



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.

This newsletter is a bit of milestone for us because it is number 50. The Virtual IMS user group started life in 2007 and the first presentation took place in December 2007.

Our first speaker was Kristine Harper, an Associate Developer with NEON Enterprise Software, the people who sponsored the user group back then.

Since 2009, Fundi Software has sponsored the Virtual IMS user group.

Virtual IMS user group presentation

The latest webinar from the Virtual IMS user group was entitled, "IBM IMS Connect for Enterprise Workloads", and was presented by Rafael Avigad, Product Manager and IMS Tools SME, Fundi Software.

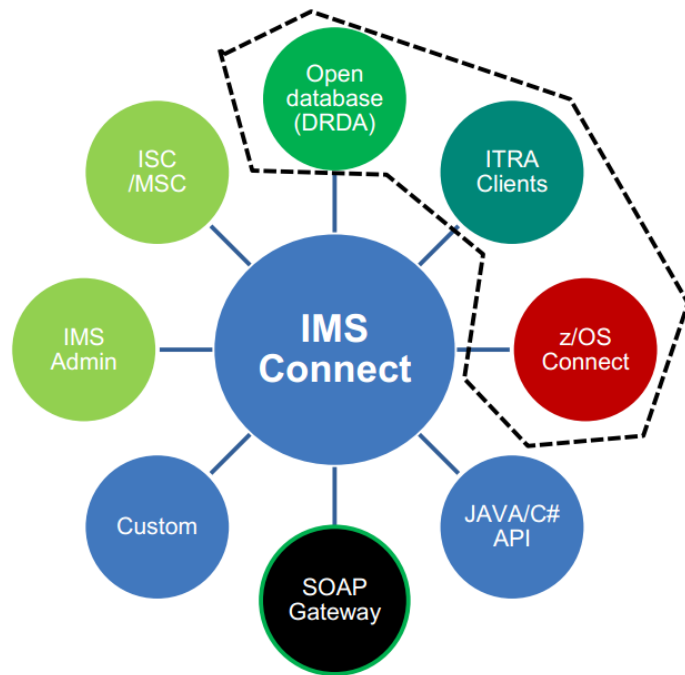
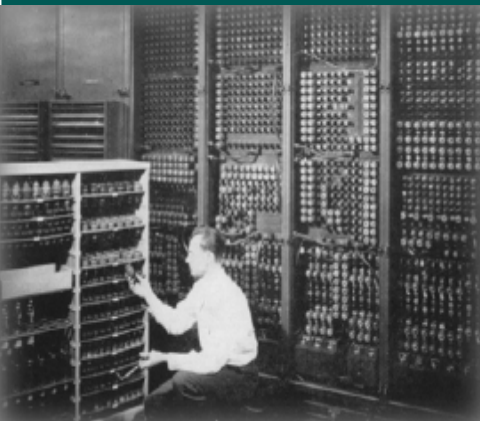


Figure 1: IMS Connect:

Rafael is a product manager with Fundi Software, an IBM business partner, responsible for the development of industry-standard tools for IMS and CICS performance analysis. Rafael has spoken in conferences

