



Recalling Dataset Names

One of the more annoying aspects of ISPF usage is constantly having to remember, type and search for dataset names. z/OS ISPF has some precious relief to this long-standing problem.

The relief comes in the form of two ISPCMDS command table entries – AUTOTYPE and NRETRIEV – that are best equated to spare PF Keys.

Briefly, AUTOTYPE resembles the automatic text fill-in function so common in PC environments. This feature saves a lot of typing on PCs. Now you can use a similar feature in ISPF for dataset names. Note that it is similar – not exactly the same.

This is because TSO/ISPF is not as interactive as a PC. A press of an AID key is required to signal the TSO server address space that you want something done. But still, AUTOTYPE is quite a nice addition to ISPF. Refer to the Screen sample slide show in this issue.

NRETRIEV stands for Name Retrieve. It retrieves previously typed dataset names from the internally maintained referral lists (or “Reflists”).

Both of these new features are well documented in the ISPF tutorial. A quick way to find explanations for their usage would be to use the tutorial index.

- Enter into the tutorial from anywhere in baseline ISPF (PF1 or HELP).
- Enter an “I” in the Command field of whatever tutorial panel you enter on and then press enter.
- This will take you to the INDEX.
- Once in the tutorial INDEX, enter the first letter of what you want information on.
- As an example, enter “A” (for AUTOTYPE) and press enter.
- You will be presented with a list of tutorial topics that begin with the letter “A”.
- Find AUTOTYPE and enter the letter/number combination associated with it in the Command field. Press enter.

If you are running your ISPF sessions with KEYLIST ON, you might need to add the AUTOTYPE and NRETRIEV commands to a number of different keylists.

If you are unaware of the KEYLIST settings of ISPF, here’s another chance to use the tutorial index.

For example, set PF16 to AUTOTYPE and PF17 to NRETRIEV. Note the following with regard to AUTOTYPE and NRETRIEV:

- They almost have to be equated to PF Keys to have any real utility.
- They are context sensitive as far as the Project/Group/Type and Other Dataset entry fields.
- They will only work on panels that have been coded to accept them.

All IBM baseline ISPF panels seem to accept these two new commands. However, some vendor or in-house written ISPF panels might not.



As you can see, there are many detailed fields displayed. On this initial screen, the displayed values are mostly system software release levels and other single-valued data items. This screen might be all you ever need to view if all you are interested in are release levels and other global z/OS settings and values.

However, by scrolling forward in the CALL.TRACE file, you will be able to see a stunning array of values, settings and other parameters that apply to your active TSO/ISPF session.

Even if you don't fully grasp the meanings of all of the information being displayed, it is nice to know that you DO have the means of answering some of your own questions about the internals of your environment.

SAYSYS REXX

For a number of years now, REXX programmers have been making use of the MVSVAR and SYSVAR built-in functions (BIFs). These particular BIFs are about as easy to use and understand as you'll ever see.

Their syntax is:

```
MVSVAR("variable")
```

or

```
SYSAR("variable")
```

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