

An Introduction to Leveraging AI to Increase Productivity in CICS

Kye Maloy – CICS AI Team Lead, IBM

70%

reported difficulty finding the skilled talent needed to effectively modernize their mainframes.¹

99%

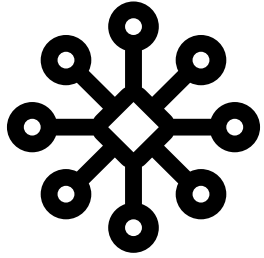
of enterprises now operate hybrid environments, and more than half increased mainframe usage year over year.¹

56%

of organizations are expanding mainframe usage in hybrid environments with new technologies, like agentic AI.¹

1. State of Mainframe Modernization Survey Report | Kyndryl 2025

LLMs in 2026



Agentic AI becoming the standard...

unlocks

more powerful E2E applications



LLMs becoming more specialized...

unlocks

better understanding of domains

abc

Context window limits at 1M+...

unlocks

more data to provide context to LLM

LLM's: The good, the bad, and the made up

- LLM's are **great** at [summarization](#), [data extraction](#), [style and tone analysis](#), [finding data patterns](#) and [writing code](#) in popular languages and frameworks
- LLM's are **good** at [translation](#), [creative writing](#) and [role-play](#) (interviews, customer service etc.)
- LLM's are **terrible** at [fact checking](#), advanced [logic](#) and [math calculations](#) and referencing [recent events](#)

LLM's cannot reference any data not present in their training data and will often make up what they would expect to see when asked

Who won the gold medal in the Men's Biathlon Relay at the 2026 Winter Olympics on February 17?

I apologize for any confusion, but as of now, the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics have not yet taken place.

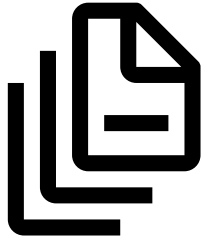
Therefore, it's impossible to determine who won the gold medal in the Men's Biathlon Relay on February 17, 2026, as the event has not occurred. Please check back after the event for accurate information.

France won the gold medal in the Men's 4x7.5km Biathlon Relay at the 2026 Winter Olympics on 17 February. This historic victory marked France's first-ever Olympic gold in this specific event.

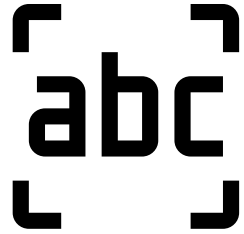
The French team finished with a time of 1:19:55.2, holding off the defending champions, Norway, by 9.8

Building an LLM

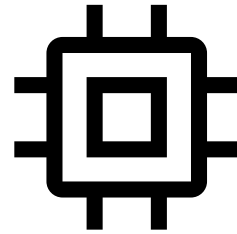
Training Data



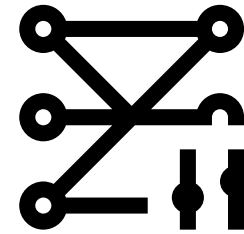
Tokenization



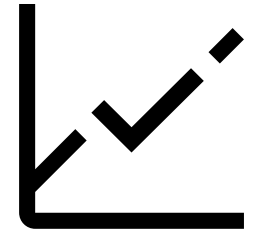
Pre-training



Fine Tuning



Evaluation



Time and cost

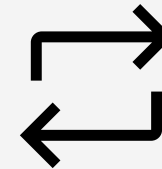
How an LLM tackles a question

1. Convert the query into **tokens**
2. Convert those tokens into **vectors**
3. Pass vectors through **transformer** and **attention layers** to refine understanding
4. **Predict** the next token
5. Feed new token plus original input back into model for **autoregression**
6. When complete, **detokenize** and display

“Who are you?”

["Who", "are", "you", "?"]

[1.256, 0.198, 2.201, 1.265]



[1.256, 0.198, 2.201, 1.265,
1.442, 2.012, 0.781....]

”Who are you? I am IBM Granite.”

What challenges this poses to the mainframe

1

Data scarcity means there's a lack of freely available training data for these LLMs to use during training.

