

A Brief History of the IBM AS/400 and iSeries

1988

IBM introduces in June the IBM Application System/400, a new family of easy-to-use computers designed for small and intermediate-sized companies. As part of the introduction, IBM and IBM Business Partners worldwide announce more than 1,000 software packages in the biggest simultaneous applications announcement in computer history. The AS/400 family includes six processor models, offering a 24-fold growth range in main memory, a 48-fold storage capacity range and a 10-fold performance range, as measured in commercial transactions processed per hour. It offers double the performance of the System/38 and five times that of the System/36. (By the time the first AS/400 shipment is shipped, more than 2,500 applications are available, along with unprecedented support, education and follow-on products. Meanwhile, IBM has sold more than 250,000 System/34, System/36 and System/38 computers worldwide, making it the most widely-used midrange family in the industry.)

1989

Early in 1989, IBM introduces the B70, a new high-end model of the Application System/400, which offers a faster processor and main memory, and the ability to expand disk storage and attach more local workstations and communications lines. Also announced are enhancements that make it easier for customers to expand other AS/400 models, the B10 and B20. The company also increases the memory capacity available with entry-level models and introduces three higher-speed matrix printers for use with the AS/400 family.

Later in the year, two new Application System/400 processors that can operate at speeds up to 20 percent faster than earlier, comparably-priced models, are rolled out, along with an improved operating system that simplifies the migration of software from less powerful IBM System/3Xs to the AS/400.

1990

IBM broadens its AS/400 product line in August, unveiling two low-cost processors that are designed for small businesses and departments of larger companies. Also added is a low-end processor to the Application System/Entry series. The entire AS/400 family is enhanced with hundreds of hardware and software products, including operating system improvements, new data storage products, expanded memory, better systems availability and numerous advanced applications.

1991

The AS/400 line is renewed from top to bottom with 11 processors. A new \$12,000 AS/400 entry-level model and a new version of the AS/400's operating system are introduced.

1992

IBM completely refreshes the Application System/400 product line in February with an enhanced operating system and 13 powerful new E model processors that boost system performance by up to 70 percent and offer the industry's first use of 16-million-bit memory chips. IBM introduces in September a new, four-way AS/400 Model E95, giving customers 20 percent more throughput than with the current high-end, three-way Model E90 and twice the processing power of the AS/400 of less than eight months ago. IBM ships its 200,000th AS/400 computer (a 9406 Model E35 to be installed at the main brewery and headquarters of Heineken Netherlands), in December while 300,000 of its predecessor systems — the System/36 and System/38 — remain in service. (Since 1988, the reliability of the AS/400 family has improved more than 20-fold and the quality of its operating system has improved six-fold and price/performance has shown gains of 30 percent a year.)

1993

A new F model Application System/400 is unveiled that is up to 60 percent more powerful and offers price/performance improvements averaging 26 percent. Later in the year, three new high-performance AS/400 Server Series models are introduced — the 9402 Server Series Model 100 and 9404 Server Series Models 135 and 140.

1994

A new generation of AS/400 computers called the AS/400 Advanced Series is introduced in May, including the AS/400 Advanced System, AS/400 Advanced Server and the AS/400 Advanced Portable. The AS/400 Advanced 36 — a replacement option for the IBM System/36 using a powerful, new 64-bit RISC processor based on PowerPC architecture — debuts, as does the Portable One Model P02, a fully functional portable AS/400. IBM ships its 250,000th Application System/400, a model F80, to The Coca-Cola Company in Belgium.

1995

The AS/400 Advanced Portable, a low-cost, compact version of AS/400, is announced.

1996

IBM introduces the AS/400 Advanced Series, to support Lotus Notes and provide easy Internet access, AS/400 Advanced Entry for the owners of small businesses, and a new AS/400 Advanced 36 business computer.

1997

The company announces in August a new family of AS/400e series servers to help small and medium-sized companies and departments of large enterprises to take advantage of business opportunities on the Internet.

1998

The AS/400e server 170 and AS/400e server 150 are introduced in February, followed by the AS/400e model S40 and 650 and AS/400e model 170 in August. During 1998, IBM delivers an AS/400 to a customer every 12 minutes of every workday.

1999

IBM announces a powerful new line of AS/400e servers with faster processors, increased performance and greater flexibility to handle multiple application workloads on a single server. The versatile new server line consolidates multiple server models into a smaller, more powerful family. A new entry server, a two-way Model 170, provides more than twice the performance of the model announced the year before.

2000

IBM introduces the IBM eServer, a new generation of servers featuring mainframe-class reliability and scalability, broad support of open standards for the development of new applications, and capacity on demand for managing the unprecedented needs of e-business. The new servers feature technology from IBM's high-end servers applied across the entire product line, and include: the eServer iSeries -- the high performance, integrated business server for mid-market companies.

IBM begins volume shipments of the new line of AS/400e servers powered by the world's first production microchips made of silicon-on-insulator transistors and copper wiring.

2001

World Access, a global provider of telecommunications services, purchases the largest-ever IBM eServer iSeries system -- the eServer i840 -- to process billings for more than 100 million telephone calls per day.

IBM announces the worldwide availability of iSeries Connect, an integrated software product to help small to mid-sized customers link their businesses to expanding global e-marketplaces.

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