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, "Five Compelling Reasons for Creating a CICS Cloud", and was presented by IBM's Matthew Webster.

Matthew is an IBM Senior Technical Staff Member in the CICS Transaction Server for z/OS team, based in Hursley, UK. He holds a BSc in Physics with Computer Science from Southampton University, and has over 25 years of experience as a software engineer at IBM leading a wide range of projects from mainframe to open source. His areas of expertise include CICS, Java, Agile software development, and Cloud technologies. Matthew is a regular blogger, podcaster, and presenter with published articles and papers on CICS and software development.
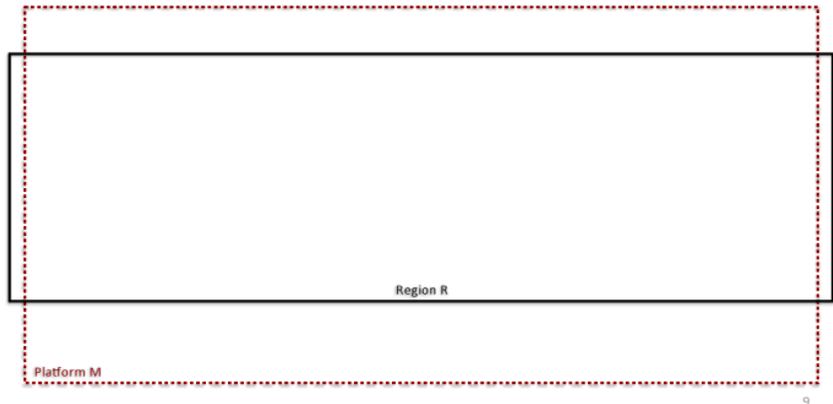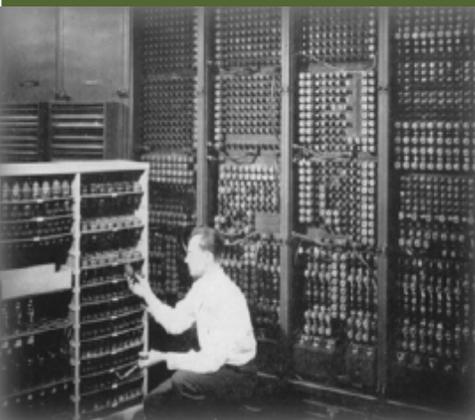
Matthew started his presentation by saying that cloud computing is one of the fastest growing technologies and more applications and services are being provided through the cloud to offer cost-saving and scalability. CICS TS V5 delivers a pattern-based, policy-managed, private CICS cloud

Figure 1: A CICS Platform: abstraction of underlying CICS Region topology to simplify deployment

