Welcome to the new 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* IMS presentation

The latest webinar from Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* was entitled, "Autonomics for your IMS database", and was presented by Nick Griffin from BMC Software.

Like all presentations, Nick started by defining what he was talking about – what is meant by autonomic. He showed how the term had moved from its straighforward biological sense and, following IBM's lead, was now used to refer to a computer system that was capable of self-management – as a way of overcoming the growing complexity of computer system management.

In a self-managing system, the human operator takes on a new role: he does not control the system directly, instead, he defines general policies and rules that serve as an input for the self-management process. This process is defined by the following four functional areas:

- Transactions are high-performing services.

- Self-configuration.

- Self-healing.

- Self-optimization.

Nick suggested that software becomes self-contained in the following ways:

- Self-configuring – automatic configuration of components:

  – able to discover the environment around it.

  – able to adapt to changes in the environment.

- Self-healing – automatic discovery and correction of faults:

  – able to recover from mistakes.

  – able to make adjustments to settings if expected results aren't achieved.

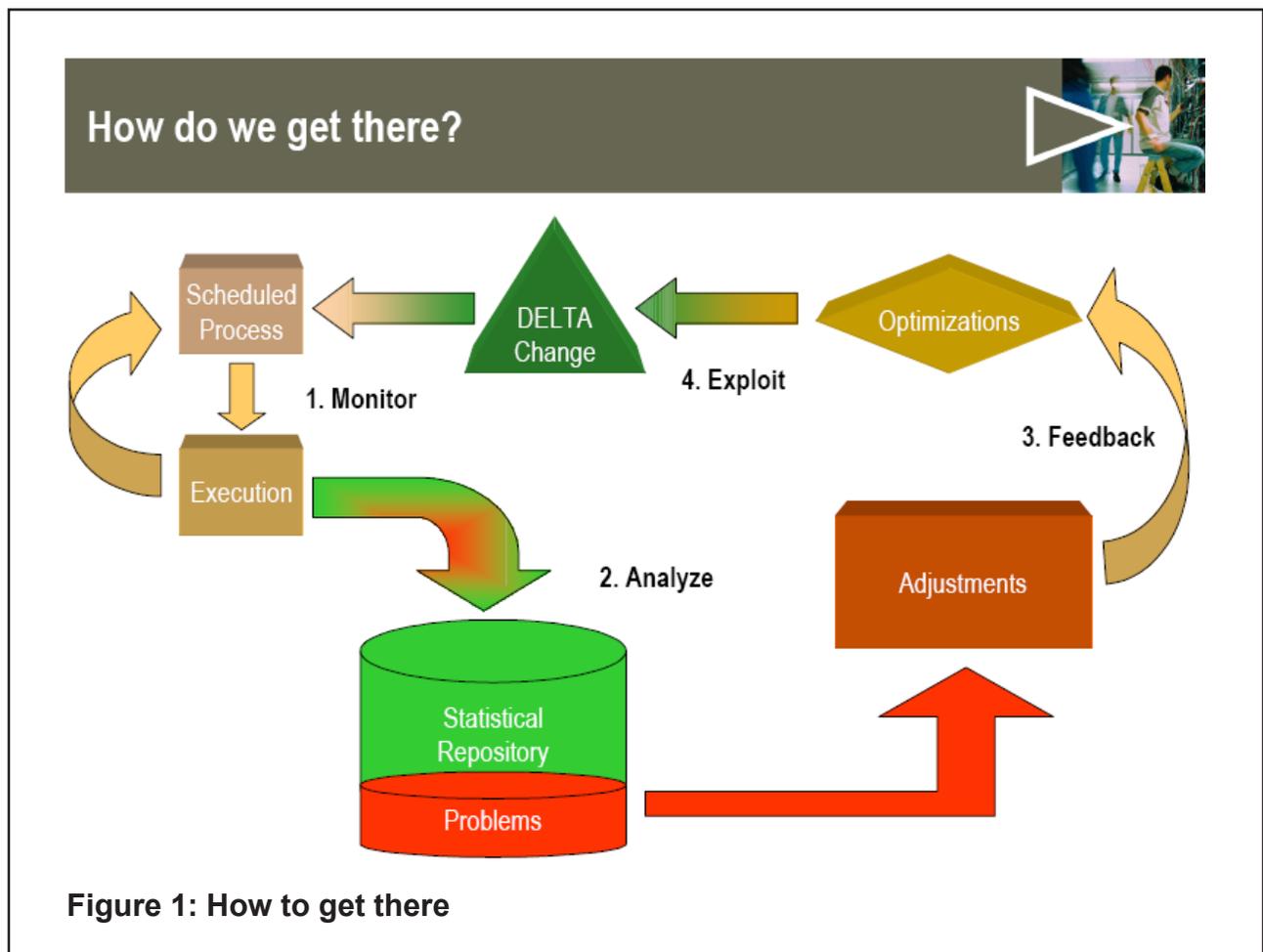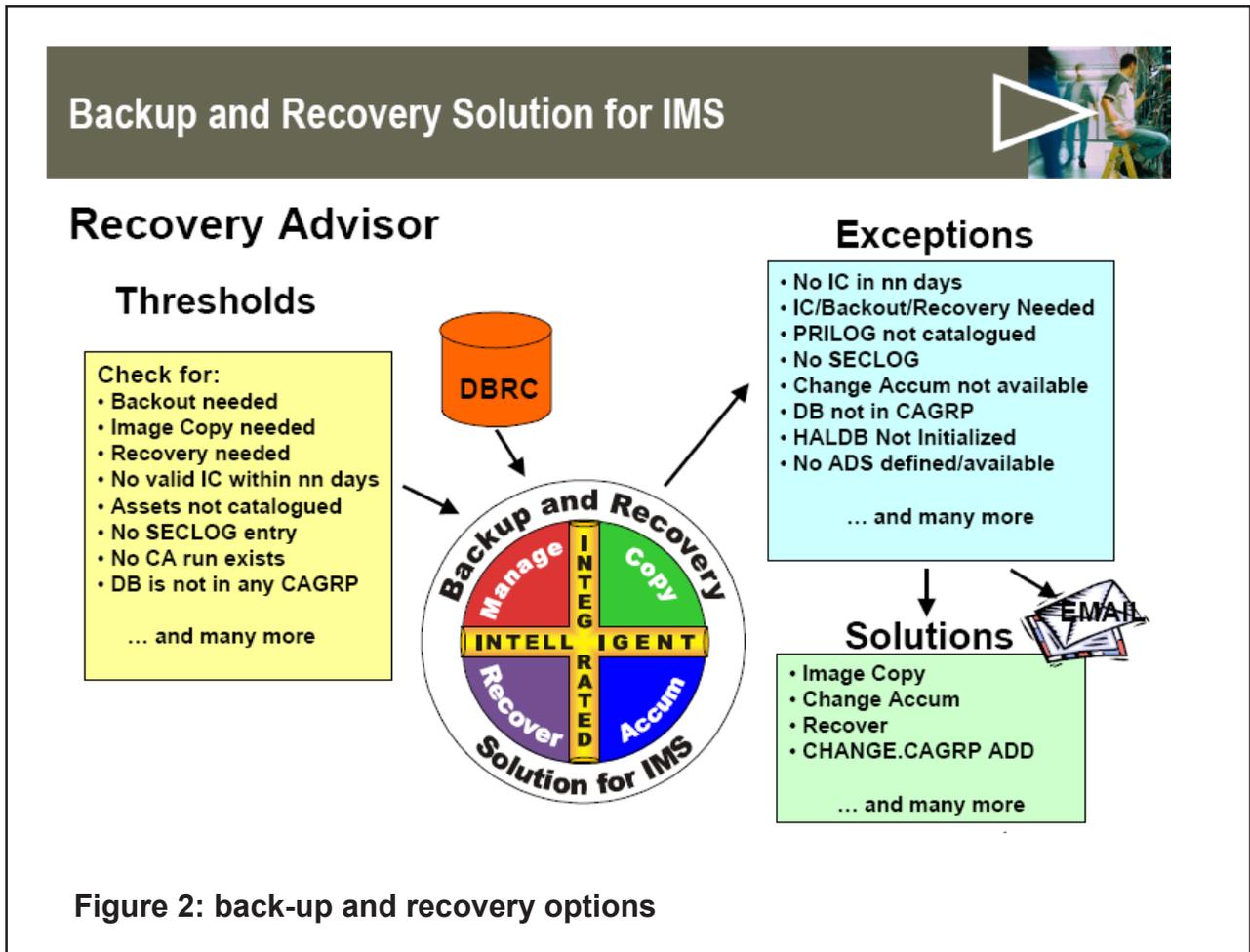**Contents:**

– able to seek alternative routes to accomplish goals.

- Self-optimizing – automatic monitoring and control of resources to ensure the optimal functioning with respect to the defined requirements:

  – able to improve performance:

    o by making adjustments to the environment (reactive).

    o by making adjustments to itself (adaptive).

