



A Deeper Look into the Inner Workings and Hidden Mechanisms of FICON Performance

- David Lytle, BCAF
- Brocade Communications Inc.
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QR Code







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A deeper look into the Inner Workings and Hidden Mechanisms of FICON Performance



This technical session goes into a fairly deep discussion on some of the design considerations of a FICON infrastructure.

- Among the topics this session will focus on is:
 - Congestion and Backpressure in FC fabrics
 - How Buffer Credits get initialized
 - How FICON utilizes buffer credits
 - Oversubscription and Slow Draining Devices
 - Determining Buffer Credit Requirements
 - FICON RMF Reporting

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This Section

Congestion and Backpressure Overview



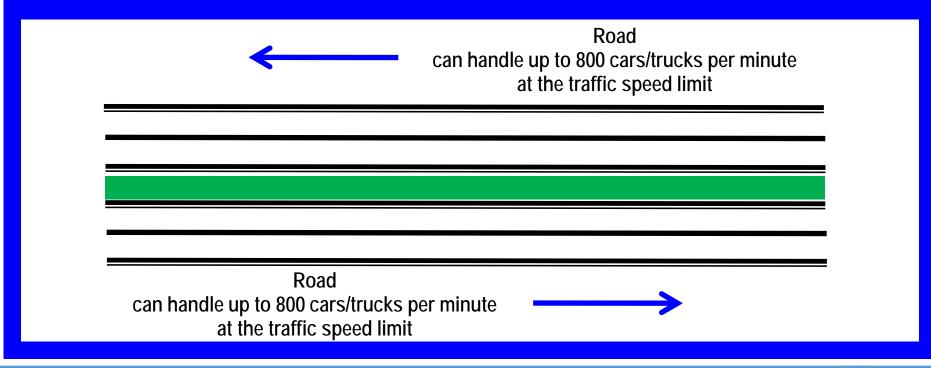
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Congestion and Backpressure Overview These two conditions are not the same thing



- Congestion occurs at the point of restriction
- Backpressure is the effect felt by the environment leading up to the point of restriction

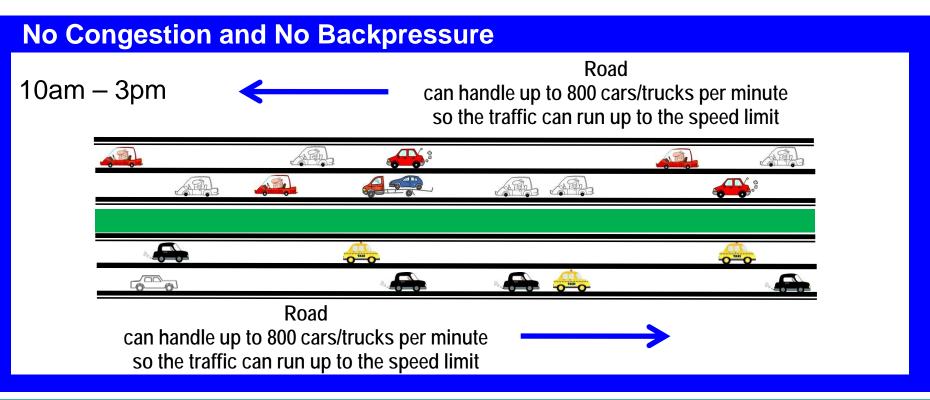
I will use an Interstate highway example to demonstrate these concepts



Congestion and Backpressure Overview



- No Congestion and No Backpressure
 - The highway handles up to 800 cars/trucks per minute and less than 800 cars/trucks per min are arriving
- Time spent in queue (behind slower traffic) is minimal
 - Cut-through routing (zipping along from point A to point B) works well

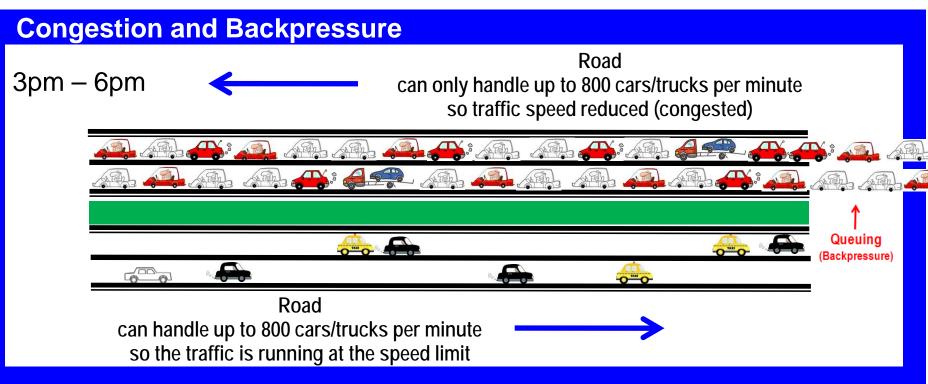


Congestion and Backpressure Overview

Congestion



- The highway handles up to 800 cars/trucks per minute and more than 800 cars/trucks per min are arriving
- Latency time and buffer credit space consumed increases
 - Cut-through routing cannot decrease the problem
- Backpressure is experienced by cars slowing down and queuing up



