

What is the recommended method for specifying isCOBOL framework properties?

Question:

From the documentation it seemed that the best or recommended practice is to put all property settings in `c:/etc/iscobol.properties`. However, with this method it is difficult to maintain different settings for different programs. I have to edit the `c:/etc/iscobol.properties` file every time I want to switch programs.

What is the recommended solution?

Answer:

Unless `iscobol.conf.only` is set (or the corresponding command line option `-only` is used, where applicable), isCOBOL can use several configurations at the same time. They are loaded in the following order, and the properties they contain are set in the order in which they appear in the respective files:

1. system environment variables
2. `/etc/iscobol.properties`
3. `iscobol.properties` located in the user home directory
4. `iscobol.properties` located in the Java Classpath
5. `-Discobol.conf=ownconfigurationfile` or, where applicable, `-c ownconfiguration file` set at the command line
6. `$ISCOBOL/iscobol.properties`
7. `-Discobol.*` at command line
8. `-Discobol.remote.conf=remoteconfigurationfile` and `-c remoteconfigurationfile` (set at the client command line in Thin Client environment)

In addition, you can specify:

`-Discobol.conf=class_name`

In this case `iscobol.properties` is loaded from the same directory as `class_name`

or

`-Discobol.conf=http://www.mydomain.com/iscobol.properties`

If a property is set in multiple places, isCOBOL will use the last read value.

Veryant recommends putting only the global property settings in `c:/etc/iscobol.properties`. These are the properties you want all programs for all purposes to use on the machine. It is common practice to put only the `iscobol.license` property in `c:/etc/iscobol.properties`.

For other properties there are two methods for reducing confusion:

1. The safest thing is to only have one `iscobol.properties` file on your machine, the one in `c:/etc`. Then create property files with different names for different purposes and specify their names on the command line when you run the program (See below for an example).
2. Have separate object directories for each application. Put the application specific properties in a file named `iscobol.properties` in the object directory for that application. When you run a program make sure that `CLASSPATH` does not contain object directories for more than one application program (otherwise only the `iscobol.properties` file for the first application would be read).

You can specify a properties file on the command line as follows where `FILENAME` is the name of the properties file and `PROGRAM` is the name of the program:

```
isrun -J-Discobol.conf=FILENAME PROGRAM
```

or

```
java -Discobol.conf=FILENAME com.iscobol.rts.Isrun PROGRAM
```

or simply

```
java -Discobol.conf=FILENAME PROGRAM
```

When using the debugger, the properties must be specified after the `-d` or debugger class name (`GraphDebugger`).

```
isrun -d -Discobol.conf=FILENAME PROGRAM
```

or

```
java com.iscobol.debugger.GraphDebugger -Discobol.conf=FILENAME PROGRAM
```

Notice that the properties file is specified as the value of the `iscobol.conf` property. You can also specify other properties and "environment" variables for the COBOL program directly on the command line.

For example, to setup your program for remote debugging you could set `iscobol.rundebug=2` as follows:

```
isrun -J-Discobol.rundebug=2 PROGRAM
```

or

```
java -Discobol.rundebug=2 com.iscobol.rts.Isrun PROGRAM
```

For another example, suppose your program has

```
ACCEPT ENV FROM ENVIRONMENT "env_var"
```

You could set `env_var` on the command line as follows:

```
isrun -J-Discobol.env_var=VALUE PROGRAM
```

or

java -Discobol.env_var=VALUE com.iscobol.rts.Isrun PROGRAM

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