

## CICS Transaction Gateway V8.0 Podcast with Matthew Whitbourne

**Nick Garrod:** Hello, and welcome to the latest in the ‘Did You Say Mainframe Podcast Series’. This is where we regularly interview IBM technical experts who can help you to understand the important IBM mainframe hardware and software issues, and I’m your host Nick Garrod. Today we are going to talk about the latest CICS Transaction Gateway Version 8.0 which was recently announced, and our guest to talk today is Matthew Whitbourne from the CICS Transaction Gateway team. He works here in CICS in Hursley, and we welcome him here today.

OK Matt, well thank you for sparing some time to talk to us today, I’ve got to say it doesn’t seem 18 months since we were sat here chatting about CICS Transaction Gateway Version 7.2.

**Matthew Whitbourne:** Yes, the time has flown by, the team have certainly been working really hard to get the Version 8.0 product announced and available later in May.

**NG:** So, tell me, what do we have to look forward to in version 8.0 ?

**MW:** One of the big things you are going to see, certainly in a lot of the announcement material that goes with this as well, is really a lot of things which are underpinned by this open integration banner which is one of the main messages we will be pushing with CICS Transaction Gateway this time round.

**NG:** So, we’re really not just concentrating on the IBM platforms to go through, there’s support for other platforms ?

**MW:** Yes, absolutely. I think people probably know CICS Transaction Gateway as being certainly a Java connector, typically being a JCA connector providing a kind of extension between Websphere application server and CICS Transaction server. The interesting thing now is, we are basically saying “Well, ideally we would love everyone to have Websphere application server and in fact the solution is still going to work best when that particular configuration is in place, but if our customers have chosen to use other J2E environments and it passes our install verification test then we will provide support for that as well, which means there is a lot greater flexibility for our customers to be able to choose which application server they want for connectivity with CICS.

**NG:** OK, so I can see the openness there, so we are broadening our horizons, if you like.

**MW:** Yes, we go a little bit beyond that as well. One of the things we brought about in 7.2 was we started providing remote C capability as well, and this is something we extended in Version 8.0, which means we now have channels in container support as well for what we call our ECI version 2, API.

Basically what this means is that if you are connecting from a remote C environment, like dot C for example, you can now take advantage of channels in containers and be able to deliver those higher payloads through the likes of CICS Transaction Gateway through to CICS TS, using the IPIC Protocol. So, really again providing some of the core

capabilities that the Transaction Gateway is known for, but being able to extent those out to a greater variety of platforms.

**NG:** I guess you could take that theme further with, I remember was it version 6, where the Gateway started taking on two-phase commits, which is something we take for granted on the run-time on the CICS Transaction Server. And then in 7.2 there was further support down that road map for higher availability.

**MW:** Yes, and in fact, one of the things we have actually done in version 8.0, is looking at combining those two capabilities together, so in 7.2 we introduced highly available configurations, in particular for system z, so we would have this ability to manage workloads, and to maximise in system uptime, being able to clone gateways, doing dynamic service selection, that kind of thing.

One of the things that people said to us was; “ OK, that really good and important to us, but what we really want is that XA two-phase commit capability that you have as well, in combination. If I’m maximising my confidence in system uptime, how do I make sure I maintain transactional scope as well?”

And thanks to some magic the CTG team have been able to deliver, we have managed to get that capability in there as well. So, you can have a highly available configuration and two-phase commit as well, in combination.

**NG:** So, if the gateway is on one of these new platforms that you are talking about earlier, the open platform, we’re now starting to get the realms of distributive platforms, where perhaps security and integrity may be comprised compared to what we are used to on the enterprise platform, the mainframe system z platform.

**MW:** Yes, I think that one of the interesting is that it has traditionally been this question of; “How do you actually maintain security going from the likes of the distributive world, if you like, back over to the mainframe world.”

Typically speaking what they have had to do is manage those security credentials separately, and often write their own ‘mapping programme’ to let you work from one environment to the other. One of the things we have introduced is ID propagation support. This is a really great stack story over the whole of system z because what we have got is the likes of z/OS one-eleven providing this kind of core capability, we’ve introduced CICS TS version 4.1 and we’ve got the CICS Transaction Gateway being able to now be a transport for that, and the ID then being injected from the likes of Websphere application server. So, this is a great stack story for being able to manage the solution from end-to-end, and again I think is another reason why having a combination of the IBM technologies with Websphere application server is still the premium choice for your total solution.

**NG:** I guess now we are getting into far more complex environments than perhaps we used to play in here, I guess monitoring statistics, that kind of thing, I know you have had that in the gateway for a while. Has that been enhanced, or is there any plans to enhance it ?

**MW:** Yes, there is a few things we have been looking to do, both from a configuration and a monitoring perspective to make things a lot easier. I mean the gateway is available on a variety of platforms with the z product being our flash of offering. One of the things we have released in this particular release is to have some configuration examples for system z to make it a little bit easier to get people up to speed there, so that's one of the things. Possibly the biggest thing though is proving our integration story with the CICS explorer.

**NG:** That's the CICS explorer that was really pushed in version 4 of CICS transaction server, are we talking about the same thing here?

**MW:** Yes, that the one. In fact, the eagle eye people will see is that we'd started down this approach a little bit earlier with some support packs as well, so what we've really been doing is continuing to progress this story. What you're going to see with the CICS transaction server Version 8.0 is a better level of integration with some of the base explorer technologies that are in there, to be able to expose some of the monitoring and administration statistics that you can actually get from the CICS Transaction Gateway, so you will be able to see a lot of that information through the CICS explorer and it is going to make it a lot easier to integrate with some of the base capabilities and be able to do things like make comparisons with things using CICS Performance analyser for example and really take advantage of a lot of the things explorer is really good at, by combining together these different technologies for specific customer solutions.

**NG:** So, it's a similar look and experience that people will get no matter which tool they are using or indeed which connector?

**MW:** Yes, exactly. I think that the interesting thing for us is we are only going to do more with this over time. I think there is so much capability in it here that it wouldn't be unrealistic to think in the future; "Maybe, we're looking at things like- do we want to do more down the configuration route? Do more down the configuration route?" You know, we might be looking far down in the future here, but this is why we are started to invest in this technology and we will probably continue even further down this path in the future.

**NG:** Am I right in saying April 27<sup>th</sup> was the date that this was first announced? So, when can people get hold of it, when is the GA date ?

**MW:** Yes, the GA date is the 21<sup>st</sup> May. From this date people will be able to go online and download the multiplatform version of the product. We will be following up on June 18<sup>th</sup> for the z product as well, which is in the regular GA as well. I would encourage people to go on the website and have a look at some of the information on there, and start getting hold of the product, have a play with it, and see what you like about it.

**NG:** Matt, thank you very much for your time again and thank you for sharing that it was really interesting and look forward to speaking with you in probably another 18 months time, when the next delivery comes out.

**MW:** My pleasure.

**NG:** Well that wraps up this podcast discussion. To find out more about the CICS Transaction Gateway version 8, please go to the description for this podcast at [www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereoz](http://www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereoz)  
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