



Virtual IMS CONNECTION: Newsletter 2

Welcome to the second Virtual IMS CONNECTION newsletter. Virtual IMS CONNECTION at www.virtualims.com is an independently-operated vendor-neutral site run by and for the IMS user community.

Virtual IMS CONNECTION newsletter

I hope you enjoy reading the Virtual IMS Connection newsletter. I am interested to see whether members of this virtual user group would prefer to have the newsletter sent to them or whether they would prefer to have it available on the Web site for them to look at.

I am aware of “bacn”, which apparently refers to newsletters that you have subscribed to but never have time to read. It seems that e-mail has been divided up into “spam” – the stuff you don’t want – and “ham” – the stuff you do. But on the “ham” side are newsletters that you thought you might be interested in, but you never quite have time to get round to. I don’t want this newsletter to fall into the bacn category.

So, if you do have an opinion one way or the other – yes you want it e-mailed to you or no you prefer to read it on the Web site when you have some spare time – please let me know. You can use the “Contact us” page of the Web site or e-mail me directly at trevor@itech-ed.com.

BTW: if you think I’m making up this bacn stuff, look it up at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacn_\(electronic\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacn_(electronic)).

Virtual IMS CONNECTION presentation

The second webinar from Virtual IMS CONNECTION was entitled “IMS Disaster Recovery Part 1 – Understanding the Issues”, and was presented by Bill Keene, a product author from NEON Enterprise Software.

Bill has over three decades of IMS experience and before joining NEON worked for IBM as the technical leader of the IMS unit within the Dallas Systems Center. Bill is the author of NEON's Eclipse iRecover and Eclipse iChange. .

Bill explained that there were basically three solutions to the problem of disaster recovery – hardware (GDPS, DASD remote copy, and remote tape), software (IMS RSR and E-Net RRDF), and manual (PTAM – Pickup Truck Access Method).

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DASD subsystem function

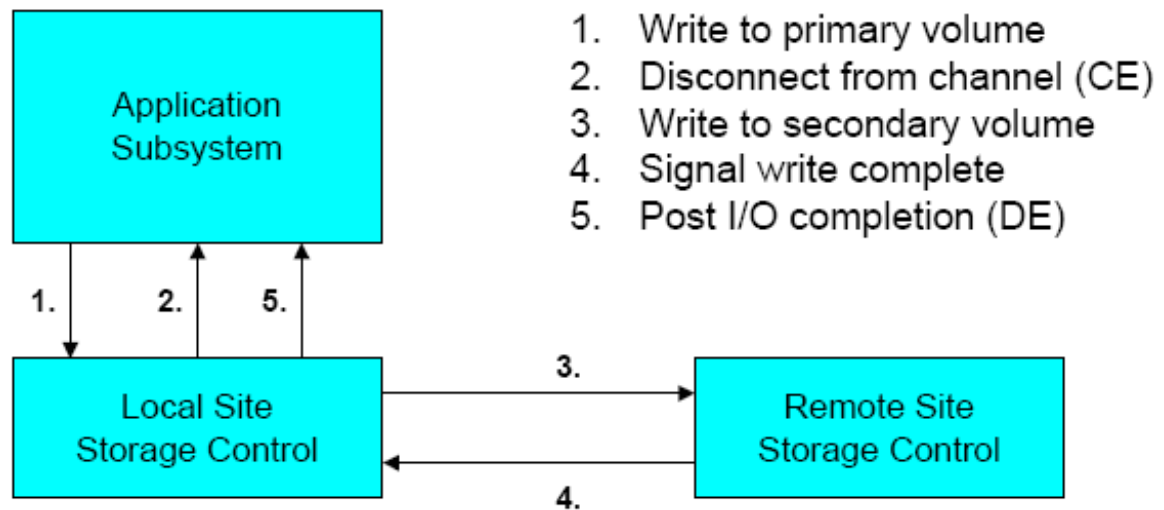


Figure 1: DASD Synchronous Remote Copy (Metro Mirror)

Bill described the objective of IMS disaster recovery was to restore IMS service at a remote location when the local (normal) computing facility is no longer available, and ensure the survival of the business! He also pointed out that remoteness is in the eye of the beholder, but as a general rule, the further away the remote site was, the better.

Disaster recovery methodology is determined by business needs. There are certain questions that have to be answered before deciding on the disaster recovery methodology. Bill suggested that these were:

- How remote is remote (what type of disaster is likely to occur)?
- How much data can a business lose?
- How long can a business go without service?
- What can the business afford?
- Is DR methodology allowed to impact local availability?

Bill's presentation then looked at what is meant by and what the strengths and weaknesses are of Geographically Dispersed Parallel Sysplex, Metro Mirror (see Figure 1)/z/OS Global Mirror (see Figure 2), and Remote tape. He then moved on to discussing the strengths and weaknesses of IMS RSR, E-Net RRDF, and finally Pickup Truck Access Method.

