



The Solution Developer Support Home Page

By Tom Hopkins

The World Wide Web is an excellent vehicle for providing timely information to broadly distributed groups. This article describes one of the efforts underway at IBM to take advantage of the Web to support solution developers.

The World Wide Web (WWW) had its beginning in 1989, when scientists at the CERN Research Center in Switzerland proposed a mechanism that would allow them to share work and disseminate information to the high-energy physics community worldwide. In January 1992, after several internal versions were developed, they made a line-mode browser available to the world via anonymous ftp. By early 1993, there were about 50 http servers in the world; and http traffic, the main protocol of the WWW, accounted for about 0.1% of the NSF backbone.

By September 1993, the traffic was up to 1% of the NSF backbone, and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) released working versions of the MOSIAC browser for common computing platforms; the world was about to change. The byte count for WWW traffic has jumped from 78 million in December 1992 to 225 billion in December 1993 to 3.5 trillion in December 1994 (see Figure 1). The Web is here!

World Wide Web

The WWW consists of interconnected documents in a variety of formats and a collection of programs that can understand the many information-retrieval protocols used on the Internet today. The WWW merges the techniques of networked information and hypertext to make an easy, but powerful, global information system.

In using the Web, you look at a document, then point and scoot. Click on a link—anything from an underlined word to an icon to a place on a map—and you are off to a new document, or

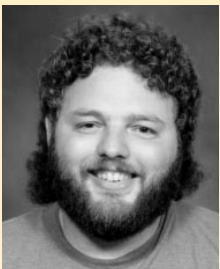
sound file, or image, or whatever is located in the U.S., or Germany, or Japan, or wherever. The possibilities are limitless.

In May 1994, IBM went live on the World Wide Web with a broad set of information designed to assist IBM's broad customer and partnership base. One of the driving forces behind the initial effort was the RISC System/6000 Division with its home page (<http://www.austin.ibm.com>), and under it, the POWER Team home page.

The goal of the POWER Team home page is to assist AIX solution developers by providing information about programs for AIX developers, details about AIX solutions, and a wide array of AIX technical information. Page usage has been strong from the beginning. Throughout the year, we added more and better information and responded to feedback. Although we were happy with what we were accomplishing, we thought that we could do so much more. Then in November, we started down the path to a WWW page that could provide that "so much more." Solution Developer Operations (SDO) was announced.

This new organization gives us the ability to combine our strengths and resources to create a page that will truly show IBM's commitment to solution developers to create one of the best offerings in the industry

The new SDO page (see Figure 2) is located at URL: <http://www.austin.ibm.com/developer>. It can also be accessed from many places in the IBM Web structure, including the Product, Service, and Support sections of the IBM home page (<http://www.ibm.com>). Since the Web is a living book that constantly grows and changes, this article will already be somewhat out of date by the time you read it. We plan to frequently add improvements based on the organizational foundation present today.



Tom Hopkins

The Information Architecture

The SDO page is a central point for developers on all IBM platforms and technologies. The top-level pages contain information of interest to developers who work on multiple platforms (see Figure 3); it also contains items from the topic pages presented in a cross-platform context. These top pages also include pointers to topic pages with a particular focus, such as AIX, OS/2, or object technologies. The SDO top page has the following sections:

- ◆ **Welcome to our server:** Gives a description of the who, what, and why of SDO as well as fast paths to other sections of the top page.
- ◆ **Developer news:** Represents the newspaper of the SDO page. Prominently displayed are key headlines with links to the full news item as well as pointers to a more comprehensive news page with current news and an archival section. There are also links to announcements from solution developers who are working with our technologies.

Another part of the developer news section is "What's New," which lists documents added to the SDO page in reverse chronological order. A quick stop in this section during a visit will ensure that you do not miss something that has been added since your last visit.

