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, "Transaction Analysis Workbench for System z Version 1.2: see the big picture from end-to-end", and was presented by Fundi Software's James Martin.

James has four years of experience working with IBM Transaction Analysis Workbench for system z and its various instrumentation data sources including: CICS, IMS, DB2, MQ, and z/OS Operlog. James now transfers the knowledge he
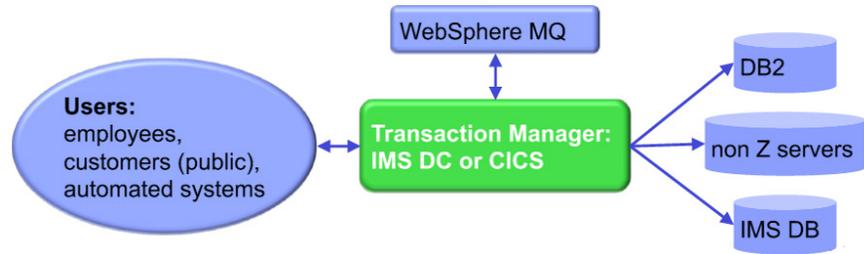

Figure 2: Today users are customers; data is complex, often distributed

has acquired using technical training sessions that focus on all facets of Workbench functionality including product: customization, reporting, and interactive analysis sessions.
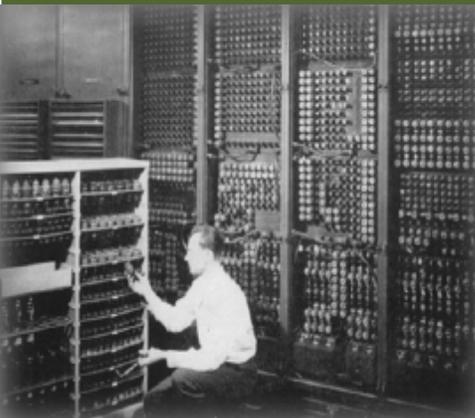
James started his presentation by reminding us

how much more complicated life is today compared to 20 years ago (see Figure 1), saying that data users can often also be customers; also the data is complex, and often distributed (see Figure

Figure 1: 1980s working ─ simple data, single data store
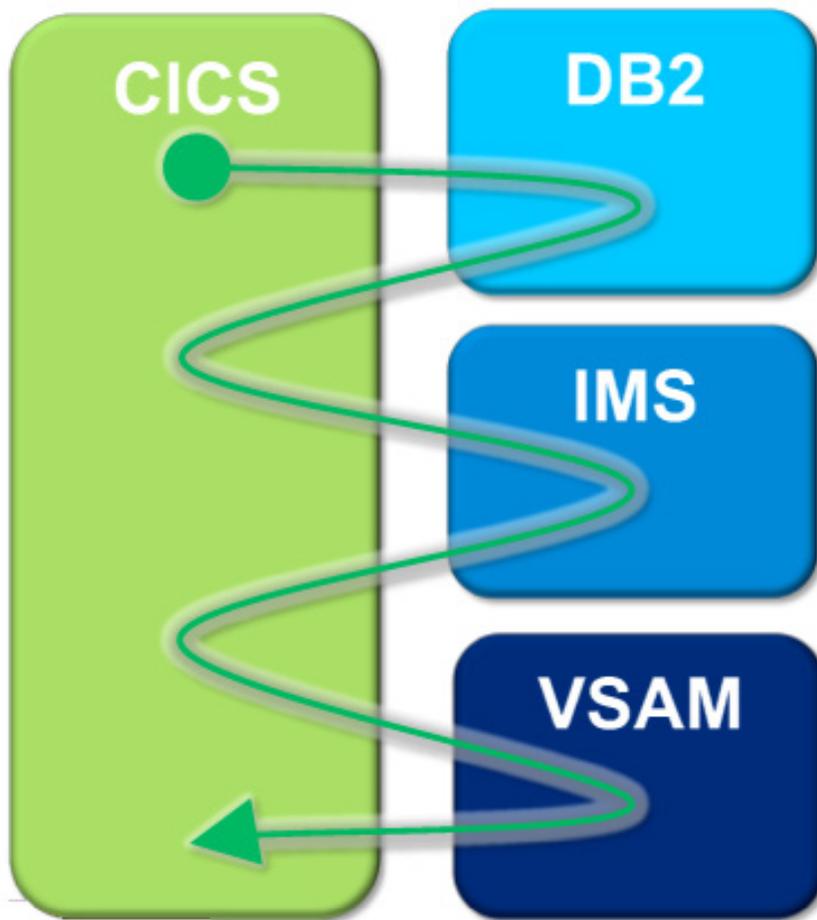
Contents:

Figure 3: Where did the delay occur?

