Virtual CICS user group: Newsletter 13

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, "No more Cold Start surprises – how Deployment Analysis in IBM CICS Configuration Manager for z/OS saves your bacon", and was presented by Fundi Software's Reuben Andrews.

Reuben is the architect of IBM CICS Configuration Manager for z/OS and has been at the forefront of the product's development since its inception.

Reuben Andrews started the presentation by asking why do a Cold Start analysis (see Figure 1). His graph illustrated that as the number of changes increased and time went by, the risk to the organization increased. However, frequently resetting the baseline reduces the risk, but may be disruptive.
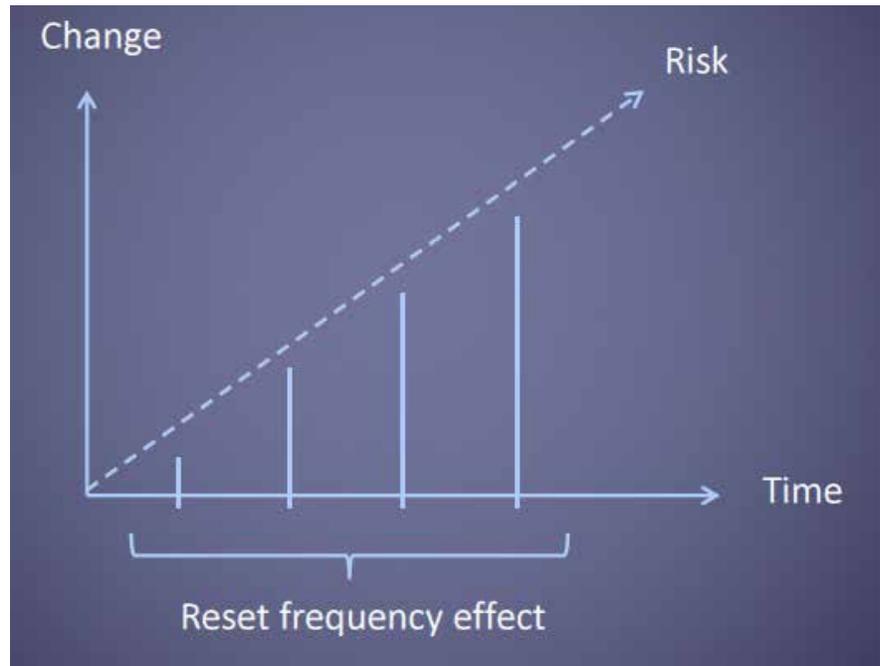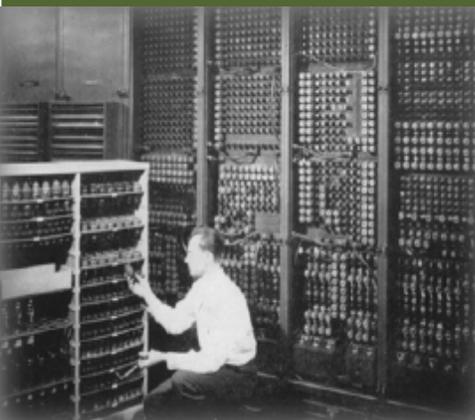

