

## A guide to sources of information for IBM mainframers

### Newsletters, magazines, user groups, and social networking information resources for the z/OS environment

Although there are now relatively few publications focusing specifically on the mainframe, there are plenty of ways to gather information and comment on large systems. Apart from traditional magazines, there are numerous e-zines, blogs, discussion groups, and other online resources, and this guide offers a personal selection for readers to sample. A list of the main mainframe user groups is also included, which are one of the best sources of information available. You can suggest other sites/titles for inclusion in the next year's Yearbook (email [arcati@itech-ed.com](mailto:arcati@itech-ed.com)).

#### Enterprise Tech Journal

*Enterprise Tech Journal* describes itself as being for IT technicians in the world's largest multiplatform enterprises. The associated website at [enterprisesystemsmedia.com](http://enterprisesystemsmedia.com) contains articles, news, events, and a store.

[enterprisesystemsmedia.com](http://enterprisesystemsmedia.com)



Journal of Information Integration and Management.

[dbta.com/](http://dbta.com/)

#### Five Minute Briefing: Data Center

Database Trends and Applications publishes a number of Five Minute Briefing newsletters, but the Data Center title sometimes has announcements that are relevant to mainframers. The newsletter provides an excellent weekly round-up of announcements.

[dbta.com](http://dbta.com)



#### Enterprise Executive

*Enterprise Executive*, this is the sister publication to *Enterprise Tech Journal*, and is aimed at IT managers in the world's largest multiplatform enterprises. It is a less technical, but no less informative, than *ETJ*, and both are available as flipbooks.

[enterprisesystemsmedia.com](http://enterprisesystemsmedia.com)



#### SearchDataCenter

TechTarget publishes a range of Web-based newsletters, and under the 'Topic' drop-down menu, you can find a number of datacenter topics, but nothing specifically for mainframes any more.

[searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/](http://searchdatacenter.techtarget.com/)

#### Enterprise Systems

Based on the once-celebrated Enterprise Systems Journal, the Enterprise Systems Web site provides some interesting articles and discussions on mainly non-mainframe platforms. It claims to provide high-end datacenter and server solutions, and has sections for information about datacenter/enterprise, cloud, security, storage, and virtualization. It offers newsletters, whitepapers, and webcasts.

[www.esj.com](http://www.esj.com)

#### TechChannel

IBM Systems Magazine website has morphed into a platform- and company-agnostic tech trends hub. It includes articles and blogs and webinars.

[techchannel.com/](http://techchannel.com/)

#### IBM Redbooks

IBM Redbooks publications provide a wealth of real-world installation, configuration, and usage insights into myriad technologies with a multitude of titles. It is categorized by IT Infrastructure, Software, Storage, and Training.

<http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/>

#### Database Trends and Applications Magazine

This bimonthly magazine describes itself as the

## Mainframe social media

In addition to the ever-growing number of blogs focusing on mainframe-related topics, it's now possible to interact with mainframe-minded people on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and other social media.

IBM has its Servers & Storage blog at: [ibm.com/blogs/systems/topics/mainframes/](http://ibm.com/blogs/systems/topics/mainframes/). There are CICS blogs in the CICS part of the IBM Z and LinuxONE Community website: <https://community.ibm.com/community/user/ibmz-and-linuxone/groups/topic-home?CommunityKey=8bc7f42b-b4ba-4419-80d8-2fbf894a6649>. There are IMS blogs in the IMS part of the IBM Z and LinuxONE Community website: <https://community.ibm.com/community/user/ibmz-and-linuxone/groups/topic-home?CommunityKey=eba3ada3-db89-4dca-9154-328195f5e560>. And there are Db2 for z/OS blogs at: <https://community.ibm.com/community/user/ibmz-and-linuxone/groups/topic-home?CommunityKey=c1dcdd7e-90a2-432a-99bd-04326454f40a>.

