Welcome to the Virtual CICS user group newsletter. The Virtual CICS user group at www.fundi.com/virtualcics is an independently-operated vendor-neutral site run by and for the CICS user community.

Virtual CICS user group presentation

The latest webinar from the Virtual CICS user group was entitled, "Solving the CICS problem when CICS isn't the cause", and was presented by Jim Martin the United States representative for Fundi Software.

Jim has worked with IMS since the early 1970s. He started with IBM in 1967 and worked as a Program Support Representative, Systems Engineer, and member of the IMS Critical situation team. He left IBM to join BMC Software as a product author and became Corporate Product Architect.
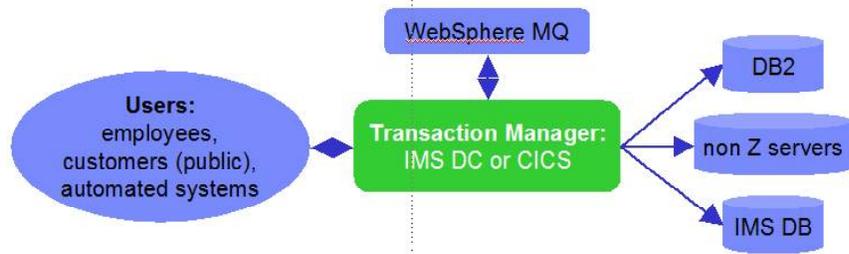

Figure 2: 2011 users are customers; data is complex, often distributed

In his ten years at BMC Software Jim was responsible for several products designed to provide IMS customer's with enhanced IMS solutions. He's the holder of 11 US patents on IMS and database-related techniques. He's also had several articles published in industry magazines, such as *ESJ*, *Technical Support*
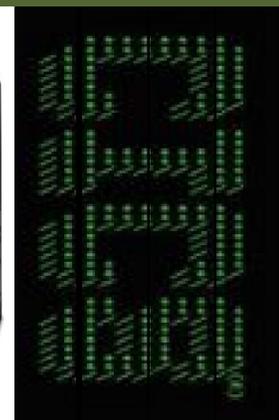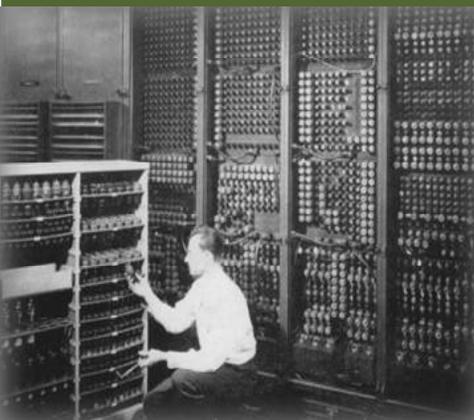
magazine, and *DM Review*.

Jim started his presentation by reminding us how much more complicated life was today compared to 20 years ago (Figure 1), saying that
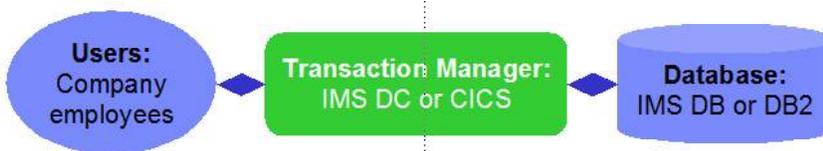
Figure 1: 1980s working - in-house users only; simple data, single data store

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data users can often also be customers; also the data is complex, and often distributed (see Figure 2). A transaction can often involve CICS, IMS, DB2 MQ or any combination. It may look like four transactions, but in effect it is only one. This is the problem many users face because they have separate monitoring software for each subsystem.