Figure 1: Why do a Cold Start analysis

Changes may occur in either the CICS definitions, or possibly in the runtime, by temporary installs or SET commands. If problems arise, discovering this at Cold Start forces you into RECOVER mode – trying to fix things up when at the
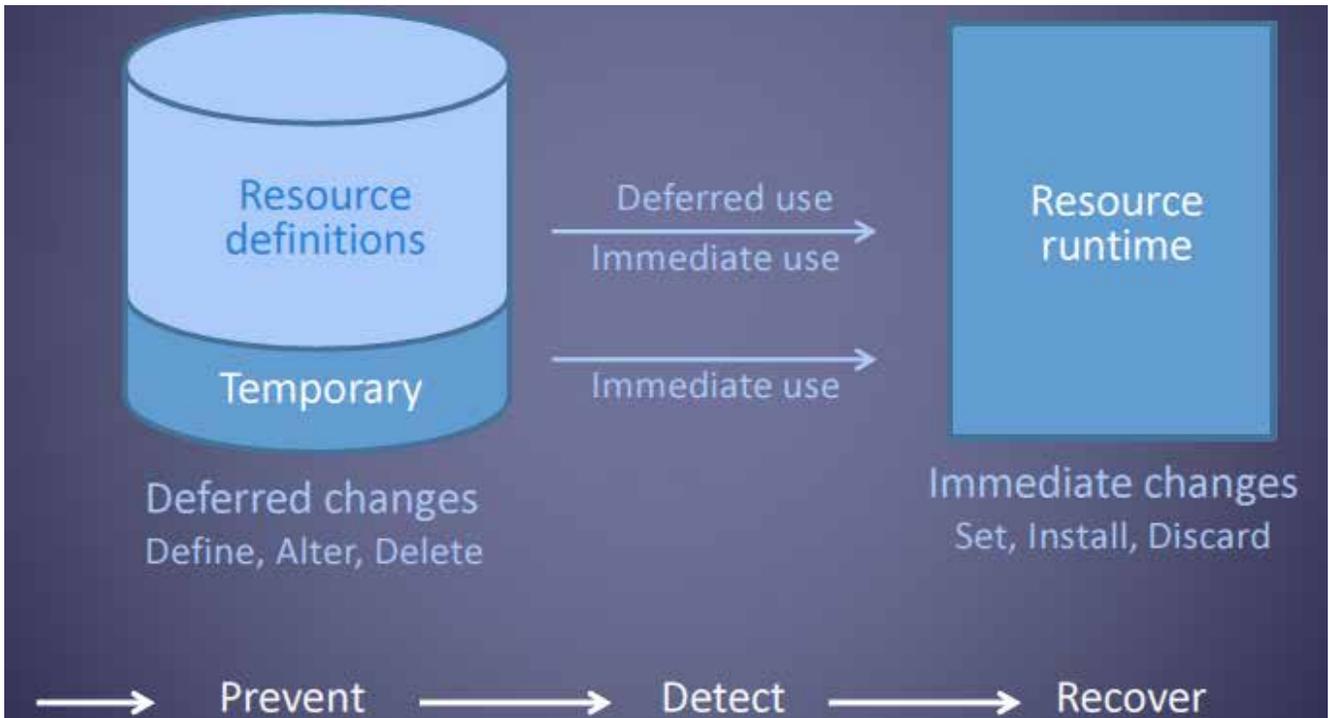
Figure 2: The bacon saving paradigm

Reuben asked: "wouldn't it be better to detect problems earlier?" (see Figure 2).

Sites want to detect stuff that's new, missing, or different, but there are other conditions that impact those states. Reuben told us that some customers have a DIY approach to predict what is going to happen. By cloning regions then doing a Cold Start, they get results. But the time and effort may be high.

Reuben Andrews informed the user group that Martians come in two forms:

- Results focused – those that just want the answer.

- Adventure focused – those that want to enjoy the ride

For the first group, CICS CM ColdStartCompare gives them what they want. It's immediate, comprehensive, and has the analytical data they want.

For the adventurous Martians, let's start the journal by collecting the runtime specimens. CICS CM has its own collectors, running as agents in the runtime regions. It can also use CPSM to do the data collection.

Candidates are the definitions to be installed at Cold Start. These can be drawn from a CSD file, a CPSM context, or both. CICS CM will merge the candidates into a composite list, simulating what CICS and CPSM do at region start-up.

CICS CM allows users to play with the GRPLIST and GROUP parameters used for CSD resource definition candidacy. This allows users to play *What if* games to change the selected definitions, without having to change the real GRPLISTs

```
                          Referential Integrity Verification

Report                              List or                    Loc        Collection       Group
Item   ID Name       Type       Group   RESDESC  Code Condition Rem Ena VV Type             Seq
------ -- ---------- ---------- ------- -------- ---- ---------------- --- --- -- --------------- -----
    20 02 T51M       CONNECTION CCVLINKS CCM510  0941 CCV5441E         LOC ENA    CANDIDATES-CSD     63
            Attribute:  SENDPFX       Value:   mt
            Attribute:  SESSION       Value:   T42T
            Attribute:  GROUP         Value:   CCVLINKS
    21 02 CCVBACK    FILE           CCV510   CCM510  0951 CCV5451W     LOC ENA    CANDIDATES-CSD     60
            Attribute:  LSRPOOLNUM    Value:   1
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  68 Line(s) not Displayed
    55 02 CCVM       TDQUEUE      CCV510   CCM510  0966 CCV5466W       LOC N/A    CANDIDATES-CSD     60
            Attribute:  FACILITYID    Value:   CCVM
    56 02 CSZX       TDQUEUE      DFHDCTG  DFHLIST 0952 CCV5452W       LOC N/A    CANDIDATES-CSD      1
            Attribute:  TRANSID       Value:   CZUX

                       Referential Integrity Verification Messages
Message     Explanation
---------   -----------------------------------------------------------------------
CCV5441E    Duplicate SESSION or modegroup-name for CONNECTION (DFHZC
CCV5451W    No LSRPOOL for ID.
CCV5452W    TRANSACTION does not exist.
CCV5466W    CONNECTION does not exist.
```

Comprehensive.
More than CEDA Check.

Figure 3: Identifying errors

used at Cold Start.

Before comparing the runtime resources with the selected candidates, there is some refinement required. For example:

- Resources drawn from CPSM might be modified using RASGNDEF overrides, or for CSD resources, understanding if a definition is local/remote (matches local SYSID) may be important.

- Definitional attributes like DESCRIPTION can't be compared, neither can some runtime-only attributes like a File's ACCESSMETHOD.

