Virtual IMS user group: Newsletter 55

Welcome to the Virtual IMS user group newsletter. The Virtual IMS user group at www.fundi.com/virtualims is an independently-operated vendor-neutral site run by and for the IMS user community.

Virtual IMS user group presentation

The latest webinar from the Virtual IMS user group was entitled, “IMS in an API and Cognitive World”. It was presented by Dusty Rivers, Director, z Systems Software: IMS & CICS, at GT Software.

Dusty has an extensive 39-year background in global mainframe systems integration, and has been recognized as an IBM Champion for Information Management for six years in a row for his leadership and contributions to the Information Management community. His expertise focuses on enabling global organizations to extend the use of their mainframe systems into the world of Web services, clouds, and all distributed systems. An engaging speaker, Dusty travels the United States presenting on various topics in leveraging IMS for modern technologies.

Figure 1: A modern mainframe

Dusty started his presentation by looking at how IBM Watson can be used to transform industries, monetize data, reimagine

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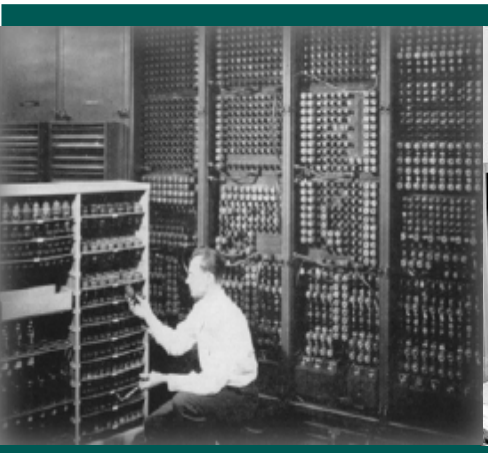

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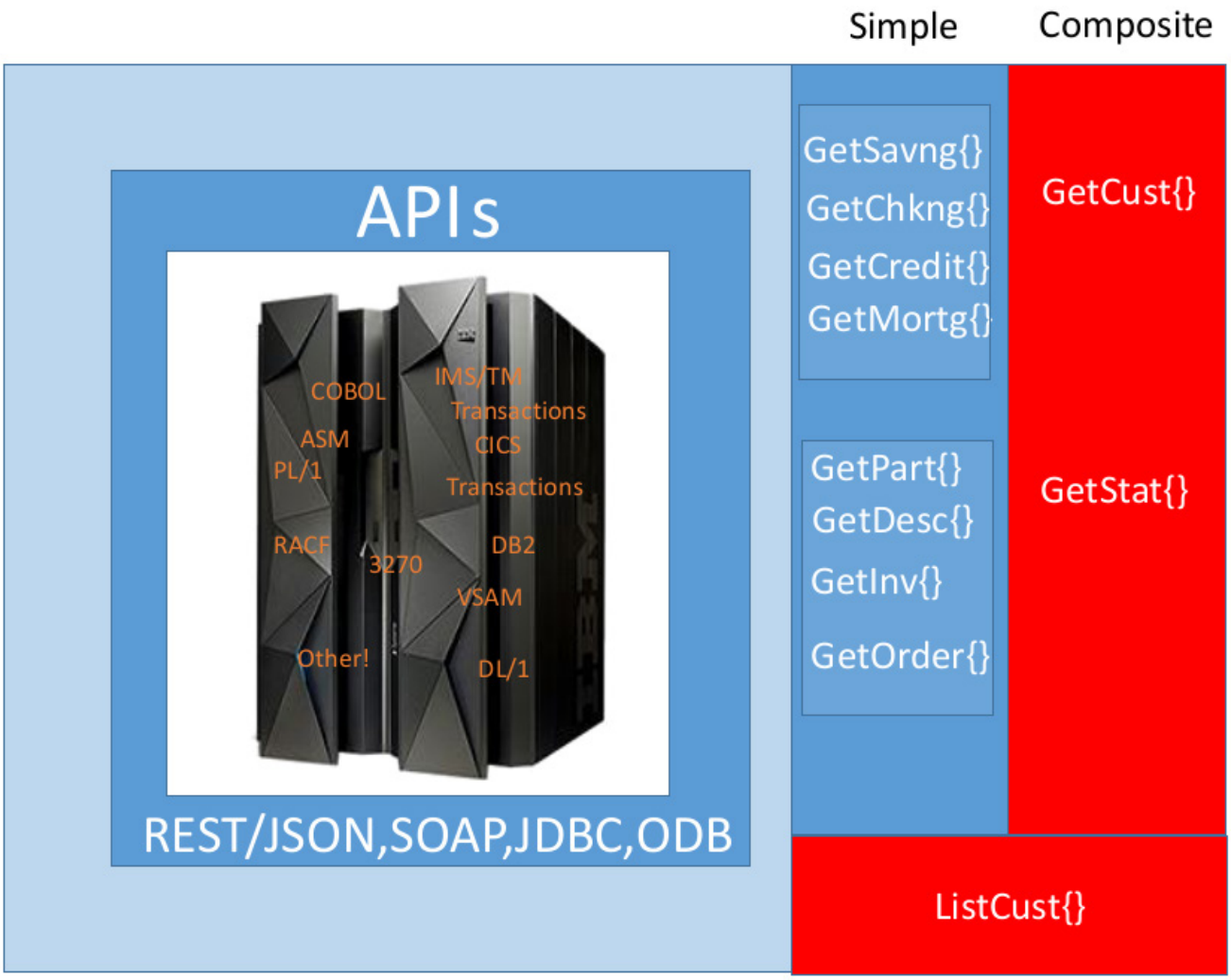

