

2. November 2020

With the new External Function feature, you can call compiled programs written in conventional language, as PL1, Assembler, and maybe more.

We closely adapted IBM's TSO/E REXX programming services:

https://www.ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/SSLTBW_2.2.0/com.ibm.zos.v2r2.ikja300/progsrv.htm

How it works:

BREXX Call an external Program

To call an external program, you call it in the same way as a normal BREXX function:

```
say load-module(argument-1,argument-2,...,argument-15)
```

you can pass up to 15 arguments to the external function. The size of the return value can be up to 1024 bytes.

Example

```
Say RXPI()
```

RXPI is a load module that must be accessible within the link list chain. It does not have any arguments.

BREXX Programming Services

BREXX provides control blocks containing the arguments and a 1024 bytes return buffer.

Called Program

The program needs to match the BREXX calling conventions to manage the argument and return value handling. To ease it, we have isolated communication control blocks and internal functions in a **copybook**. Once included, it will transparently provide the functionality to the program.

Example, PI calculation:

```
RXPI:    PROCEDURE (EFPL_PTR)  OPTIONS (MAIN);                00000101
%INCLUDE RXCOMM;                                           00000201
...
```

Benefits

The performance of a compiled program is much higher than in BREXX. So if you have complex mathematical calculations, they will be significantly faster than code implemented in BREXX.

In our testing, we implemented an algorithm for calculating PI with 500 digits. In comparison, it was over 600 times faster than the same algorithm implemented in BREXX.

Example, PI calculation:

```
RXPI:    PROCEDURE (EFPL_PTR)  OPTIONS (MAIN);                00000101
%INCLUDE RXCOMM;                                           00000201
/* -----00000301
* CALCULATE PI USING THE ALGORITHM OF S. RABINOWICZ AND S. WAGON 00000413
* INPUT VARIABLES 00000501
* ARGNUM          CONTAINS NUMBER OF PROVIDED ARGUMENTS (MAX 15) 00000601
* ARG(I)          CONTAINS CONTENTS OF ARGUMENT I (1 TO 15) 00000701
* ARG_LEN(I)     CONTAINS LENGTH OF ARGUMENT I (1 TO 15) 00000801
* RETURN VARIABLES 00000901
* RESULT         CONTAINS RESULT TO BE RETURNED TO BREXX 00001001
*               THE RETURN VALUE MUST NOT EXCEED 1024 BYTES 00001112
* RESULT_LEN     CONTAINS LENGTH OF RETURNED STRING 00001201
```

```

* -----00001301
*/                                00001401
DCL (N, LEN) FIXED BINARY;        00001505
DCL PI CHAR(512) VARYING;         00001611
DCL TEMPI CHAR(9);                00001709
DCL PREDIGIT BIN FIXED(15);       00001806
N = 500;                           00001912
LEN = 10*N / 3;                    00002012
PI='';                              00002112
BEGIN;                              00002212
  DECLARE ( I, J, K, Q, NINES) BIN FIXED(15); 00002312
  DECLARE X FIXED BINARY (31);      00002412
  DECLARE A(LEN) FIXED BINARY (31); 00002512
                                      00002600
A = 2; /* START WITH 2S */          00002712
NINES, PREDIGIT =0; /* FIRST PREDIGIT IS A 0 */ 00002812
DO J = 1 TO N;                       00002912
  Q = 0;                              00003012
  DO I = LEN TO 1 BY -1; /* WORK BACKWARDS */ 00003112
    X = 10*A(I) + Q*I;                00003212
    A(I) = MOD (X, (2*I-1));          00003312
    Q = X / (2*I-1);                 00003412
  END;                                00003512
  A(1) = MOD(Q, 10); Q = Q / 10;     00003612
  IF Q = 9 THEN NINES = NINES + 1;   00003712
  ELSE IF Q = 10 THEN DO;            00003812
    TEMPI=PREDIGIT+1;                00003912
    PI=PI||SUBSTR(TEMPI,9,1);        00004012
    DO K = 1 TO NINES;               00004112
      PI=PI||'0';                    00004212
    END;                              00004312
    PREDIGIT=0;                      00004412
    NINES = 0;                       00004512
  END;                                00004612
  ELSE DO;                            00004712
    TEMPI=PREDIGIT;                  00004812
    PI=PI||SUBSTR(TEMPI,9,1);        00004912
    PREDIGIT = Q;                    00005012
    DO K = 1 TO NINES;               00005112
      PI=PI||'9';                    00005212
    END;                              00005312
    NINES = 0;                       00005412
  END;                                00005512
END;                                  00005610
END ; /* END BEGIN */                00005712
  TEMPI=PREDIGIT;                    00005812
  PI=PI||SUBSTR(TEMPI,9,1);          00005910
RESULT='3.'||SUBSTR(PI,3);           00006012
RESULT_LEN=LENGTH(PI);               00006112
END RXPI;                             00006201

```

BREXX Version of the PI calculation program:

```

/* -----
* PI USING THE ALGORITHM OF S. RABINOWICZ AND S. WAGON
* -----
*/
RXPIR:
  N = 500
  LEN = (10*N/3)%1
  A.=2

```

```

NINES=0
PREDIGIT = 0 /* FIRST PREDIGIT IS A 0 */
DO J = 1 TO N
  Q = 0
  DO I = LEN TO 1 BY -1 /* WORK BACKWARDS */
    X = INT(10*A.I + Q*I)
    A.I = INT(X/(2*I-1))
    Q = X%(2*I-1)
  END
  A.1 = (Q//10)%1
  Q = Q % 10
  IF Q = 9 THEN NINES = NINES + 1
  ELSE IF Q = 10 THEN DO
    PI=PI||PREDIGIT+1
    PI=PI||COPIES('0',NINES)
    PREDIGIT= 0
    NINES = 0
  END
  ELSE DO
    PI=PI||PREDIGIT
    PREDIGIT = Q
    PI=PI||COPIES('9',NINES)
    NINES = 0
  END
END
END
PI=PI||PREDIGIT
RETURN '3.'SUBSTR(PI,3)