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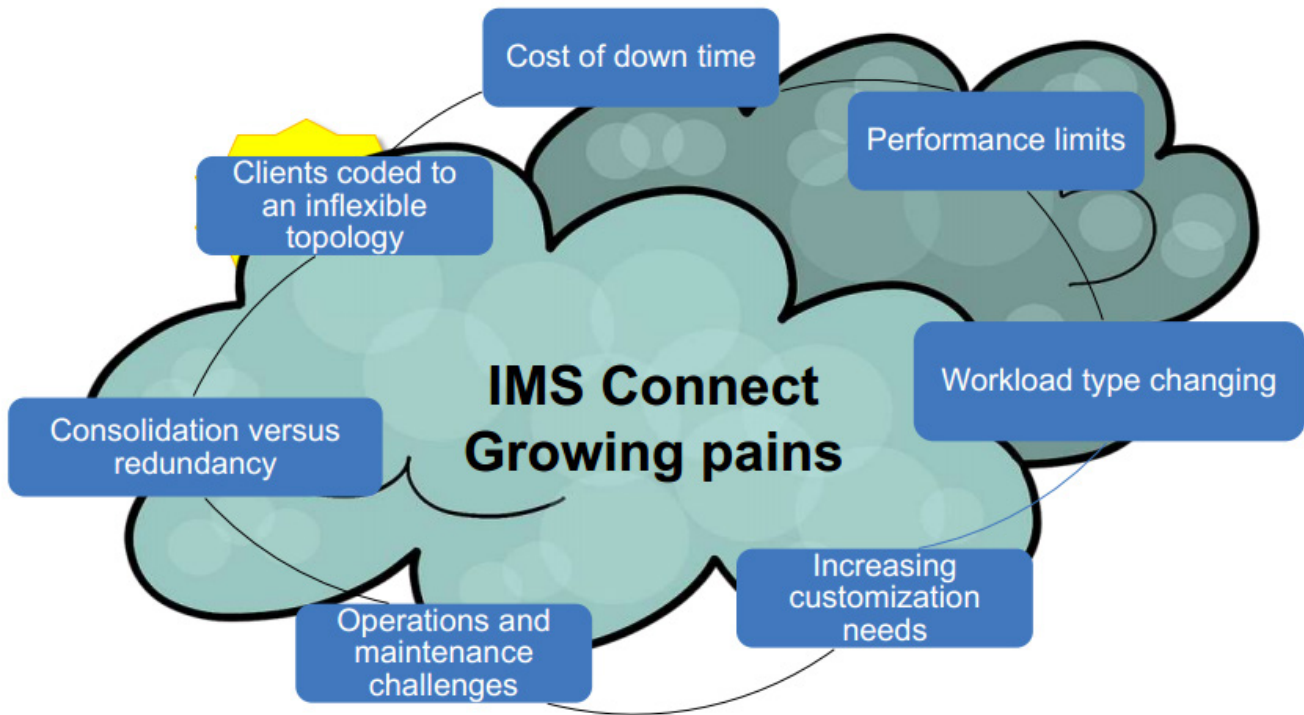


Figure 2: IMS Connect growing pains

in the USA, Europe, and Australia. He is a contributor to IBM Redbooks and numerous articles covering performance, modernization, and connectivity topics for mainframe transaction systems. Prior to joining Fundi, Rafael worked on operational support systems for Internet service providers and mobile telephony.

Rafael started his presentation by taking a look at the history of IMS Connect. He said that in 1997, ITOC (IMS TCP/IP Open Transaction Management Architecture (OTMA) Connection) got a User's Guide. In 1998, Visual Age for Java provided connectivity to IMS using Java ("ebusiness"). In 2004,

with IMS V9, IMS Connect became an integrated component. 2009 saw IMS V11 with IMS Open Database. And in 2011 came the IMS Management Console. Figure 1 illustrates the current IMS Connect state of the union.

IMS Connect's characteristics are:

- Lightweight
- Own address space
- Extensible: messages processed via user exits
- Simple to configure and set up
- Propriety IRM protocol (except for open database).

IMS Connect Extensions is a companion tool for IMS Connect that's been available since just before IMS V9. It was originally developed for routing and exit management, but was mainly used for event collection. However, in recent years there's been a strong shift towards using it for routing and exit management. IMS Connect's growing pains are illustrated in Figure 2.

Users of IMS Connect now use routing to improve parallelism, add redundancy, and provide abstraction (insulation) to clients. They can centralize the management of the client option. They can centralize operational management. And they can use IMS

