CICS Portfolio e-Newsletter

October 2006

Welcome to the October issue. We hope you find this compilation of what's happening in the busy world of CICS and System z useful, informative and enjoyable.

In this issue:

View from development

This month IBM brings you some great new tools that support the interoperation of CICS Transaction Server with WebSphere Service Registry and Repository (WSRR).

The tools which are available as a SupportPac (CA1N) streamline the job of registering the service descriptions for CICS applications that are being deployed as Web services, and reading descriptions for services to be called by CICS applications.

The tools provide additional support in the move towards a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) for which WSRR is a key component. They also provide additional evidence of IBM's ongoing commitment to SOA as the modern environment for conducting today's business operations.

WSRR allows service metadata assets to be catalogued and stored in a common repository. WSRR delivers strong governance capabilities for the publication, discovery, subscription, management and policy enforcement of SOA services and service metadata assets.

The service metadata assets stored in WSRR are used by other applications when selecting, invoking, governing or reusing Web services as part of a successful SOA. WSRR can contain service metadata assets that describe the Web services in an organization's own business systems, or in different business systems.

When an application needs to request (invoke) a Web service, it discovers information about suitable Web services by looking in WSRR.

Information about CICS applications is stored in WSRR as Web Services Description Language (WSDL) files and metadata. WSDL is an extension of the XML data description standard that provides public interfaces for accessing applications over the Web. WSDL documents describe application protocol bindings and message formats in a way that allows other applications to access them. Put another way, WSDL files describe CICS applications in terms that can be easily understood by other applications on the Web.

How do the SupportPac tools enable better governance?

Better governance means carefully managing key business assets (for example the service metadata assets held in WSRR) in order to maximize their benefit. It also

means the ability to formulate, control, and oversee the proper maintenance, regulation and growth of business IT assets.

The new SupportPac tools encourage better governance because they allow CICS Transaction Server to interoperate directly with a single, centralized service metadata asset management system (WSRR).

WSRR is a critically important component for ensuring effective governance within an SOA, not only because it provides a central storage location for service metadata assets, but also because it encourages a unified and consistent approach to asset management across the enterprise.

Initially, having a central location for storing and managing service metadata assets may not seem very important, but as the business grows and as more Web services are created and deployed, this becomes imperative. Registering these is easier if a central location is available. Discovering these is also easier if they are held in a single location.

How do the SupportPac tools make it easier to register CICS resources?

When enabling a CICS application as a Web services provider, it is necessary to generate a set of WSDL files from the application's HLL structures and register them in WSRR. The SupportPac contains a tool for registering WSDL files that have been generated from CICS applications.

The CICS Web Services Assistant included with CICS Transaction Server provides facilities for generating WSDL files directly from CICS applications.
The SupportPac tool automates the registration process and allows for metadata to be published along with the WSDL files. For more sophisticated interface mapping requirements, WebSphere Developer for zSeries provides comprehensive visual tools to generate WSDL files.

How do the SupportPac tools make it easier to discover CICS resources?

When developing a CICS application that is going to request (invoke) a Web service, it is necessary to discover the application's WSDL files in WSRR. HLL structures must then be generated for passing data back to CICS when the Web service is invoked. The CICS Web Services Assistant provides facilities for generating HLL structures from the discovered WSDL files. The SupportPac tool automates the discovery process.

The new tools provided in SupportPac CA1N allow CICS Transaction Server to register and discover information about CICS applications in WSRR. These CICS applications can be service providers or service requesters. WSRR provides a centralized service metadata asset base that supports good governance. The tools automate the processes of registration and discovery.

Please feel free to email me if you have any questions.

Finally, why not click the link and download the WSRR SupportPac and documentation right now!

Speak to you again soon.

Dibbe Edwards,
Director, CICS Development

Marketplace

Are you ready for SOA? IBM is. In early October IBM kicked off a worldwide launch of the SOA messages with a Webcast explaining why SOA matters so much to today's modern businesses.

