

CICS TS 5.3 open beta – Foundation

Nick - For this podcast I'm joined by John Tilling and Colin Penfold from our CICS development team here in Hursley who will explain the advances we have made in the area of CICS foundation veritable cornucopia of new and tuned function to give you even greater value to CICS core capabilities. So John, Colin, thank you for joining us today.

So you're here to talk about foundation, would you like to just expand a little on what we include in foundation?

John - Yes so I think Nick in the previous podcast when you were talking about design thinking you explained that there are three main focus areas of the release, a liberty hill, a performance hill and a deployment hill. And foundation is really the fourth one of those for things that don't actually fit in those three so its base core foundation enhancements perhaps coming from RFE's in areas that are not covered by those three areas.

Nick - So are there sort of main areas that these fall into under foundation. Well my colleague Colin is going to talk about security there are a quite a number of enhancements in Java and also in the cloud arena and lastly, but not least forgetting CICS explorer. Okay John so let's kick off with Java.

John - Okay in the area of Java we've made some enhancements for Java standard edition called java that you run in an OSGI JVM server and in the area of how you get a WebSphere MQ, so up to this point if a java application wants to access WebSphere MQ they have to use the proprietary WebSphere MQ classes for java supplied by WebSphere MQ product. and those are based on the MQA API and as I said its proprietary what we've done is we've given the application developer an alternative, namely the ability to use JMS, this is a standard industry API so for java developers who are not familiar with MQ but are familiar with JMS, they will easily be able to code to the JMS API, under the covers, the request flows through the standard CICS MQ interface and now to MQ so you get all the capabilities that you have today with the CICS MQ interface. And of course it makes it portable as well so if he's been written outside of CICS to JMS standards then it can come into CICS and run inside CICS.

Nick -Okay thank you and is that being back ported to 5.2 or any other prior releases?

John - Yes indeed we've taken the decision to actually back port the CICS portion to CICS TS 5.2 so there's maintenance that you can apply to 5.2 and you'll be able to use this with MQ version 7.1 or MQ v8 and there are fix packs that you have to apply to either of those releases to use this capability.

Nick -Okay thank you John, now Colin, and let's talk about security enhancements

Colin - Okay thank you Nick, auditors have been increasingly concerned about the flow of user IDs and passwords even though these are flowing over either private networks or encrypted networks. And we've had a number of customer requests raised through RFEs to make some changes here, in the last release of CICS we provided a new mechanism to enable web services and web requests used curvas tokens via the new API verified token. In this open beta we've got an enhancement so that curvas tokens can be used in 3270 applications in the 3270 sign on. This will avoid the need to flow user IDs and passwords over the VTAM network. In addition for outbound requests, we've got a new capability to request pass tickets so an application can request a pass ticket for its user ID and then use that pass ticket as part of a basic authentication request on an outbound request. This is

something that we've provided previously but only if you were using the FEP EV channel. We've had a number of other changes in the security area one of the changes is the way that we have offloaded some of the security requests off the ROTCB onto open TCBS enabling a greater throughput of requests which should alleviate some of the problems with the start of day problem where everybody's logging in at the same time. Another enhancement that we've made is as a response to the poodle vulnerability problem that we fixed in various APARS in all the releases we have removed SSL v3 in the open beta and we have made a simplification so you can simplify how you specify the minimum TLS protocol that you want your system to use. a final change that we've made in the security area is to give you the ability to configure encryption either using the CICS interfaces that you may currently use or using the ATTS product.

Nick - Okay thank you very much Colin. So John, back to you, let's take some words of wisdom on cloud.

John - Okay we've been building in the open beta on top of the capability that we already have in 5.1 and 5.2 in a number of areas the first one is threshold policies. so today we have a number of policies that you can apply to like for example the number of db2 requests or the number of file control requests, or transient data requests that a particular task issues and we've extended that capability so we can now have threshold policies to do with the number of WebSphere MQ requests that the task issues the number of dli requests, that's both call dli and exec dli, the number of name counter requests and finally the number of shared temp storage requests so i think that brings the total number of thresholds that you can now have up to fourteen.

Nick - And I think we did temp storage before didn't we, but this is first time that it is shared

John - Yes we've done temp storage but we haven't done shared temp storage so that just completes that particular picture.

Nick -So fourteen policies now that's growing

John - Yes and I think it will continue to grow overtime. the second piece in the cloud area is we've enhanced cloud capabilities so you can now define a transaction as an entry point into an application previously you can only define a program or a URI map so you now have the ability to define a transaction so as that transaction starts running it will apply the application context of the application and run with that. so you can actually combine these two capabilities and now be able to easily restrict a policy to a particular transaction if you so wish rather than the policy applying to a particular application or the whole region.

Nick - So if I understand you correctly John, can you set policies now or use policies outside of cloud?

John - Indeed that's a good point you can do that already today, but this makes it even easier to use so now with these two capabilities you can take advantage of those up to 14 threshold policies and easily define the policy and restrict it down so it only applies to a particular transaction so the way you do that is very easy, you define yourself a bundle in the bundle you put the policy you put a transaction definition in there and you define a transaction entry point associated with the policy. and all you do then is install that stand alone bundle into your CICS region and hey presto! You've now got a policy that will apply to that particular transaction that you define, so very powerful concept that's really easy to use

Nick - And I'm sure our listeners will be very interested in that. Now I think the final points you mentioned was the CICS explorer?

John - Well indeed as you know with CICS TS we always ship a CICS explorer to go with it and the open beta is no different so there is a version of the CICS explorer supporting the 5.3 open beta and all the capability coming with the hills and foundation and over and above that capability we've also expanded CICS explorer so that it can now run on a different platform so as well as windows and Linux you can now run it on apple OSX Yosemite so if you've got a mac you can now run CICS explorer on that and connect to your plex.

Nick - Okay so if I was to summarize what you two gentleman have just been telling me, we've made further enhancements to our java support, continuing our pathway down with java. We've extended our security support we've put more policies inside cloud and of course we've ensured that the explorer has kept pace with all this to keep the user interface of the new capabilities.

Well, that wraps up this podcast discussion. To find out more about the CICS TS V5.3 open beta, please go to the description for this podcast at:

<http://www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereonz/>

More information about CICS open betas. <http://www-01.ibm.com/software/hcp/cics/openbeta/>

Join us next time as we talk about another important mainframe topic. For now, this is Host saying "Thanks for listening".