### CICS V5.3 open beta Podcast

**Hi and welcome to the ‘Did you say mainframe’ series of podcasts, this is where I, Nick Garrod, chat to technical experts about hardware and software topics related to the mainframe.**

**Today we are changing things around a little and instead of interviewing one of our top developers from CICS, I am going to try and give you a high level taster of what is available with the latest CICS Transaction Server offering, the CICS TS V5.3 open beta. So without more ado I shall try to interview myself.**

Firstly I see why my respondents normally have a fearful look on their face when I start asking questions, but in the absence of formal questions I shall kick off with a few comments about our open beta program and why we make the offering available.

A new CICS open beta has just been announced on 17th February 2015 and will be available for download from March 23rd. This CICS TS open beta gives our customers, both new and existing the opportunity to take part in a limited time trial of the latest CICS TS capabilities with no charge of financial commitment – so this mean customers can get to play with, and feed back on the very latest technologies the guys in Hursley are working on without having to go through levels of financial approval to justify ordering the new product. Having downloaded, customers can see through their own eyes the value that the new delivery offers.

I think before I go on in to what is being delivered specifically, I’d like to take a few moments to explain something that is quite new for CICS. Many customers will have observed that the regular 24 month cadence of delivery between major releases has been shortening and this has been due to new development techniques being introduced in to CICS. We have agile development and indeed ‘eat our own cooking’ by using our own CICS tools to analyse and monitor as well as Rational products to build, test, deploy. For this latest release we have adopted a style called design thinking.

 This involves setting 3 hills or targets, breaking down key elements to achieve those targets and ‘take the hill’. During this process there are regular playbacks both internally and also externally to members of our design partnership program – and I’ll talk more about how to join the Design Partnership program and the benefits of joining later In the podcast. An important point here is that as part of this process we identify key personas (users) to ensure there is value for each of those users in the hills we set. If there isn’t value then we shouldn’t be using resource to build/develop it, in other words fail fast and early on to get as rich a delivery as possible and the playbacks give us valuable feedback into the perceived value for the customer.

So what made it through the playbacks, and became a successful hill? Well, we have continued to build on the advances we introduced for CICS TS V5, providing enhancements to the themes introduced back in 2012, namely **Service Agility**, **Operational Efficiency with cloud and Development Operations or DevOps.**

In service agility we have extended support for the WebSphere Application Server Liberty Profile including a wider range of APIs and frameworks. Other enhancements help to make Java based web applications even more portable. Other improvements with this container concern monitoring and data access as well as bi-directional CICS API calls from both Liberty Java programs and non-Java programs. There is also improved interoperability between Java in CICS and MQ. Another big tick in the Service agility box is having z/OS Connect available for both CICS TS V5.2 and V5.3 open beta. This will allow client to accelerate mobile and cloud projects. This was announced in an earlier Statement of Direction in April 2014, and this is the fruition of some fine development work.

For operational Efficiency we will see reduced CPU utilization for web services, enhanced transaction tracking and improved trace and monitoring. So if you have not yet started to use web services with CICS there is even more reason for you to start. The increased transaction tracking scope allows users to use it for tracking useage when implementing a mobile pricing solution. Trace and monitoring are made more efficient with exploitation from new hardware and extending the scope of our policies and thresholds support.

For cloud and DevOps the open beta enables devOps teams to adopt a continuous integration model to build and deploy CICS cloud apps and bundles. This is achieved through automated builds by using bundles to package and manage components resources and dependencies on CICS. There is a new CICS build toolkit, which is a flexible command line tool to use with build systems to automate building of cloud apps and bundles. A set of scripting commands can then be used to deploy the bundle across CICS systems. There is support for IBM Urban Code deploy allowing deployment of CICS applications coordinated in a single action. There is added support for transaction endpoints which provides the ability to scope policies deployed as part on an app to be specific to a particular TRANID. There is also good news for application recovery. The available or unavailable state of an application is automatically recovered across CICS restarts. Finally in cloud and devOps, there are a number of security enhancements that both extend the security of CICS transactions and provide a more efficient execution.

The CICS Explorer is also enhanced to take advantage of the new capabilities of the run time.

I will get the technical leads for these three areas to speak on separate podcasts to go in to a little more detail of how we are achieving this value, but for now I wanted to give you a high level view of the sorts of things we have improved in this CICS TS V5.3 openbeta.

I spoke earlier about the CICS Design Partnership Program, so I’d just like to explain what this is and why you might be interested in taking part. The CICS Design Partnership Program is a program set up by CICS Development that covers the entire CICS Portfolio and associated products. It's objectives are to engage with customers early in the development cycle at the design phase prior to any code being written. Development will make disclosures about future directions and the possible ways in which new functions could be introduced with the idea that customers can comment and discuss developments ideas.

As this is at the design stage nothing is set in stone customer feedback can radically change direction or the implementation of feature / functions and change developments priorities of which functions are important. This gives the customers the opportunity to help set the future directions and priorities of CICS Releases as well as giving customer early insight and education. There is also the possibility to test some of the proposed functions and feedback prior to them being committed to the product.

If you are interested in participating, you will need to sign a legal non disclosure document and the easiest way to register interest is to email cicsep@uk.ibm.com

So just to sum up, the CICS TS open beta allows customers to explore potential new CICS capability, assess the value to their business and plan for adoption. Participants in the open beta gain insight into CICS strategy and direction and are encouraged to provide feedback and articulate their own requirements which may influence future CICS releases. The open beta will be available from March 23rd and interested parties should go **to ibm.com/cics/openbeta** for further information and links to the download site. On this page you will also find a link to a pdf file of an informative presentation of the features of this open beta.

I hope you have found this different ‘Did you say mainframe podcast’ useful and you feel you have some insight into what this open beta delivers and indeed decide that you will download it and try it for yourself… at no charge!

So that about wraps it up for this podcast, for more details go to…. http://www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereonz/

Join us again for an insight in to another interesting topic for the mainframe. For now this is Nick Garrod saying thank you for listening