zCOST AutoSoftCapping – Frequently Asked Questions
IBM z/OS VWLC Software Pricing Optimization

IBM Business Partner

zCOST AutoSoftCapping FAQ's	
Question	***Answer***
Q1) Does zCOST AutoSoftCapping (ASC) replace core functions of the zSeries Hardware Management Console (HMC) & is it a proprietary solution requiring specialized support?	All HMC functions remain unchanged & zCOST ASC only utilizes standard HMC services for MSU resource management. Specifically zCOST ASC utilizes the published HMC API HWMCAAPI to dynamically change LPAR MSU ratings, as per customer based parameters. Therefore zCOST ASC is not a proprietary solution requiring specialized support.
Q2) How many CPU cycles are used by zCOST AutoSoftCapping & why should my organization implement yet another z/OS Systems Management tool (E.g. Monitor)?	zCOST ASC minimizes CPU usage by requiring only one instance of an RMF or CMF equivalent monitor for each SYSPLEX instance & works on the premise that SCRT data collection already exists. Unlike other monitors, which are just that, monitors, zCOST APC is a solution to reduce VWLC software costs, by ~10-20%, with minimal MSU usage.
Q3) What is the relationship between IBM & zCOST Management for the AutoSoftCapping product & IBM z/OS software pricing in general?	zCOST Management are a premier IBM Business Partner & a PartnerWorld for Developers (PWD) member. This means that zCOST ASC will always keep pace with latest zSeries technology advancements, from GA date. IBM also references the zCOST ASC solution on their zSeries software pricing web page; thus there are no considerations.
Q4) Why would you want me to increase MSU capacities for use with zCOST AutoSoftCapping, as surely this will only increase software costs, while surely the objective is to reduce VWLC software costs?	zCOST ASC allows the customer to define high & low watermarks for MSU ratings, while also allowing critical workloads (E.g. Production) to be prioritized. Because of the 4-hour rolling average, zCOST ASC utilizes MSU resource that would not be used in a "fixed" environment. Thus software costs are in fact reduced, while MSU's are allocated to workloads requiring "temporary" MSU allocation (E.g. Batch).
Q5) Why do I need the zCOST AutoSoftCapping solution, when IBM has introduced the Group Capacity Limit (GCL) function with z/OS 1.8?	The GCL function extends MSU management with a 3rd management criteria, adding Group Capacity to a group of LPAR's within a single CEC, to the standard defined capacity & LPAR weight. zCOST ASC provides such support for all z/OS releases, not just 1.8 onwards, while providing continuous & dynamic MSU management; GCL management is "fixed".
Q6) Why do I need the zCOST AutoSoftCapping solution, when IBM has introduced the Capacity Provisioning Manager (CPM) with z/OS 1.9 & the z10 Enterprise Class (EC) server?	The CPM function does provide automated functions to temporarily increase MSU ratings for workloads based on customer policies. There are several policy implementation considerations, for example, CICS & IMS transaction classes cannot be used to trigger policy changes (E.g. Provisioning). zCOST ASC provides such support for all z/OS releases, not just 1.9 onwards, while providing continuous & dynamic MSU management for all workloads.
Q7) We don't have the time to learn yet another product & implement yet another reporting process to manage our z/OS environment & associated software costs!	zCOST ASC is easy-to-use & easy-to-install, providing familiar SCRT type reports for both the z/OS technician & the Software Asset Manager alike. zCOST ASC reports can be dynamically generated via an easy to use GUI, while there a number of static report formats, namely PDF, Web, Email, SMF (SAS/MXG, Tivoli DS) to satisfy all reporting requirements.
Q8) Why should my organization deploy the zCOST AutoSoftCapping solution; what are the short-term & long-term benefits?	The objective of zCOST ASC is to safeguard that the "right MSU's are in the right place, at the right time & for the right cost". So via customizable customer parameters (E.g. Policies), zCOST APC dynamically monitors & manages MSU allocation, reducing VWLC software costs, without impacting service. zCOST ASC therefore offers short-term ROI, & long-term TCO reduction.