This is where IBM's Transactional Analysis Workbench comes in. It's a transaction analysis framework for System z. It's not transaction manager specific, rather it leverages current IBM tools for transaction analysis. It isn't IMS or CICS specific, but the first release provides more synergy with the existing tools for those transaction managers
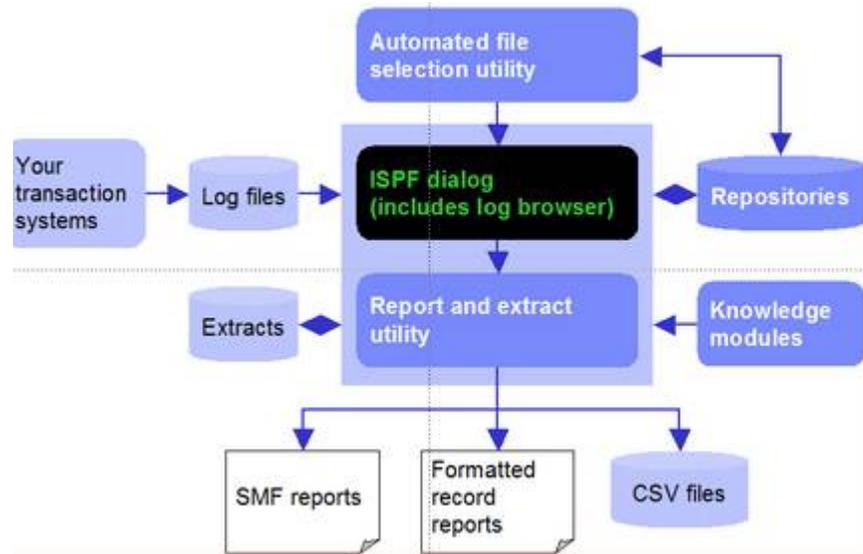
The product automates the

Figure 4: Components

collection of the data needed for problem analysis (see Figure 3). It provides a session manager to manage problem analysis through its life-cycle.

Jim informed the user group that the goals of Transaction Analysis Workbench are:

- Enable higher productivity by less skilled staff, reduce problem analysis time, and serve as a training tool for new support staff

- Allow the 'First Responder' to determine the most likely source of the problem so that the right subject matter expert can work on the problem

- Allow for 'deep dive' problem determination via synergy with other IBM tools

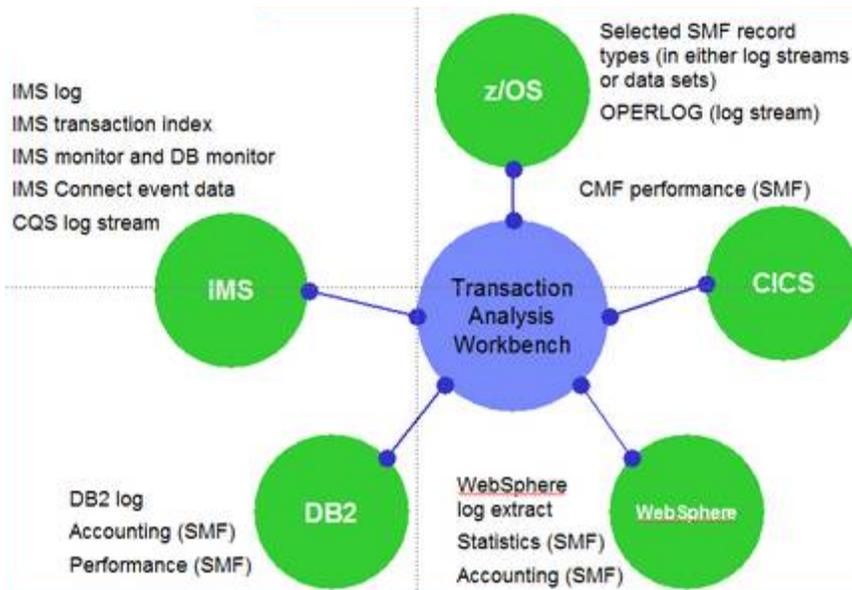 – Subject matter experts may also use tools not supported by the Workbench.

Figure 4 illustrates the way that using Transaction Analysis Workbench can incorporate information from

Figure 3: Supported logs

other sources. Giving:

- Integrated CICS and IMS performance management and problem determination

- System and subsystem performance that directly affects CICS and IMS

- Integrated CICS-DBCTL performance reporting using both CICS and IMS performance data

Transaction Analysis Workbench can provide a window into other subsystems that impact CICS and IMS performance. And by using information from SMF, OPERLOG, and other data sources such as CICS-DBCTL transaction performance, IMS address space resource consumption, WebSphere address space performance, MQ and DB2 external subsystem (ESAF) performance, APPC transaction performance, and IRLM long-lock activity, it can give an insight into what's changed and where the problem might be originating.

