageFlex playing a companion role next to SpoolFlex, DRV's popular spool file distribution software. "We created this product as a direct result of multiple [SpoolFlex] customers requesting this functionality," he says. "In fact, anyone interested in automating System i monitoring to take a pro-active approach to system management to make their life easier should be interested."

A future release of MessageFlex will include the capability to escalate a critical error message to ensure that it's responded to quickly. With escalation, if an operator or administrator does not respond to a critical message in a certain period of time, the software automatically tries the next person on the list, until a live human who can deal with the software is reached. Voss says escalation is on the product's list of future features.

MessageFlex version 1 is available now. The software runs on OS/400 V5R1 through IBM i 6.1. Licenses cost \$2,995 when purchased as a stand-alone product, and \$1,995 when purchased with other DRV Tech modules or by existing DRV Tech customers. For more information, see the vendor's Web site at www.drvttech.com.