2

Most mainframe data is locked away in private repositories due to the sensitive nature of the platform and its core industries.

3

Monolithic applications, built over decades of time, mean most LLMs may struggle to understand connections between different parts of a mainframe setup.

4

Bias means that when a user asks questions about the mainframe, due to the abundance of Linux/Windows data, most answers will skew towards answering as if the mainframe worked in the same way.

Can you tell me what STGSOSC means in CICS?

STGSOSC is not a standard CICS acronym that I am aware of based on the provided document.

However, in the context of CICS (Customer Information Control System), it's possible that **STGSOSC** could be a user-defined or application-specific acronym. If you have more information about where you encountered this acronym, I may be able to help you better.

Some common CICS acronyms include:

CICS: Customer Information Control System

COBOL: Common Business Oriented Language

DB2: Database 2

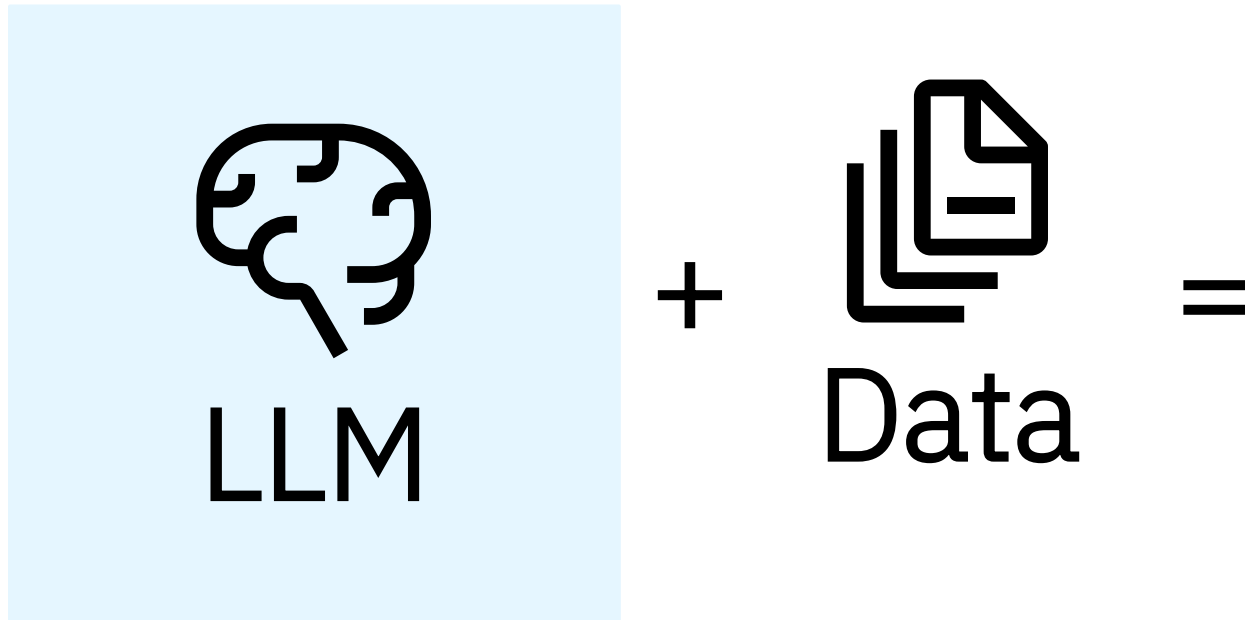
Without more context, it's difficult to provide a specific definition for **STGSOSC**. If you have any additional information, please let me know and I'll do my best to assist you.

Based on the provided context, STGSOSC is a field that represents "The number of times CICS went short on storage (SOS) in this dynamic storage area."

The context explains that SOS means "either the cushion is currently in use and/or there is at least one task suspended for storage."

In summary, STGSOSC indicates the number of times CICS experienced a shortage of storage condition in a particular dynamic storage area.

How Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) helps



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Prompt Example

System: You are an expert customer service assistant. Use the following retrieved information to answer the user's question. If the answer is not in the context, say that you do not know; do not make up information.

Context:

[Return policy: 30 days. No returns on sale items. No returns on socks or underwear.]

User Question: Can I return a shirt I bought on sale?

Your answer:

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[Return policy: 30 days. No returns on sale items. No returns on socks or underwear."]

User Question: Can I return a shirt I bought on sale?

Your answer: You cannot return a shirt purchased on sale.

Demo

Getting the most out of LLM calls

- Prompting: Asking once ([single shot prompting](#)) can be effective but providing examples of what you want ([multi-shot prompting](#)) can really help guide the LLM
- Tuning parameters such as [temperature](#), [repetition penalty](#) and [maximum tokens](#) can help with how creative, strict, succinct or long winded the LLM answers questions
- Use LLMs for their [strengths](#)! They are excellent at a lot more than just email summaries.

Prompt Lab Demo

How can we make LLMs more
powerful, more independent, and
self-actioning?

Agentic AI

Uses AI Agents, autonomous programs powered by Large Language Models (LLMs) that can **reason, plan, and take independent actions** to achieve specific goals.

Key features include:

- Autonomy
- Memory
- Tool use
- Decision making
- Goal-Orientated



React Style Prompting

You run in a loop of Thought, Action, PAUSE, and Observation.

At the end of the loop, you output an Answer.

Use Thought to describe your reasoning about the question.

Use Action to run one of the available tools - then return PAUSE.

Observation will be the result of running those actions.

Your available tools are:

search_wikipedia: e.g. search_wikipedia: Apollo 11. Returns a summary fl

calculate: e.g. calculate: $4 * 7 / 3$. Runs a calculation using Python.

Example session:

Question: What is the age of the current President of France?

Thought: I need to find out who the current President of France is first.

Action: search_wikipedia: President of France

PAUSE

Observation: Emmanuel Macron is the current President of France.

Thought: I now know the President is Emmanuel Macron and his birth date.:

Action: calculate: $2026 - 1977$

PAUSE

Observation: 49

Answer: Emmanuel Macron is 49 years old.

LLMs

- Foundational component of all AI workflows
- Knowledge cutoff means there's a limit to what can be known
- Very responsive/fast to return answers
- Cannot validate process LLM took to arrive at answer

AI Agents

- Plan and reason as they execute towards achieving a certain goal
- Uses tools, LLMs, and other agents as they progress through
- Can take longer as more process is going on under the covers
- Process can be traced as agent makes decisions

How do we provide these LLM based agents with **API access** to gather crucial data?

MCP Servers

An MCP (Model Context Protocol) server is a lightweight program that acts as a standardized [bridge](#) between AI applications and [external data sources](#) or [tools](#) (files, databases, APIs).

