MODERNISE IBM I APPS

IBM i Modernization Engine for Lifecycle Integration (Merlin)

AUTOMATE MODERNISATION AND STREAMLINE APP DEVELOPMENT

To remain competitive, the pressure to constantly evolve and improve applications is driving app developers to adopt an efficient DevOps culture, along with streamlined continuous integration/ deployment (CI/CD) processes, and industry standard tools for code repositories, testing and automation.

While these practices are common in many environments, modernising business-critical IBM i applications has always been more of a challenge. Good news, for those organisations looking for a way to combine the power, reliability, and security of IBM i together with emerging new technologies - the answer came as part of IBM i version 7.5 – although the solution also supports previous versions 7.3 and v7.4.

What is IBM i Merlin?

IBM i Modernization Engine for Lifecycle Integration, or "Merlin" for short, is a set of containerised applications that act as guides, or patterns, to help IBM i app developers take on the task of moving into a DevOps services-oriented world.

Using Merlin, a developer extracts source code from the IBM i system and can then work with modern browser-based graphic tools. When then new code is ready, it is uploaded into the IBM i environment and the application can be re-compiled. Business user access to the application is unchanged.

Merlin helps IBM i software developers to:

Realise the value of hybrid cloud and multi-platform DevOps implementation for IBM i	Expose native IBM i functions as RESTful interfaces and manage enterprise message technologies	Automate and optimise an intelligent build and accelerated continuous integration/continuous deployment cycle	Bridge the talent gap with a browser-based IDE and CodeReady workspaces

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Highlights of IBM i Merlin for Application Development

✓	Spin-up IBM i dev environments quickly and take them down when done
✓	Automate the conversion of fixed-format RPG to Free Form RPG
✓	Utilise a Visual Studio Codelike interface to build new IBM i apps
✓	Implement CI/CD for new IBM i app development
✓	Web browser-based IBM i dev tools running in an OpenShift container
✓	Reduce the learning curve for new developers with Git and Jenkins integration for IBM i app development
✓	Integrated impact analysis, giving developers code understanding at their fingertips

Red Hat OpenShift on Linux

The whole Merlin solution (open source VS Code and ARCAD components) is packaged together to run in Red Hat OpenShift containers - developers access the environment through a web browser.

Even though containers don't run on IBM i platforms, IBM has chosen this approach to hide complexity and allow developers to create a standard image of all application components, confident that they will all work together. Merlin's suite of container-based tools may be the catalyst to accelerate the modernisation and development of next-gen IBM i applications.

As a containerised application, Merlin is managed by a Linux-based Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform (OCP). OCP can run in various platforms ranging from Linux partitions on the same IBM Power system as the IBM i LPARs, to Linux VMs in a public cloud.

Do you have OpenShift and Containerisation skills?

We recognise that many clients may lack the required technical skills and admit this is may be an obstacle to taking advantage of Merlin.

As an IBM Platinum Partner and Advanced Red Hat Certified Cloud & Service Provider Partner, CSI is perfectly positioned to help you navigate this complex world. We provide "best of both worlds" solutions - so you get the performance and reliability of IBM Power together with the flexibility of open-source technologies like containerisation on public hyperscale clouds.

Our experts can design, set-up and manage a Merlin platform so that IBM i users can take advantage of the application modernisation tools without being distracted by the demands of Linux and Red Hat OCP.

Get in touch today to find out how we can help your business adopt DevOps and CI/CD practices.