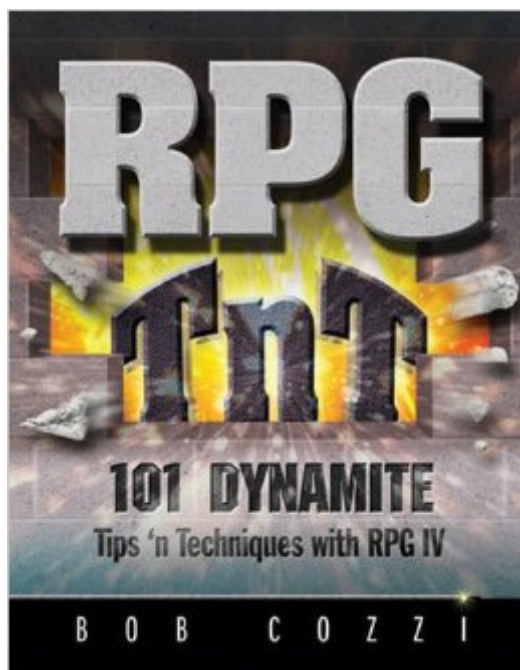# RPG TnT: 101 Dynamite Tips 'n Techniques With RPG IV

Synopsis

Providing solutions to dozens of technical dilemmas, this guide features 101 tips for evaluating and circumventing RPG IV's shortcomings to help end users create extensions and program features that are not available through standard RPG IV—the primary programming language used for business application development on IBM's midrange computer systems. Using nearly 20 years of AS/400, iSeries, and System i experience, the author's insights into RPG IV extensions and System i MI instructions allow even the most inexperienced programmer to implement wrappers using code directly from the book.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a mixture of good, bad and a combination of both. The good things are useful, usable routines or pieces of advice; the bad are solutions offered in the desperate hope that someday the problem they fix will appear; the combinations are good ideas explained badly, and good routines mis-applied. There are a few tips about which I just don't have anything to say.Examples of good: 1. Tip 11. If there is anyone out there who actually still doesn't know about *all, this tip is badly needed. I must confess to not knowing about *allx. 2. Tips 12 and 13. Everyone should already know and use these, but they don't. I just recently had to repair a program written by someone who doesn't know about 13. 3. Tip 17. Good point if you prefer free-form comments. 4. Tip 27. Although I loathe the new Date and Time field types, this one could be very useful. Hint: positions 254 through 263 of the Program Status Data Structure already contain User Profile. Also, call a CL that retrieves the

System Date (by returning concatenated System Values) and returns it in whichever of yyyymmdd, mmddyyyy, etc., you want, based on a flag you pass. 5. Tip 30. Nice, if you want to use this stuff. 7. Tip 32. Very useful, and you can concatenate with it. See Tip 88. 8. Tip 43. I like this one. A lot. It's decades overdue. See Tip 14. 9. Tip 49. I haven't found a use for this one yet, but I like the idea.10. Tip 61. Important for beginners. Everyone else should already know this.11. Tip 62. See Tip 61. The real issue, of course, is to put pressure on IBM to restore Addtrc.12. Tip 63. See Tip 62.13. Tip 64. See Tip 49.14. Tip 65. See Tip 64.15. Tip 78. I like this one, and I almost had a use for it once. So might someone else.16. Tip 79. Nice idea. I think revoking everyone's authority to the save file (which is the default when issuing crtsavf anyway) would work just as well.17. Tip 85. Cool, but I just can't imagine ever using this.18. Tip 88. Useful and many years overdue, and you can concatenate with it. See Tip 32.19. Tip 92. I can't imagine ever needing this, but I like it.20. Tip 94. Very important for beginners.21. Tip 95. Needed, but unnecessarily cumbersome. Copy to a work area, translate to uppercase, then scan and replace. See Tips 100, 29 and 53.22. Tip 96. Useful. Be wary of Activation Groups anyway.23. Tip 97. As an old-timer, I prefer carefully-applied goto's, but when free format prevents their use, "leave" within a for loop seems to be a good second choice.24. Tip 100. This one makes Tips 29, 53 and 95 unnecessary.Examples of combinations: 1. Tips 1 - 5. Call me crazy, but I just can't make myself care about this stuff. 2. Tip 6. OK, but who uses C functions? 3. Tip 7. The Program Status Data Structure provides lots of critically- important information when things go wrong (as does the File Information Data Structure), so why does Cozzi feel the need to re-define it using Overlay? It almost seems as though he is just showing off his knowledge of the Overlay keyword. 4. Tip 14. Not bad, but Cozzi should have mentioned that you can also use it to force your RPG to open a specific member of the declared file. See Tip 43. 5. Tip 16. Just too clever. Use an array. 6. Tip 26. Nice idea, but what would anyone use it for in RPG? 7. Tip 29. Nice, but you can get the same result by using work fields translated into upper or lower case. See Tips 100, 53 and 95. 6. Tip 31. The problem with this one is that it doesn't tell you what ABOUT the date is invalid, so you can't tell whoever sent it to you. Write one program that does this, and make everyone call it. 8. Tips 39 through 42. I'm sure someone, somewhere, someday will have some use for this. 9. Tip 50. OK, but why use an indicator instead of a well-named flag, unless you MUST connect it to something like a Display File?10. Tip 52. OK, but wouldn't it be less trouble to build a work file in Qtemp?11. Tip 53. Nice, but wasn't it Cozzi himself who first pointed out that Bit 1 is the only difference between upper-and lower-case? After you have verified that what you are dealing with is a letter of the alphabet (they are NOT all consecutive in EBCDIC), to change uppercase to lowercase, set Bit 1 off; to do the reverse, set it on. Also, see Tips 29, 53 and 100.12. Tip 54. Too