The next part of the presentation looked at disaster recovery requirements. Bill stressed that local system data availability should not be impacted by disaster recovery methodology, and

DASD subsystem / DFSMS function

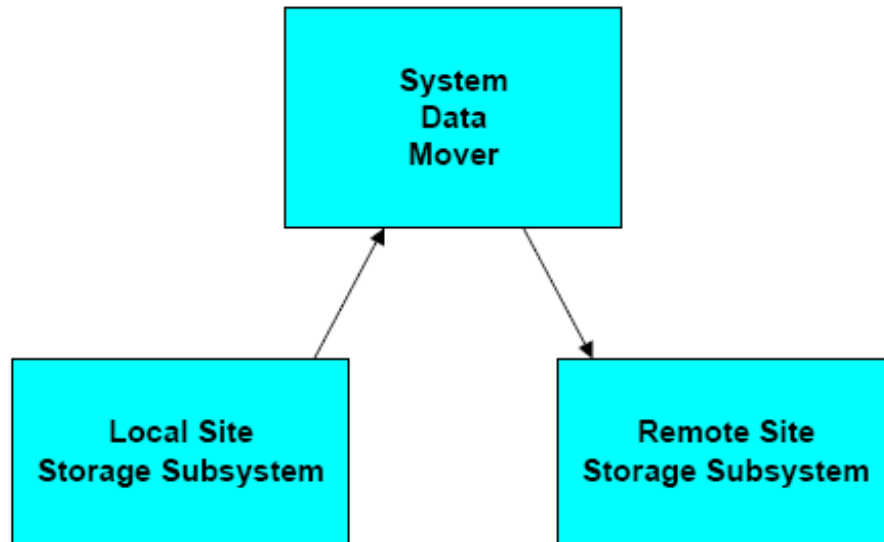


Figure 2: DASD Asynchronous Remote Copy (z/OS Global Mirror)

that RECON conditioning/clean-up operations should be automatic. Looking at database recovery speed, Bill told us that one pass, parallel recovery operations are a necessity, and that image copy, index rebuild, and hashed pointer checking operations need to be performed as part of the recovery process. Other important considerations that were mentioned included the fact that users need complete control over the time to which databases are recovered, and coordinated recovery with DB2 is mandatory.

In his summary, Bill highlighted that all disaster recovery solutions require recovery software that can recover thousands of objects in a single step and survive, recover objects to any point in time, and support multiple recovery points in time if needed. Bill again stressed that recovery solutions need to be designed with disaster recovery in mind.

Arcati Mainframe Yearbook 2008

For the past four years the Arcati has published a Mainframe Yearbook. The 2008 version is now available. The Mainframe Strategy section contains some interesting papers on mainframe trends and directions. There's a complete directory of vendors and consultants, a glossary of terminology, a media guide, and a technical specification section. Perhaps most interestingly of all, in each issue, is the annual user survey of mainframe sites. The Yearbook is freely available in PDF format from Arcati's Web site at www.arcati.com/newyearbook08.

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* steering committee

Like all User Groups, the Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* User Group has a steering committee to ensure that members are getting exactly what they want from the user group. The steering committee's role includes organizing presentations at the bi-monthly meetings and finding speakers to give those presentations.

The steering committee members include:

- Denise Jeffers from Cigna
- IBM's Kevin Wang
- NEON Enterprise Software's Robin Reddick
- GT Software's Dusty Rivers/Alan S Velasquez
- BMC Software's Nick Griffin.

If anyone else would like to be a member of the steering committee please contact me soon at trevor@itech-ed.com or via the Contact Us page of the virtualims.com Web site.

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IBM's IMS newsletter

IBM, as you probably already know, has its own IMS newsletter, which can be accessed via the link on our Web site or by typing <http://www-306.ibm.com/software/data/ims/library/#Newsletters>. The first edition in 2008 – expected to be available end of April – will contain an article about Virtual IMS *CONNECTION*.

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* Tools page

The Tools page on the Web site contains a list of all the products we know of that work with IMS. If you are using a product that isn't on the list, or if you sell a product that we haven't included, please let us know. The list is provided to help members when they come to selecting new software.

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* meeting dates

The following meeting dates have been arranged for the Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* user group:

- **April 8, 2008 – Bill Keene, NEON, IMS disaster recovery preparation – part 2.**
- *June 10, 2008* – John Butterweck, IBM, IMS V10 installation and migration.
- *August 5, 2008* – Dusty Rivers, GT Software, IMS and SOA.

All meetings start at 10:30 CDT (3:30 GMT). All members will be e-mailed the Webex access code and password for each meeting. Members need to log in about five minutes before the meetings starts in order for the Webex connection to complete, and to phone into the freephone number provided so they can join in with the audio component of the meeting.

About Virtual IMS *CONNECTION*

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* is a user group established as a way for individuals using IBM's IMS hierarchical database and transaction processing systems to exchange information, learn new techniques, and advance their skills with the product.

The Web site at www.virtualims.com provides a central point for coordinating periodic meetings (which will be technically-oriented topics presented in a webinar format), and will provide articles, discussions, links, and other resources of interest to IBM IMS practitioners. Anyone with an interest in IMS is welcome to join Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* and share in the knowledge exchange.

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

The Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* user group is free to its members. Various sponsorship opportunities are available to vendors of IMS-related products. Full details of these opportunities and can be found *here*.