

# Robot/CONSOLE and Robot/ALERT Help Standardize and Simplify

by Erin Titcomb

The people at Everence Financial are committed to providing their clients with knowledgeable, experienced advice on their key financial decisions. They also understand the importance of having a rock-solid IT operations structure to support that commitment.

Everence (formerly Mennonite Mutual Aid [MMA] and Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union) is located in Goshen, IN, about three hours from Chicago. Founded in 1945 by the Mennonite Church, it grew out of a long tradition of church communities sharing resources with each other. Today, Everence representatives offer a wide range of financial, banking, and insurance services to help individuals and businesses integrate faith and core values into financial decisions.

## Using Resources Effectively

In their own words, “Everence is a financial services organization based on the idea that it is possible to incorporate your faith and values with your decisions about money.” They actively promote the importance of using assets effectively, including their own. Their Operations department has embraced that ideal by implementing the Robot automation products from Help/Systems to standardize their core processing and simplify their IT environment.

John Nafziger, Technical Services Operations Supervisor, has been with Everence over 15 years, long enough to witness the benefits of automating their IBM i environment. The Robot solutions have allowed them to automate complex activities and streamline their daily workflow. As John explains, “There’s really just one way to describe our experience with the Robot products—reliability. We can count on these products to make our jobs easier. For me that sums it up.”

## Automated Message Management and Monitoring

Robot/CONSOLE<sup>®</sup>, the message management solution, monitors system console messages and automatically responds to them, redirects them, or suppresses them, according to Everence’s customized preferences. And, by monitoring the QSYSOPR message queue, Robot/CONSOLE can identify security, printer, and communication errors, as well as hardware and application failures.

John elaborates, “We run insurance administration software from a health claims management system and their server needs to be running at all times for our user interface to work. Recently, one of the jobs running in QSYSWRK went



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down when nobody was around. As a result, the users couldn't access their interface. So, we set up Robot/CONSOLE to monitor the job. When the problem happened again, Robot/CONSOLE sent me a message immediately. This time, I resolved the issue before the users even noticed a problem. Robot/CONSOLE monitors the system automatically—it's extremely helpful.”

### Automation Is Even Easier With OPAL

Everence manages messages using Robot/CONSOLE message sets and OPAL® (OPERator Assistance Language®), Robot/CONSOLE's powerful operations language that helps them handle automation issues. As John explains, “We developed message sets to automate responses to recurring issues. For example, we have an OPAL table-driven program set up to automatically increment the file size when physical files reach their maximum. When we receive the customary error message, Robot/CONSOLE replies with a standard response. The job continues uninterrupted and we don't have additional downtime. We also use Robot/CONSOLE to monitor our printers and to suppress messages; we created a message set with a list of the messages I don't need to know about. This frees me to deal with the important ones.”

### Automated Notification Saves Time

The Operations team found Robot/ALERT® to be a critical component of effective message management. They use it to send text, e-mail, or pager messages in reaction to job events, allowing recipients to quickly and easily monitor the situation.

John describes Everence's notification process. “I have a cell phone with me 24/7 and the system is set up to notify me immediately for important issues. If issues aren't urgent, Robot/ALERT sends me an e-mail. When I go on vacation, I have the system send messages to my backup. I don't get many pages, and when I do, I can deal with the situation immediately.

“Recently, we had an issue with errors during our billing process. We used Robot/CONSOLE to standardize message responses and that resolved it. I still want to be aware of the situation when it occurs, and Robot/ALERT keeps me in the loop so I don't get a surprise page at 3:30 a.m.”

### The Key To Automation

Robot/ALERT and Robot/CONSOLE are just part of the mix of Help/Systems products that Everence uses—including Robot/SCHEDULE®, Robot/SCHEDULE Enterprise®, Robot/REPLAY®, and Robot/NETWORK®—to make their operations run smoothly. As John explains, “By implementing the Robot products, we completely eliminated our night shift. We used to have an operator work until the backup was done, often near midnight. We've automated all of that. The way the Robot products allow us to control jobs across machines and handle complex scheduling has been our key to automation.”

### Easy To Use and Great Support

John and the Operations team are also very pleased with how easy the Robot products are to implement and use. “The products are so user-friendly and intuitive, most of our learning has been on-the-job training. I've also consulted the manuals, which are quite helpful, and Help/Systems Technical Support is top notch. I would advise anyone to make good use of the Support team, especially early on in the automation process—we're definitely glad we did.”

### The bottom line for Everence:

Standardization and simplification is easy when you automate with the products from Help/Systems.