



Statement of direction: IBM CICS Explorer, the new face of CICS

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Overview

IBM intends to introduce a new Eclipse-based graphical user interface, the CICS Explorer, to increase the productivity of highly skilled CICS development and administration personnel, and to enable broadly skilled technical staff to develop and manage CICS system configurations effectively. The CICS Explorer will enable users to create customizable, task-oriented views. These will be extensible by IBM, customers, and independent software vendors (including IBM).

IBM intends that current and future releases of CICS Transaction Server for z/OS® (CICS TS) will include the CICS Explorer. IBM is currently planning that the initial capability of the CICS Explorer will be delivered in fourth quarter 2008 as a new SupportPac™ offering for current releases of CICS TS, with even more function expected to be made available through subsequent releases in 2009. The CICS Explorer is intended to act as a point of integration between current and future releases of CICS TS and the IBM CICS tools.

All statements regarding IBM plans, directions, and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice.

Description

The CICS family of application servers, connectors, and tools provides industrial-strength, online transaction management, and connectivity for mission-critical Web and traditional applications. CICS TS fully participates in enterprise and inter-enterprise service oriented architectures (SOAs). It is supported by many other products in the IBM software portfolio.

As many first- and second-generation System z computer professionals retire from the IT industry, enterprises need to transfer skills, knowledge, and best practice to the next generation of technical staff, while maintaining productivity and protecting service-levels. In this period, enterprises can build a highly flexible and efficient IT skill pool in which specialists can collaborate with more broadly skilled personnel, to build and administer the IT systems of the future.

CICS is a leader in transaction processing and, in conjunction with z/OS and DB2®, delivers levels of performance, availability, and security that are hard to match. To prepare for the future, IBM intends to make significant contributions to the CICS offerings that will help to reduce the skills barriers to the development of CICS applications and the management of CICS systems.

IBM intends to introduce a new user interface, the CICS Explorer, that will give architects, developers, system programmers, and administrators a common tooling environment, with integrated access to a wide range of data and control capabilities delivered by CICS TS, CICS tools, and CICS connectors, plus other IBM and third-party software products.

The CICS Explorer is expected to increase the productivity of highly skilled CICS technical users, as well as providing an intuitive entry-point for broadly skilled staff, by integrating powerful tools into a single Eclipse-based user interface.

It is anticipated that this new user-friendly and intuitive interface to CICS will facilitate team building from a far wider skills pool, to help speed the development and deployment of new business applications, while contributing to reduced total cost of ownership for CICS systems.

IBM's intent is that the CICS Explorer can be integrated within existing Eclipse environments, where the capabilities of the new interface can be extended by IBM, customers, and independent software vendors (including IBM). IBM is currently planning for the CICS Explorer to be available, from fourth quarter 2008, for current and future releases of CICS TS as a strategic point of integration between the run-time and the CICS tools.

The CICS Explorer

The CICS Explorer is intended to act as the tooling integration point for the CICS runtime, and to provide a rich set of CICS views, data, methods, and features, easily extensible by IBM, other vendors and customers to deliver integrated solutions to key CICS users.

To facilitate third-party software support for the CICS Explorer, IBM also intends to release a Software Development Kit (SDK) in order to provide the ability to integrate existing and new solutions with the CICS Explorer. The planned CICS Explorer SDK will enable users to construct and integrate their own features.

CICS TS for z/OS

IBM intends that current and future releases of CICS TS will include the CICS Explorer; future releases of CICS TS will build on existing Atom and Representational State Transfer (REST) support to provide even more control of the CICS runtime from the CICS Explorer and other Web 2.0-enabled tools. More information about Atom feed support for CICS can be found in SupportPac CA8K, refer to the [Reference information](#) section.

CICS tools

IBM also intends that selected CICS tools will complement and enrich the base data and tasks provided by the CICS Explorer with their own views, tasks and data to support disciplines, such as CICS performance analysis, application configuration, application structure and inter-dependency analysis. CICS tools will work together to deliver integrated solutions that cross traditional discipline boundaries.

CICS Transaction Gateway

IBM intends to deliver a future version of CICS Transaction Gateway (CICS TG) that will support the CICS Explorer, adding its own data and controls to provide an integrated view of the greater CICS environment.

IBM problem determination tools

IBM intends that members of the IBM problem determination tools family will support the CICS Explorer to provide a more integrated application development environment for CICS. This will build on the existing problem determination tools support for CICS currently included as part of IBM Rational Developer for System z.

IBM Rational Developer for System z

IBM intends that a future release of IBM Rational Developer for System z will contain an integrated version of the CICS Explorer to provide consistent views and control points for CICS development environments. A technical preview of some of this capability, focusing on systems management, is already available. Refer to the [Reference information](#) section for details. IBM intends that further integration with CICS tools will build on this support and help to simplify the interactions between development and operational processes.

IBM

IBM recognizes the contribution made to CICS customers by the thriving CICS third-party software industry, and intends to facilitate their ability to integrate existing and new solutions with the CICS Explorer. IBM intends to announce details of a CICS Explorer SDK and a Business Partner/ISV program open to all who build solutions for CICS.

Product positioning

The CICSplex® Systems Manager (CICSplex SM) component of CICS TS provides a management infrastructure that gives users a single system image and a single point of control for CICS management, operations, and administration. The CICS Explorer is intended to complement and extend CICSplex SM by adding an integration point with other CICS-related tooling solutions, and by providing an intuitive task-optimized interface. IBM intends that the CICSplex SM Web User Interface will retain its role as an important operational and control interface for CICS TS.

The performance, availability, and monitoring of CICS TS and CICS TG are available via IBM Tivoli® OMEGAMON® XE products. Utilizing CICS Explorer along with the OMEGAMON XE products will provide a full range of capability in managing CICS TS and CICS TG.

IBM Rational Developer for System z remains the strategic application development platform for CICS applications. IBM Rational Developer for System z provides a unified development environment for maintaining and developing new CICS and other System z workloads, as well as connecting CICS applications to other platforms in a heterogeneous environment. IBM continues to invest significantly in IBM Rational Developer for System z, with support for both the CICS TS V3.1, or later, runtime and the integration of the problem determination family of tools. The CICS Explorer is intended to complement and extend IBM Rational Developer for System z by providing a unified view of CICS systems and resources as a basis for both system programmer and application development activities around CICS TS.

Beta program

Customers can apply to gain access to early versions of the CICS Explorer, before the availability of the new SupportPac, through the CICS managed beta program. This gives eligible customers early access to some of the value that will be provided more fully at a later time, and provides an ideal opportunity to provide feedback and potentially influence the development of future versions of the product.

The CICS managed beta program is expected to run well into 2009, with further enhanced early versions of the CICS Explorer being made available during that time.

Customers who are interested in participating in the CICS managed beta program should write to CICSEP@uk.ibm.com or contact their IBM representative for further details.

Webcast

IBM intends that more detailed information on the function of the new CICS Explorer SupportPac will be provided on a Webcast, to be held on November 5, 2008. To register for the Webcast, refer to the [Reference information](#) section.

Reference information

CICS ATOM feed SupportPac CA8K

<http://www-1.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?rs=1083&uid=swg24018619>

Application Deployment Manager (ADM) technology preview

<http://www-1.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?rs=1083&uid=swg21298279>

Webcast "IBM CICS Explorer - The New Face of CICS". November 5, 2008. To register, visit

<http://www.ibm.com/software/systemz/webcast/5nov>

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