So what was this launch all about?

Firstly let me say that SOA is not something that was invented by IBM as a piece of marketing hype, as a way of driving the sales of its products against those of its competitors (even though that's what we're in business for!).

In fact SOA is something that is widely accepted throughout the industry and is being advocated not only by IBM but by many other leading vendors, as a technology-independent way of modeling business systems and processes as loosely-coupled, interoperable, reusable services.

However where IBM really scores over and above the competition with customers is not just with market leading SOA technology solutions but with a huge amount of practical experience gained through helping deliver real value to a wide range of customers over many years. Put simply, IBM doesn't just try and sell technology solutions, it tries to interpret its customers' real business needs and help customers achieve those goals.

OK so I still haven't told you what the SOA launch was about. Well in a nutshell the key messages are:

- ***Good governance***: SOA encourages good IT asset governance. The value this brings is the ability to properly manage and fully exploit valuable core business assets.

- ***Streamlined application Development:*** SOA streamlines the application development lifecycle.

- ***More effective business process management:*** SOA helps in the deployment of services-based solutions and enables more effective Business Process Management (BPM).

- ***Better collaboration:*** SOA encourages role-based interaction and collaboration through the implementation of services. The result is an improvement in productivity because it puts the user's experience into the context of the business process (this is the 'people' entry point).

- ***Easier business innovation***: SOA encourages real business innovation. This allows greater flexibility and faster deployment of business processes by allowing them to be used as modular components (this is the 'process' entry point).

- ***More focus on services***: SOA places trusted information in a business context by treating it as a service. This means a better business operation, better-informed decision making and reduced risk because information is delivered in-line and in context (this is the 'information' entry point).

- ***New services through asset reuse***: SOA enables core business assets to be deployed as Web services providers and requesters and enables gaps in the application portfolio to be filled with new, reusable services. The result is lower risks and faster time to market because established, well-proven functionality can be more fully exploited (this is the 'reuse' entry point).

- ***Better connectivity***: SOA connections between systems, users and business channels are based on open standards technologies. This delivers reduced maintenance costs, greater reliability and consistency through flexible any-to-any linkages (this is the 'connectivity' entry point).

- ***Greater flexibility***: SOA encourages a flexible infrastructure and good infrastructure management.

To summarize, IBM has the leading portfolio of technologies for SOA enablement and IBM also offers the key differentiator – a huge range of practical experience gained through working with a wide range of customers and their businesses for many years. IBM experience and SOA really is an unbeatable combination.

Richard Thomas,
Program Director, CICS Marketing

Developer's corner

Seminars: 'Modern Application Architectures for CICS COBOL Developers'

COBOL is the future…now. Attend one of these free technical education seminars for CICS COBOL developers coming to a venue near you. Learn how to use your existing COBOL skills to develop SOA applications. As well as the US, these seminars are also being brought to various European and Asian venues.

More…

You can also have these great seminars delivered at your own location for your developers! Take advantage of this great offer and have a seminar conducted on site by someone from the IBM Development group. Traditional developers will gain training on the similarities and differences between a familiar transactional environment such as CICS, and the environment for Web services transactions. The briefing includes a live demonstration of WebSphere Developer for z. To have the seminar visit your location, complete the briefing form and send it to Michelle Cordes.

Mainframe developer skills for SOA - The Facts!

(or 'Good coders are really good business people that happen to contribute with good coding')

By: Michael Connor, IBM WebSphere Enterprise Application Technologies.

Service oriented architectures consist of assemblages of services or code components that can be invoked (called). However, while the underlying technologies of parts of the application have changed, there are still some basic tenants of Service Oriented Architectures that make CICS business application developers occupy such an important role.

So what's changed?

- Architecture: services are now written to link modern user interfaces and devices to core business processing. User interface and session 'state' processing is moving to new runtimes, business processing is now focused on by the business runtimes.