Figure 2: Opening up the mainframe

professions, and redefine development. And from each of the explanations that went with those headings, he identified how mainframes were already doing them. Dusty went on to confirm that IMS is ready to transform industries, monetize data, reimagine professions, and redefine development.

Dusty Rivers went on to look at how mainframes have been traditionally protected from the outside world by strong firewalls. And they have run IMS, COBOL transactions, Assembler, VSAM, DL/I, PL/I etc, (see Figure 1), which aren't really known outside the mainframe environment.

He assured us that now is the time to make the power of the mainframe available to the rest of the world. And the way to do that is through APIs (Application Programming Interfaces).

Non-mainframe people are familiar with REST/ JSON, SOAP, JDBC, and ODBC interfaces, and aren't familiar with mainframe applications – and they don't need to be. All that needs to happen is that APIs need to be available that allow external products to talk to mainframe-based products. That way, everyone is speaking a language that they are familiar with, plus they are able to access mainframe data and transactions.

Don't think so much in terms of APIs, think in terms of

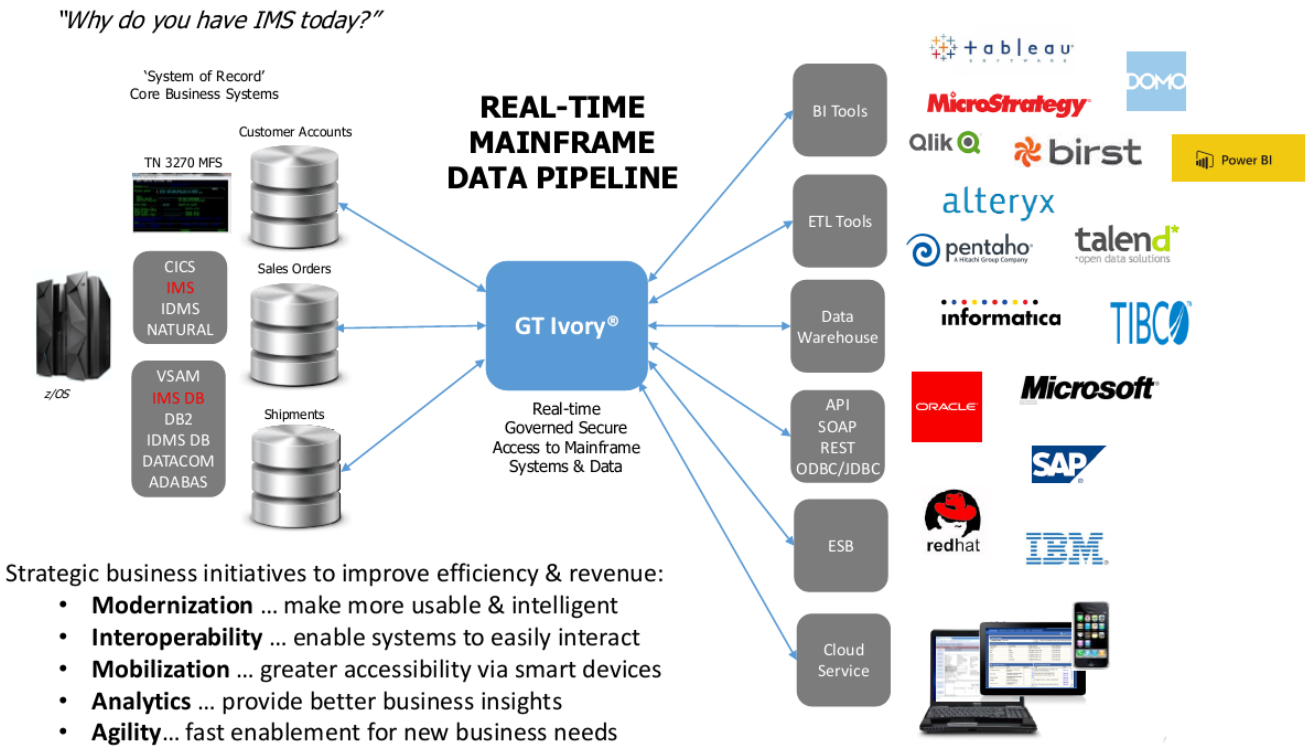

Figure 3: Connecting the mainframe to the world

functions. So, as Figure 2 shows, for a savings account, you might want to know four things. Or for bill of materials application, you might need four completely different pieces of information. And these simple functions could be grouped together into composite functions. And that way, the mainframe becomes an important part of the whole transaction that takes place. The mainframe does what it does best – running transactions on large databases, and the transaction can be called from a remote device running quite different software, and the results of the transaction can be returned to that, or a different, device .

So now, rather than being behind a wall, the mainframe has bridges linking it to other technology.

For example, IBM's API Connect is an API management solution for creating, running, managing, and securing APIs for external and internal consumers to accelerate an organization's API Program and capture new revenue through compelling new customer experiences. GT Software has its Ivory product, which Dusty used to illustrate what's possible. And, there's z/OS Connect, which works well with REST URIs and JSON data.

