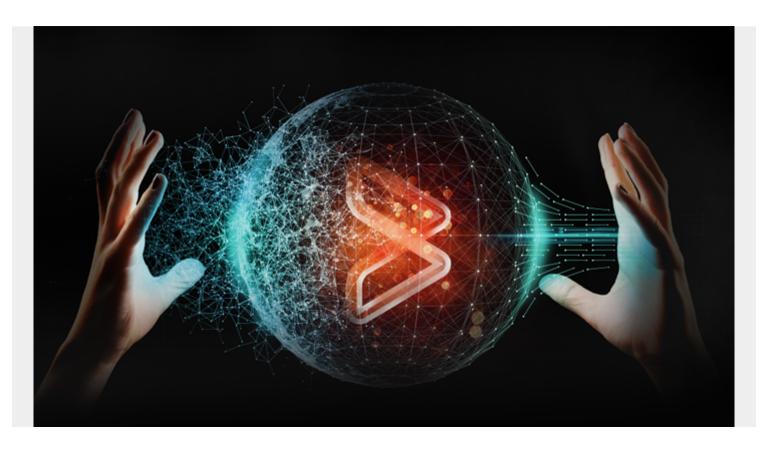# COBOL: READY FOR THE NEXT 60 YEARS

Overview: COBOL may be 60 years old, but it is far from antiquated. The history and current uses of the language provide useful lessons for our own lives. COBOL has remained relevant, stayed current, and leveraged past successes to help make the mainframe an indispensable platform for business and government not only today, but for the foreseeable future.

In 2019, COBOL and I shared a milestone birthday—we both turned 60. Recently, I read an article about COBOL being antiquated. Really, since when did something become antiquated because it turned 60? After all, consider our leading politicians. So, I decided to take a look at what it means to be 60 and be recognized for everything that has brought you the knowledge to be the leader you are today.

Stay Relevant

Staying up to date is the most critical component of technology today; it allows you to avoid technical debt while continuing to provide the most resilient processing available. When I achieved my technology degree in 1984, I could have stayed frozen in time and never learned another thing in technology. But that approach would have definitely made me antiquated in today's world. Fast forward to today; constant research and engagement with leading technologists and integrating

with top technologies keeps me on the leading edge with my peers. But, my years in the industry have taught me valuable lessons…it's about the citizen and about leveraging your resources to increase quality, velocity and efficiency.

> *"Shiny new technology may be fun at first, but we need to do what works and works well."*

How does my dear 60-year-old friend COBOL stay relevant? Take a look at the release history to see what new features—including Continuous Delivery—help COBOL stay relevant and harness the capabilities unleashed by the IBM z15.

Stay Current

I grew up in the '70s. Ah, the fashion, the music, the cars… Even if I stayed relevant with my research and technology interactions today, it does nothing if I don't apply what I learned. Currency is critical in technology. If you do not keep your systems and services up to date with today's releases and apply today's methodologies, guess what you are? Yep—antiquated. Mainframe programs should be optimized to meet the needs of the Digital Economy and the best way to optimize your COBOL programs is to migrate them to a newer version of COBOL. If you don't you are missing out on new features and compile options.

Recently, I visited a customer who just five years ago was a state leader in information technology. Leadership changed and operations stood still. They were one operating system release behind and multiple releases behind in the software they purchased from multiple vendors. It was like going back in time, and yes, we have to fight that battle every day. If you do not stay current, you will quickly become irrelevant.

Leverage What Works

> *"We are not the 60-year-olds from our parents' generation."*

We stay relevant and current. My day-to day-work includes visiting multiple states to attend events from speaking engagements to technology celebrations to networking with leaders from across governments. And yet I apply what I have learned from each and every one of my sixty years on this earth. It is a culmination of experiences and modifying what works… and eliminating what does not.

Going Forward

It sounds a little funny, but as medical technology continues to improve, who knows? After all, look at everything that has changed in my 60 years. I started this career just as PCs were first introduced to the market, and today my main access point for technology services is through my cell phone. But the mainframe is still behind the technology. In fact, looking at businesses worldwide, 92 of the top 100 banks, 23 of the 25 largest airlines, and the 10 largest insurers use the mainframe to process transactions. Overall, 80% of the world's corporate data resides or originates on mainframes. I rely on industry experts to leverage what works best for their processing environment—and they tell me it's the mainframe.

Sixty years old and antiquated? Take a look again and get those facts straight. COBOL is the most

up-to-date programming language in the technology arena today, running on the most securable, highest processing capability zSeries platform on the market. Don't believe me? Let's do a quick video chat and debate that face-to-face. I'm ready whenever you are!