environment, improving the agility of CICS application
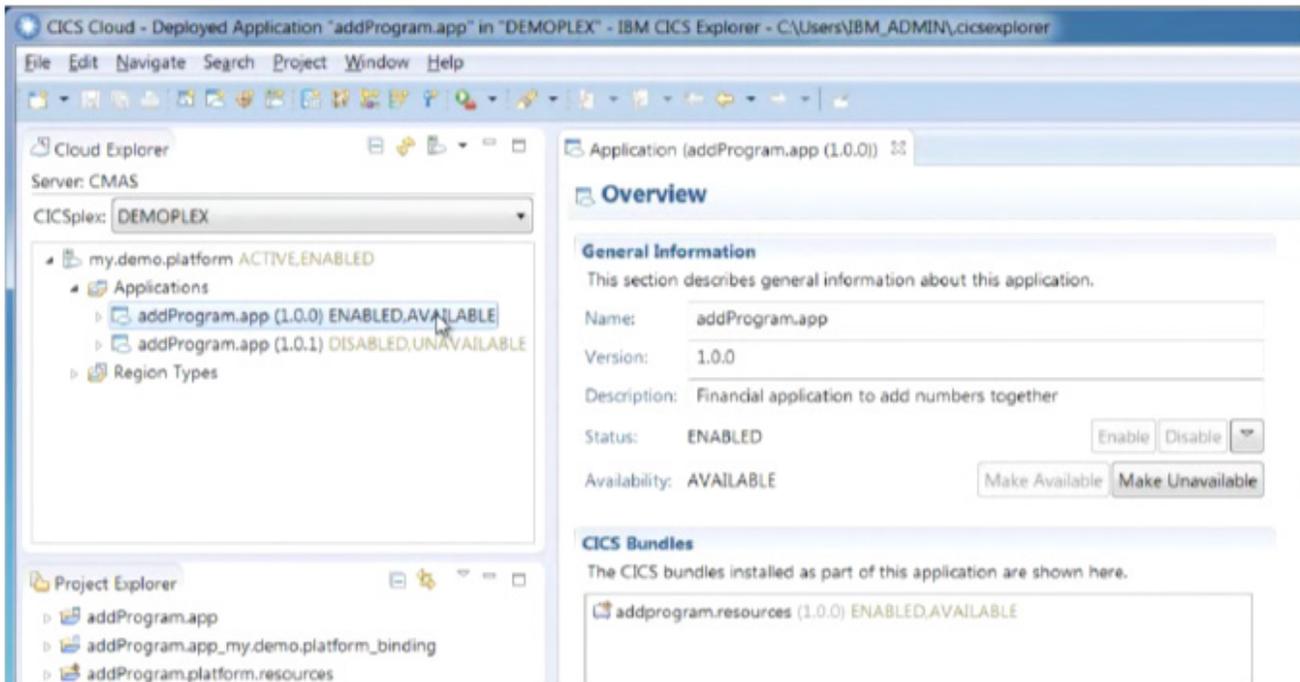
Contents:

Figure 2: Application addProgram.app Version 1.0.0 is enabled and available

deployments while reducing the risk of implementation errors.

Matthew Webster suggested that sites needed to create a CICS cloud because

- Agile methodologies allow developers to increase the rate of change of applications in response to business needs

- IT operations needs to respond by deploying applications into production more frequently while reducing cost and maintaining reliability

- A CICS cloud allows you to deploy new applications, application features, or bug fixes

while minimizing any impact to existing users or requiring additional infrastructure.

Matthew's first scenario was: "The mobile guys need a new feature but I'm concerned about the potential performance impact for the existing high volume Web site. This is a pilot so I really don't want to spin up new regions just to support a few users. I'm also still trying to move the back office users off an old version of the application."

Figure 1 illustrates a CICS platform. A CICS Application now has a name, version, entry point and now resources. This goes in the platform. It's now possible

to have Application Versions 1.0.0 and 1.1.0 hosted on the same Region(s) where each define PROGRAM P. Older versions of PROGRAM P can be retired when users have migrated to newer versions.

