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

Virtual IMS user group presentation

The latest webinar from the Virtual IMS user group was entitled, "Solving the IMS problem when IMS isn't the cause", and was presented by Jim Martin the United States representative for Fundi Software.

Jim has worked with IMS since the early 1970s. He started with IBM in 1967 and worked as a Program Support Representative, Systems Engineer, and member of the IMS Critical situation team. He left IBM to join BMC Software as a product author and became Corporate Product Architect.
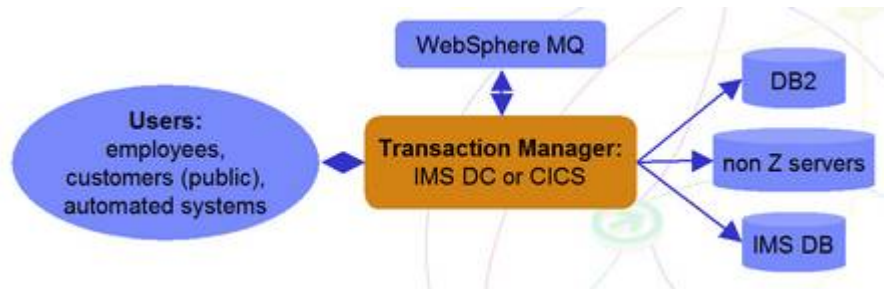

Figure 2: 2011 users are customers; data is complex, often distributed

In his ten years at BMC Software Jim was responsible for several products designed to provide IMS customer's with enhanced IMS solutions. He's the holder of 11 US patents on IMS and database-related techniques. He's also had several articles published in industry magazines, such as *ESJ*, *Technical Support* magazine, and *DM Review*.

Jim started his presentation by reminding us how much more complicated life was today compared to 20 years ago, saying that data users can often also be customers; also the data is complex, and
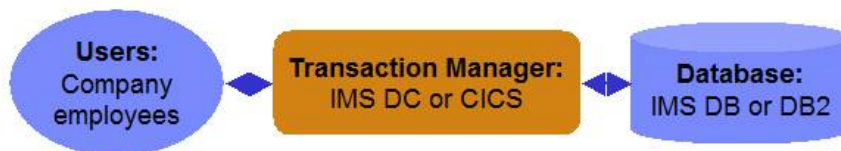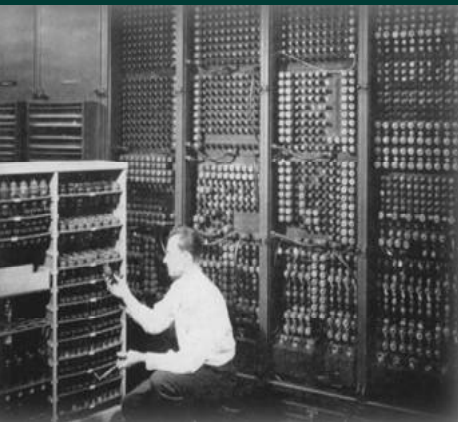

Figure 1: 1980s working - in-house users only; simple data, single data store

Contents:

often distributed. 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.

This is where IBM's Transactional Analysis Workbench comes in. It's a transaction analysis framework for System z. It's not transaction manager specific, rather it leverages current IBM tools for transaction analysis. It isn't IMS or CICS specific, but the first release provides more synergy with the existing tools for those transaction managers

The product automates the collection of the data needed for problem analysis. It provides a session manager to manage problem analysis through its life-cycle.

Jim informed the user group that the goals of Transaction Analysis Workbench are:

- Enable higher productivity by less skilled staff, reduce problem analysis time, and serve as a training tool for new support staff

- Allow the 'First Responder' to determine the most likely source of the problem so that the right subject
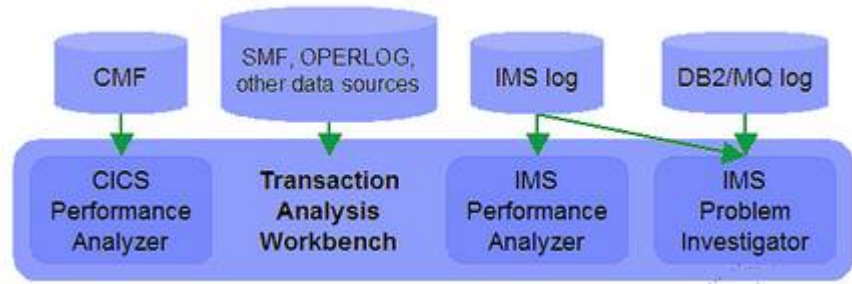

Figure 3: Using Transaction Analysis Workbench

matter expert can work on the problem

- Allow for 'deep dive' problem determination via synergy with other IBM tools

  – Subject matter experts may also use tools not supported by the Workbench.