The Session Manager approach to problem management provides a way to:

- Register the problem

- Automatically locate the files required to diagnose the problem: IMS, DB2, CICS, SMF, OPERLOG etc.

- Resume from where you left off, or from a previous save-point.

- Write reminder notes and information as you go.

- Re-assign the problem to the appropriate subject-matter-expert.

- Use PI-style interactive analysis to look at related logs and other subsystem events via SMF, OPERLOG etc.

- Run reports that are specific to the problem.

So, for example, a poor response for CICS and IMS users may be due to an increase the work being done by DB2 or MQ. Using the tool allows yesterday's figures to be compared against today's values and huge differences to be identified and the 'culprit' subsystem can be 'fixed'.

Excessive deadlocks and time-outs may be the cause of transaction failures.

Jim showed the user group meeting a number of real-life examples to illustrate the point.

He summarized Transaction Analysis Workbench by saying that it's a companion to the popular IMS and CICS Performance Analyzer tools, allowing systems programmers to look outside of IMS and CICS for the source of any problems.

Jim informed us that the product exploits the wealth of system performance and activity information available in SMF, OPERLOG, and event traces. He also explained that it allows medium-skilled analysts to perform expert analysis of their enterprise.

Anyone interested in more information can find out more at the IBM DB2 and IMS Tools Web site: www.ibm.com/software/data/db2imstools/. Alternatively, you can e-mail Fundi Software's US representative, Jim Martin at jim_martin@fundi.com.au.

A copy of Jim's presentation is available for download from the Virtual CICS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/virtualcics/presentations/Transaction_Analysis_WorkbenchMay11.pdf.

You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/2011-04-12meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

The following meeting dates have been arranged for the Virtual CICS user group:

- 12 July 2011 – Jeff Geminder, CA. "Cross-enterprise application performance

monitoring and CICS-specific drill-down". To register for this meeting you need to go to https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/465173329.

- 13 September 2011 – Charles Jones, Seagull Software. "CICS TS 4.2: Leveraging event processing and high-performance Java".

We will be using Citrix GoToMeeting for the user group meetings.

Recent CICS articles

CICS Transaction Server for z/OS Version 4.2 by Nick Garrod & John Knutson in *z/Journal* (June/July 2011). You can find the article at www.mainframezone.com/it-management/cics-transaction-server-for-z-os-version-4.2.

CICS and the Open Transaction Environment by Russ Evans in *z/Journal (April/May 2011).* You can find the article at www.mainframezone.com/it-management/cics-and-the-open-transaction-environment.

CICS news

H&W has announced SYSB-II Version 6.4, which allows users to keep mainframe CICS applications online while batch updates VSAM files. This ability allows organizations to increase

business capacity, extend the life of crucial business systems, and obtain updated information more often to make better decisions and ensure customer satisfaction. Performance enhancements gained from features designed to avoid unnecessary update locking, optimize use of Read Ahead Buffer space, and take advantage of syncpoint optimization. Full details can be found at www.hwcs.com/news_events/news_releases/newsrelease_SYSB-II_64.pdf.

Rocket Software has announced that its LegaSuite SOA integration and application modernization software will support CICS TS V4.2 when it becomes generally available. Among the new features is a Java-based CICS service flow runtime engine that offloads SOA processing to an IBM System z Application Assist Processor (zAAP). This leverages the latest multithreaded 64-bit JVM server in CICS TS 4.2. Full details can be found at www.rocketsoftware.com/seagull/about/news/press-releases/ibm-cics-soa-integration-support.

IBM has decided to run another open beta program for the new release of CICS TS Version 4 Release 2. The objectives of providing an open beta program for this release are: to give early

access to the new function in CICS TS V4.2; to provide feedback to IBM; to test the code in various and unique environments; to ensure that the code functions as designed. Full details can be found at www-01.ibm.com/software/htp/cics/tserver/v42/openbeta/index.html.