Virtual Storage Relief

Nick – 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 are joined by Ian Burnett from the CICS performance group and he's come here to talk to us about CICS performance and ways and tips on how to improve your performance. so Ian, thank you for joining us. so Ian, I believe this is going to be the first in a series of performance and hints and tips that listeners can get from CICS would you like to give us a quick brief of what it is, the topic that you're going to talk about today

Ian - We're going to talk about virtual storage constraint relief today and that's part of the CICS TS roadmap which allows you to grow your applications we know that user applications are continuing to grow and that's only going to go larger. But we have seen inside the lab that we produce significant miip savings by consolidation of regions and also when you consolidate regions there is some reduction in administration overhead and that provides cost savings in terms of manpower.

Nick - so it sounds like this virtual storage relief is gonna be around consolidation and getting more things through in a shorter time, would that be correct?

Ian - that's correct yes it means that you can put the same workload though more regions so you may have decided in the past for example that you needed 30 regions to maintain the workload but nowadays with the modern TS releases you can get the same in 10 regions.

Nick - And is that something new in the CICS 5.2 product?

Ian - No its part of the continual roadmap we made significant progress in CICS TS v4.2 with 64 bit support and that's been extended through in version 5.1 and 5.2.

Nick - Okay so let's say our listeners have got one of those releases, how would they identify if they have appropriate workloads for this and I'd also like you to touch on configuration considerations that might be involved here

Ian - The first part of understanding exactly what your workloads do and whether you are in position to take advantage of this is the CICS statistics reports. an alternative source which is much more rich for your application is to use the CICS monitoring data we have the CICS performance analyse tool and that helps you understand what the information is telling you, and in the most recent versions CICS pa v5.2 there are some excellent visualising tools which give you significant opportunities to understand where the opportunities for growth are.

Nick - We're providing more and more statistics by the sound of it as we've gone down this road?

Ian - That's correct Nick, the more recent versions of CICS TS are increasing the amount of information provided to you on a per- transaction and a per region basis.

Nick - Is this actually part of the CICS runtime or do we have to download support packs or feature packs or things like that?

Ian - No it's all part of the CICS TS package the most recent versions of CICS also include the extra monitoring and extra statistics data without any configuration changes.

Nick - One thing we haven't talked about as yet on this is java, are there any benefits for the users out there are using java in CICS these days?

Ian - Absolutely java is strategic language on CICS and in 4.2 we also introduced the ability to use 64 bit JVM within CICS again providing much more constraint relief for other applications and allowing much larger heap sizes within the JVM.

Nick - And this is of course running java on the mainframe not on distributed platforms as well isn't it?

Ian - That's correct running java on the mainframe inside z/OS and using CICS resources directly.

Nick - Okay thank you so is there are any other points that you'd like to bring up?

Ian - There are many opportunities to grow your applications and that's the way that we see many customer applications going these days, but there are also significant opportunities to reduce miips just through consolidation of regions and again using virtual storage constraint relief features in the latest CICS releases that provided for you.

Nick - So that sounds like the key thing is if you get current, you're gonna get more statistics to see where opportunities are and there will be more capability in the base products who help you release those savings and performance improvements.

Ian - Absolutely, using the latest ts versions will provide you better statistics and with better monitoring information and the latest version of the CICS pa tool with provide with a better way and a more easy way to understand what those statistics are telling you.

Nick - Okay that really interesting Ian thank you very much for taking the time to share that with us today.

Well, that wraps up this podcast discussion. To find out more about CICS, 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 Host saying "Thanks for listening".