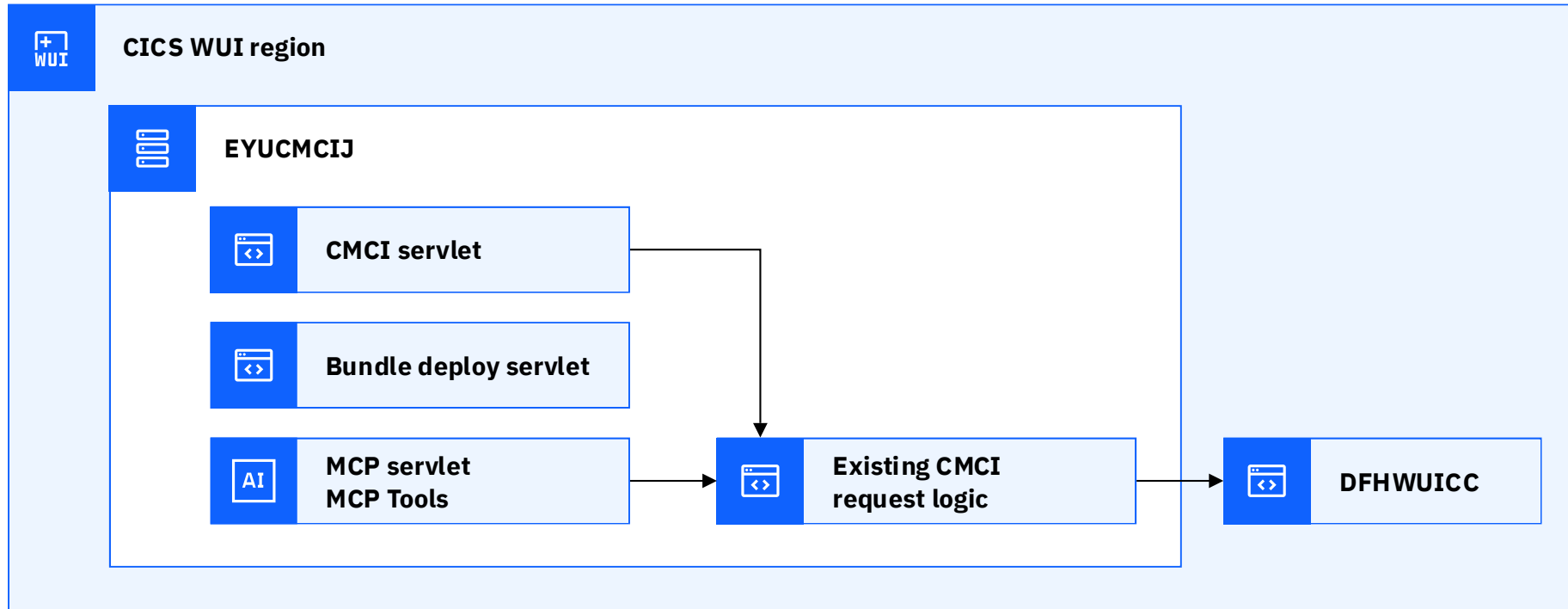
They typically provide 3 resource types: [tools](#), [resources](#) and [prompts](#).

Developed by Anthropic in Nov 2024, and donated to the Agentic AI Foundation (AAIF) in Dec 2025, MCP offers a [standardisation](#) of how tools and other MCP based resources are offered, removing any ambiguity.

Think of MCP as the “USB-C” for LLMs connecting to servers filled with useful tools and resources.

IBM CICS 6.3: MCP Server

Runs in a CMCI JVM server in [either a WUI or SMSS region](#). In a standalone region, the JVM server that runs the MCP server is called [EYUCMCIJ](#). The MCP server is [enabled by default](#) from CICS TS 6.3. MCP work runs under the CICS-supplied transaction, [CWMC](#).



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z

Combine CICS expertise with live-system contextual awareness for rapid insights and advice

User personas

Junior System Programmer Enable junior systems programmers to make best-practice decisions from day one

Senior System Programmer
Instant access to CICS SME knowledge to maintain and optimize environments

Benefits

- **Embedded CICS expertise** with best practices and how-to guidance
- **Instant access to live system data** for diagnosis, development, and configuration
- Accelerated **problem resolution**

Use cases

Technical concept and workflow guidance

Help teams quickly understand unfamiliar CICS terms, commands, and architectural concepts. Ask follow on questions to get deeper insights into CICS topics.

Configuration and environment decision support

Provide best-practice recommendations for configuring and managing CICS environments

Accelerated problem diagnosis and remediation

Accelerate incident resolution by analyzing error codes, transaction context, and live system data to recommend remediation.

*Included with and entitled through CICS Transaction Server for z/OS

CICS Transaction Server Agents for Z cont.