- Technology: HTML, JSPs, Java Server Faces and Web services all are core technologies to SOA. CICS Web services support provides the glue required by business services.

- Promise: The upfront costs of developing SOA applications can be higher (some analysts estimate up to 1.5 times higher). The payback is in having modern access to processing and information, plus flexibility and speed of change because existing services can be reused existing services (it's not necessary to write new services).

And what's stayed the same?

- Business Services: These need to be described and coded in a simple-to-manage way. Often business languages are used thus promoting reuse. COBOL and CICS combine to make a great language and API for SOA. The core of COBOL is business. The COBOL language is easy to write and understand.

- Performance: Business services (or programs) make up significantly more callable modules than previously existed in past applications. Performance is even more critical. For example: if 10 business services each average .1 second. Assembling them sequentially leads to a minimum 1 second response time. Of course, the proximity of processing and data can also improve throughput. CICS and COBOL have combined to deliver proven service in application processing for years.

- Quality of service (QOS): Handling of workload management and balancing, failover...

The modern application architectures for COBOL developer seminars are all about educating IT developers and managers in the architecture, technology, and processes required to make SOA successful. Click the link to register and join us.

More…

CICS happenings

New: Business Process Management products!

On 10 October 2006, IBM announced the following BPM products:

- IBM WebSphere Process Server for Multiplatforms, Version 6.0.2
- IBM WebSphere Integration Developer for Multiplatforms, Version 6.0.2
- IBM WebSphere Process Server for z/OS, Version 6.0.2

WebSphere Process Server for Multiplatforms and WebSphere Integration Developer for Multiplatforms enable you to take advantage of IBM's extensive experience and long history in providing solutions that address your BPM challenges. With the combination of open standards, SOA, the new features and enhancements described here, WebSphere Process Server for Multiplatforms and WebSphere Integration Developer for Multiplatforms enable you to rapidly build and deploy flexible, on demand processes that integrate with your existing assets. This means that you can build your SOA the way you want it — flexible, fast, and business-driven.

New to this release:

- Enables you to rapidly construct and deploy processes that can meet the goals of your business needs
- Delivers one platform, one tool for end-to-end integration to provide service discovery, mediation and orchestration

- Integrates more (into the process) with Web services, application adapters and advanced messaging capabilities
- Supports comprehensive, human-centric business process management and task management
- Provides service-governance capabilities with dynamic runtime discovery and invocation of services
- Offers advanced administration and management features
- Provides simplified tools to describe, create and manage business processes with minimal skills
- Delivers high performance and quality of service with advanced fault-tolerance and error detection capabilities

WebSphere Process Server for z/OS, Version 6.0.2 delivers all the functions of the multiplatform version listed above. In addition, it is able to take advantage of the benefits of running on IBM System z servers. These benefits include:

- Extremely high levels of application and data availability for business resiliency
- Solid security and privacy
- Massive horizontal and vertical scalability features for non-disruptive growth
- An optimized operating environment with higher usage and balanced system design
- Advanced multidimensional virtualization capabilities
- Highly responsive, autonomic and intelligent workload management
- An open-standards-based platform
- A leading-edge platform for the transformation and integration of existing applications and data
- Specialty engines that can better integrate with and take advantage of existing assets with a new set of economics
- World-class integrated support

WebSphere Process Server is at the very heart of your business process management solutions. It ensures that the processes you design in WebSphere Business Modeler or WebSphere Integration Developer are executed consistently, reliably, securely, and with transactional integrity. Built on open standards, it deploys and executes processes that orchestrate services (people, information, systems, and trading partners) within your SOA or non-SOA infrastructure. When combined with the power of WebSphere Business Monitor, processes can be optimized to meet changing business requirements, giving the business a competitive advantage. WebSphere Process Server is built upon, and contains, the WebSphere ESB functionality.

