2008 WebSphere System z Podcasts – 'Did you say Mainframe?'

TITLE: Announcing WebSphere Business Monitor for Linux on System z

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 recent Announcement and availability of WebSphere Business Monitor for Linux on System z

Our guest today is Rob Rowe from IBM System z BPM Marketing. Rob, it's great to have you here.

SME: Thanks, Sherrie. I'm delighted to be here.

HOST: Before we begin, I'd like to mention to our listeners that the announcement letter for WebSphere Business Monitor for Linux on System z is now available. I'll be giving out more information at the end of this podcast.

HOST – Question 1: So Rob, Tell me what's new in the announcement of WebSphere Business Monitor for Linux on System z?

SME – Answer 1: First, let's just briefly discuss what WebSphere Business Monitor is. IBM WebSphere® Business Monitor is part of IBM's Business Process Management Suite. It is comprehensive business activity monitoring software that provides a real-time view of your business processes and operations. It contains personalized business dashboards that calculate and display key performance indicators and metrics - derived from business processes, business activity data, and business events from a wide range of information sources. This gives business users immediate actionable insight into their business operations to mitigate problems or take immediate advantage of opportunities, resulting in cost savings and increased revenues. The generated alerts can be sent through various channels, such as a web browser, an email or even an SMS text message, so an executive can even receive critical information while on the golf course! Ok, so what does all this mean? It means that interested parties can see **what** their business process are doing and **how** they're doing and take corrective actions if there is any sign of interruption or trouble. This contributes to business agility, which is what BPM is all about.

Now, about the GA and the announcement of WebSphere Business Monitor for Linux on System z, in one aspect, it's about platform choice. We want to provide the choice in operating system that our customers are asking for. We actually ported WebSphere Business Monitor to Linux on System z in response to a customer request. This provides a mainframe environment in which we can run critical elements of the SOA and BPM solutions that are not yet supported on z/OS. And since we

support other BPM products natively on Linux on System z, it made sense to provide this product offering as well. Our z customers can now install BPM products such as the WebSphere Business Monitor server, WebSphere Process Server and WebSphere Business Services Fabric all on the z/OS or Linux on System z operating systems. You can enjoy the benefits of Linux® on System z with IBM z/VM® operating-system virtualization capabilities and the IBM Integrated Facility for Linux (IFL) specialty processors for efficient consolidation and top performance. System z brings to Linux the most reliable hardware platform available, with redundant processors and memory, and error detection and correction.

HOST – Question 2: Ok, that's one aspect, but you implied that there may be more?

SME – Answer 2: Yes. When you talk about running mission-critical applications, you naturally think about the mainframe. That's because of the inherent benefits that the mainframe provides. It's quality of service, availability, scalability, security manager, workload manager and dynamic resource allocation are all known qualities of System z. With your process server and possibly your WebSphere Business Services Fabric foundation pack installed in the mainframe, it makes sense to install your Monitor server there as well. Think about it. You are monitoring events from your process server. You may be monitoring events from any application running in the LPAR, IN REAL TIME. With a Linux on System z offering, why would you choose to install your Monitor server anywhere else? If it were installed in a networked environment and the network was interrupted, you'd lose your monitoring capabilities. Your LOB executives would not be able to see how the business processes are running, when a supplier needs to be changed or when, due to a particular pattern of events, a credit card purchase needs to be declined for unauthorized use. The alerts would not happen and the KPIs would not function. Would you like to be the one who made the decision not to deploy the monitor server on the same platform as the business process server?

HOST – Question 3: What additional features are in the new version of the product?

SME – Answer 3: The new release of the Monitor server, version 6.1.2, adds some really nice features. With a complimentary new feature in WebSphere Business Modeler Publishing Server, users can now collaborate on dashboard design. In much the same fashion the Publishing Server allows collaborative process model design, users can now upload static images of dashboard designs which enables business analysts and IT developers to view these images and work together to make quick iterations on the dashboard design.

Another enhancement is for the developers who create the monitor model. Monitoring models can now be debugged using graphical means. With the debugger, an IT developer can step

through the execution of monitor logic when an event arrives, set breakpoints, examine the values of event fields and the effect on the metrics. The debugger provides a graphical representation of all elements in a monitor model, such as metrics, triggers, stopwatches and counters, as well as the sequence of steps that will be executed as events are being consumed. This enables developers to quickly identify problems in the monitoring models, reducing the time to develop new monitoring solutions.