clever for his own good.13. Tip 55. Sounds good in theory, but does it do what really needs to be done?14. Tips 58 and 59. Great if it works.15. Tip 68. Or you could simply ignore the Date Data Type, since 8-digit dates have been working just fine since 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 1999, when you frantically converted to them from 6-digit dates.16. Tip 69. Of course, you could call QCMDEXC with an indicator, and check the Program Status Data Structure, the way you've been doing since the day the /38 was invented.17. Tip 70. I think I like this one; I'm just not sure.18. Tip 71. I think I like this one; I just can't imagine using it.19. Tip 72. Fine, but there are Translation Tables that do this.20. Tip 74. Good idea, but why would anyone use this in an RPG program?21. Tip 75. See Tip 74.22. Tip 77. Good idea, but far too clumsy. Write to a program-described file instead, or a file consisting of only one huge character variable. Use different members to distinguish jobs if necessary.23. Tip 91. Nice, but that's what FORTRAN is for.24. Tip 93. I should mention this one twice: first in the Good area, because, even though Cozzi doesn't stress it anywhere NEAR enough, he does indicate that the %trimr function is absolutely ineffectual, and therefore completely worthless, unless you specify evalr when using it; and once in the Bad area, because this routine is more complicated than necessary. Most RPG shops already have centering routines that are easier to understand (especially for beginners!) than this one.25. Tip 99. OK, but simpler approaches are to pass parameters, and to use data areas and files.26. Tip 101. See Tip 6.Examples of bad: 2. Tip 20. Has Cozzi really never heard of the Dlyjob command? 3. Tip 23. These functions do NOT work unless whatever the argument is is ALREADY perfectly valid, so when would you ever use such a thing? Write -- and frequently call -- a program that right-justifies "numeric" character data, compresses out punctuation and then flags or removes Decimal Data Error. 3. Tip 24. Now that the plus sign can FINALLY be used to concatenate strings, when would anyone ever use this? 4. Tip 28. See Tip 6. 5. Tips 33 - 37. Who would ever have a need for such a thing? 6. Tip 38. I'm sure this is nice, but I know Cozzi has heard of QCMDEXC. 7. Tip 45. When you need to pass another program a flag that tells it how to process the data you're sending it, that is a use for this one, but why would you ever not just carefully code the subprocedure so it can never do anything it shouldn't? 8. Tip 46. Isn't a varying constant an oxymoron? 9. Tips 47 and 48. Why create parameters you aren't going to pass?10. Tip 51. See Tips 33 - 37.11. Tips 56 and 57. One word: cvtdat. Also, use substringing and concatenation. And if all else fails, revert to multiplying by 10,000.01, 100.0001 and, for eight-digit dates, 10,000.0001.12. Tip 60. Anyone who doesn't know that numeric data types are converted to packed to make arithmetic faster deserves whatever they get.13. Tip 66. ENTIRELY too complicated, and see Tip 23.14. Tip 67. Cumbersome and complicated. When would anyone ever need such a thing?15. Tip 73. Did someone not tell Cozzi

that Qtemp vanishes all by itself as soon as the job ends?16. Tip 76. See Tip 67.17. Tip 80. Duplicate variable names are NEVER good programming practice. Ever.18. Tips 81 - 84. Confusing. Why add complexity?19. Tip 86. Does Option 11 of Wrkjob (wrkjob option(*pgmstk)) suddenly no longer work?20. Tip 87. Convenient, but multiple points of exit are just not good programming practice.21. Tip 89. See Tips 47 and 48.22. Tip 90. Far too cumbersome. Use the following instead: cpytostmf ('/qsys.lib/libname.lib/filename.file/mbrname.mbr') + ('/directory01/directory02/mbrname') + stmfopt(*replace) stmfccsid(00819) If you're worried, you can delete it first: del ('/directory01/directory02/mbrname')23. Tip 98. For goodness sake, get acquainted with Addtrc! You will forever curse IBM for having taken it away!

A couple of the other reviews mention using this book as a reference or skimming through it -- I would recommend reading from cover to cover, even if the tip is covering a topic that may not necessarily apply to you or your shop. Buried in these tips are other tips and techniques that can truly change how you approach some coding practices.I personally was a steadfast fixed-formatter before reading this book. By the end my attitudes had changed completely and I was eager to take advantage of all the more modern advances in the language, many of which I was introduced to through this book.It will not teach you to program, and may not even make you a better programmer, but it will definitely open your eyes to many aspects of RPG you had not explored before.One way to judge the quality of a technical book: how many times it has been "lost". I have purchased this book 3 or 4 times now :)

As others have commented, the price of the book is slightly high. Nevertheless, the tips that are provided are great. I would recommend reading through the complete book as there is something for any RPG programmer/analyst.

Unfortunately, once I got this book I already knew most of the stuff he was mentioning. It would be valuable for someone that is just starting out with RPGLE though.

This book really tells you how to do amazing things with RPG IV ! For me, that have been using the RPG language family since System/36, this book give me knowledge about the kind of things only available in other languages before RPG IV. Almost all of these tips are really new and incredibly useful to my day to day work.Great book !

Excellent book !!!!!!!

I started out on the Sys38 and then went to the AS400 in 1989. Cozzi's book have always been on either my reference shelf or my wishlist. Cozzi has always provided leading edge information on RPGxxx in a digestible format. It's not for pure beginners but it is an invaluable resource for those of us that are still trying to pry out that last bit of functionality of this wonderful box we call the AS400.

This book is a good book as a reference. If you already have experience in RPG then this book can help learn new and more techniques. It would have been nice to have a index.

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