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. Figure 3 illustrates the difficulty in finding where a delay has come from.

Cross support is key with fewer staff. Support is difficult because Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) may be in silos, cross training may be difficult, it takes too much time using current tools,

and staff can be unable or unwilling to cooperate.

A good cross-platform tool will conserve SMEs' time (a valuable, limited resource), and the transparency of information (everyone using the correct data from the same time period).

And SMEs need to see the big picture and the benefit of collaboration, which leads to reduced time to resolution, more SME time focused on problem resolution, and cross-training of first responders and SMEs.

This is where IBM's

Transactional Analysis Workbench for System z comes in. It's a tool for problems in the big picture for "first responders" and subject-matter experts and for SMEs in different areas. It provides a life-cycle view of transaction activity across subsystems and changes the way problem resolution is performed by ensuring everyone is looking at the same transactional data. It goes in-depth. It uses SMF, trace, and log records to follow transaction flow. And it allows for the better assignment of problems to the correct group. So you have improved confidence that problems are assigned to the appropriate experts.

James informed the user group that Workbench merges logs from multiple subsystems to present a consolidated, cross-subsystem view of a transaction's life cycle. The interactive ISPF dialog log browser provides a consistent interface to all log types from all subsystems (finding, navigating, filtering, formatting – when you know how to work with one log type, you know how to work with them all). It provides automated file selection for IMS logs, DB2 logs, and (soon) SMF. There's specific additional support for combined CICS-DBCTL reporting (other combinations coming soon: CICS-DB2,
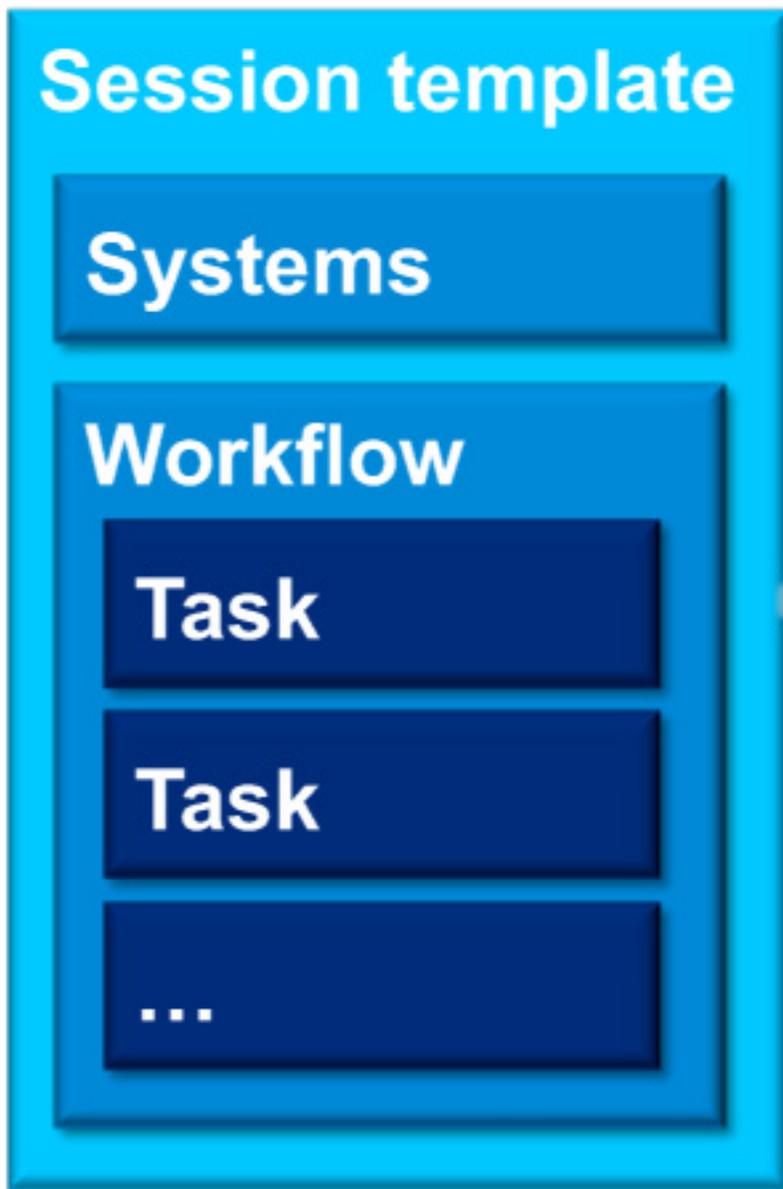
Figure 4: Session templates