- ◆ **Events and workshops:** Provides a calendar of upcoming conferences as well as worldwide workshop schedules. Watch this space for new features that will be implemented over the next six months.
- ◆ **Developer assistance from IBM:** Provides pointers to the various programs offered by IBM to assist you in developing, porting, or marketing solutions for IBM platforms. There is also information about facilities available to help you.
- ◆ **Information for solution developers:** Represents the core of the SDO page. A pointer to the SDO Main Library is the first part of this section. It points to a vast array of information from the individual topic page developer libraries such as technical papers, periodicals, and directories, as well as general developer documents including back issues of the *SDO Developer Support* newsletter. This section also includes pointers to a growing list of topic pages, each one with many levels of information in context for the topic. Closing out the

World Wide Web Byte Count

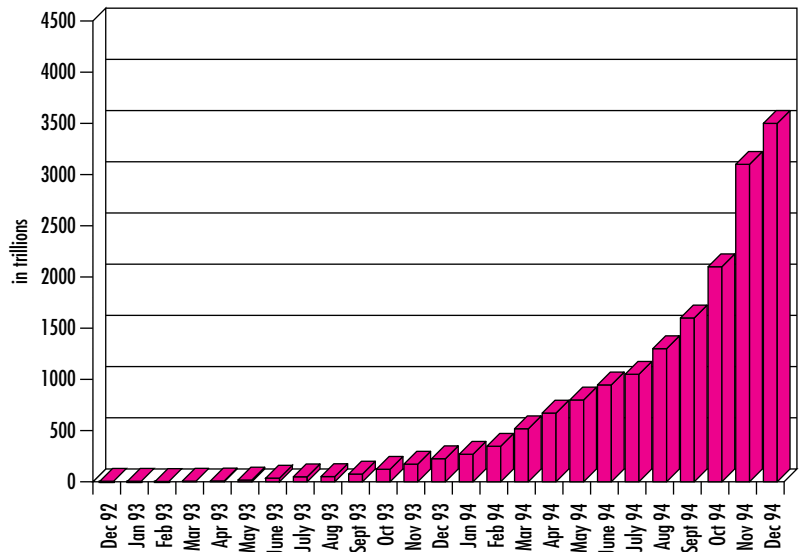


Figure 1. World Wide Web byte count on the NSFnet backbone



Figure 2. Solution Developer Operations home page

area are pointers to the IBM home page and its IBM products and services page.

- ◆ **Other interesting places in cyberspace:** We will be watching for WWW sites that might be of interest to you. Luckily, adjoining