Figure 1 illustrates the way that using Transaction Analysis Workbench can incorporate information from other sources. Giving:

- Integrated CICS and IMS performance management and problem determination

- System and subsystem performance that directly affects CICS and IMS

- Integrated CICS-DBCTL performance reporting using both CICS and IMS performance data

Transaction Analysis Workbench can provide a window into other subsystems that impact CICS and IMS

performance. And by using information from SMF, OPERLOG, and other data sources such as CICS-DBCTL transaction performance, IMS address space resource consumption, WebSphere address space performance, MQ and DB2 external subsystem (ESAF) performance, APPC transaction performance, and IRLM long-lock activity, it can give an insight into what's changed and where the problem might be originating.

The Session Manager approach to problem management provides a way to:

- Register the problem

- Automatically locate the files required to diagnose the problem: IMS, DB2, CICS, SMF, OPERLOG etc.

- Resume from where you left off, or from a previous save-point.

- Write reminder notes and information as you go.

- Re-assign the problem to the appropriate subject-matter-expert.

- Use PI-style interactive analysis to look at related logs and other subsystem events via SMF, OPERLOG etc.

- Run reports that are specific to the problem.

So, for example, a poor response for CICS and IMS users may be due to an increase the work being done by DB2 or MQ. Using the tool allows yesterday's figures to be compared against today's values and huge differences to be identified and the 'culprit' subsystem can be 'fixed'.

Excessive deadlocks and time-outs may be the cause of transaction failures.

Jim showed the user group meeting a number of real-life examples to illustrate the point.

He summarized Transaction Analysis Workbench by saying that it's a companion to the popular IMS and CICS Performance Analyzer tools, allowing systems programmers to look outside of IMS and CICS for the source of any problems.

Jim informed us that the product exploits the wealth of system performance and activity information available in SMF, OPERLOG, and event

traces. He also explained that it allows medium-skilled analysts to perform expert analysis of their enterprise.

Anyone interested in more information can find out more at the IBM DB2 and IMS Tools Web site: www.ibm.com/ software/data/db2imstools/. Alternatively, you can e-mail Fundi Software's US representative, Jim Martin at jim_martin@fundi.com.au.

A copy of Jim's presentation is available for download from the Virtual IMS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/ virtualims/presentations/ Transaction_Analysis_ Workbench.pdf.

N E W You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi. com/virtualims/presentations/ 2011-02-08meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

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

- 12 April 2011 – Ron Haupert, Rocket Software. "Simplify and improving database administration by leveraging your storage system".

- 14 June 2011 – Ronnie Parker, Logic Online Inc. "The ripple effect of making changes".

The session will describe storage-aware data management tools. These
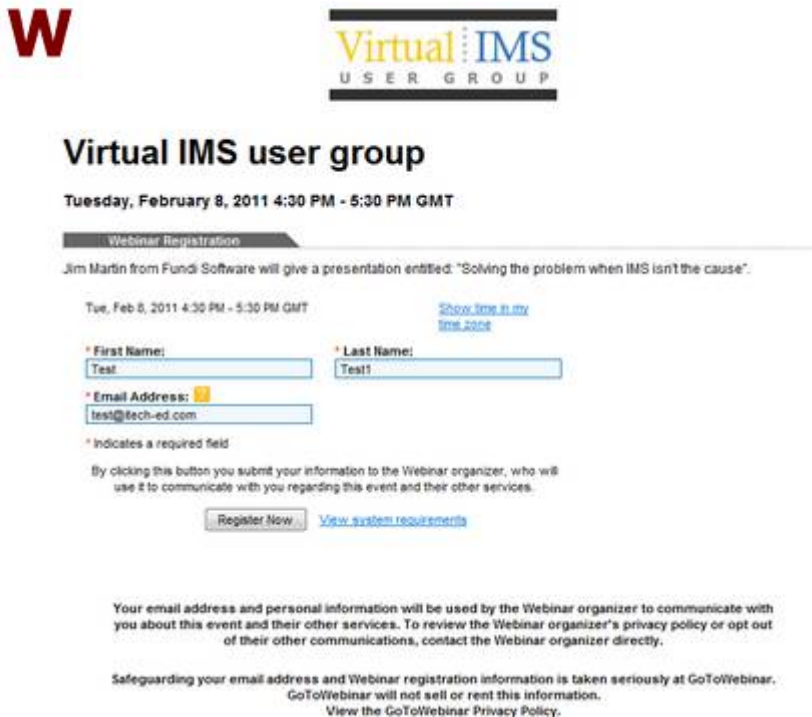

