Virtual IMS user group: Newsletter 35

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, "TIMS in the Connected World - Why You Should Pay Attention!", and was presented by Dusty Rivers, Principal Technical Architect with GT Software.

Dusty has an extensive 36-year background in global mainframe systems integration and has been recognized as an IBM Champion 4 years in a row for his leadership and contributions to the Information Management community. He has played an integral role in the design and implementation of distributed mainframe projects for a distinguished list of Fortune companies in finance, government, manufacturing, and
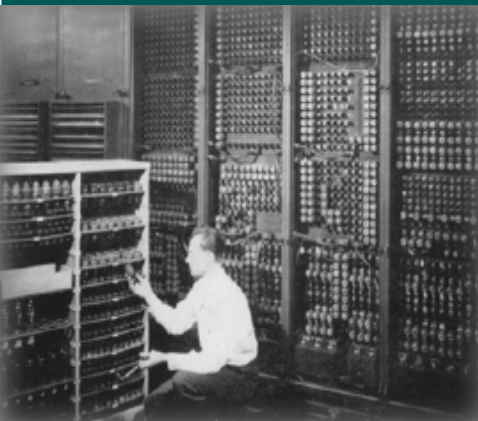

Figure 1: IMS roadblocks

insurance industries. Dusty is well-regarded within the technology community and is a frequent presenter at conferences in the USA, Europe, South Africa, and Australia. His expertise focuses on enabling global organizations to extend the

use mainframe systems into the world of Web services, clouds, and all distributed systems., entitled, "IMS in the Connected World - Why You Should Pay Attention!"..

Dusty Rivers started by illustrating just how much IMS there is out there. IMS systems are used for banks (ATM, loans, account management), IMS systems are used for insurance (claims and policy management), IMS systems for manufacturing, IMS systems for finance, and IMS systems for medical.

Dusty added that 75% of Fortune 1000 companies use IMS. There are thousands of companies globally using IMS. Yet, most users are not aware that the information in their applications comes from IMS.

The very reliability and transparency of IMS systems can make it nearly invisible to architects. So they are not using IMS to its fullest advantage. They are unaware that they can integrate new technology with IMS data and transactions, which means that they may recommend other options, not knowing they can integrate without changing the underlying IMS applications.

Dusty suggested that today's business needs were: Web self-service, mobile/
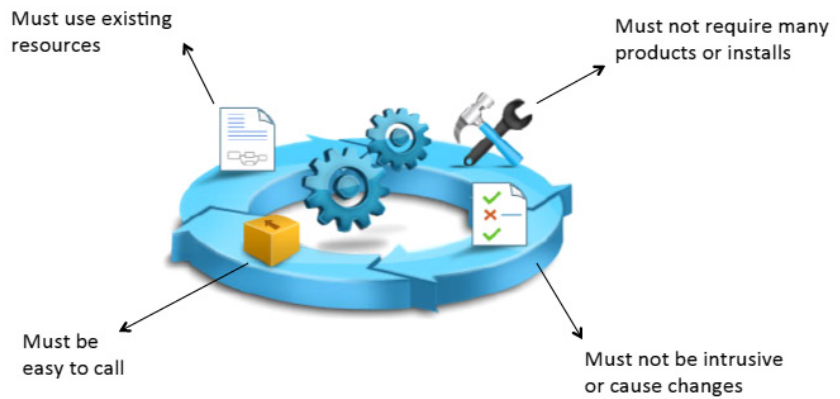

Figure 2: IMS applications calling other distributed applications

cloud, and BYOD; real-time access to enterprise data residing on any platform; integrated views of related information; customer and business-focused IT; building and deploying apps rapidly; using industry standards; integration between mainframes and distributed systems; and finding common tools and skills.

The IMS roadblocks (see Figure 1) people envisage include: the mainframe not being agile; the existence of multiple systems and interfaces; integration challenges; difficulties with legacy data; and the fact that IMS is old (45 this year!).

The good news is that there are a number of modernization scenarios using: IMS data via ODBC/JDBC/Web Services; re-using existing IMS transactions (business logic); conversational IMS transactions; combinations of both; IMS in conjunction

with distributed systems; and running IMS as a client.