Solution Developer Support Home Page Structure

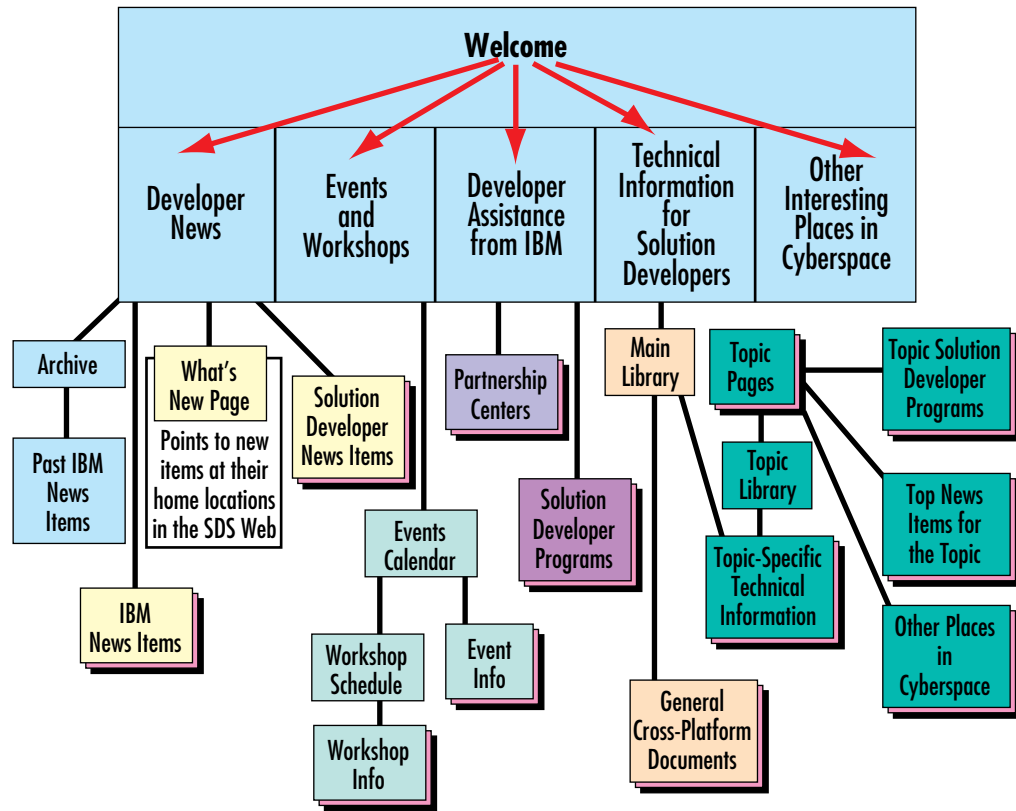


Figure 3. Main structure of Solution Developer Support home page

“interesting places” is a pointer to a form for you to send us feedback. Let us know what you think as well as what you would like to see added or expanded.

Navigation bars are located at the bottom of the SDO top page and also at the bottom of every document in the SDO page. The bottom bar is the same on every page and points to functions shared by the entire IBM Web community. The first bar, however, will change to suit the context of the document. It will start with a pointer to the SDO home page top and to the SDO Main Library, but may contain other items, such as a pointer to the Table of Contents (ToC) and Next page on compound documents, or a pointer to a topic page.

Topic Pages

Under the SDO home page is a series of topic pages with information for a particular set of solution developers. These pages are the home of general information and technical documents presented in the context of the topic. Although this article describes the AIX page in detail, you can

expect to find similar types of data in the same place on most of the topic pages. You will also find that the structure parallels that of the top page. The following may be included on a top page:

- ◆ **Introduction.** Introduces the topic page.
- ◆ **List of top news items.** Ranges from product announcements to interesting news stories to summaries from recent conferences.
- ◆ **Developer programs.** Provides information about programs for AIX solution developers. If you have already looked at the programs from the top page, there is nothing new here. If you are only interested in the ones that touch AIX, there is information about POWER Team programs plus activities in North America and in Europe, as well as pointers to the IBM Developer Connection for AIX and the AIX Version 4 certification program.
- ◆ **Online library.** Contains technical information for AIX solution developers. The AIX topic page has pointers to key entries and a

link to the library itself. The library page contains many of the most popular documents from the old POWER Team home page. For example, Periodicals has the online version of *AIXpert* magazine including back issues to August 1993. Definitely watch this space! Directories has *AIX POWER Solutions*, contain-

ing over 4,000 entries of applications running on AIX. Other frequently accessed documents are the *All about AIX Version 4.1 Guide* (recently updated for 4.1.1) and the *AIX Version 4.1 Developer's Highlights* white paper. There is also a pointer to the AIX known-problems database.

Getting Connected to the World Wide Web (WWW)

After reading about it everywhere, you are now ready and eager to get connected to the Internet and surf the World Wide Web. So what do you do? First, get connected to the Internet; then locate a WWW browser for your platform.

Connecting to Internet

As an AIX user, you already have the basis for Internet connectivity—TCP/IP support in the operating system. With this type of support included, you only need to find an Internet access provider. One provider that offers everything from dial-up Serial Link Internet Protocol (SLIP) access to leased lines and firewall services is the IBM Global Network (IGN). For more information about IGN in the U.S., call 1-800-455-5056. If you already have Internet access, see URL: <http://www01.ny.us.ibm.net/adv/> for more information.

If you choose the dial-up approach, you can find information for configuring SLIP in InfoExplorer and also in the 1-800-IBM-4FAX automated FAX server, available from IBM's WWW server (<http://www.austin.ibm.com/>) or under Services & Support if you have other means of connecting). *Internet World*¹, a monthly magazine published by Mecklermedia, is a good source for information about other Internet access providers.

For accessing the Internet from your personal computer, OS/2 Warp Version 3.0 is IBM's premiere operating system for PCs. It ships with a Bonus Pack of software containing an Internet Access Kit (IAK). This IAK provides a point-and-click interface for connecting to the Internet through IGN using SLIP; it can be used to connect to other access providers supporting SLIP and Compressed SLIP (CSLIP) or Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP). IBM also offers an IAK for

DOS/Windows™ users. This IAK is available at local software stores.

