

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 Nick Garrod.

Today we're going to talk about [Achieving Business Resilience with the new capabilities introduced with CICS TS 4.1]

Our guest today is [Paul Johnson] from [CICS Worldwide Development in Hursley, UK]. it's great to have you here.

SME: Hi, thanks for inviting me to talk to you and your audience.

HOST: Before we begin, I'd like to mention to our listeners that there is more information in an announcement letter, and I be giving you the references to this and the white paper under discussion at the end of this podcast.

HOST Q1: So Paul, I believe IBM recently released a white paper which you wrote titled “Achieving business resilience through integrated systems management”. Perhaps you could tell our listeners a little bit about what they can find within it, and why it would be of interest to them.

SME A1: Yes, I'd love to. As you know we recently introduced CICS Transaction Server 4.1, along with various CICS Tools enhancements which support version 4. We also enhanced the CICS application development experience in collaboration with our colleagues at Rational. Collectively they significantly improve the end to end CICS experience for all our customers, and the businesses they operate in.

HOST Q2: Why is that?

SME A2: Given the global recession that we have experienced in the last 18 months, there has never been more pressure on businesses to provide low risk resilient services that can rapidly adapt to changing needs in order to control costs and maintain their lead against their competition. Development of business applications and managing the IT environments which provide access to these applications is key. Efficiently exploiting the experience of their workforce is fundamental to the survival of the business.

HOST Q3: So what is today's environment like?

SME A3: The CICS Ecosystem is quite large. Many development tools such as Rational Developer for system z provide a development environment. Base CICS TS management facilities, including those of CICSplex SM provide valuable configuration, runtime, and high availability capabilities such as dynamic workload management. These facilities are further enhanced by the CICS Tools portfolio including products like CICS Configuration Manager, CICS Performance Analyser, and CICS Interdependency Analyser, and various Tivoli products such as

OGEGAMON for CICS. Then there are a myriad of third party vendor products which further enhance CICS management capabilities.

However, many of these products are “point products” with different interfaces, different taxonomies, and different interaction techniques. As well as enhancing server capability, we also need to integrate the users experience in order to simplify the learning path and day to day interactions with the system.

HOST Q4: So how have the recent additions helped integrate the experience for application developers and system programmers alike?

SME A4: Just over a year ago we announced CICS Explorer as the smart new face of CICS and made it available for download as a Supportpac. That has now been extended via the CICS TS version 4 delivery, along with extensions to the plugins for the various tools.

CICS Explorer is key to our simplification and integration strategy. After all, simplification and streamlining processes means faster reaction times to the needs of the business. We’ve also integrated components of Explorer into the development experience provided by the Rational tooling.

HOST Q5: That’s a great story for the people who interact with CICS every day, but what new runtime facilities will help me cope with today’s demands?

SME A5: There’s a whole host of capabilities that have been introduced and extended in version 4.

We’ve added new facilities to enable the business to exploit the latest technologies for competitive advantage such as CICS’s new event driven processing capability.

We’ve also enhanced application availability through enhancements to CICSplex SMs dynamic workload management component, and MQ group attach.

HOST Q6: What about the increasing pressures of governance compliance on businesses.

SME A6: Yes, we’ve improved those facilities in base CICS TS through extending various aspects of the CICS audit and monitoring facilities, as well as tools exploitation.

HOST Q7: What about “the aging workforce” issue?

SME A7: CICS Explorer is an element of resolving that problem, as it will bring together more pieces of the puzzle into a common framework over time. It also more closely meets the expectation of the new generation of CICS systems programmers and administrators. Of course, the real answer to this is providing a more autonomic environment that does not need so much day to day “love and care” as today. Rest assured we’re working on that aspect also.

HOST Q8: I’ve heard IBM has seen performance improvements in version 4?

SME A8: Yes. We've seen various aspects of this in our performance testing systems here at Hursley. All the way from improved throughput from the CICSplex SM WLM enhancements, through to faster XML processing just to name a few. Improvements have also been seen when running CICS on the latest z10 processors. Of course, that is only what we've seen in our specific testing environment, and will vary customer to customer depending on individual workload characteristics.

HOST Q9: Where can customers find out more about this exciting new version of CICS and CICS Tools?

SME A9: Well to start with they can go to the CICS home page at ibm.com/cics where they will find links to CICS TS V4 as well as a CICS Tools home page. Here there are links to demos and further more detailed explanatory materials like white papers and Redbooks. We have several videos available on the CICSFLUFF youtube group and there will be CICS Specialists delivering detailed presentations at the SHARE Conference in Seattle, WA the week of March 15 – 19 and at the Impact Conference in Las Vegas, NV the week of 2 – 7 May. Links for these two events can be found on the CICS home page under the left hand navigation called Events.

HOST: [Paul], 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 [], 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 Nick Garrod saying "Thanks for listening".

Speaker information:

Title:

Summary: Hear about the latest version of CICS TS as it relates to achieving business resilience in a CICS environment..

Speaker Name: Paul Johnson

Speaker Bio:

Paul Johnson is CICS System Management and Tools Architect at IBM Hursley. After initially working in the base CICS system management area, he played lead roles in CICSplex System Manager, CICS Performance Manager, CICS Configuration Manager products. Paul has been with IBM for 25years, joining IBM after several years post doctoral research in High Energy Physics. He is currently a member of the CICS planning and strategy group, responsible for System Management strategy and content.

Headshot from bluepages:

<http://w3.ibm.com/bluepages/searchByName.wss?task=viewrecord&index=0&uid=063946866>

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