- Custom LLM-based agents, [built with purpose](#) for common CICS use cases
- Connects to MCP server as part of CICS 6.3 to [provide live data about the CICS system and its configuration](#)
- Built with [SME knowledge](#) from the CICS team to provide LLMs with some grounding information about the complexities of CICS
- Support for [Granite](#), [Llama](#) and [Spyre Accelerator](#) cards on the z17 to keep all processing on-mainframe

Topology Agent

- Ask questions about [CICS topologies](#), setup, inter-region connections, [JVM Servers](#), architecture, programming concepts and more!
- Uses a special index of data, built by the CICS team and formed on [interviews with SMEs](#) on key topics and concepts

Problem Determination Agent

- Uses [live CICS data](#) via MCP (in CICS 6.3) to [diagnose causes](#) of DFHAC class of message codes (transactions)
- Uses that live data to [recommend a fix](#) for the issue, all in one response along with other key data about the transaction and its related program

Updates as of last week!

CICS Transaction Server Agents for Z 1.2.0

What's new!

- Talk **naturally** to the agents and they **retain memory** to what “that” is as you progress through the conversation.
- Ability to ask about resources currently installed in CICS
- Ask **follow-up questions** to continue understanding more about CICS.
- Questions are **dynamically routed** between all our agents to ensure the right agent is used to answer the question.
- Improvements to existing agent's ability to **search through zRAG database** for documentation
- Bug fixes, performance enhancements.

I want to learn about
something in CICS

You 9:50 PM

How many JVM servers can I run in a single CICS region?



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 9:50 PM | Show Reasoning ▾

There is no configuration limit to the number of JVM servers that a CICS region can support theoretically. However, the threads and the z/OS storage that are used by a JVM do have practical limits. A CICS region can support up to 2000 CICS-enabled Java threads in total, with each JVM server being able to have a maximum of 256 threads. Furthermore, the number of JVM servers that can effectively be run is often constrained by the available unallocated 31-bit z/OS storage, which primarily depends on the size of the private area allocated to the CICS extended dynamic storage area (EDSA), defined by the EDSALIM system initialization parameter.

You 9:51 PM

Can you tell me a little more about that ED thing



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 9:51 PM | Show Reasoning ▾

The ED, or Extended Dynamic Storage Area, refers to the storage area used by CICS to hold data and programs during runtime. The EDSALIM system initialization parameter defines the maximum amount of 31-bit storage allocated to the CICS workload in a CICS region. This allocated storage includes the private area for the JVM servers. The number of JVM servers you can effectively run is often constrained by the amount of unallocated 31-bit z/OS storage, which is primarily dependent on this EDSA. It's important to monitor EDSA usage, as it can impact the number of JVM servers that can be supported efficiently in a single CICS region.

or

Managing JVM threads

Last Updated: 20

JVM servers are multithreaded, because they run in threads. This means that each JVM server can have many threads running at the same time. This can be a problem if the JVM server is running in a region against a limited amount of storage.

About the JVM thread limit

Each JVM server can have many JVM threads running at the same time. You can adjust the thread limit for each JVM server to suit your applications.

The thread limit for your Java work is controlled by the JVMSECT parameter in the CICS system initialization table.

Procedure

1. Enable the JVMSECT parameter in the CICS system initialization table. You can use the CICS command SET CICS to do this.
2. Check how many threads the JVMSECT parameter allows. The “JVMSECT” parameter in the CICS system initialization table specifies the number of threads for other JVM servers by reducing the thread limit.
3. To check the availability of z/OS resource, use the dispatcher TCB pool and TCB mode statistics to assess the T8 TCB usage across the CICS

Managing EDSALIM

Last Updated: 2026-02-18

The **EDSALIM** system initialization parameter specifies the upper limit of the total amount of storage within which CICS® can allocate the individual extended dynamic storage areas (EDSAs) that reside in 31-bit (above-the-line) storage; that is, above 16 MB but below 2 GB.

About the EDSALIM parameter

The default **EDSALIM** value is 800 MB (838,860,800 bytes). You can specify *number* in bytes (for example, 52428800), a whole number of kilobytes (for example, 51200K), or a whole number of megabytes (for example, 50M). See [Coding conventions for DSA limits](#).

From the storage that you specify using **EDSALIM**, CICS allocates the ECDSA, EUDSA, ESDSA, ERDSA, and ETDSA. For information about the contents of each of the extended dynamic storage areas, see [CICS dynamic storage areas](#).