Alternatively, many Internet access providers supply the necessary software for DOS PCs and Macintoshes® as part of their signup fee. New Internet access software packages arrive at computer retailers' shelves every day, as well as in the back of books at your local bookstores. Prodigy® provides Internet and WWW access through their Windows-based interface using their private network; other major online services have announced their intention to follow.

Locating a Browser

After connecting to the Internet, find a WWW browser (the interface for navigating the WWW) if one did not come with your Internet access kit. Most platforms have several available. The right one for you is primarily a matter of personal preference.

AIX/UNIX®, Macintosh, or DOS/Windows users can get the original NCSA MOSIAC by anonymous FTP from <ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu> under the /Mosaic directory. For OS/2 users, IBM distributes Web Explorer by anonymous FTP at <ftp.ibm.net> in the /pub/WebExplorer directory. Web Explorer works with both the IAK distributed with OS/2 Warp and older versions of OS/2 with TCP/IP for OS/2 2.0. OS/2 Warp's IAK also supports most Windows-based browsers.

Once you can access the WWW, you can find information on other browsers at the following URL: http://www.yahoo.com/Computers/World_Wide_Web/Browsers/. After you start surfing, you will see why the WWW is one of the hottest topics in the media today. It brings a wealth of global information to your screen with an easy-to-use interface.—Ron Woan, IBM Corporation

¹ To request a subscription to *Internet World*, write to Internet World, P.O. Box 713, Mt. Morris, IL 61054, send E-mail to jwsubs@kable.com, or call 1-800-573-3602.

- ◆ **Links to other places.** There are also links to other places in cyberspace that an AIX developer might find of interest and the navigation bars which include a link to a list of POWER Team contacts worldwide.

This is only one example of a topic page. Other topic pages provide a wealth of information, including an excellent one about object technologies.

Futures

Other areas to be implemented in the coming months include the following:

- ◆ Adding information in all the topic pages
- ◆ Adding search facilities to certain areas, such as the *AIXpert* archive
- ◆ Expanding topic pages to cover subjects such as database and transaction processing
- ◆ Establishing a restricted area in which solution developers could access information and functions not available to the general public
- ◆ Improving the feedback form to make it easier for you to tell us what you want and what you think our priorities should be

Do not wait for the improved form. This home page is for you, a solution developer on IBM platforms. And we want your input for what you need. Contact us via the feedback form on the

Other Waves on the Web

Check out these other IBM Web pages while surfing the Web:

- ◆ <http://www.ibm.com/> : The IBM home page; the heart of the IBM Web and the jumping off point for all IBM Web pages
- ◆ <http://www.austin.ibm.com/> : IBM RISC System/6000 home page; detailed product information about the RISC System/6000 family and AIX as well as home of technical papers
- ◆ <http://www.austin.ibm.com/pspinfo.> : IBM Personal Software; home for OS/2, PC-DOS, and LAN Server
- ◆ <http://www.austin.ibm.com/os2games> : Information for game developers as well as directories of OS/2 games and information about getting your favorite game to run on OS/2

Solution Developer Operations home page or send E-mail to sdo@austin.ibm.com.



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NetView Association Services Extended to SystemView

In May 1995, IBM announced SystemView® Series (code name Karat), its solution for network and systems management. As part of the announcement, IBM unveiled a new program for SystemView that offers vendors the high-level of services provided by the NetView Association.



SystemView marks the beginning of a new era of integration. From a single platform, users can manage any device or system in their enterprise. Management applications will have a common "look and feel," will share data, and will be able to invoke each other automatically to complete a task.

SystemView supports a variety of platforms and databases, offering the interoperability and connectivity required by users and a high level of access to data and applications anywhere in the network. And because SystemView is based on open industry standards, you can choose from a broad set of systems management applications.

NetView Association members whose products run on any of the IBM NetView® platforms, such as AIX and OS/2, are automatically affiliated with the new vendor program.

For information about SystemView or about the new vendor program, send a note to nvassoc@vnet.ibm.com.

— Larry Kunz