

## **A better virtual control panel for IBM i!**

### **IBM i Access Client Solutions provides a simple, functional design for users with IBM i 6.1 or newer versions**

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The IBM i Access Client Solutions product is known for its simplicity and flexibility, and it includes console-related functions. In this article, you can learn how the IBM i Access Client Solutions virtual control panel function outshines its predecessor!

### **Background**

Those familiar with LAN console have probably been using the Operations Console portion of IBM i Access for Windows. While this feature allowed you to get to the 5250 console, it also provided a virtual control panel for managing an IPL and performing other system-related administrative tasks. Now, all these tasks can be performed with the IBM i Access Client Solutions product.

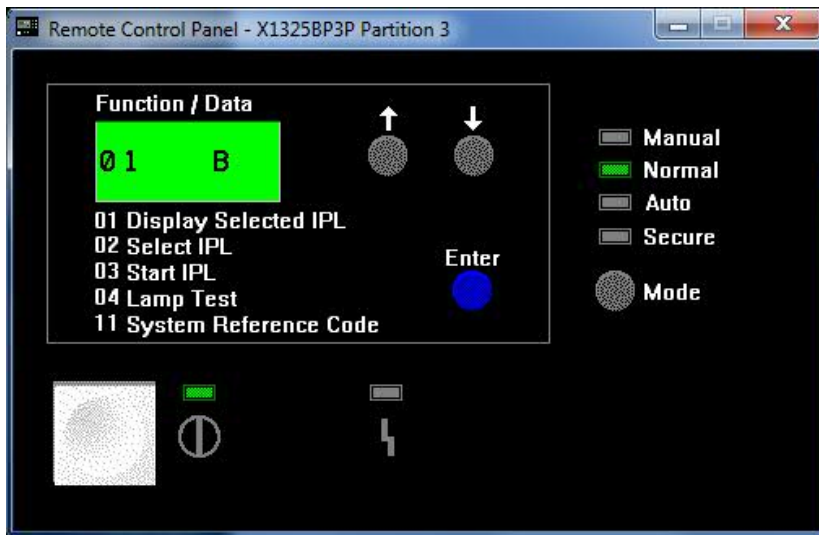
The IBM i Access Client Solutions client offers a platform-independent solution that adds simplicity to the most common system access tasks. Even better, it doesn't require an installation. That means, you can get connected in just minutes! The ease of deployment has made it a popular offering, and many folks are using IBM i Access Client Solutions for everyday access tasks (especially the powerful emulator). It uses the same XW1 licensing paradigm as the rest of the product family, and is entitled to anyone with a Software Maintenance (SWMA) agreement.

In this article, we'll take a quick look at the virtual control panel function included with IBM i Access Client Solutions.

### **Human-readable commands**

Today, you're probably using the virtual control panel that is included with IBM i Access for Windows. While this feature has proven to be reliable and trustworthy, the interface's design is the most literal implementation possible: it looks just like an old IBM i control panel, except that it is virtual!

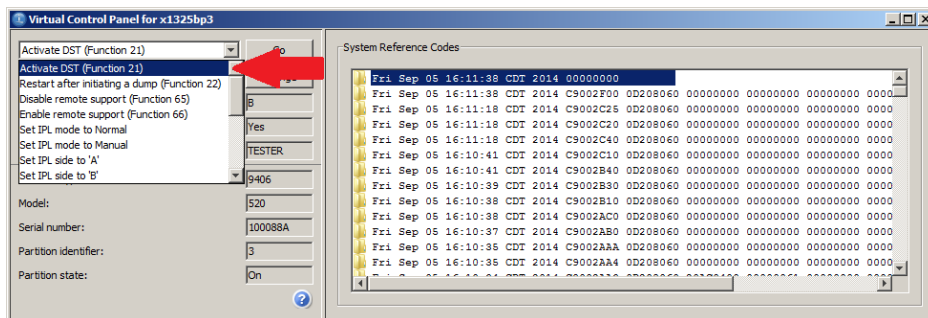
**Figure 1: IBM i Access for Windows (the 'old' control panel)**



The numerical representation of functions, combined with the operation of the Up Arrow, Down Arrow, and Enter keys, is far from intuitive to a new user. Even though experienced users have been accustomed to the design, it provokes the question: could there be a better way?

