James Harris

Reflection Paper 1

As a Data Center Operator at OneMain Financial my job responsibilities include operating the IBM Mainframe, AS-400 I-Series, monitoring FTP status through Axway SecureTransport. This essay reflects on my experiences, the knowledge I have gained, and the challenges I have encountered during this initial training period.
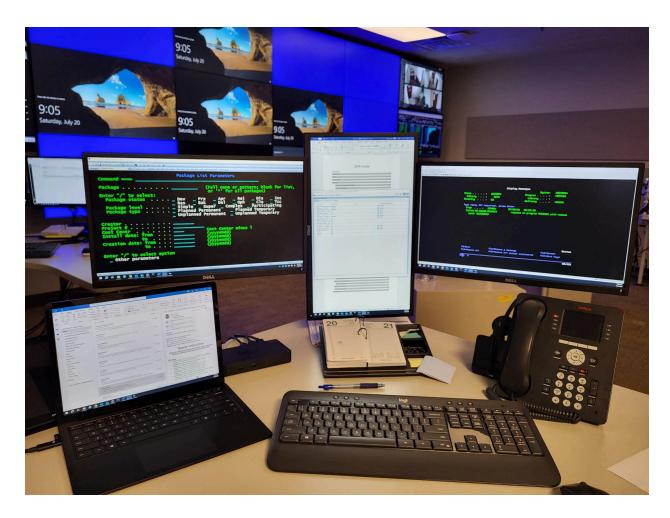
One of the primary learning objectives was to understand the daily duties and responsibilities of a Data Center Operator. My role requires meticulous attention to detail and strict adherence to established protocol. Each day begins with a comprehensive review of system alerts and logs for the past 12 hours, followed by checking my email and Teams chats. Depending on the Julian day of the year there is also day, week, month, specific actions and reports that run.

The IBM Mainframe series is essential for our data center operations. My initial thoughts while learning to navigate and operate the terminal were that it felt like I was learning to type on a keyboard for the first time again. I am normally a very fast typer but the Mainframe terminal is essentially a beefed up command line interface that is very case sensitive. The Mainframe is used to monitor and troubleshoot jobs that have failed to run.

Similarly, the AS-400 I-Series is also important to my daily responsibilities. The interface is also difficult but a little more forgiving than the Mainframe. Daily tasks on the AS-400 include monitoring the automated job scheduler and canceling/restarting failed jobs.

The last component of my role involves monitoring FTP packets through the use of Axway SecureTransport. This program filters all FTPs going across the Mainframe and I-Series to give us at a quick glance information on the file contents and success rate of the FTP. My duty is to resubmit failed FTPS or report transfers that have repeatedly failed.

Over the past 50 hours I have found that initially, the learning curve was very steep. Having had no prior mainframe experience, the complexity of the IBM Mainframe and AS-400 I-Series systems initially felt foreign to me. However, each day I feel as though I am getting better at navigating and recognizing the different menus. Monitoring FTP packets using Axway SecureTransport has been fairly straightforward but understanding the purpose and actions behind each FTPis what throws me through a loop. Overall I am excited for this position as it is my first hybrid work environment and my colleagues are good people.

The photo below captures my work environment at OneMain Financial, where I have spent the first 50 hours learning the Data Center Operator role.