```

Comparison of both implementations

PL1 Program:

```

3.14159265358979323846264338327950288419716939937510582097494459230781640628620
8998628034825342117067982148086513282306647093844609550582231725359408128481117
4502841027019385211055596446229489549303819644288109756659334461284756482337867
8316527120190914564856692346034861045432664821339360726024914127372458700660631
5588174881520920962829254091715364367892590360011330530548820466521384146951941
5116094330572703657595919530921861173819326117931051185480744623799627495673518
857527248912279381830119491

```

Elapsed Time 0.49016099452972417 seconds

BREXX Program:

```

3.14159265358979323846264338327950288419716939937510582097494459230781640628620
8998628034825342117067982148086513282306647093844609550582231725359408128481117
4502841027019385211055596446229489549303819644288109756659334461284756482337867
8316527120190914564856692346034861045432664821339360726024914127372458700660631
5588174881520920962829254091715364367892590360011330530548820466521384146951941
5116094330572703657595919530921861173819326117931051185480744623799627495673518
857527248912279381830119491

```

Elapsed Time 300.3606059551243 seconds

For the hardcore programmer

The current content of the Communication Interface follows. The long-winded coding is caused by the functionality of the old PL1-360-F compiler.

```

/* -----00000500
* REXX INTERFACE BLOCK  EFPL 00000600
* -----00000700
*/ 00000800
DCL EFPL_PTR PTR; 00000900

```

```

DCL 1 EFPL BASED(EFPL_PTR),                                00001000
    2 EFPLCOM  FIXED BIN(31),                              00001100
    2 EFPLBARG FIXED BIN(31),                              00001200
    2 EFPLEARG FIXED BIN(31),                              00001300
    2 EFPLFB   FIXED BIN(31),                              00001400
    2 EFPLARG  PTR,                                        00001500
    2 EFPLEVAL PTR;                                        00001600
/* -----00001700
* ARGTABLE ENTRIES AND RELATED DEFINITIONS                00001800
* -----00001900
*/                                                         00002000
DCL EFPLARG_PTR      PTR;                                  00002100
EFPLARG_PTR          = EFPLARG;                          00002200
DCL 1 ARGTABLE BASED(EFPLARG_PTR),                        00002300
    2 ARGTABLE_ENTRY(15),                                00002402
    3 ARGSTRING_PTR  PTR,                                00002500
    3 ARGSTRING_LENGTH FIXED BIN(31);                    00002600
                                                         00002704
DCL ARGNUM          BIN FIXED(31);                       00002810
DCL ARG_LEN(15)     BIN FIXED(31);                       00002908
DCL ARG(15)         CHAR(255) VARYING;                   00003010
                                                         00003104
DCL ARG_PTR PTR;                                         00003200
DCL ARGSTRING CHAR(255) BASED(ARG_PTR);                  00003300
/* -----00003400
* EVALUATION BLOCK: EVALBLOCK                            00003500
* -----00003600
*/                                                         00003700
DCL EFPLEVAL_ADR_PTR PTR;                                00003800
DCL EFPLEVAL_PTR    PTR;                                00003900
EFPLEVAL_ADR_PTR    = EFPLEVAL;                         00004000
                                                         00004104
DCL 1 EVALBLOCK_ADR BASED(EFPLEVAL_ADR_PTR),              00004200
    2 EFPLEVAL_ADR PTR;                                  00004300
                                                         00004400
EFPLEVAL_PTR = EFPLEVAL_ADR;                            00004500
                                                         00004600
DCL 1 EVALBLOCK BASED(EFPLEVAL_PTR),                     00004700
    2 EVALBLOCK_EVPAD1 FIXED BIN(31),                    00004800
    2 EVALBLOCK_EVSIZE FIXED BIN(31),                    00004900
    2 EVALBLOCK_EVLEN  FIXED BIN(31),                    00005000
    2 EVALBLOCK_EVPAD2 FIXED BIN(31),                    00005100
    2 EVALBLOCK_EVDATA CHAR(256);                        00005200
                                                         00005300
DCL EVDATA_PTR PTR;                                      00005400
DCL EVDATLN_PTR PTR;                                    00005500
                                                         00005600
EVDATA_PTR = ADDR(EVALBLOCK_EVDATA);                    00005700
EVDATLN_PTR = ADDR(EVALBLOCK_EVLEN);                    00005800
                                                         00005900
DCL RESULT CHAR(1024) BASED (EVDATA_PTR);                00006009
DCL RESULT_LEN  BIN FIXED(31) BASED(EVDATLN_PTR);        00006100
                                                         00006200
RESULT_LEN = 1;                                         00006300
/* -----00006400
* COPY BREXX PARMS INTO PL1 STRUCTURE                    00006503
* -----00006600
*/                                                         00006703
DCL AI BIN FIXED(31);                                    00006804
                                                         00006904
DO AI=1 TO 15 ;                                         00007004
    ARG_PTR = ARGSTRING_PTR(AI);                          00007103

```

ARG_LEN(AI) = ARGSTRING_LENGTH(AI);	00007208
IF ARG_LEN(AI) <= 0 THEN ARG(AI) = '';	00007308
ELSE DO	00007403
ARG(AI) = SUBSTR(ARGSTRING, 1, ARG_LEN(AI));	00007508
ARGNUM=AI;	00007605
END;	00007705
END;	00007803