

z/VSE 4.3 User Experience

The time to get it is NOW!

Site Overview

- Hardware:
 - z9-BC A01
 - DS6800 disk subsystem
 - 3590 tape system
 - OSA (OSC) for 3270 access
 - OSA (OSX) for TCP/IP
 - 3174 supporting 6262 printers
 - No “Sandbox” System
 - No production on weekends

Site Overview

- Software

- z/VSE 4.2.2+

- CSI TCP/IP stack
 - CICS/TS **only**
 - VTAM C/S version
 - Encryption Facility/VSE

- ISV Software

- McKinney LISTCAT+
 - McKinney CEMT/Batch
 - Viaserv ViaSQL

Site Overview

- Software (continued)
 - CA Products
 - Vollie
 - Librarian
 - FAVER2
 - Sort
 - Meta-COBOL
 - Vision:Results (DYL280)

Maintenance Philosophy

- Keep All Software Current
 - Client at one time was grossly outdated which resulted in stagnate environment requiring very painful upgrades
 - Try not to be “bleeding” edge adopter
 - Wait for the “.1” maintenance tape
 - Now it’s usually sufficient to wait for RSL release
 - Update ISV on old release prior to z/VSE FSU
 - Reinstall all new when z/VSE version upgrade
 - Sometimes a moot point with CA software

Motivation For z/VSE 4.3

- VSCR of 24-bit storage
 - Mostly VSAM SVA to 31-bit
 - Would like more below the line for batch
- * \$\$ PUN MEM=
 - Have a lot of “pre-processor” compile procedures
 - Hey, been waiting for this since MVT/VSE days 😊
- Other considerations
 - Enhancements in security interfaces
 - CEETRACE partition activation more granular

Jumping the Gun

- Investigated all PTFs for ISV software
 - Applied all on z/VSE 4.2.2 before upgrade
 - Not many were required (some only documentation)
- FSUed on December 11th
 - Tested system with normal “test suite”
 - Identified problem with IDCAMS parameter DEFAULTVOLUMES but found it could be circumvented by running “below the line”
 - Made “go” decision for production

Oops, oh Lordy Lordy

- FCOBOL (WRITE AFTER POSITIONING)
 - Fails if output is going to a disk file
 - Cannot be fixed since FCOBOL is unsupported
 - Rewrite application in LE/COBOL (3rd largest program in shop) with AFTER ADVANCING
- SYSIPT on FBVA fails
 - Impacts only program “demotions” and “promotions”
 - Open PMR with IBM (PTF in hand 12/20)
- IDCAMS issue
 - Open PMR with IBM (local fix from level 2 in hand 1/17)
 - Circumvent by making all batch “below line”
 - IBM wonders about explicit DFVOL usage (discuss)
- GETVIS availability?
 - Seems to need more (maybe due to “sub-pool” buffer allocations?)
 - Change SIZE defaults in the system to expand partition GETVIS
 - Took additional 1MB of reclaimed space due to VSCR

And A Real Show Stopper

- Vision:Results (DYL280)
 - Programs failing
 - Compile and Go
 - “Frozen” pre-prepared programs
 - Compatibility Status
 - Not on CA website but had received “all OK” from Technical Support but ***no VSAM buffers in 31-bit***
 - Failing regardless of partition size
 - Open PMR with CA on this
 - Took then “a while” to find a z/VSE system to test on
 - Provided fix in late December
 - Partition left in 31-bit addressing mode after return from IBM SVA resident journaling exit interface (only happened when VSAM file was opened for output)

Rolling Back The System

- Rolled Back on Monday Evening
 - Most processing worked but could not process orders to warehouse which had a dependency on DYL280 and that FCOBOL program.
 - Backed up POWER queues to put back to old system.
 - Difficulty with S/A restores from stacked 3590 tapes (particularly since I was remote).
 - Used VTAPE images to restore system (DOSRES thru SYSWK5) to empty volumes.

Lessons Learned

- Release Level
 - Much more “under the hood” with this than typical release level changes
 - Extensive VSAM code relocation caused unforeseen issues (should have been forewarned)
- ISV Support
 - CA Vision support was good but I’m concerned that they appeared not to have the ability to test on z/VSE 4.3 system.
 - Many CA products are old and get the bare minimum of service as releases go on; hope not to repeat the “dynamic partition upcharge” in the future.
 - Others are generally right on with their stuff

Lessons Learned

- Don't Be Bleeding Edge
 - Too aggressive on this rollout and ignored well working philosophy
- Need A Better Sandbox
 - Have some additional capacity that could be used to create a sandbox LPAR.
 - A weekend only strategy will also work quite effectively and be a lot less restrictive.
 - Standalone strategy needs to be reviewed but deferred pending the situation with virtual tape system.
- Test Suite
 - Keep adding new tests as you think of them since the oddest stuff can be things that a nightmare can be made of.

April 9th, 2011

- FSUed with the original delivered tapes
 - Applied RSL for 4.3.0 as of January 31st
 - Ran Software inventory for PSPs and applied
 - Reapplied local IBM VSAM fix for DFVOL
 - Vendor fixes had previously been applied on 4.2
- Now running 4.3.0+ in production
 - Batch partitions at 11MB with 8MB for GETVIS
 - * \$\$ PUN PMR opened with IBM
 - Things are running smoothly and as expected