Kamilia: Hi and welcome to the “Did you say Mainframe?” podcast series. This is where we interview IBM technical experts from hardware and software sides of the business, who can help you to understand the importance of IBM Mainframe. And I am your host Kamilia Armasova.

Today we are going to talk about what you can do in the latest release of CICS - CICS V5.2. And we are very lucky to be joined here by Nick Garrod from the CICS business team. Nick, thanks for coming along!

Nick: Well, thank you for inviting me, it’s a pleasure, Kamilia.

Kamilia: Okay, so V5.2 has just been released. So Nick, can you please tell us about the new features?

Nick: Sure. For those who may not remember, CICS V5.1 focused on three main themes: service agility, operational efficiency and cloud enablement. And we’ve put in certain functions to underpin those themes. Now in V5.2 we have gone into more details, and expanded on the capabilities adding extra values into each of those themes.

So for example, in service agility we’ve embedded the feature pack capability that we had for mobile and JSON transports and now that’s actually integrated into CICS V5.2. As well as that, we’ve also upgraded and added a capability to our Liberty function that we had. Liberty was in V5.1, but now in V5.2 it’s far more robust and it’s more of a value function rich capability.

Kamilia: That’s very interesting and what about operational efficiency? Does it have any changes as well?

Nick: Yes, we’ve also focused on a couple of the points that were particularly successful in V5.1. A number of policies were introduced in V5.1. We’ve actually doubled the amount of policies in V5.2. So there are more thresholds that can be set to allow you to automate and control your systems more automatically. As well as the extra policies we’ve also looked at security, and the observants of you would’ve noticed that we’ve brought out a feature pack, that was available for V4, an extension to security tokens. And that included the support for SAML. Well now in V5.2 we’ve taken that capability and function, and brought it into V5.2, but we’ve also added support for KERBEROUS security. So in operational efficiency it’s those two main areas that we were concentrating on: the policies and security.

Kamilia: Oh that sounds great! And has anything new been introduced to the cloud?

Nick: Oh yes, we’ve introduced a new capability with cloud. We call it multiversioning and it enables you within the same region to have the same program name, so you could have different versions of the same program and you can transition between that newer or older version. So for example you have V1.0, V1.0.1 and all the way to the version 2, and further if you wanted to. So imagine, a bug has been found and an urgent fix is required immediately. Step 1 after fixing the bug and the code, you repackage it and it will have a new micro version, and once installed, you are switching to a new version of the application, simply a case of making it available. And then the last step would be - CICS takes care of moving the clients to the new version of the application across all of the regions within a platform.

Kamilia: And what about the tools? Have they also been upgraded?

Nick: Yes, they have. As we did with V5.1, there are five key tools or core tools, as we refer to them that are also coming out of a V5.2 level. It’s CICS Interdependency Analyzer (CICS IA), CICS Performance Analyzer (CICS PA), CICS Deployment Assistant (CICS DA), CICS Configuration Manger (CICS CM) and CICS VSAM Recovery (CICS VR). Now, also we have an open beta running for a new version of CICS Transaction Gateway V9.1, and that includes support for mobile as well as enhancements to both connectivity and security. Finally, there is a solution pack, it’s called the Optimization Solution Pack and that is being upgraded to V5.2, and the Modernization Solution Pack will follow a little later on.

Kamilia: That’s amazing. Nick, thanks a lot for telling us about the new capabilities of CICS V5.2, and I look forward to speaking to you again on some other topic, so thank you very much.

Nick: Kamilia, it’s been a pleasure. Thanks for giving me an opportunity to talk about CICS V5.2.

Kamilia: Well that about wraps it up for this podcast discussion, to find out more about CICS V5.2 and to help you understand and implement some of the new functions, please go to the description for this podcast at: http://www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereonz/

Join us next time when we will talk about another mainframe topic, for now this is Kamilia Armasova saying thank you for listening.