IMS-DB2). And there are various SMF record-type-specific batch reports (aimed at transaction analysis).

Transaction Analysis Workbench for System z can help application development teams in many ways. Because application releases must work and perform when deployed, application teams can perform validation testing during roll-out. The evaluation can occur at the transaction level, but what is the cost of performance validation testing? And, what is the cost of a failed roll-out due to poor performance? And does system programming have time to help?

The Application Team may not know how to obtain the performance data and sometimes access to the data is not allowed. They may also have limited or no knowledge of tools that use instrumentation data.

Workbench helps by automating the collection of instrumentation data – the application development teams do not have to acquire those skills. It performs automated reporting of validation testing, and includes reporting through CICS PA and/or IMS PA, in addition to its own reports. It analyses instrumentation data for performance exceptions, and provides easy recognition of validation testing against expected results. It provides transaction life-cycle views of transaction exceptions, identifying what part of the transaction is causing problems. It saves the results of each validation testing run, and facilitates collaboration with system programmers and/or DBAs for help with transaction exception diagnosis.

SMEs can use session templates to populate new sessions with the tasks needed to prepare the problem for evaluation (see Figure 4).

A copy of James's presentation is available for download from the Virtual

CICS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/virtualcics/presentations/CICS_VUG_TAW_Sep14.pdf.

Some additional scenarios are described at www.fundi.com/virtualcics/presentations/AdditionalSep14.pdf.

You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi.com/virtualcics/presentations/2014-09-09meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

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

- On 11 November we have IBM's Wilhelm Mild speaking about CICS Mobile Connectivity Architecture and Design Considerations.

The meeting after that will be on 13 January 2015.

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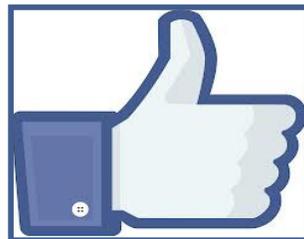
Recent CICS articles

The Evolution of CICS Transaction Server and WebSphere MQ Connectivity by Steve Burghard, Andy Wright, and Mark Woolley in the August/September 2014 edition of *Enterprise*

Tech Journal. You can find the article at *http://enterprisesystemsmedia.com/article/the-evolution-of-cics-transaction-server-and-websphere-mq-connectivity.*

Reach for the Clouds: CICS TS for z/OS V5.2 Adapts to New Technologies by Nick Garrod in the August/September 2014 edition of *Enterprise Tech Journal.* You can find the article at http://enterprisesystemsmedia.com/article/reach-for-the-clouds-cics-ts-for-z-os-v5.2-adapts-to-new-technologies1.

CICS news

BMC Software has announced BMC Subsystem Optimizer for zEnterprise, which removes the traditional requirement that DB2, IMS, and CICS subsystems must reside on the same LPAR to communicate and process workloads. Users can now reduce MLC charges by reconfiguring their subsystem placement across partitions. Full details can be found at http://www.bmc.com/news/press-releases/2014/BMC-Subsystem-Optimizer-Reduces-Mainframe-Software-License-Costs-.html.

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.