Dear [FirstName] [LastName],

This is an announcement from SIT COBOL (Smart Interpreter Training COBOL).

You are receiving this e-mail because you purchased SIT COBOL, registered as a user, or contacted us.

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1. SIT COBOL/Standard V11 R2.4.0 has been released
2. Free-form reference format (COBOL 2002) is now supported

SIT COBOL/Standard V11 R2.4.0 released

On October 11, 2026, we released R2.4.0, the latest version of SIT COBOL/Standard.

It is available from the download page:
https://sit-cobol-e.sit11.com/download

This release mainly adds new features. The additions are as follows.

Added features

- **Support for the free-form reference format (COBOL 2002).** The conventional fixed format (sequence number area, indicator area, Area A/B, columns up to 72) continues to work as before.
- In the COBOL editor, pasting a COBOL file (.cob/.cbl/.txt) copied in Explorer (Ctrl+V) or dropping it onto the editor now opens that file.
- The COBOL editor starts faster.

Fixes

- None

[Details] About the free-form reference format

SIT COBOL automatically detects, program by program, whether a source is written in fixed or free format. Copybooks (COPY text) are detected file by file as well, so a fixed-format program can use a free-format copybook and vice versa. In free format you can write, for example:

```
*> Code may start at any column. There is no line length limit.
IDENTIFICATION DIVISION.
PROGRAM-ID. SAMPLE.
PROCEDURE DIVISION.
MAIN-PARA.
    DISPLAY "HELLO"-          *> To continue a literal, end the line with
            " WORLD".         *>   quote+hyphen and start the next with a quote
    DISPLAY "HELLO" &         *> The concatenation operator "&" also works,
            " WORLD".         *>   as before
    STOP RUN.
```

- Comments use "*>" (comment lines and inline comments); debugging lines use ">>D".
- To specify the format explicitly, write >>SOURCE FORMAT IS FREE (or FIXED) at the top of the file, or use the format=free / format=fixed option of the command version.
- The COBOL editor shows the detected format at the right end of the status bar; click it to choose auto detect / fixed / free.
- To convert your existing fixed-format programs to free format, use Edit > "Convert fixed format to free format" in the COBOL editor, or "sitcobol_bat.exe to_free=xxx.cob" in the command version (a folder can also be given). The original files are not modified.

See "General Rules" > "Free-form reference format" in the manual for details.

Differences between the Standard and Pro editions

Please see:
https://sit-cobol-e.sit11.com/information/

Manual

Please see:
https://sit-cobol-e.sit11.com/manual

Sample programs

Available from the download page:
https://sit-cobol-e.sit11.com/download

For more information, please visit the SIT COBOL website.

Thank you.

SIT11 Corp.
SIT COBOL Support
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