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Q9) What is the typical customer profile for the zCOST AutoSoftCapping solution?	The zCOST ASC solution provides z/OS software cost savings for all IBM Mainframe customers alike. The only common denominator being the customer's desire to minimize software costs.
Q10) What type of pricing mechanisms are available for the AutoSoftCapping solution?	zCOST can be purchased as a perpetual license with an annual renewable support contract or as optionally via a monthly lease/rental agreement. As a core objective of zCOST is to be virtuous, we provide an option to convert any lease/rental agreements to perpetual licenses without any extra cost.
Q11) We are considering upgrading our current IBM Mainframes from z9 to z10 technology; so why should we consider the zCOST AutoSoftCapping solution?	There are always functional, performance and cost benefits associated with a technology upgrade, for example an IBM z9 to z10 server upgrade. With zCOST ASC, a business can optimize the costs associated with such an upgrade, by minimizing the associated MSU's required. zCOST ASC is a technology that works in harmony and provides benefits for all IBM Mainframe technologies.
Q12) Why do some ISV's use MIPS to describe IBM Mainframe CPU power, when IBM and zCOST use the MSU terminology?	When IBM announced their Mainframe Charter in 2003 they indicated a 10%+ Reduction in software units or MSU (Millions of Service Units) between processor generations. Put another way, if a customer upgrades from a z990 to z9 or z9 to z10, they will receive 10% software value benefit. Therefore for Variable Workload Charging (VWLC), IBM pricing mechanisms are MSU based, and so it would hopefully make sense that all software was licensed in such a way. Thus zCOST is an ISV that has chosen to use the MSU pricing metric.
Q13) For every IT improvement or product acquisition activity, my department has to build a business plan; so how difficult is such an activity for the zCOST AutoSoftCapping solution?	By using the small CSV outputs from standard IBM reporting tools, namely the Sub-Capacity Reporting Tool (SCRT) and the Sub-Capacity Planning Tool (SCPT), the zCOST Solutions team can help customers build such a business case, demonstrating MSU related cost savings in ROI and TCO formats. Additionally custom built installation parameters are also generated, safeguarding a ~1 hour installation process, facilitating a complimentary 20 days Proof Of Concept (POC) to verify the results of the zCOST ASC cost saving projections.
Q14) Does zCOST AutoSoftCapping provide cost optimization benefits for other z/OS software products, IBM (E.g. IPLA) or ISV (E.g. CA, BMC, Etc.), or does zCOST only work for customers submitting monthly SCRT reports to IBM, using the VWLC pricing mechanism?	There are some technical pre-requisites for Sub Capacity workloads described in Chapter 1 of the IBM z/OS OS Planning for Subcapacity Pricing Manual, but presuming these are satisfied, zCOST AutoSoftCapping can be deployed to optimize MSU resources for all z/OS software products, not just those associated with IBM WLC. Thus zCOST AutoSoftCapping could be deployed to safeguard that Enterprise software agreements (E.g. ESSO, ELA, Advantage, FlexSelect, Etc.) are maintained within defined MSU metrics, regardless of whether the customers submits monthly SCRT reports to IBM or not.
Q15) Does zCOST AutoSoftCapping offload any of its MSU resource to the zIIP speciality engine? Additionally, how much "General Purpose" CPU does AutoSoftCapping consume during typical day-to-day operations?	zCOST Management are members of the IBM PartnerWorld ISV programme & receive regular updates from IBM regarding latest zSeries techniques, pre-GA. Thus where possible AutoSoftCapping offloads eligible function to zIIP engines. More importantly the fundamental design of AutoSoftCapping is to minimize MSU resource, where typical 24-Hours CPU consumption for 1 LPAR is 1-2 Seconds & for 36 LPAR's, ~50 Seconds of measured CPU usage per day. We recommend that zSeries customers realize the benefits associated with zIIP for all Systems Management functions (E.g. Sort, CMF/RMF, Monitors, et al).

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