That's where Access Client Solutions comes in. The new IBM i Access Client Solutions interface provides a way for you to invoke functions without the help of a reference manual. Need to activate dedicated service tools (DST)? No problem! Just select **Activate DST** from the actions drop-down list!

**Figure 2: Human-readable commands in the new control panel**



For convenience, the interface also keeps basic system information always visible on the left side of the user interface (UI).

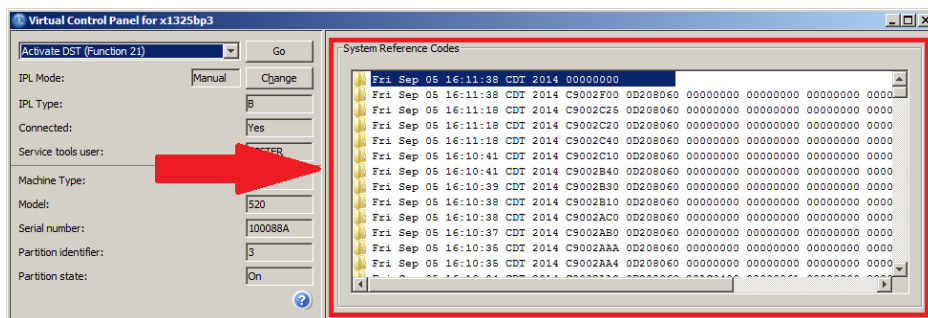
**Figure 3: Basic system information**

Service tools user:	TESTER
Machine Type:	9406
Model:	520
Serial number:	100088A
Partition identifier:	3
Partition state:	On

## An entire history of system reference codes

In addition to an easy-to-use interface, the IBM i Access Client Solutions virtual control panel also provides a new function. Most notably, the interface gives you an easy view of the entire system reference code (SRC) history! Because each entry also records a timestamp, you can easily review and reference the entire set of known previous states. The server keeps this history and will maintain a finite amount of SRCs in its database. This history will be displayed on the right side of the interface. It is updated with each new SRC as the system changes state.

Figure 4: SRC history



Does the SRC history contain valuable information? Would you like to print it, share it, or reference it later? Good thing that IBM i Access Client Solutions allows you to save the entire history! Just right-click in the SRC history display and click **Save**. This will write a simple plain-text file with all timestamps and SRC information.