There's the IBM IMS Central site at <https://imsdev.github.io/>, which has lots of useful information.

Planet Mainframe publishes blogs each week. It describes itself as, "The world's premiere resource for leading-edge mainframe technology". You can find the blogs at: [planetmainframe.com/blog/](http://planetmainframe.com/blog/).

And, not to be missed, Craig Mullins' DB2 Portal blog at [db2portal.blogspot.com/](http://db2portal.blogspot.com/).

Alan Radding describes himself as a 20-year IT industry analyst and journalist covering mainframe, midrange, PC, Web, and cloud computing. His DancingDinosaur blog – Mainframe computing in the 21st century – can be found at [dancingdinosaur.wordpress.com](http://dancingdinosaur.wordpress.com).

Other interesting blogs include: Irving Wladawsky-Berger by Irving Wladawsky-Berger at [blog.irvingwb.com/blog/](http://blog.irvingwb.com/blog/), and James Governor's Monkchips site at [www.redmonk.com/jgovernor](http://www.redmonk.com/jgovernor). It says of itself, an industry analyst blog looking at software ecosystems and convergence.

IBM has a mainframe page on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/IBMZ](http://www.facebook.com/IBMZ). There is an IMS group; at [facebook.com/groups/ibmims](http://facebook.com/groups/ibmims), and there's the CICS Training Hub at [facebook.com/27CICS](http://facebook.com/27CICS). Although these don't seem very active.

The Virtual CICS user group is on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/VirtualCICS](http://www.facebook.com/VirtualCICS). And the Virtual IMS user group is at [www.facebook.com/VirtualIMS](http://www.facebook.com/VirtualIMS).

There are mainframe-related discussions on LinkedIn. For example, there's: Mainframe Products & Services: Announcements, Events, Training, Promotions, Blogs, etc at [linkedin.com/groups/2915689/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2915689/); Mainframe Operators and Programmers at [linkedin.com/groups/3688300/](http://linkedin.com/groups/3688300/); Mainframe Users at [linkedin.com/groups/3699921/](http://linkedin.com/groups/3699921/); Mainframe Performance & Optimization: News and Opinion at [linkedin.com/groups/2318931/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2318931/); System z Advocates at [linkedin.com/groups/155723/](http://linkedin.com/groups/155723/); MainframeZone at [linkedin.com/groups/2196066/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2196066/); Mainframe Audit at [linkedin.com/groups/2352119/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2352119/); Mainframe Experts Network at [linkedin.com/groups/55779/](http://linkedin.com/groups/55779/); Mainframe Security Gurus at [linkedin.com/groups/36083/](http://linkedin.com/groups/36083/); IBM Z and Events at [linkedin.com/groups/3053018/](http://linkedin.com/groups/3053018/); SHARE at [linkedin.com/groups/1803278/](http://linkedin.com/groups/1803278/); z/OS at [linkedin.com/groups/2085015/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2085015/); z/OS Operating System Education at [linkedin.com/groups/2109186/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2109186/); and Mainframe Professional Network Group at [linkedin.com/groups/1912637/](http://linkedin.com/groups/1912637/).

If you're interested in Db2 there's Db2 Professionals at [linkedin.com/groups/45375/](http://linkedin.com/groups/45375/); IDUG: International Db2 Users Group at [linkedin.com/groups/46747/](http://linkedin.com/groups/46747/); Db2 for z/OS at [linkedin.com/groups/1171547/](http://linkedin.com/groups/1171547/); and Db2 for z/OS DBAs at [linkedin.com/groups/2008475/](http://linkedin.com/groups/2008475/); amongst many

others. The Virtual Db2 user group is at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12717787/>.

There's the CICS Special Interest Group at [linkedin.com/groups/1534227/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1534227/); IBM CICS at [linkedin.com/groups/4304249/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4304249/); and the Virtual CICS user group at [linkedin.com/groups/3847862/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3847862/).