Matthew's second scenario was: "I need to apply a hot fix to an application in production but I want to use the same process that I use for my weekly updates so I get an audit trail and correct monitoring data. I really want to make sure it's installed correctly before making it live while the existing version is still being used. Also if the update makes things worse I want to rollback the change as quickly as possible."
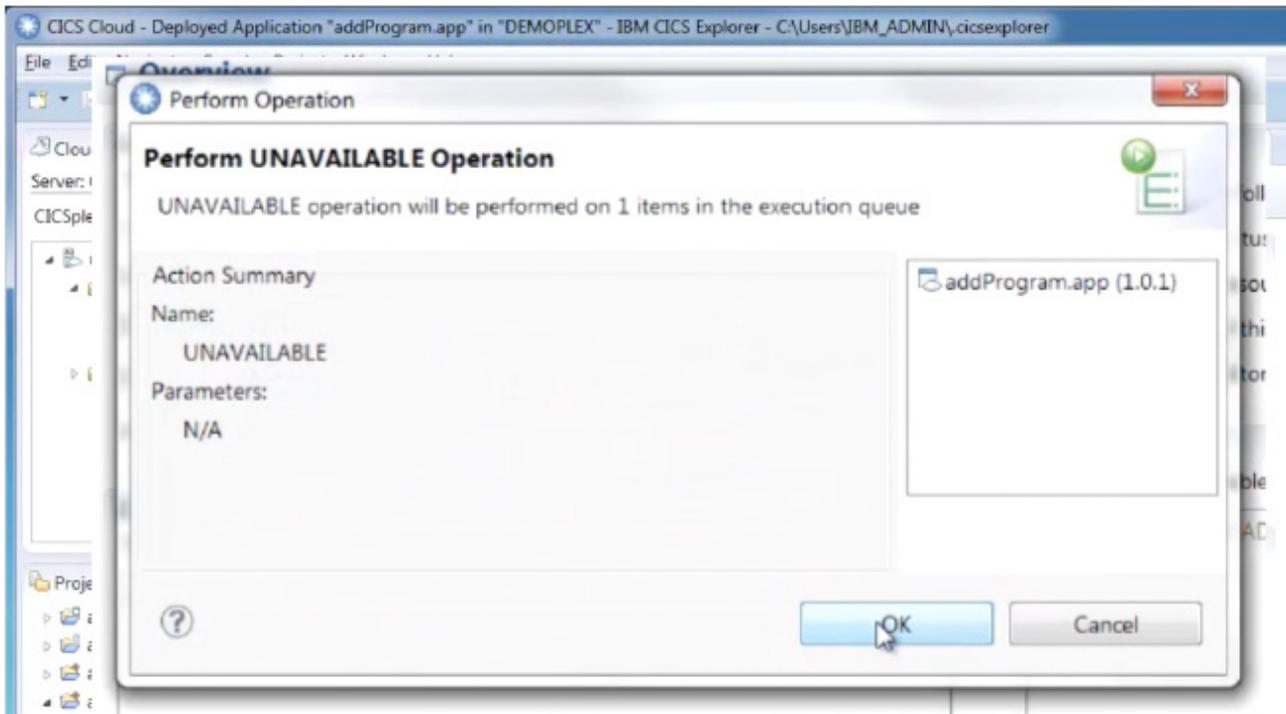
Figure 3: if there is a problem, you can simple make it unavailable to backout the fix

If Application Version 1.0.0 has a bug, users can INSTALL and ENABLE Version 1.0.1, but requests still go to version 1.0.0. User can then make application Version 1.0.1 AVAILABLE so it receives new requests. If there is a problem, users can make Version 1.0.1 UNAVAILABLE to rollback to Version 1.0.0. Figure 2 shows CICS Explorer showing Application addProgram.app Version 1.0.0 is enabled and available. CICS Explorer can then be used to make the changes required. Figure 3 shows there's a problem with Version 1.0.1 so it can be rolled back to Version 1.0.0.

Matthew's third scenario was "When rolling out a new version of an application I want to initially give access to just 10% of my users. That way I can reduce the impact of any potential problems related to either the new features or to the platform because of performance. The requests arrive over MQ so I want to use origin data to route each one to the appropriate application version."

Using the cloud, most users get application Version 1.1.0, but "early access" users get pointed to the latest application Version 1.2.0.

The fourth scenario was: "I have two applications (one of which was developed by a company we acquired) that currently run on different sets of CICS regions. I'd like to take advantage of the recent scalability improvements especially being able to increase MAXTASK. However, I know that there are PROGRAM name clashes which prevent these applications from being hosted together."