Figure 3 shows how products from a number of different suppliers can be used for applications such as: BI tools; ETL tools; Data Warehousing; API, SOAP, REST, ODBC/JDBC; ESB (Enterprise Service Bus); and cloud services. These can then connect to something like GT Ivory. And from there, they can connect to data and services running on the mainframe. And the results can be sent back equally easily.

These strategic business initiatives will improve efficiency and revenue through:

- Modernization – make them more usable and intelligent.
- Interoperability – enable

systems to easily interact.

- Mobilization – greater accessibility using smart devices.
- Analytics – provide better business insights.
- Agility – fast enablement for new business needs.

Dusty went on to give a number of examples of customers who had implemented Ivory in order achieve specific business needs.

Dusty Rivers concluded that it definitely was possible to use IMS in an API and cognitive world.

A copy of Dusty's presentation is available for download from the Virtual IMS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/IMSAPIApr17.pdf.

You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/2017-04-11meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

- On 6 June 2017, IBM's James Martin will be presenting "IMS Open Database: You need to know what application developers do not know".
- The following meeting will be on 15 August 2017.

Sponsorship opportunity

Are you missing a great opportunity to advertise your IMS software?

The Virtual IMS user group is now offering software vendors the opportunity to advertise their products in a number of ways. You could have an advert on the home page of the Web site (at www.fundi.com/virtualims), you could advertise in the newsletter, and/or you could advertise in the monthly e-mails sent to members of the user group.

E-mail trevor@itech-ed.com for full information about marketing opportunities with the Virtual IMS user group.

Like us on Facebook

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About the Virtual IMS user group

The Virtual IMS user group was established as a way for individuals using IBM's IMS hierarchical database and transaction processing systems to exchange information, learn new techniques, and advance their skills with the product

The Web site at www.fundi.com/virtualims provides a central point for coordinating periodic meetings (which contain technically-oriented topics presented in a webinar format), and provides articles, discussions, links, and other resources of interest to IBM IMS practitioners. Anyone with an interest in IMS is welcome to join the Virtual IMS user group and share in the knowledge exchange.

To share ideas, and for further information, contact trevor@itech-ed.com.

The Virtual IMS user group is free to its members.