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## How 6 Fresh Faces are Helping Their Companies Develop Modern Applications

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*Learn how Mohit Porwal, Kerim Guney, Sai Sridhar Varanhabhatla, Gajender Tyagi, Johannes Heirman and Sheenam Bulandi are innovating on IBM i.*

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By Courtney Welu

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# Mohit Porwal

HCL Technologies

I got my start in IBM i when I started my career in 2017. Early on, I learned about web services and was amazed to see how fast the data flows from IBM i onto the different systems via web services. My interest in IBM i increased from the beginning stages of my career.

In my current organization, we focus on offering the best solutions to our clients by using the base functionalities of IBM i. The benefit of working with IBM i is that instead of having multiple systems with different integrities to maintain, companies can work on one single system. Though I've worked in many systems, I've found the architecture of IBM i to be the best.

I'm an active member of many user groups on social media like Facebook and LinkedIn, and always try my best to answer the queries of users. Often, college graduates do not have knowledge about IBM i, and I enjoy explaining the system to them. I believe we need to make students and other young people aware of the power, security and robustness of IBM i. We can do this through events like coding boot camps and organizing workshops in colleges. IBM i is generally not mentioned in textbooks, and students should have the chance to learn and choose their own career path.

What I enjoy most about working on the platform is the robustness of the system and the speed of data flowing between different interfaces and systems via web services. Nowadays, we have so many modern ILE editors available in the market, but I still love to code on the 5250 greenscreen.

**“What I enjoy most about working on the platform is the robustness of the system and the speed of data flowing between different interfaces and systems via web services.”**

*Mohit Porwal, HCL Technologies*



# Kerim Guney

Task Force IT-Consulting

I got my start on the IBM i by pure chance. I was freelancing in 2017 and received a call from my now-CEO Andreas Strietholt, who said he might have an interesting job for me modernizing IBM i applications and teaching people the power of the platform. I decided to go over to the office the next day to see these so-called “green screens” with my own eyes, and I was hooked.

I've always been fond of command line tools, so the green screens definitely appealed to me. In my role now, I have been showing our clients that IBM i is not synonymous for “green screen” and that modern open-source technologies can be used to leverage the platform's strengths. One particularly fun project I worked on was a hybrid-cloud solution, enhanced by existing RPG applications with Node.js applications. IBM i provides a well-supported system that needs only a small, dedicated sysadmin staff, and is cost-efficient over a long time. It's often powerful enough to replace an entire

and is cost efficient over a long time. It's often powerful enough to replace an entire farm of servers.

I advocate for the platform by doing presentations at various European IBM i-specific conferences. I also contribute to open-source technologies made specifically for IBM i, and offer workshops for clients interested in modernizing their applications.

There is something special about the small, tight-knit community of IBM i that I haven't seen with other platforms. In order to attract new talent to the platform, companies need to react quickly and introduce modernization measures and new technologies to attract young people. IBM also has to ensure that the barrier to entry to learning IBM i-specific technologies is as low as possible by offering services such as publicly available VMs and beginner-friendly tutorials.



## Sai Sridhar Varanhabhatla

**Blue Yonder**

Since I started my IBM i career in 2011, I have used IBM i in various roles including development and support. My experience includes working on IT solutions for various domains such as banking, finance, supply chain management and retail. In my current position, IBM i supports various other languages and platforms like Node.js. This provides the opportunity to effectively communicate with different modules while achieving the ability to host our applications on the web.

The biggest benefit that I have experienced from the platform is the completeness of having everything in one package, including database, reporting, programming languages and platforms that support various languages and interfaces. IBM i also started bringing many next-gen technologies and open-source software onboard as well. The IBM i community began using these technologies and running open-source projects that help organizations leverage and utilize its capabilities.

The IBM i community needs to continue the focus on evolving to support and complement next-gen technologies. I think organizations should encourage innovation targeted at simplifying the complex architecture and making it user-friendly. They should also provide the opportunity to learn, scale and grow while supporting various other languages and GUI to ease the collaboration to work with IBM i.

I advocate for the platform by leading training for employees new to the platform at my company. I've also actively contributed to various groups on social networking platforms including OCEAN User Group of Southern California and Young IBM i Professionals. In addition to that, I've been exploring the future of the technology with a focus on the next-gen capabilities that the current industry and market will benefit from, especially the AI and machine learning revolution.



