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RPG Compares and Sequencing

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[Carsten Flensburg](#)

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The AS/400's RPG compilers offer some interesting options for controlling the way characters are compared or sorted when you run a program. If a specific sort sequence has already been applied to a file read by the program, the file opcodes used against the file (CHAIN, SETLL, SETGT, READE, and READPE) work in accordance with the file's sort attributes (shown in [Figure 2A](#)).

To download the
code for this issue,
[click here](#).

If you want the behavior of RPG's compare opcodes (ANDxx, CABxx, CASxx, COMP, DOU, DOUxx, DOW, DOWxx, IF, IFxx, ORxx, WHEN, and WHENxx) to match the behavior of the file opcodes, you can use RPG's ALTSEQ/SRTSEQ keywords to accomplish this.

The ALTSEQ/SRTSEQ keywords also let you ignore case and handle national-language special characters in compare (sequence checking), array sorting (SORTA), and lookup (LOOKUP) operations. Specify ALTSEQ(*NONE) on the D-spec to exclude an array from H-spec alternate-collating sequence.

To see this tip in action, compile the source in [Figure 2B](#) and then place the program in debug mode using the STRDBG (Start Debug) command. Then use the step function (F10) to step through the program and see how the execution is affected by the settings applied.

Carsten Flensburg, Programmer/Analyst, Novasol Data AS, Copenhagen, Denmark

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