

TITLE: Compete, Comply, and Control with CICS Transaction Server Version 4.1

HOST: Hi, and welcome to the "Did you say Mainframe?" podcast series. This is where we regularly interview IBM technical experts who can help you to understand important IBM mainframe hardware and software issues. I'm your host Sherrie Abshire.

Today we're going to talk about the new CICS Transaction Server (also known as CICS) V4.1 that was recently announced and is now Generally Available.

Our guest today is Nick Garrod from the CICS Worldwide Marketing team in Hursley, UK. Nick, it's great to have you here.

SME: Hello there, it's very nice of you to invite me

HOST: Before we begin, I'd like to mention to our listeners that there is more information in the announcement letter I'll be giving out more information at the end of this podcast.

HOST: [Question 1] So, tell me a bit about the new CICS Transaction Server version 4.1

SME: [Answer 1] CICS TS V4.1 is the latest version of the worlds favourite transaction server. We formally announced end of April and it is available at the end of June, a couple of months before CICS TS v2.3 goes out of service. For CICS TS V4.1 we have attempted to address many of the issues customers are facing in the current climate with agility in their markets, skills problems, and adherence to standards and policies. To that end we have three messages we try to convey to customers, Compete, Comply and control.

HOST: [Question 2] Could you talk a bit more about compete?

SME: [Answer 2] Whilst many of the capabilities introduced in V4 cross over these '3Cs' messages, broadly in the Compete theme we have introduced RESTful Web Services and Atom support which helps CICS to participate in modern web 2.0 architectures and development models. This means that Mashups using Atom feeds or RESTful APIs can be used to integrate data from CICS applications such as CICS customer policy systems along information from other sources such as public information from electoral rolls and crime statistics, as well as mapping, weather, climate, and similar third-party information. When combined, these new views provide higher levels of business insight required to identify risk levels, ensure standards, policies and regulations are adhered to and assist in business decision making. So this support not only allows customers to compete but helps them comply. Mashups maybe created using powerful tools from IBM like Lotus Mashups, WebSphere sMash and Rational Developer for System z (RDz), as well as those from other vendors, and can greatly simplify access to diverse information sources so accelerating development process of Web 2.0 applications. Another new capability being provided in CICS TS V4.1 is Service Component Architecture (SCA) which enables our customers to identify and package their applications (whether they are existing or new) in a more flexible way. This will enable reuse as components in many composite applications and simplifies as well as speeding up the process of assembling and deploying new business applications.

HOST: [Question 3] So these aspects address competing in the market place and agility to react, What are the main areas of interest in the Comply theme?

SME: [Answer 3] Governance is about the methods that businesses use to control important aspects of their business but governance is meaningless unless methods are put in place to measure performance to these methods. Compliance is the tolerance to the criteria that have been set. Reliable and demonstrable governance and compliance are important to the management of business risk, which is becoming an increasing requirement for both enterprise lines of business and IT management alike. CICS V4 builds on the CICS Events SupportPac introduced at the end of 2008 and delivers support for producing events that are triggered by

2009 WebSphere System z Podcasts - 'Did you say Mainframe?' CICS applications that might be in banking, trading, sales transactions, health insurance claims, or manner of other business-relevant data constantly running inside of CICS. In v4 this new CICS event technology will enable CICS to be configured to feed event processing engines and business dashboards, without the need for application change. This will better allow the line of business to ensure that business processes are under control and to monitor and react to compliance requirements, security breaches, and incidents of fraud. Business event detection and emission within CICS requires no changes to or re-testing of existing applications, enabling the creation of production business views using dashboards in a matter of hours. There is a short video available on the CICSfluff youtube channel and CICS website that illustrates how simple this is. When combined with the power of pattern recognition or rule compliance, end-to-end processes can be constructed to ensure follow up of out of line situations, alerts can be sent to prohibit potential fraud situations, simple metrics can be set up to provide valuable business information that can then be used to react to and take advantage of new opportunities as they present themselves.

CICS in conjunction with the z/OS team has worked to take advantage of new features in the operating system to allow ID propagation which helps to improve cross-platform accountability and the auditing of access to sensitive business information and applications. As I mentioned before, SOA and web services are maturing and have been a part of CICS for around six years now thus sound SOA governance to control these new services is essential. CICS (the first IBM product to offer support for Websphere Service Registry and Repository - WSRR) provides the capability to publish and read web service documents from WSRR, this assists customers and IT Departments in controlling the proliferation of web services within their organisation and avoiding duplication. Demonstrations of this can be seen on the CICS website (under library, demos).

HOST: [Question 4] So CICS V4.1 helps users to compete in their marketplace, assists in compliance, how does it help with control ?]

SME: [Answer 4] Well **control in this sense does not just mean just mean controlling costs,** since there are numerous aspects to control that CICS v4 addresses. CICS recognizes a potential skills problem many customers maybe facing and to help address this CICS TS v4.1 aims to control costs by simplifying IT infrastructure and improving development and operations productivity through easier-to-use interfaces and functions. Also included are is updated dynamic workload balancing for high volume traffic, a continuation of our IP support on our inter-connectivity roadmap and following on from our Java 5 support in CICS TS version 3, we are now supporting Java 6 in version 4. There have also been improvements in performance when compared to CICS TS V3.2. These improvements manifest themselves in traditional workloads, dynamic workload management, TCP/IP connectivity and XML parsing. To really help in the system management area the non-invasive emission of CICS events greatly reduces the effort required to event-enable an application while integrated system management provides the necessary operational control. The CICS Explorer, the new face of CICS, is currently available as a SupportPac for CICS TS V3, but in V4 will give users a much more powerful tooling environment to help experienced, skilled IT staff to be more productive and provide a more intuitive experience for less knowledgeable team members. It is an important tool in establishing and handing over best practices to the next generation of IT staff. The CICS tools and RDz integration ensures a similar CICS view across the life-cycle, helping to improve CICS IT productivity, prepare a changing skill-base, manage complex environments, and provide the tooling for the new CICS capabilities like Events, Web 2.0, and Components. A Software Development Kit (SDK) is available so that business partners, customers, and IBM can extend the CICS Explorer and integrate it with their own tools. There is a short animation of the CICS Explorer in action available at the CICSfluff YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CICSfluff>) and a more technically focused example of how to create your own plug in to the CICS Explorer on the CICS Explorer channel at YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CICSExplorer>).

HOST: [Question 5] So CICS TS V4.1 continues the 40 year tradition of CICS embracing and taking advantage of new technologies as they transpire?

SME: [Answer 5] Yes very much so Sherrie, CICS has been at the forefront of transaction processing for 40 years and will continue to be IBMs premier transaction server for many years to come. The new capabilities that I have been talking about here will enable businesses to position themselves to take advantage of market opportunities as they present themselves swiftly and with confidence, whilst ensuring regulatory compliance is maintained and cost and resources are controlled. CICS TS V4 enables customers to do more with less.... And do it right

HOST: Thank you Nick, that was really interesting.

SME: Yes well thanks very much for giving me the opportunity to talk about this exciting new technology.

HOST: Well, that wraps up this podcast discussion. To find out more about the CICS Transaction Server V4.1 and the demos that are out there to help you understand and implement some of the new function, please go to the description for this podcast at:
<http://www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereonz/>

Join us next time as we talk about another important mainframe topic. For now, this is Sherrie Abshire saying "Thanks for listening".