For IMS there's IMS Global at [linkedin.com/groups/1949922/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1949922/); and the Virtual IMS user group at [linkedin.com/groups/3792561/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3792561/).

In future, LinkedIn might consider using vanity names like Facebook does.

If you go to YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) there are numerous short videos about mainframes and mainframe-related topics. IBM has a number of YouTube channels, including [youtube.com/user/IBM](https://www.youtube.com/user/IBM).

On Twitter, Craig Mullins (@craigmullins) recommends the following each week: @IBMZ, @PlanetMainframe, @RosalindRad, @t\_eddolls, @RegHarbeck, @JeffBisti,

@SHAREhq, @Interskill, @zster, @MainframeGuyBS, @tinatarq, @rossmauri, @mentorafrika, @a\_giorgio, @Darren\_Surch, @MistyMVD, @MarvinSilverma3, @topictrick, @psqlctln, @drdusty275, @OpenMFProject.

Other good tweeters to follow include:

@IBM, @IBMChampions, @ARCserve\_Europe, @BigData\_paulz, @BMCSsoftware, @BobThomas\_ESM, @crshnburn, @DTurnerBlogs, @GlobalKnowledge, @IDUGDB2, @JoshARhoads, @Macro\_4, @martinpacker, @microfocus, @PlexSpy, @PreciselyData, @TeamARIN, @VirtualCICS, @VirtualIMS, @VirtualDb2and @WarrenWhitlock, @MainframerzM, @GSE101, @stevewallin, @ezriel\_gross, @SHAREhq.

It may not be a definitive list, but it's a good place to start!

In addition, there are now mainframers using Instagram (eg @ibm, @lifeatibm, @ibmdata, @ibmsports, @lifeatibm, @ibmscience, @t\_eddolls).

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IBM Tech TV is the always-on platform for the latest technical talks, interactive coding sessions, and up-to-date information straight from IBM Experts. IBM Tech TV shows coveri topics that are key to enhancing your skills and relevant to your industry and applications you're building. Subscribe now and return to watch your favorite weekly series and access valuable content that is added regularly!

IBM Tech TV offers free live and on-demand shows on topics of Cloud, Data, AI, Automation, DevOps, social topics and IBM Z®. You can find the latest technical talks, interactive coding sessions, and up-to-date information straight from IBM experts and our partners.

You can subscribe at: <https://community.ibm.com/community/user/ibm-tech-tv>

## Other online information

### Wikipedia

Although not a newsletter or journal, Wikipedia is a great online encyclopaedia that is written and maintained by its readers. The editors work hard to make sure that valuable content is not vandalized, and the site contains a surprisingly up-to-date range of mainframe-related definitions.

[en.wikipedia.org/](http://en.wikipedia.org/)

### IBM Z Favorites

zFavorites for z Systems is a collection of links to helpful z Systems websites. It has links to various interest categories, such as products, product documentation, software and solutions, support and more. Use the navigation bar to the left to select your area of interest.

[www-01.ibm.com/servers/resourcelink/svc00100.nsf/pages/ibm-z-favorites?OpenDocument](http://www-01.ibm.com/servers/resourcelink/svc00100.nsf/pages/ibm-z-favorites?OpenDocument)

### IBM-MAIN listserv

The IBM Mainframe discussion list has been maintained for many years by the University of Alabama, and continues to be well supported. Unlike the high-level blogs, this is the place for very

specific technical discussions. Subscribers can sign up to receive useful summaries of message threads.

[listserv.ua.edu/archives/ibm-main.html](http://listserv.ua.edu/archives/ibm-main.html)

You can also find information on Google Groups at: [groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bit.listserv.ibm-main](http://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bit.listserv.ibm-main)

### RACF-L

A discussion group that focuses on RACF.

[listserv.uga.edu/scripts/wa-UGA.exe?A0=RACF-L](http://listserv.uga.edu/scripts/wa-UGA.exe?A0=RACF-L)

### Assembler-List

A discussion group that focuses on Assembler.