## Gajender Tyagi

**Programmers.io**

I joined my company in 2017 and was trained in native IBM i technologies. In college, I worked with embedded systems and Internet of Things (IoT), but I'd never heard of IBM Power Systems™ and was trained on the job. There was a learning curve, since IBM i is a whole system where you have to know everything, from system knowledge to development knowledge.

With IBM i, I can work with both native and open-source technology. I've been using

Node.js on the platform for the past two years, which benefits both me and our client. My primary role is to gather requirements from the client, then go from planning to deployment with my team. I'm a regular explorer of all new tech that can be run on IBM i using PASE.

I think the existing talent within the IBM i community needs to be upskilled, as a lot of the experienced programmers are not using the latest updates and tech for development. They should be taught to use free-form coding, embedded SQL, web services, ILE concept and open source.

I want to popularize IBM i, so I took the initiative to run a recruitment drive for our company in my university. We recruited young programmers and trained them on IBM i, ultimately adding nearly 30 new programmers to our team.

IBM i opens up many possibilities for companies. We can easily utilize any web service in the market, and we can use open-source tools to implement DevOps for native and open-source development. The built-in database provides a secure and seamless experience to the business. I have built web apps, mobile apps, web services and CI/CD all with IBM i. I cannot think of any implementation being used in today's world that is not implementable on IBM i.



## Johannes Heirman

**EASi**

I didn't start out on a traditional IT career path. I studied history, yet I was always interested in creating software. Eventually, my interest in programming led me to a course that trained "alternative" IT profiles to become qualified RPG professionals. I love the simplicity of the RPG programming language and the speed at which it develops applications.

I'm currently employed as a developer in a consultancy firm, where my tasks on the IBM i platform range from maintaining legacy fixed format RPG code, to modernizing databases from DDS to SQL, to developing cutting-edge web applications and services. A standard modernization project involves upgrading the database from DDS described files to SQL; we work on identifying and extracting business logic from those programs. We find and rewrite large, monolithic programs to make the code more readable and modular. Simultaneously, we develop new web applications in PHP, using the Laravel framework and Zend server on IBM i. The fact that modern applications can run side by side and interact with applications written 20 years ago on the IBM i is simply amazing.

I also do research on the possibilities of the new open-source environment on the IBM i, including nginx, node-red, python and git. I have set up a git repository for our RPG teams so we can enjoy the benefits of version control. I am an advocate for bringing modern development workflows to the IBM i, so I hope introducing git will only be the beginning.

I love programming in RPG, and IBM i allows me to do just that. I get to dig through older programs like a historian, creating new and modern applications in various programming languages, creating and calling web services, and tuning databases. I have IBM i to thank for realizing my dream of becoming a software developer.



## Sheenam Bulandi

## Programmers.io

I've been working on the IBM i platform for two years, since I joined my company. In college, I worked on full stack development with Java®. Because my company has clients with projects running on IBM systems, they trained me on IBM i. I was introduced to the limitless integrations of the platform with the open-source world. Since then, I've used my knowledge on open source to integrate both. I have worked on the modernization of the green screen using modern technologies and tools like Profound, HTML, CSS, JSON and JavaScript®.

New talent should be thoroughly trained and taught about the advantages of IBM i. They should be introduced to the new updates and functionalities of the system and taught that it is not only about the green-screens and fixed free format coding. There is a lot more to it, such as free format coding, a powerful database engine, server hosting, open-source packages and more.

As an IBM Business Partner, we have some in-house machines. Every year, we do a recruitment drive in the universities to hire new talent and provide them training on native RPG, CL, Db2® and IBM i systems using the machines for practical purposes. Due to COVID-19, these trainings will be shifted to online trainings this year.

The best part about working on the IBM platform is the versatility to use various open-source languages. I also love its capability as a server to host Db2-based web applications because of built-in data, which results in great efficiency. Companies have a vast option of open-source languages to opt from their future application development based on Db2 as a database. The level of security available in this system is far more than anything else available in the market.

**“The best part about working on the IBM platform is the versatility to use various open-source languages.”**

*Sheenam Bulandi, Programmers.io*

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**About the author** Courtney Welu is an editorial assistant.  
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