Figure 5: Option to save the SRC history

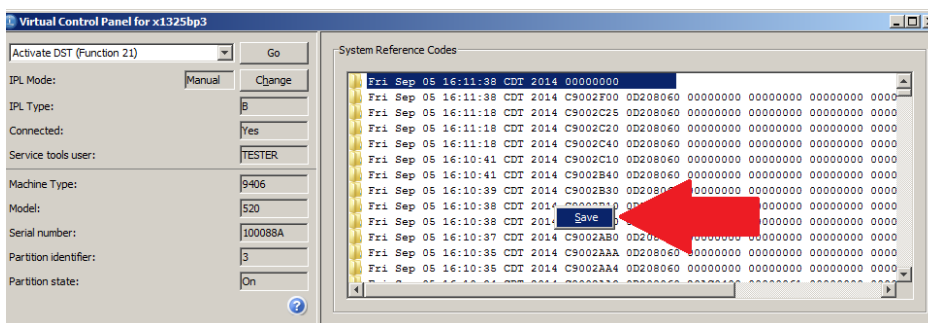
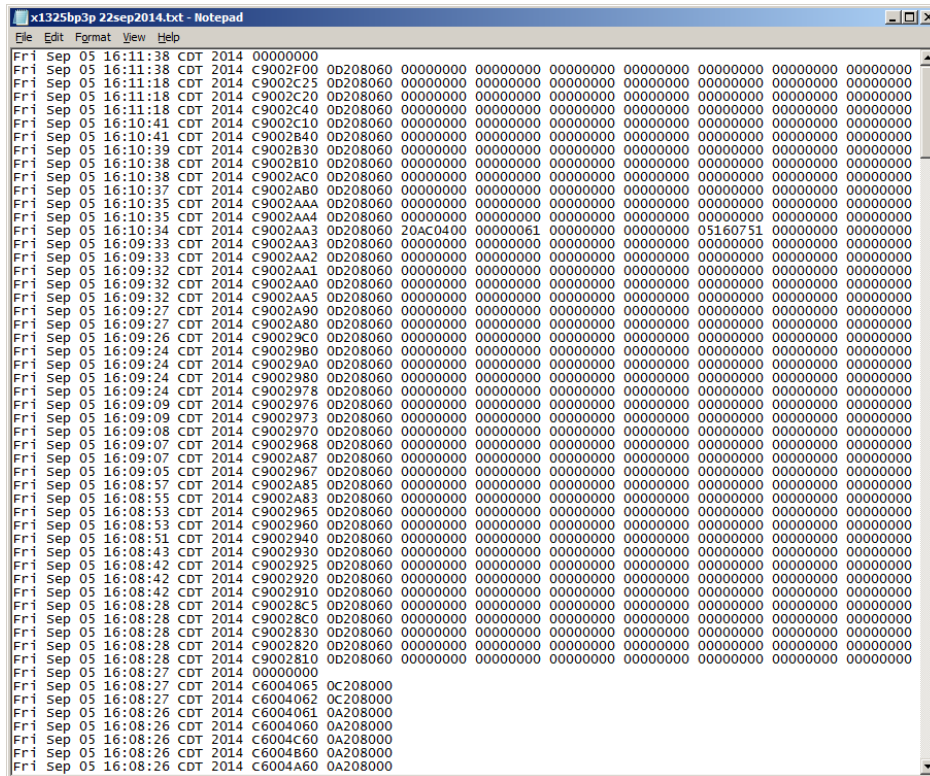
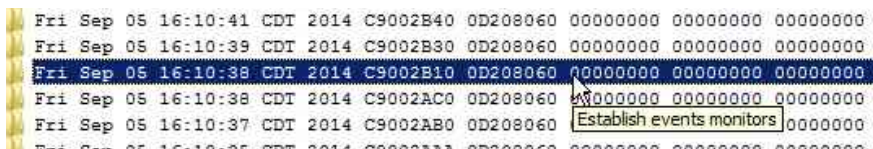


Figure 6: SRC history saved to a .txt file



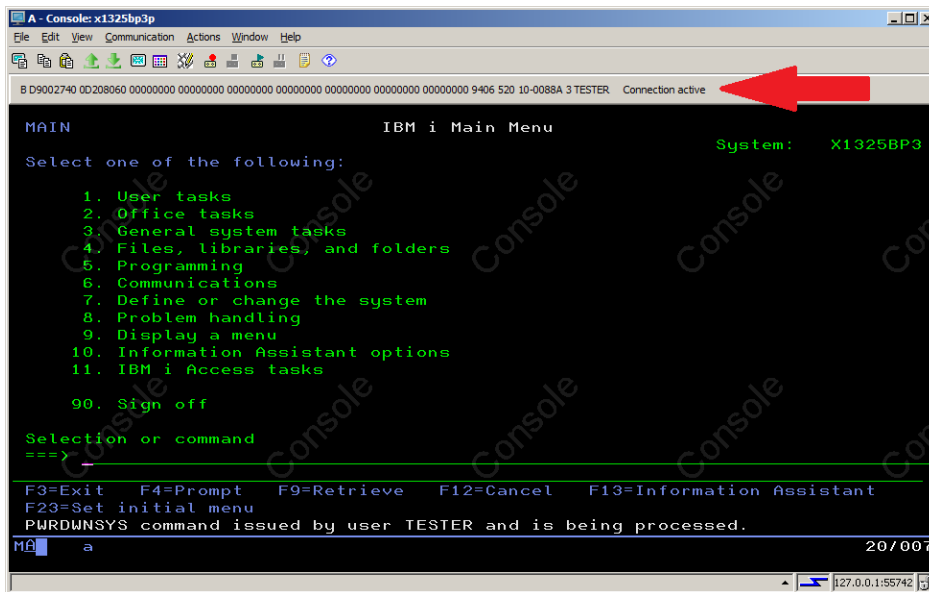
And that's not all! More information about a particular SRC can be obtained through tooltip. Just hover your mouse pointer over an entry, and the tooltip tells you what it means! For instance, C9002B10 indicates that the system was in the **Establish events monitors** step of an IPL.