[www.lsoft.com/scripts/w1.exe?SL1=ASSEMBLER-LIST&H=LISTSERV.UGA.EDU](http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/w1.exe?SL1=ASSEMBLER-LIST&H=LISTSERV.UGA.EDU)

### IMS list

A discussion group that focuses on IMS.

[imslistserv.bmc.com/scripts/wa-BMC.exe?A0=IMS-L](http://imslistserv.bmc.com/scripts/wa-BMC.exe?A0=IMS-L)

### CICS list

A discussion group that focuses on CICS.

[listserv.uga.edu/scripts/wa-UGA.exe?A0=CICS-L](http://listserv.uga.edu/scripts/wa-UGA.exe?A0=CICS-L)

## Mainframe-related apps

There are now mainframe-related apps available that you can download from Google Play for Android devices and the App Store on Apple devices. So, what comes as an app?

**IBM HMC Mobile for Z and LinuxONE** allows users to securely monitor or manage systems from anywhere, even if they are spread across multiple Hardware Management Consoles. user can view system details, including status, hardware messages, memory, processors, and more.

Mainframe tutorial and refresher apps available include:

- **Mainframe IBM Interview QA** from Programmerworld, which gives 600+ interview questions.
- **Mainframe Tips** from Bhooshan Suresh Rao Mane, which provides mainframe tips for COBOL, JCL, Db2, VSAM, and CICS.
- **Mainframe Quiz** also from Bhooshan Suresh Rao Mane, which has quiz questions for COBOL, JCL, VSAM, Db2, and CICS.

- **JCL Tutorial** a free guide to Job Control Language.

And there are lots more like that. I've no idea how useful they are, but there must be a need for them or people wouldn't keep releasing them.

It's good to know that your mobile device can be a useful resource for working on a mainframe. And it's handy to know that while you're waiting for a plane or friends to show up, you can sharpen and hone your mainframe skills on an app on your phone or tablet.

## Mainframe user groups

The IBM mainframe world has attracted numerous user organizations and special interest groups (SIGs). Most hold regular meetings and conferences, often with satellite groups and chapters throughout the world. Here are a few of them:

- **SHARE**. The oldest (1955) and probably most influential IBM user organization with SIGs focusing on various aspects of IBM software, hardware and security. Known as GUIDE/SHARE in Europe.  
share.org  
gse.org  
gse.org.uk/
- **zNextGen** is part of SHARE, and invites people who are new to enterprise computing, in a new role with z Systems servers, or working as new z Systems professionals, to participate.  
share.org/Connect/SHARE-Programs/zNextGen
- **CMG**. The Computer Measurement Group is widely supported and specializes in capacity planning and performance issues (mainframe and increasingly distributed). There is a large network of CMG organizations worldwide.  
cmg.org
- **IDUG** – International DB2 User Group.  
idug.org

- **TPFUG** – TPF User Group (yes, it's still out there, handling 5000 transactions per second).  
tpfug.org
- **IBM WebSphere, Liberty, Java & DevOps Community**.  
community.ibm.com/community/user/wasdevops/home
- **International zSeries Oracle SIG** for companies licensed for Oracle on z/Linux and/or z/OS.  
zseriesoraclesig.org

There are also two large user organizations for data center managers with a focus on infrastructure (including mainframe):

- **AFCOM** (afcom.com)
- **7x24 Exchange** (7x24exchange.org)

Apart from the Virtual IMS user group (itech-ed.com/virtualims), regional IMS user groups include the long-established Dallas/Fort Worth group and a number of newer ones. There is also the Virtual CICS user group (itech-ed.com/virtualcics), and the Virtual Db2 user group (itech-ed.com/virtualdb2).

Canada has CIPS, Canada's Association of IT Professionals, which has been in existence since 1958 and can be found at [cips.ca/](http://cips.ca/).