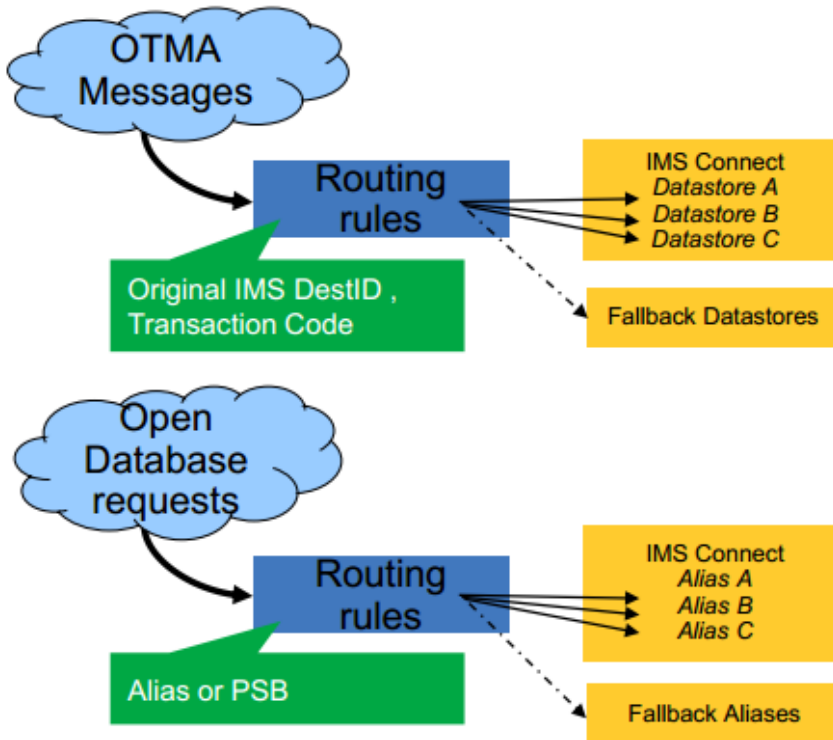


Figure 3: Manage workloads by attributes

Connect instrumentation to tag the various workloads.

when it comes to customizing exits:

- It can provide a short-term fix for some requirements
- Open database offers simple round-robin routing
- Maintenance over time
- Can only refresh BPE (Base Primitive Environment) Exits, not message exits.

Figure 3 illustrates managing workload by attributes. OTMA (Open Transaction Manager Access) routing includes the ability to qualify by transaction code as well

as datastore. Open Database routing support can qualify by the alias name or PSB. You can have generic destinations, parallelism, and optional fallback (flood or down).

It's possible to manage message distributions. Capacity weights allow you to dynamically favour certain destinations. Users can switch from one plan to another with a z/OS Explorer plug-in.

There's no need to interrupt in-flight work. Users can drain in-flight work before IMS shuts down. They can coordinate manually using a z/OS Explorer Plugin. And

they can use commands and batch automation to achieve this.

In terms of security, IMS Connect provides: password, passticket, and password phrase verification; ACEE cacheing; and it automatically monitors RACF Event Notification Facility (ENF) events for changes.

It's possible to manage access to IMS Connect systems based on the IMS Connect system a client is connecting through and the IP address they are connecting from. Security rules (RACF or other) can be used to produce whitelists. Or rules can be formed to produce blacklists that reject access from certain IP addresses or address ranges. And access can be restricted further based on the IMS Connect port being used by the client.

The CEX host command environment for REXX enables IMS Connect Extensions commands to be embedded in REXX programs, which allows more flexible automation of IMS Connect operations. Programs can connect to multiple IMS Connects. They can use REXX features such as variables and conditional logic. They can integrate with other host command environments (MVS, CONSOLE, TSO). Users can