WebSphere Integration Developer is the common tool for building SOA-based integration solutions across WebSphere Process Server, WebSphere ESB, and WebSphere Adapters. It simplifies integration with rich features that accelerate the adoption of SOA by rendering existing IT assets as service components, encouraging reuse and efficiency.

It enables integration developers to assemble complex business solutions requiring minimal skills - whether processes, mediations, adapters, or code components. You can construct process and integration solutions using drag and drop technology without having a working knowledge of Java.

More on WebSphere Process Server…

More on WebSphere Integration Developer…

New: CICS and WebSphere Service Registry Repository (WSRR) SupportPac

The new tools provided in SupportPac CA1N enable automatic registration of CICS service metadata assets (WSDL files) in WebSphere Service Registry Repository (WSRR). The tools also enable automatic discovery of these assets. The tools support the deployment of CICS applications as Web services in an SOA environment. Good governance is also made easier because resources are held in a single, centralized location (the WSRR). For more information, contact Mark Cocker, IBM CICS Technical Strategy and Planning. Dibbe's article in this newsletter gives you the high level overview and has a download link.

More…

SOA is on YouTube…

Have you seen YouTube lately? YouTube is a popular free video hosting Web site that allows you to upload, view, and share video clips. YouTube now features three great new SOA video clips: 'SOA is like your wardrobe', 'SOA is like building blocks', 'SOA is like musical notes'.

More…

Win an elegant CICS T-shirt!

Stand out from the crowd at the Christmas party in a CICS T-shirt (after all Christmas Is Coming Soon). To win your CICS T-shirt, tell us how you are using the new features of CICS Transaction Server 3.1. Outline the challenges you faced and the business benefits that have resulted. Click the link and send your entry. The first 50 entries will win a CICS T-shirt. Click the link now and email your story.

More…

What's on worldwide

IBM Information On Demand Conference, October 15-21, Anaheim, California, USA

So what happened to the DB2 Technical Conference? What happened to the IMS Technical Conference? Absolutely nothing! Both are being held this fall as they are every fall, this year during the week of October 15 in Anaheim, California! This year the DB2 Technical Conference and the IMS Technical Conference are being held at the same time and the same place and both conferences are included in IBM's premiere global conference called 'Information On Demand', along with several other conferences. Go along and drive the products, see the demos and meet the experts.

More…

IBM European Transaction & Messaging Technical Conference, November 13-17, Salzburg, Austria

This year the T&M Technical Conference and the WebSphere Technical Conference will run in parallel at the same place and during the same week. Don't miss this unique opportunity to switch between agendas to make the best use of your time at the conference.

More…

Webcasts teleconferences podcasts and books

COBOL webcast: 'Get your COBOL code and your COBOL developers ready for SOA with IBM's WebSphere offerings'

COBOL continues to be the language for business applications, even in an SOA world. But there are some changes required by the COBOL developer community to participate in SOA. Your developers need to understand the new architectural environment and how they can leverage their COBOL skills in these Web service environments.

More…

developerWorks webcasts

The Webcasts on the IBM developerWorks pages give you access to a wide range of information about business modernization, SOA, Web services and other topical issues. Two Webcast examples are: 'Addressing real world planning for SOA Governance' and 'Building the front end of a service oriented architecture'.

More…

System z webcasts and teleconferences

These are a great way of finding out how IBM System z software tools can help you work smarter, faster and more cost-effectively. In the November 9 webcast, Sherrie Abshire, IBM WebSphere Product Marketing, Enterprise Platform Software looks at business process management (BPM).

System z Teleconference, October 19, 2006: 'Using WebSphere to achieve an SOA for reuse and service generation on the mainframe':

Are your business needs in synchronization with your business applications? Is your core business logic easily accessible to all applications that require it? If not, you may end up with redundant business logic and such a complex integration schema that making assets readily available across the enterprise is a painful proposition. With the right tools and solutions you can deliver a secure and reliable base for your service oriented architecture.

