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## PREFACE

*Welcome to the wonderful world of the AS/400!*

It's hard to believe I wrote that two years ago.

Also hard to believe was the overwhelming response to this book's first version. I don't mean it to seem like a cliché, but I was truly humbled.

It has been good to see that so many fellow AS/400 advocates also needed the same information I needed, and that my once-overflowing file folder of scratched notes about how to do this and that did indeed contain information equally valuable to many others.

Like with my own children, it's hard to say I prefer one to the other, but I have to say that *The AS/400 Owner's Manual* has become the favorite of my books. Two reasons come to mind.

First—soon after the first edition came out—Midrange Computing's ace phone solicitor, (Acquisitions Editor) Leah Wilbur, happened to call me. I was on the phone with her a good 10 minutes getting hooked on this great new book before I realized she was talking about my own book! I had never heard one of my books pitched to me as if I were a customer and the experience was a new perspective. It really drove home what a great service this book provided.

Second, unlike my other books, a copy of *The AS/400 Owner's Manual* is always located next to my workstation. Technical books age quickly and my copy grew wrinkled with many notes inked in the margins. I don't know about other readers, but I can't get through a typical day without using it.

About a year ago, Merrikay Lee (my good friend and publishing guardian angel) suggested that I update the book. I demurred because the AS/400 always supports all the old stuff. The book was pretty basic (I thought) and didn't have anything that IBM would be upgrading (I thought). Boy, was I wrong.

In early 1998, I agreed to a rewrite and quickly realized how different the point of view is between day-to-day computer work and book writing. When I work on an AS/400 every day, I kind of grow with it. A little new thing today, another next week, then another—I really don't notice anything special going on.

But, when I write a book, I focus all my energies on it and, in this case, I realized that Version 4 introduces a lot of cool stuff for the AS/400 that just didn't exist when *The AS/400 Owner's Manual* first came out.

For example, consider Internet access. Version 4 gives the AS/400 tremendous Internet server power. But that's only half the equation. The other half is that the Internet has grown to a point where at least the consideration of the AS/400's almost native connectivity to this medium is of prime importance to any customer. When I wrote that new section (chapter 12), I was particularly proud to be a part of the AS/400 phenomenon.

Frankly, I can't wait for this new book to replace the battered copy on my own desk.

And I sincerely hope you find *The AS/400 Owner's Manual for Version 4* as useful as you found the first version. Like I also wrote two years ago:

*Enjoy this book.*

*More importantly, enjoy the AS/400.*