The hard questions to answer are: can I get IMS data for use in the new systems; can IMS transactions be easily incorporated into new systems; and what about the others (CICS, IDMS/DC, IDEAL, NATURAL, etc)?

Not surprisingly, Dusty illustrated how this could be done using GT Software's Ivory products.

It becomes possible for IMS applications to call mobile or cloud applications; to call in native languages (COBOL, PL/1); to not need to worry about XML/SOAP; and to be orchestrated.

And by adopting industry standards, it becomes possible for IMS to call other distributed apps (see Figure 2). Orchestration is illustrated in Figure 3.
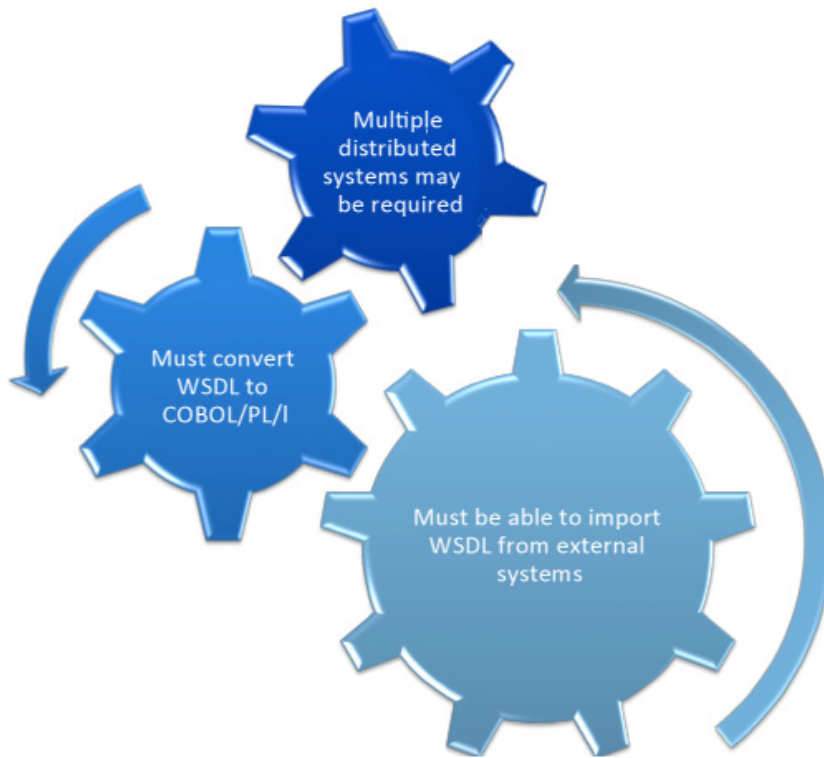
In terms of modernization,

Figure 3: Mainframe applications can be orchestrated

IMS can easily be used as a client. IMS applications can interface with new applications without knowing SOAP or XML. And no new software is needed and it can rapidly call distributed systems.

Why enable IMS for mobile devices? Because there's a demand from clients and users for BYOD; it gives you a private app store; your competition is mobile; and it saves money.

A copy of this presentation is available for download from the Virtual IMS user group Web site at `www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/ConnectingDec13.pdf`.

You can see and hear the user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from `www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/2013-12-03meeting.wmv`.

Meeting dates

• 4 February 2014, Informatica's John Boyle will be discussing "IMS test data management".

IMS news

CA Technologies has released Version 7.1 of CA LISA. Enhanced mainframe support includes the IMS Connect protocol for IMS gateway transactions and full support for standard system IRM (IMS Request Message) headers and COBOL copybook or XML parsers used with IMS Connect. More information can be found here. More information can be found at `www.ca.com/us/lpg/ca-lisa-7-1.aspx`.

Recent IMS articles

Driving Data Management on a Solid Track Record by Sandy Sherrill in *IBM Data Magazine* (November 2013). You can find the article at `http://ibmdatamag.com/2013/11/driving-data-management-on-a-solid-track-record/`.