WebSphere Application Server and System z feature an advanced Web services software stack for integrating and expanding your core software assets. Working with other WebSphere tools, they give you unique platform advantages for accessibility and scale, so you can quickly change process behavior to keep pace with business requirements.

Attend this complimentary teleconference to learn how the WebSphere Application Server and other tools work with System z to:

• Support flexible workloads and new business patterns, enabling business logic to be centrally located and accessed asynchronously

• Simplify management by consolidating critical business applications on the mainframe

• Utilize application tooling to reuse core business environments in new and productive fashions

Speaker: Andrea Greggo, IBM System z Marketing Manager
Broadcast date: October 19, 2006 – 11 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (US)
Developed for: IT managers, IT architects, application developers
Technical level: Basic to intermediate

Register online now…

Technical podcasts

The 'WebSphere technical podcasts on SOA' series has been an ongoing success this year, with many downloads. The theme throughout 2006 has been 'Making SOA real with WebSphere'. There are usually two new episodes each month: a special episode and a regular 'Did you say mainframe?' segment featuring a 10 minute discussion with one of the experts. Why not download the podcasts or receive them automatically as RSS feeds. To find out more about RSS read this article. Here are some recent new podcasts:

- Special episode 'IBM CICS and event-driven applications'. Take 14 minutes to hear Satish Tanna, senior IT specialist within the CICS tools department at the IBM Hursley laboratory, discuss how CICS Business Event Processor (BEP) and event-driven applications (EDA) can help you drive new business processes through existing applications within an SOA. Find out how others are implementing today.

- Episode 7 'Did you say mainframe?' segment, 'Problem determination tools for z/OS'. Michelle Cordes, IBM Application Integration and Middleware talks about how the new CICS problem determination tools help developers in their jobs, how they interact with subsystems such as CICS, DB2 and IMS, and how they help customers move to an SOA environment.

- Special episode 'IBM WebSphere Host Access Transformation Services'. Find out what IBM WebSphere Host Access Transformation Services (HATS) is and the role it plays in an SOA by enabling applications to be transformed and reused as Web services by providers or requesters. Hear how other customers are using HATS and its recent product enhancements.

- Special episode ‘Back to basics on SOA’. Listen to Bobby Woolfe, a member of IBM Software Services for WebSphere team, explain what SOA is, and how it makes applications more reusable and more robust. Discover how composite applications communicate in an SOA environment and find out which IBM products are available for developing SOA and ESB applications.

- Episode 8 'Did you say Mainframe?' segment, ‘Process Server for z’. Hear Sherrie Abshire talk about the new release of WebSphere Process Server for z/OS V6.0.2 and WebSphere Enterprise Service Bus Version 6.0.2 and the role these two products play in SOA and the Business Process Management portfolio. In addition, learn why deploying these products on z/OS provides the scalability, security, and availability that so many businesses require.

Finally, why not listen to Steve Wood in the ‘Did you say mainframe?’ segment of ‘Episode 4, ‘Integrating with WebSphere Process Server’. Steve who is a long-time CICS developer talks about building Web services for z/OS using WebSphere Developer for z/OS and the Service Flow feature.

More…

IBM Redbooks and Whitepapers

- ‘Implementing CICS Web Services’: Find out how to configure CICS Web services support for HTTP-based and WebSphere MQ-based solutions. Learn how Web services can be used to integrate J2EE applications running in WebSphere Application Server with COBOL programs running in CICS.

- ‘Application Development for CICS Web Services’: Developing Web service applications in CICS? Read the broad view on developing and modernizing CICS applications for XML, Web services, SOAP, and SOA, and the architectures for developing these types of application.

- ‘The Value of the IBM System z and z/OS in Service Oriented Architecture’: Learn about the infrastructure challenges that SOA brings to the table and how the IBM System z platform and the z/OS operating system address those challenges.