Figure 7: Sample SRC information



### Integration into the emulator

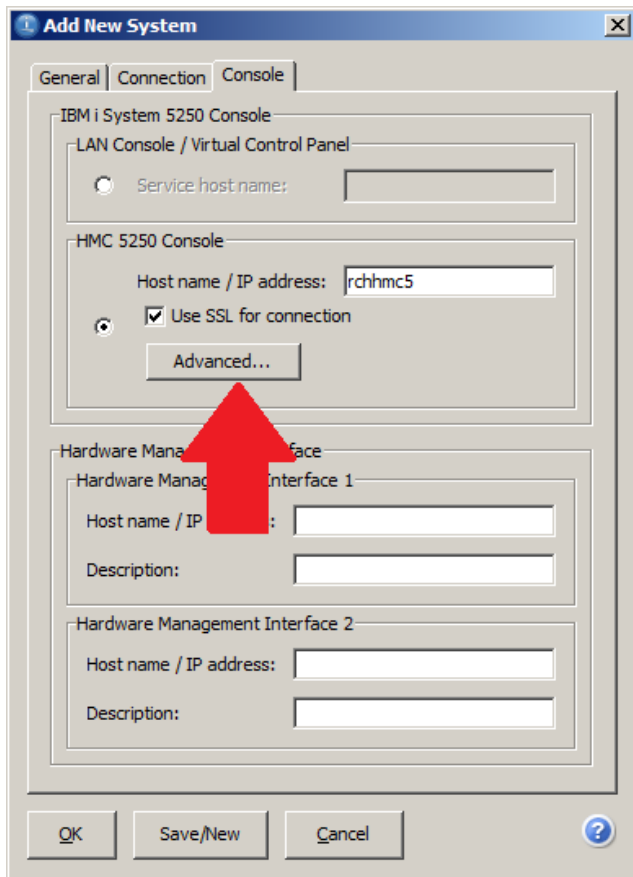
The virtual control panel also provides a toolbar for the 5250 emulator. When this toolbar is enabled (by clicking **View** → **Console Toolbar**), it provides updated information about the system, including IPL side, current system reference code, and some basic system information. It also shows the current 5250 state.

**Figure 8: Console toolbar**

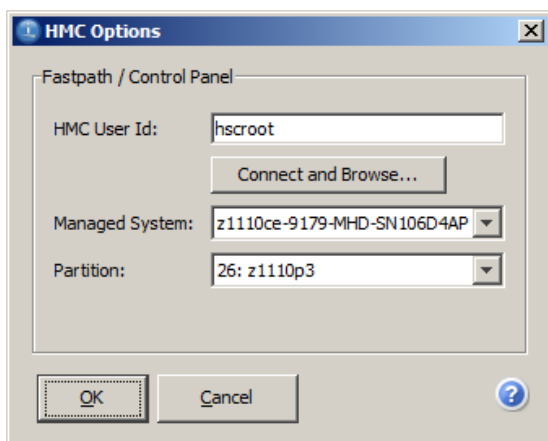
## It also works with the HMC

Unlike IBM i Access for Windows, the console functions within IBM i Access Client Solutions are also supported for Hardware Management Consoles (HMCs). In order to use this function, you need to configure advanced information in the system configuration, where you will identify the managed system and partition of interest. The virtual control panel and the console toolbar will not work until this step is completed.

**Figure 9: Configuring advanced options for HMC**



**Figure 10: Selecting the managed system and the partition**



## System requirements

**Table 1: Required PTFs for LAN console support with IBM i Access Client Solutions**

IBM i release	Required PTFs
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6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MF55543</li><li>• MF55549</li></ul>
6.1 with machine code 6.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MF55540</li><li>• MF55547</li></ul>
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MF55485</li><li>• MF55538</li></ul>
7.2	No PTFs required

## Summary

The improved design of the virtual control panel is notable in both efficiency and utility. In a nutshell, it makes the administrator's job easier!

Visit the [IBM i Access Client Solutions product web page](#) at for more information about how to download, deploy, and use the product.

## Resources

- [IBM i Access Client Solutions product web page](#)
- [IBM i Access Client Solutions \*Getting Started\* guide](#)
- [IBM i forum](#)

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