Figure 4: Registration form

tools integrate storage-based fast-replication facilities with database management systems to provide fast and non-disruptive IMS and DB2 backup and cloning solutions. Storage-aware data management tools improve database backup, recovery, and cloning solutions by using storage-based fast-replication facilities to copy data; saving time and host CPU and I/O resources. The session explores how storage-based fast-replication facilities offered by IBM, EMC, and Hitachi storage systems can be used to backup, recover, clone, and refresh IMS and DB2 systems.

Using Citrix GoToMeetings

All user group members will be sent a meeting URL about

Figure 6: Download GoToMeeting

a week before the meeting date - something like: https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/xxxxxxxxx.

You need to click on the link and register for the meeting.

You'll see a screen (like Figure 4), and you need to enter your first and last names and an e-mail address.

You'll receive a confirmation e-mail - like the one in Figure 5. When the meeting is nearly due to start, you can click on the big button in the e-mail and join the meeting.

You will need to join the meeting a little early because GoToMeetings needs to download a small piece of software onto your computer. And you will need to tell your firewall to enable all connections. The screen is shown in Figure 6.

For each webinar you attend, you will need to download this small piece of software. Once the software's downloaded, you'll need to run it.

After that, you will be in the meeting, and able to see and hear everything that's going on – just the same as if we were all in the same room.

One other thing. If you want to use a telephone rather than

Figure 5: Reminder e-mail

use a headset, you'll need to click on the 'Use Telephone' button. You can then dial in, and enter the appropriate meeting code and audio pin.

Recent IMS articles

Modern Integration Methods for IMS Applications by Ben Johnson, Dave Cameron, and Jack Yuan in *zJournal*. You can find the article at www.mainframezone.com/it-management/modern-integration-methods-for-ims-applications.

Improved IMS Performance by Ben Johnson and Jack Yuan in *IBM Systems*

Magazine. You can find the article at www.ibm systemsmag.com/mainframe/enewsletterexclusive/35073p1.aspx.

IMS news

Select Business Solutions has announced Transit ETL, which is designed to allow non-technical users to extract data from the mainframe and mid-tier systems (including IMS, VSAM, QSAM, DB2, IDMS, Oracle, and SQL Server), transform the data using over 100 built-in functions and operators, and save the data in one of a variety of formats,

including fixed, delimited, and XML. Full details can be found at www.selectbs.com.

About the Virtual IMS user group

The Virtual IMS user group was 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.fundi.com/virtualims 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 IMS practitioners. Anyone with an interest in IMS is welcome to join the Virtual IMS user group and share in the knowledge exchange.

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

The Virtual IMS user group is free to its members.

Virtual IMS on Facebook and Twitter...

Don't forget that you can stay up-to-date with all that's happening in the IMS world and with what's happening with the Virtual IMS user group by following us on Twitter or becoming a Fan on Facebook – as well as by checking the Web site regularly.

You can find us on Twitter at twitter.com/VirtualIMS.

You can become a fan on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Virtual-IMS-Connection-user-group/282385116069.

...and now LinkedIn!

We've also just formed an open user group on LinkedIn, where you can keep up-to-date with all the latest IMS and user group news, and also start your own discussions.

You can join the group by going to www.linkedin.com/groups/Virtual-IMS-user-group-3792561