The maximum value that you can specify for **EDSALIM** is limited by the following factors:

- The size that you have specified for the CICS region on the MVS **REGION** parameter in the CICS job or procedure.
- The amount of MVS storage, outside the EDSAs, that you require to satisfy MVS GETMAIN requests for 31-bit (above-the-line) storage.

For methods to estimate the amount of storage to specify on the **EDSALIM** parameter, see [Estimating, checking, and setting EDSALIM](#).

Note: If you change the EDSA limit while CICS is running, the change is cataloged in the local catalog. If **EDSALIM** is specified in the system initialization table, the cataloged value specified by the change overrides the value of the **EDSALIM** system initialization parameter on an initial, cold, or warm start. The cataloged value is not used if you specify **EDSALIM** as a system initialization parameter override (for example, in SYSIN), or if you reinitialize the CICS catalog data sets.

Parent topic:

→ [The system initialization parameter descriptions and summary](#)

e CDSA, UDSA, SDSA, and RDSA. The

1 CICS subpools. The subpools are pool statistics in the CICS storage

its.

1 for each DSA can depend on the settings

ns is allocated from user-key storage. storage.

. If you specify **RENTPGM=NOprotect**,

e pressure on virtual storage by using the

stem initialization parameter **DSALIM**

Why did something **not**
work as expected?

All

CEMT INQUIRE PROGRAM

Last Updated: 2026-02-18 

Retrieve information about programs, maps, and partition sets.

In the CICS Explorer®, the [Programs view](#) provides a functional equivalent to this command.

Description

INQUIRE PROGRAM returns information about the programs, map sets, and partition sets that are defined to your system. Java™ programs that run in a JVM return a subset of values.

A program that is defined as part of an application installed on a platform is private to that version of that application. A program is private if the PROGRAM resource is defined in a CICS® bundle that is packaged and installed as part of an application, either as part of the application bundle, or as part of the application binding bundle. A program that is auto-installed by a task for an application that is deployed on a platform is also private to that version of the application. Private programs are not visible when you use the CEMT INQUIRE PROGRAM command. To inquire on or browse private programs, use the CICS Explorer or the EXEC CICS INQUIRE PROGRAM system programming command. Note that a private program that is declared as an application entry point becomes a public program when the CICS bundle containing the statement of the application entry point is made available.

1. The APPLICATION, APPLMAJORVER, APPLMINORVER, APPLMICROVER, OPERATION, and PLATFORM fields for **CEMT INQUIRE PROGRAM** display information about a public PROGRAM resource that is defined as an application entry point.

The resource signature

You can use this command to display the resource signature fields. You can use these fields to manage resources by capturing details of when the resource was defined, installed, and last changed. For more information, see [Auditing resources](#). The resource signature fields are CHANGEAGENT, CHANGEAGREL, CHANGETIME, CHANGEUSRID, DEFINESOURCE, DEFINETIME, INSTALLAGENT, INSTALLTIME, and INSTALLUSRID. See [Summary of the resource signature field values](#) for detailed information about the content of the resource signature fields.

Input

6. Press the clear key. You can start this transaction in one of two ways:
 - Type CEMT INQUIRE PROGRAM. You get a display that lists the status.
 - Type CEMT INQUIRE PROGRAM followed by as many of the other attributes that are necessary to limit the range of information that you require. For example, if you enter cemt i prog c e, the resulting display shows you the details of only those programs that are written in C language and are enabled.

You can use the tab key to navigate to the highlighted or blank fields and type over them with the required values.

(value)

Was this topic helpful?  

INQUIRE TRANSACTION

18 

about transactions.

In the [Transactions view](#) provides a functional equivalent to this command.

1

ACTION command returns information about transaction definitions.

Resource signature

Command to display the resource signature fields. You can use these fields to manage resources by capturing details of when the resource was defined, installed, and last changed. For more information, see [Auditing resources](#). The resource signature fields are CHANGEAGENT, CHANGETIME, CHANGEUSRID, DEFINESOURCE, DEFINETIME, INSTALLAGENT, INSTALLTIME, and INSTALLUSRID. See [Summary of the resource signature field values](#) for detailed information about the content of the resource signature fields.