It's now possible to run two different programs with the same name in the same region – see Figure 4. Matthew Webster's fifth and final scenario was: "We have spent a lot of time using CICS Interdependency Analyzer (IA) to understand the call structure of one of our applications. This has
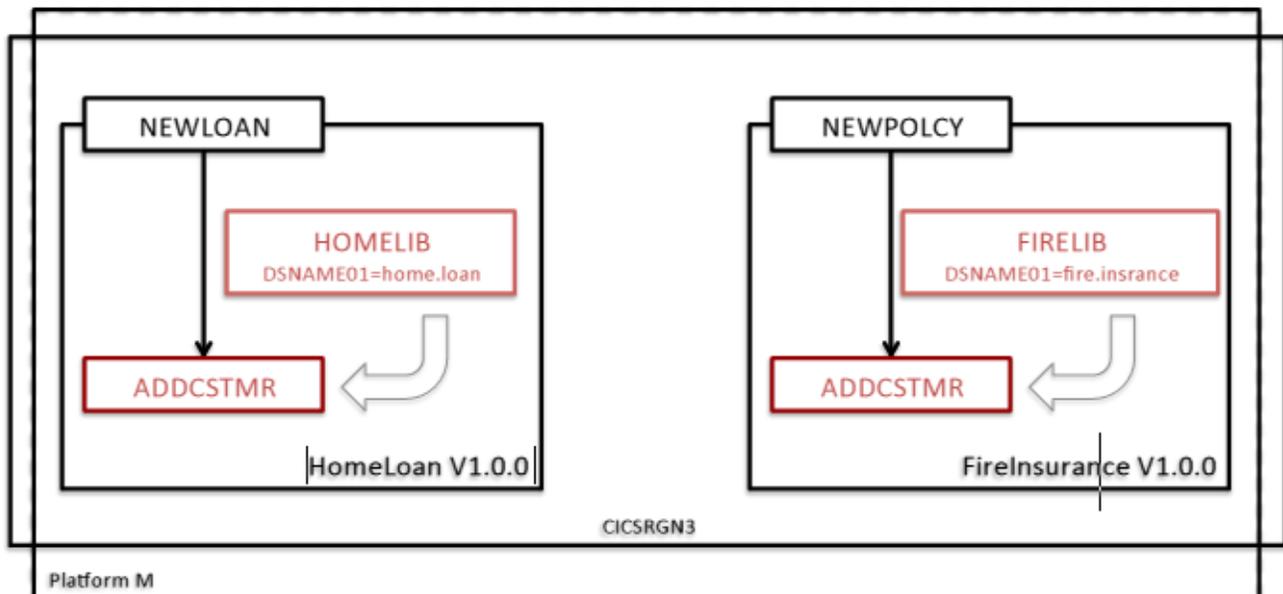
Figure 4: HomeLoan and FireInsurance both with ADDCSTMR installed into the same Region(s)

enabled us to add more validation logic to avoid ABENDs when a copybook changes and someone hasn't recompiled all the right modules. But now we need to ensure no one bypasses these new checks."

Again, Matthew was able to show how this could be done using CICS Cloud Explorer.

IBM's Matthew Webster summarized by saying that sites could use a CICS cloud to deploy new applications, application features, or bug fixes while minimizing any impact to existing users or requiring additional infrastructure:

• Implement the different scenarios using private PROGRAM and LIBRARY resources, the AVAILABLE | UNAVAILABLE application status, and INVOKE APPLICATION API

• Manage CICS cloud with Explorer.

A copy of Matthew's presentation is available for download from the Virtual CICS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/virtualcics/presentations/CICSCloudJan15.pdf.

You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi.com/virtualcics/presentations/2015-01-13meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

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

• On 3 March 2015, we have Fundi Software's Jim Martin talking about, "Solving difficult transaction performance issues in mixed environments".

• On 5 May, we have Eugene Hudders, and his presentation is CICS Tuning 101.

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

CICS news

H&W Computer Systems has announced the release of the 2015 CICS report, which covers the state of CICS now and compares to past results to identify trends. The report analyzes the continued use of business-critical applications through CICS and those applications' relevance in modern uses like mobile and Web. It also considers its relationship to business-critical data, as well as looking at how respondents view its future and examining past predictions for accuracy. The report further reveals variances in usage, based on industry. Full details can be found at http://pages.hwcs.com/cics-report-2015.html.

Compuware has announced Version 12.4 of Abend-AID, its fault management tool. The new release features tighter cross-product integration, modernized utilities, and usability enhancements. There's deeper integration between Abend-AID and File-AID within the Eclipse plug-ins, which facilitates faster problem solving. Abend-AID Fault Analytics now shares common Web services with iStrobe to help users simplify and automate common tasks. Compuware Find & Fix functionality has been expanded to include Batch, IMS, and DB2 components along with existing CICS support.

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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.