

Koen Decorte



# Reinventing IBM i

The journey from RPG to Python

[www.cdinvest.eu](http://www.cdinvest.eu)

International IBM i ISV and  
IBM business partner .

located in Antwerp, Belgium

Expertise in RPG, SQL,  
Python, HTML, Ai,  
NodeJS, Linux...

Working with IBM i  
and its predecessors  
for more than 40  
year

IBM Champion  
since 2018 and  
CEAC member

Applications : CDErp,  
CDReport CD-Account  
accountancy, CDVts  
and MES.

What others talk about,  
we do.

Who are we ?



# The IBM i legacy

- Decades of reliability, performance, and business continuity
- RPG's central role in mission-critical workloads
- The modernization challenge: staying relevant in a cloud-native, API-driven world

# Why modernize ?

- Need for agility, integration, and new talent
- Limitations of monolithic RPG applications
- Growing ecosystem of open-source tools and frameworks
- Future-proofing business logic and data

# Why Python on IBM i?

- Modern, readable, and widely used language
- Massive ecosystem: data analytics, APIs, automation, AI
- Supported natively on IBM i (via IBM Open Source RPMs)
- Bridges legacy and modern apps seamlessly

# The Modern IBM i Environment

- Linux-like PASE environment
- Access to open-source tooling (pip, virtualenv, etc.)
- Running Python alongside RPG and CL programs
- Integration options: DB2, IFS, REST APIs

# Integration Patterns

- DB2 access: using `ibm_db` or `pyodbc`
- APIs: exposing RPG business logic as REST endpoints
- Hybrid applications: RPG for core logic, Python for UI, data, or analytics

# Migration Strategies

- Incremental modernization: coexistence of RPG and Python
- Refactor & wrap: exposing RPG logic as services
- Rewrite selectively: modernizing high-impact modules
- Governance and version control best practices



# Real-World Example (CRM)

- Organization modernizing an RPG app using Python
- Steps taken, challenges faced, and outcomes
- Key lesson: modernization doesn't mean replacement — it's enhancement

# Building Your Team's Skillset

- Upskilling RPG developers in Python fundamentals
- Using Python to make IBM i more accessible to new talent
- Internal training, pair programming, and community resources

# Closing thoughts

Key takeaway: IBM i isn't legacy — it's evolving

Python enables innovation without disruption



**Thank You**

For more information contact:

Koen Decorte

[kdecorte@cdinvest.be](mailto:kdecorte@cdinvest.be)