Clear the screen. You can start this transaction in two ways:

1. TYPE TRANSACTION (or suitable abbreviations for the keywords). The resulting display lists the current status.

2. TYPE TRANSACTION (or suitable abbreviations for the keywords), followed by the attributes that are necessary to limit the information that you require. For example, if you enter cemt i trans en pu, the resulting display shows the details of only those transactions that are enabled and system-purgeable.

3. List attributes in the following ways:

a. Press the clear key. You get a display that lists the current status of transactions on the INQUIRE screen after tabbing to the appropriate field. See [Overtyping a display](#).

b. TYPE TRANSACTION command.

4. Transaction identifier. Only transactions that have been defined in the CICS® system definition file (CSD) and installed on the system are accessible through CEMT.

5. Suffix of a transaction list table (XLT).

(value)

or

You 10:21 PM

I just got DFHAC2016 on TXN1

You 10:24 PM

What about the TRANCLASS thing

You 10:23 PM

What that routing value means?

decision on where to run a
then the location of a resource,
this approach can be useful
x environments where dynamic

separate local and remote
the name of the target region,
static routing is used, the
onsive, which can cause

, which means that it will
the transaction is
the program PROGA1 needs to
if necessary.



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 10:24 PM | Show Reasoning ▾

The TRANCLASS thing refers to the transaction class in CICS, which is a way to group transactions together for scheduling and management purposes. In your case, the live system data shows that the transaction TXN1 has a TRANCLASS value of DFHTCL00, which is the default transaction class name indicating that the transaction does not belong to any specific transaction class.

The TRANCLASS is used to define the scheduling constraints for a group of transactions, such as the maximum number of tasks that can run concurrently or the maximum number of tasks that can queue awaiting initial dispatch. The SET TRANCLASS command can be used to change the limits that govern tasks within a particular transaction class. The INQUIRE TRANCLASS command can be used to determine the limits defined for a transaction class, as well as the current activity within the transaction class.

In the context of the error message DFHAC2016, the TRANCLASS value of DFHTCL00 suggests that the transaction TXN1 is not subject to any specific scheduling constraints. However, the fact that the transaction is disabled and the program is disabled indicates that there are other issues that need to be addressed before the transaction can be executed successfully.



IBM CICS 1

The DFHA
not availa
program l

Live Sy

The live s

- TRAN
 - PF
 - ST
 - TF
- PROG
 - PF
 - ST
 - LA

Resolu

To resolve

Further

The follow

- TRAN
 - PF
 - RE
 - RC
 - TRANCLASS: DFHTCL00
- PROGRAM:

Show me **that** in terms I will
understand

Can you tell me about the dynamic storage areas in CICS



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 10:27 AM | Show Reasoning ▾

CICS dynamic storage areas (DSAs) are essential for CICS operation, providing storage for CICS tasks to run transactions. There are DSAs in 24-bit storage, 31-bit storage, and 64-bit storage, and they are allocated in virtual storage pages taken from z/OS storage subpools. CICS manages DSA storage in extents, with each extent consisting of one or more pages. The storage that individual subpools use is shown in the domain subpool statistics in the CICS storage manager statistics. Parameters such as DSALIM and EDSALIM control the amount of storage that CICS can use for DSAs. Understanding the different types of storage, including primary, auxiliary, and tertiary storage, is also important for effective log stream storage management.



