62% of mainframes now run web-enabled applications, new Macro 4 research reveals

… but users are relying on expensive customized web interfaces rather than using third party software or other shortcuts to deliver mainframe web access

Crawley, UK, November 24 – At least 62% of IBM mainframe users polled in a new survey say their organization has web enabled some of their mainframe applications, with 63% of those saying a key driver was the increased productivity that web-based mainframe access delivers. Most (70%) have chosen to develop their own customized web interfaces for applications rather than using third party software or other faster, lower cost approaches.

The findings come from a survey by software and services company Macro 4, a division of UNICOM® Global. The research highlights the following benefits for
web enabling mainframe applications:

- *'Increasing productivity by allowing users to access the mainframe while travelling, working from home or out of office hours'* (cited by 63% of the sample)
- *'Making it easier to allow customers and partners to access mainframe applications'* (50%)
- *'Increasing ease of use for staff who are unfamiliar with the mainframe'* (47%)
- *'Reducing the cost of training and educating staff who are unfamiliar with the mainframe'* (41%)
- *'Delivering cost savings by reducing dependency on terminal emulation software'* (27%)

Lynda Kershaw, marketing manager at Macro 4, said, "There are many good reasons for web enabling mainframe applications as our survey highlights. Users on the go expect mobile access to just about any application they work with and vital online customer services like banking and insurance often need access to the mainframe. Web access also offers a more user-friendly alternative to traditional 'green screen' command line interfaces."

A surprising finding from the survey was that few mainframe users are turning to dedicated software or other shortcuts that can web enable their applications, or acknowledge that web enablement could cut terminal emulation costs.

"Creating a customized web interface for a mainframe application soaks up time and resources and creates extra pressure for companies already suffering from mainframe skills shortages," explained Kershaw. "There are also risks associated with making changes to your core applications, so you need to think carefully before going down this route."

One shortcut is to use session management software with a browser interface, such as [Tubes](#) from Macro 4, as an instant way of web enabling mainframe applications, without changing the underlying application or creating a new interface. The original 3270 user interface is automatically transformed into a browser interface that responds to mouse clicks and touch screens so that it can be used on a PC or mobile device.

There are additional options for customization such as merging several screens into one to make navigation faster and easier. Drop-downs and buttons can be added to replace commands, which reduces the need for user training, for example.

Commenting on the fact that less than a third (27%) of the survey sample quoted reduced terminal emulation costs as a benefit of web enabling applications, Kershaw said:

"Mainframe customers often have hundreds or even thousands of staff using terminal emulation software to access mainframe applications from PCs and laptops, amounting to significant license costs. So it was surprising that few of those we polled see web enabling mainframe applications as a way to slash those costs."

Macro 4 ran the survey of 65 IBM mainframe users in November 2015 at the [GSE UK Conference](#) held by GUIDE SHARE EUROPE (GSE), the premier IBM User Group in Europe.

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About Macro 4 www.macro4.com
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