- ‘CICS Transaction Server V3R1 Channels and Containers Revealed’: Find out about new channels and containers support in CICS Transaction Server 3.1. This overview explores techniques used to pass data between applications running in CICS and their constraints. It provides information, which allows CICS to fully comply with emerging technology requirements in terms of sizing and flexibility.

- ‘Implementing CICS Web Services’: Learn how to configure CICS Web services support for HTTP-based and WebSphere MQ-based solutions, and demonstrates how Web services can be used to integrate J2EE applications running in WebSphere Application Server with COBOL programs running in CICS.

More…

New book: ‘Secrets of SOA: an enterprise view on service oriented architecture deployment revealed’

Available November 28 2006, Larstan Publishing, ISBN 0977689573

(Steve Wood widely experienced CICS developer and product line manager for CICS Transaction Server at the IBM Hursley lab contributed to this great book!).

Pre-order on Amazon now!

‘The best experts on earth probe the most important IT development of the decade’.

The authors of this upcoming book include authorities from leading-edge, industry analysts and Fortune 100 companies implementing SOA as well as respected IBM senior technical leaders - a true ‘dream team’.

Experts everywhere have called SOA the most important IT development of the decade, a truly ‘disruptive’ technology on the same plain as mainframes or the PC. Yet, few companies across the globe take full advantage of this potentially transformative technology. In ‘*Secrets of SOA’*, due for release from Larstan Publishing in November, internationally recognized experts reveal the problem lies in deployment.

The focus of this book is not about the business value of SOA, or how to develop SOA services, but rather on the value to IT in making enterprise-level SOA infrastructure investments.

Properly deployed and managed, service oriented architecture affords speed, flexibility and efficiency to compete in today’s ultra-competitive marketplace. In this book, readers will learn how enterprise-level planning, backed up by a centralized deployment strategy, can best channel this transformative technology.

As outlined in the first chapter ‘*Service-oriented IT: The Goal is Within our Grasp’,* IBM's Paul Dimarzio points out:

“The platform-agnostic nature of SOA development technologies has led many pundits who watch this space to follow the path of least resistance and take up a matching platform-agnostic view of SOA deployment. Having observed several large enterprises that are reaping the benefits of SOA, as well as others that are struggling, I have concluded that deployment does indeed matter—it matters a lot. So much so that it requires as much as, if not more, attention than development. In fact, it has become apparent to me that larger and more complex enterprises need to take even greater care to ensure that SOA services are deployed on platforms best able to handle the job properly. The true business value of SOA is only realized when the technology is managed and deployed with an enterprise perspective, and not in isolation. Far too often, he says, companies take a departmental “silo” approach to deployment, virtually negating the benefits of the revolutionary technology."

More…

Training and development

Application development for e-business

Gain the skills you need to build e-business applications. Take on board the core technologies, processes and tools skills that you need to improve your productivity.

More...

CICS skills

Work alongside CICS Redbook authors to develop useful new CICS skills. These courses are delivered in partnership with IBM IT Education Services.

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IBM training News brings you the latest information on technical training. Get late-breaking news on technical training offerings tailored to the interest areas you select in the subscription form.
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CCR2 is for the IBM System z and software community and is the leading source of information on best practices, tips for exploiting features in the latest IBM releases and trends.
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Mainstream is for the IBM System z and S390 software community. Read the latest System z and S390 news, events, success stories and related information.
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CICS Update/z Journal is for everyone who uses CICS. Get the latest ideas, lessons based on experience, hints & tips, plus useful code snippets.
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z/OS Hot Topics is an easy going, no-hard-sell approach to informing you about new or little understood aspects of the z/OS platform.
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SOA Newsletter brings you the latest news on the exciting world of SOA.
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Useful links

CICS products
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Why not keep your development colleagues informed by emailing them the link to the registration page so they can also get CICS e-news:

http://www.ibm.com/cics/enews/register