You 10:28 AM

Compare CDSA, RDSA, ECDSA and EUDSA in a table



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 10:29 AM | Show Reasoning ▾

Here is a comparison table of CDSA, RDSA, ECDSA, and EUDSA:

DSA	Description	Storage Type	Equivalent Area
CDSA	CICS-key task-lifetime storage in 24-bit storage	24-bit	ECDSA (31-bit), GCDSA (64-bit)
RDSA	Read-only storage for reentrant programs and tables in 24-bit storage	24-bit	ERDSA (31-bit), no equivalent in 64-bit
ECDSA	CICS-key task-lifetime storage in 31-bit storage	31-bit	CDSA (24-bit), GCDSA (64-bit)
EUDSA	Extended user-key task-lifetime storage in 31-bit storage	31-bit	UDSA (24-bit), GUDSA (64-bit)

Explain how a CICS region communicates in terms I understand, as a Kubernetes engineer



IBM CICS Transaction Server agent for Z 10:46 PM | Show Reasoning ▾

As a Kubernetes engineer, you can think of a CICS region as similar to a pod in Kubernetes. Just like how pods in Kubernetes can communicate with each other through various methods, CICS regions can also communicate with each other through different protocols such as Multi-Region Operation (MRO), Inter-System Communication (ISC), and Internet Protocol Intercommunication (IPIC).

In CICS, MRO is used for communication between regions within the same z/OS image or sysplex, similar to how pods within the same cluster can communicate with each other. ISC is used for communication between regions in different z/OS images or sysplexes, similar to how pods in different clusters can communicate with each other through a network. IPIC is used for communication between regions over a TCP/IP network, similar to how pods can communicate with each other through a service mesh.

Just like how you would configure networking in Kubernetes to enable communication between pods, you would need to configure the communication protocols in CICS to enable communication between regions. This includes defining connections between regions, specifying the protocols to use, and configuring any necessary security settings.

In terms of scalability and high availability, CICS regions can be grouped into CICS system groups and CICSplexes, which can be distributed across multiple z/OS systems in a sysplex. This allows for the scaling of applications and the provision of high availability, similar to how you would scale and provide high availability for applications in Kubernetes by adding more pods or nodes to the cluster.

Overall, while the specific technologies and protocols used in CICS and Kubernetes may differ, the concepts of communication, scalability, and high availability are similar, and understanding these concepts in one environment can help inform your understanding of the other.



Explain MRO to me like a pirate



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 10:48 PM | Show Reasoning ▾

Arrr, ye landlubber! Yer lookin' fer a explanation o' MRO, eh? Alright then, matey! MRO stands fer Multi-Region Operation, and it be a way fer different CICS regions to communicate with each other, like ships passin' messages in a bottle.

Imagine ye have a treasure map, and ye need to share it with yer matey on another ship. Ye can use MRO to send the map to yer matey's ship, and they can use it to find the treasure. It's like a special kind o' messenger service, but instead o' sendin' messages, ye be sendin' whole programs and data!

MRO be useful when ye have different CICS regions that need to work together, like a crew o' pirates workin' together to find the treasure. It helps them share resources and get the job done faster.

So hoist the sails and set course fer MRO, me hearty! It be a powerful tool fer any CICS pirate lookin' to communicate with other regions and find the treasure o' efficient processing!

You 10:50 PM

And now IPIC connections but as a poem



IBM CICS Transaction Server agents for Z 10:50 PM | Show Reasoning ▾

In the realm of CICS, where regions converse and share, A protocol emerges, IPIC, with its own flair. It weaves a tapestry of communication, strong and wide, Between CICS regions, over TCP/IP, it does reside.

With attributes defined, and resources in place, IPIC connections flourish, with a secure, gentle pace. The IPCONN resource, a key to unlock the way, Specifies the partner, the port, and the protocol to sway.

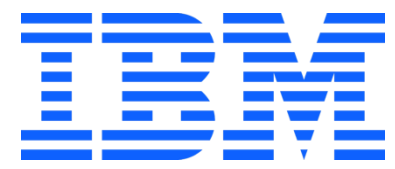
The TCPIP SERVICE resource, a companion true and dear, Defines the protocol, and the port, that banish fear. Together they dance, in harmony and in time, Enabling CICS regions to converse, in a secure, IPIC chime.

So let us cherish IPIC, this protocol of might, That brings CICS regions together, in the dark of night. For in its depths, we find a world of communication, free and wide, Where CICS regions converse, with IPIC, as their gentle guide.

Demo

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