- Self-protecting – proactive identification and protection from arbitrary attacks:

  – able to anticipate and cure intrusions/problems.

Nick explained how we get to autonomic computing from here. Figure 1 illustrates the procedure.

BMC's Nick Griffin then went on to look at the hopes and dreams of autonomics. He suggested at the high level they were:

- Junior DBA able to handle open-ended tasks.

- Let humans stay at the policy level.

Figure 1: How to get there

Figure 2: back-up and recovery options

- Programming language for systems.

- Just enough (and not too much) detail in reports.

- Natural language processing for instructions and reports.

At a low level, Nick listed the aspirations as:

- Have it learn to automate what I do repeatedly (high-tech macro recorder/player).

- Build and share best practices.

- No downtime!

Nick proposed that automation had a number of advantages – which he then went on to list:

- Reduces the amount of time, error, and human effort required to implement and maintain efficient database systems.

- Gives expert DBAs more time to concentrate on aligning databases with the business, new technology, planning, and strategy.

- Provides a means to train novice DBAs through learning what has been automated.

Nick then went on to look at what one could find in an application that was developed with autonomic computing in mind. His example, not surprisingly, was BMC's MAXM Database Advisor for IMS. He informed us that this type of product would offer the following functionality:

- Auto-discovery

- Proactive notification

- Conditional Reorg

- Statistics/history

- Database Management Console.

Amongst many other topics, Nick discussed back-up and recovery options. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

A copy of Nick's presentation is available for download from the Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* Web site at http://www.virtualims.com/presentations/autonomics.pdf.

IMS V11 beta

IBM has announced IMS V11 beta. It starts its trial in January and is expected to be generally available at the end of 2009.

The big news is that information in an IMS database can now be accessed from any network, including TCP/IP, without needing to build network interfaces.

Database Manager enhancements include:

- IMS Open Database support offers direct distributed TCP/IP access to IMS data, providing cost efficiency, enabling application growth, and improving resilience.

- Broadened Java and XML tooling eases development and access of IMS data.

- IMS Fast Path Buffer Manager, Application Control Block library, and Local System Queue Area storage reduction utilize 64-bit storage to improve availability and overall system performance.

- Enhanced commands and user exits simplify operations and improve availability.

Transaction Manager enhancements include:

- IMS Connect (the TCP/IP gateway to IMS transactions, operations, and now data) enhancements offer improved IMS flexibility, availability, resilience, and security.

- Broadened Java and XML tooling eases IMS application development and connectivity, and enhances IMS Web services to assist developers with business transformation.

- Enhanced commands and user exits simplify operations and improve availability.

- IMS Application Control Block library and Local System Queue Area reduction utilize 64-bit storage to improve availability and system performance.

Full details are available from http://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/index.wss?DocURL=http://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/rep_ca/8/897/ENUS208-258/index.html&InfoType=AN&InfoSubType=CA&InfoDesc=Announcement+Letters&panelurl=index.wss%3Fbuttonpressed%3DNAV002PT090&paneltext=Announcement+letter+search.

Virtual IMS *CONNECTION* meeting dates

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

- *December 2, 2008 –* Jenny Hung, IBM, *IMS and Web 2.0*.

- *February 2, 2008 –* TBA, CONNX Solutions, *SQL Access to IMS Data*.

All meetings start at 10:30 CST (4:30 GMT). All members will be e-mailed the WebEx URL, 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.

Recent IMS articles

The latest issue of *IBM Database Magazine* contains an article by Kim Moutsos entitled *IMS at 40: Stronger than Ever*. You can find the article at http://www.ibmdatabasemag.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=211300235.

News Update

Software AG has announced a new version of the webMethods Application Modernization Suite designed to help organizations create a stable and economical IT environment with a clear path to future capabilities. Both the Web Edition and SOA Edition of the Suite now incorporate new functionality to make users more productive and to squeeze additional business value out of existing assets such as "green screen" user interfaces and COBOL programs. The Mainframe Integration Support is designed to leverage existing mainframe environments and facilitate a broad range of capabilities. Among the features now included in the SOA Edition is "zero footprint" support for Information Management System (IMS) applications, which means that the SOA Edition has broader access to mainframe applications without requiring actual installation on a mainframe – enabling developer productivity gains within enterprises that have geographically or organizationally separated systems. Full details are available from http://www.softwareag.com/Corporate/Press/pressreleases/20081103_Application_Modernization_Suite_page.asp.

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*.

© *i*Tech-Ed Ltd 2008