- Some attributes may be blank on the definition, and at runtime default to an environmental

value (like IPCONN NETWORKID).

- Referential integrity checks may render a candidate as uninstallable.

- Duplicate candidates must be graded as winners or losers, possibly impacted by uninstallable conditions.

Figure 3 is an example of Referential Integrity warnings and failures. Each observation is given an error message to explain the failing further. This checking is very comprehensive, and goes so much further than CEDA CHECK.

When duplicates are found, some will be selected as the candidate winner, and others as the loser. It's not as simple

as first-in wins. For some types, it's last wins. If the first found is uninstallable, then perhaps the second becomes the winner. The good news is that CICS CM works this out for you.

Reuben showed other examples of where the software could identify problems people might be experiencing, and how easy it was to see what was going on, including the source of new definitions, missing definitions, and mismatched definitions.

The number of observations within a Cold Start analysis report can be many thousand. However much of this could be noise – conditions accepted as normal. The various report sections are given a 2-digit

class number, like 00 for Matched Definitions, or 09 for Referential Integrity checks. A 2-digit sub-class number, like 01 for enabled/disabled state differences, is also assigned.

Using a code enables CICS CM to apply filtering rules to remove unwanted output from the report. By using the code (the why) along with the resource's Name, Type, and Group, a series of filtering statements can be prepared.

When CICS CM performs its analysis, report conditions matching the filter criteria are excluded from the report. The reduced report results allow users to focus on conditions of importance to them.

When the Cold Start Compare report is run, the CCVBMAIN utility can create filter statements for the report conditions found. These can then be used as input for the next job run, to avoid reviewing unwanted output.

An interesting idea is to create a baseline filter file. Immediately after a region's Cold Start, run a CICS CM Cold Start Compare report. Collect the filter statements created by CCVBMAIN, and keep these for later.

Next, when you do analysis, run the Cold Start Compare again, feeding into the run the saved filtering statements. You'll find the

report output far less wieldy to manage.

Reuben Andrews concluded by saying that with CICS CM, you can avoid Cold Start Surprises. You don't need to be in the Cold Start Recover mode because you can detect errors before they happen.

What's more, CICS CM makes it easy. It's fast, and you don't need to stop your regions, just build the job and start running.

A copy of Reuben's presentation is available for download from the Virtual CICS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/ virtualcics/presentations/ ColdStartAnalysisMar13.pdf.

You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi. com/virtualims/ presentations/2013-03- 05meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

The following meeting date has been arranged for the Virtual CICS user group:

- On 14 May 2013 at 10:30am CDT, James Alexander, Director of Technical Services at HostBridge Technology, will be talking about Integrating Life-Comm,

Life/70, or other CICS resident insurance and annuity applications with distributed applications utilizing the ACORD standard.

- On 9 July we'll be hearing from Matter of Fact Software's Stephen Mitchell.

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

Recent CICS articles

The CICS Web Services Assistant and Support for Variable Arrays by Russ Evans in *Enterprise Tech Journal* (Winter 2013). You can find the article at http:// enterprisesystemsmedia. com/article/the-cics-web-services-assistant-and-support-for-variable-arrays.

CICS news

CASI Software has announced JES2RSS, mainframe software for publishing z/OS report content via RSS Web feeds. It takes report content directly from the JES queue or designated datasets, transforms them into Web friendly formats (PDF, HTML, etc) and publishes the results so an RSS reader on any device – laptop, tablet, smartphone – can retrieve the published content.

Web feed publication of mainframe report content can be immediately deployed without any mainframe TSO or CICS access requirement. More information can be found at http://www.casisoft. com/Products/J2X/J2XRSS. aspx.

★   ★   ★

Attachmate's MobileNow initiative, along with updates to Verastream, will help IT let smartphone and tablet users access mainframe data, applications, and more. The list of Attachmate's mobile-

optimized capabilities across MobileNow, Verastream Host Integrator, and VeraStream Process Designer includes: allowing IT to design and support customizable mobile UIs for host applications, including those using COBOL copybooks; and integration with multiple backend mainframe resources including 3230, 3270, and CICS. Full details can be found at http://www. attachmate.com/Press/ PressReleases/verastream-jan-22-2013.htm.

Don't forget to Like us on Facebook at: http://www.facebook.com/VirtualCICS

About the Virtual CICS user group

The Virtual CICS user group was established as a way for individuals using IBM's CICS TS systems to exchange information, learn new techniques, and advance their skills with the product.

The Web site at www. fundi.com/virtualcics provides a central point for coordinating periodic meetings (which contain technically-oriented topics presented in a webinar format), and provides articles, discussions, links, and other resources of interest to IBM CICS practitioners. Anyone with an interest in CICS is welcome to join the Virtual CICS user group and share in the knowledge exchange.

To share ideas, and for further information, contact trevor@itech-ed.com.

The Virtual CICS user group is free to its members.