More importantly, this new version allows business users to change business rules directly from within their monitoring environment when WebSphere Business Monitor is used with WebSphere Process Server. This feature allows business users to respond very rapidly to changing business conditions, without having to go back to their IT department to make the changes. This is HUGE! As an example, I remember that when I moved to California, the cost of housing was going up $2000 per week in Santa Clara County. If a business person had the kind of visibility into their business processes that this new version of Monitor provides, he could see from the KPIs that loan applications might be taking too long to process, or that each week more mortgage requests were being denied because the cost of housing was rising rapidly while the applicants weren't able to come up with more money to put down on the loan to keep the same percentage of loan to equity. Having this visibility, the business person could easily modify the business rule to increase the percentage that is financed by the applicants, providing increased customer satisfaction and more and quicker loan approvals while at the same time increasing his business agility.

HOST – Question 4: Are there any other important reasons to install the WebSphere Business Monitor server on Linux on System z?

SME – Answer 4: Certainly. One of the main attractions of the mainframe right now is due to its inherent "green" features. Hundreds of Intel servers can be replaced with one mainframe, significantly reducing real estate requirements, licensing costs, maintenance costs and possibly reducing energy consumption in terms of power, heating and cooling as well. We actually did this with our own IBM data center. In Feb of this year, as part of Project Big Green, we announced the New Enterprise Data Center where more than 3300 servers were consolidated down to 30 System z mainframes running Enterprise Linux. The ROI is expected to be less than two years. It's the socially responsible move to make, and Linux for System z participates in that initiative. For more information on the Big Green initiative, refer to the web site at http://www-03.ibm.com/systems/z/advantages/energy/index.html

HOST – Question 5: You mentioned that other BPM products are supported on Linux for System z. What about other WebSphere and SOA products? Are they supported on this operating system?

SME – Answer 5: The WebSphere portfolio has extensive support for Linux on System z. Looking at the Infrastructure portfolio, the Application Server and Application Server Network Deployment as well as the Service Registry and Repository support Linux on System z. The Extended Deployment Compute Grid, Virtual Enterprise and eXtreme Scale features also support Linux on System z. The Connectivity portfolio supports WebSphere MQ, WebSphere Message Broker, WebSphere ESB, WebSphere Adapters, the CICS Transaction Gateway and the WebSphere Transformation Extender all on Linux for System z.

In most cases, you will find that if a product supports Linux, it also supports Linux on System z. This can be verified by going to www.ibm.com, and under products, following the System Requirements link from the main product page to see which operating systems are supported for that product.

HOST – Question 6: Recently I heard about the WebSphere Dynamic Process Edition. Can you speak a little about that? My understanding is that a Linux version of WebSphere Business Monitor is included in that offering?

SME – Answer 6: Yes, that is correct – WebSphere Business Monitor Server is included in that offering for System z customers. While this is a new offering on the distributed platform, it is an extremely new offering for System z. Its purpose is to allow our customers that need business agility through dynamic processes to purchase the WebSphere Dynamic Process Edition of the BPM Suite easily, with a single product ID. Included in the bundle are WebSphere Business Services Fabric Foundation, WebSphere Monitor server on Linux for System z and WebSphere Business Modeler, which is a business process development tool. These products together are the logical choice for developing, running and monitoring your business processes.

HOST – Question 7: We discussed the announcement of WebSphere Business Monitor for Linux for System z, what Monitor does, and the benefits of deploying the Monitor server to Linux on the mainframe. Is there anything else that you'd like to mention?

SME – Answer 7: Wrapping up, only to reiterate that this is the first time that this product is offered on Linux for the mainframe. It's been available on x86 platforms, but now our customers can take advantage of the benefits that the mainframe has to offer for this product as well, to provide complete Linux mainframe support for their SOA and BPM initiatives. With the WebSphere Dynamic Process Edition, it simplifies the purchase and furthers IBM's support for BPM on the mainframe, which for our System z customers is very important.

HOST: Rob, that was really interesting.

SME: Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk about the recent offering of WebSphere Business Monitor on Linux on System z.

HOST: Well, that wraps up this podcast discussion. To find out more about the announcement letter I mentioned earlier, 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”.