CICS V5 open beta Hill 2 - Performance

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.

You may have listened to our CICS TS V5.3 open beta podcast and that gave a brief summary of the highlight topics the open beta addressed. In that podcast, I made a promise to get the technical experts to come in and give a podcast going into a little more detail around the three areas the open beta focuses on for this podcast, I'm joined by Martin Cocks, who will explain the advances we have made in the area of performance. So Martin, thank you for joining us today.

In previous podcasts we've talked about different capabilities and aspects and today you're going to talk about the hill 2 performance hill, I think also it would be interesting to hear about how design thinking has influenced how hill 2 has evolved during its development.

Martin: so hill 2 is come to be aimed about a capacity planner demonstrating in routing and data owning regions, CPU reduction of 10-20% we spent quite a bit of time talking with our clients and sponsored users to try and understand exactly where to focus on and what value they wanted to get. so we in CICS had various ideas on what we thought was going to be needed but having playbacks in front of clients with the discussions there we actually found out what we were focussing on while some of it was of interest to customers there are other areas that are actually going to provide much larger value so what we've done is try to focus on reducing CPU usage in both popular and growing workloads as well as to also try and improve the performance of understanding of what is going on inside of CICS.

Host: So this time we really think we've hit more of a sweet spot than perhaps we have done before because we've got feedback directly from our customers on these playbacks, would that be a good way of putting it?

Martin: yeah I'd say so it certainly feels that way to me.

Host: So martin can you just elaborate a little bit on what have we actually done and how our customers might realise these benefits.

Martin: certainly, so one of the areas that we've found speaking with customers that both popular and growing is web services workloads, specifically over the http. so we've spent a bit of time there to look and see what we could do and one of the things we found is that in our web processing today there's something called the web attach task which helps understand and set up context for then the follow on transaction so it can set up the security so the user id etc. that it runs under. Now what we' done here is we for many scenarios that customers have actually eliminated the need for that transaction so that will then lead to a CPU usage saving for our

Host: okay thanks martin I can understand that that's great for routing regions but what other performance improvements have been made what's really going on inside CICS?

Martin: So the team has had a look at various internal algorithms and looked to improve them, they're also exploiting the new hardware pre-requisite we have of a z9 machine, so taking all those together we've managed to make some significant improvements to both the monitoring and the trace facilities by using some of those new instructions as well as improving the algorithms there.

Host: okay thank you. So what the value that value that the customer could potentially realise by implementing this?

Martin: well it has the potential to help customers reduce costs by reducing the amount of CPU used by http and web services workloads. also on the network security side of things for inbound work customers have the choice of using CICS SSL which is being and more efficient or between using ATTLS which allows a security configuration to be done in a common place with other systems running on system z. now given the numbers we've seen on prototype code that's showed a further reduction in CPU usage per transaction over the improved CICS SSL. if it's a viable option for customers to use ATTLS I would recommend that they try it out.

Host: alright then martin you've excited me about the value there to realise, what do they actually have to do to start gaining this value?

Martin: well apart from running on the CICS TS v 5.3 open beta, many workloads customers will not have to change anything to realise the value. But to exploit the ATTLS aware capabilities they will need to do some configuration of IBM communications server alongside making some minor changes to tcpip service definitions. But with just those changes they will have the ability to realise even greater value of their workloads.

Host: okay martin that's great, I'm going to put you a little bit on the spot now, and put you in the elevator scenario where you've got 30 seconds to get your main points over, what are the main points you would want out listeners to take form this discussion?

Martin: okay, we've been improving the performance of both http and web services workloads which are popular and growing among our clients. As well as to improve the performance of understanding what is going on in the CICS systems. So they key thing i think we've been doing with this release is we've been listening to users to give them the greatest benefit in areas they care about.

HOST: 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/htp/cics/openbeta/

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