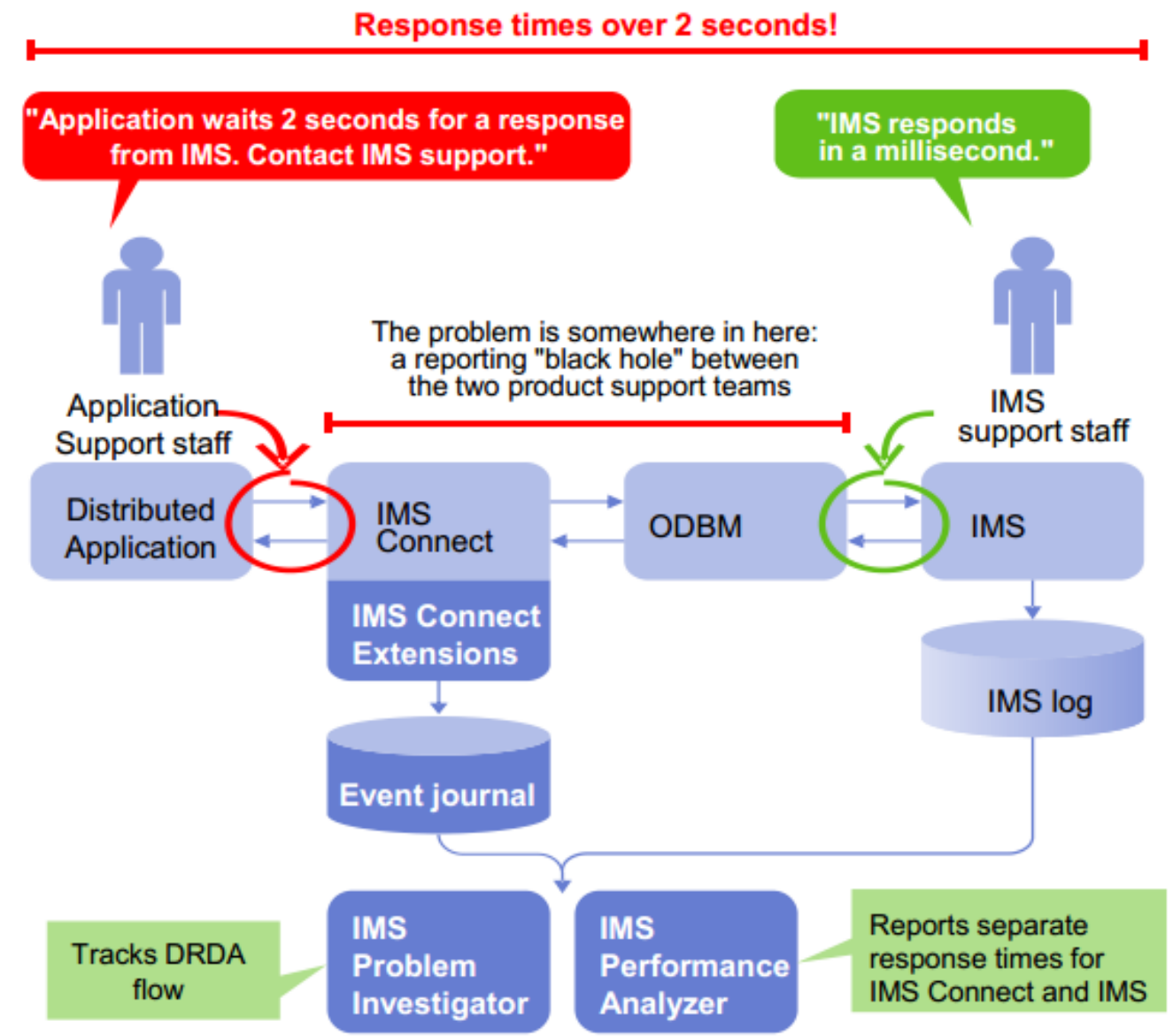


Figure 4: Finding the response time black hole

submit programs interactively as well as in batch.

It's now possible to quickly understand where a problem lies in complex multi-tiered environment (see Figure 4).

In conclusion, Rafael said that starting with IMS Connect is easy, but it can be a poisoned chalice – it can be a victim of its own success. He suggested that

users should have a plan for how they will grow their workloads. And users should understand that growth is not just more workload but a greater variety of workload. People need to understand what changes impact clients that they cannot control. And they need to understand the big picture.

A copy of Rafael's presentation is available

for download from the Virtual IMS user group Web site at www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/IMSConnectJun16.pdf.

You can see and hear the whole user group meeting by downloading the WMV file from www.fundi.com/virtualims/presentations/2016-06-07meeting.wmv.

Meeting dates

- On 9 August 2016, Deepak Kohli, IMS Product Management Team at IBM will talk about, "The IMS Catalog Revolution".

IMS Catalog was introduced back in IMS V12 as an optional system database. Now, more-and-more IMS functions require the IMS Catalog. So how has the catalog evolved? Where is it headed? Will it replace the ACBLIB? For answers to these and other questions that have been keeping you up at night, come to this session and get enlightened.

- The following meeting will be on 4 October 2016, SQData's Scott Quillicy will be speaking.

Recent IMS articles

IBM's IMS newsletter 1602. You can find the newsletter at <https://developer.ibm.com/zsystems/connect/>

Using IMS 14 Callout for Increased Throughput and Control by Sandy Sun, Jack Yuan, and Yee-Rong Lai in IBM Systems Magazine (June 2016). You can find the article at <http://www.ibmssystemsmag.com/mainframe/administrator/ims/IMS-14-Callout/>

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.

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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.