This Section

 Very basic flow for the Build Fabric process and how Buffer Credits get initialized



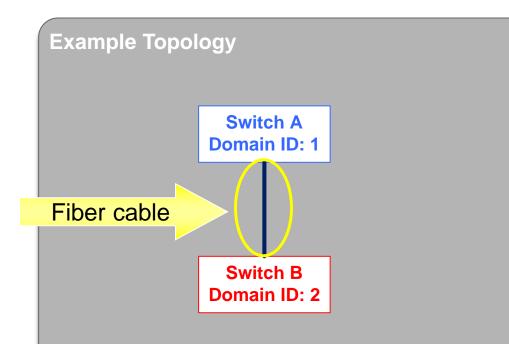
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Build Fabric Process



Assume

- A fiber cable will be attached between switch A and B
- This will create an ISL (E_Port) between these two devices



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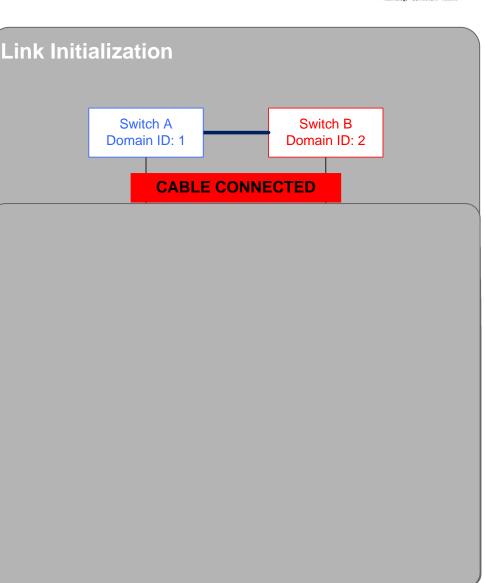
Build Fabric Process

- Cable connected
- Link Speed Auto-Negotiation
- Link is now in an Active state
- One credit is granted by default to allow the port logins to occur
- Exchange Link Parms (ELP)
 - Contains the "requested" buffer credit information for the sender
 - Assume 8 credits are being granted for this example

Responder Accepts – then does its own ELP

- Contains the "requested" buffer credit information for the responder
- Assume 8 credits are being granted for this example
- Link becomes an E_Port
- Send Link Resets (LR)
 - Initializes Sender credit values
- Link Reset Response (LRR)
 - Initializes Responder credit values

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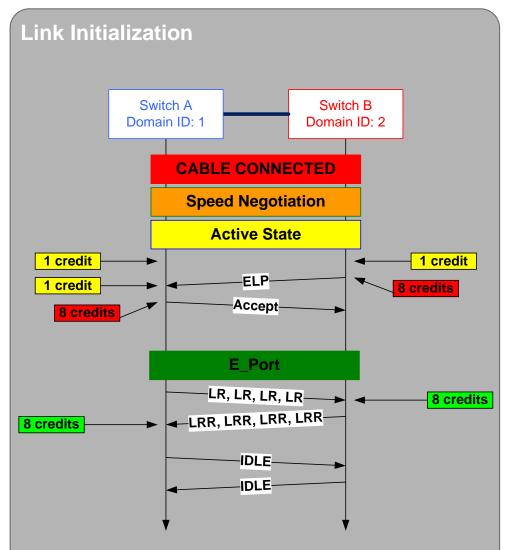
Build Fabric Process

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- Assume 8 credits are being granted for this example
- Link becomes an E_Port
- Send Link Resets (LR)
 - Initializes Sender credit values
- Link Reset Response (LRR)
 - Initializes Responder credit values
- Ready for I/O to start flowing







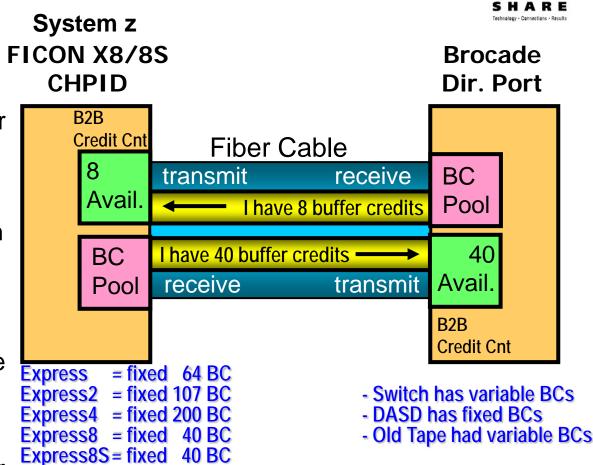
- How FICON uses Buffer-to-Buffer Credits
- Data Encoding
- Forward Error Correction (FEC)



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How Buffer Credits Work

- A Fiber channel link is a PAIR of paths
- A path from "this" transmitter to the "other" receiver and a path from the "other" transmitter to "this" receiver
- The "buffer" resides on each receiver, and that receiver tells the linked transmitter how many BB_Credits are available
- Sending a frame through the transmitter decrements the B2B Credit Counter
- Receiving an R-Rdy or VC-Rdy through the receiver increments the B2B Credit Counter
- DCX family has a buffer credit recovery capability



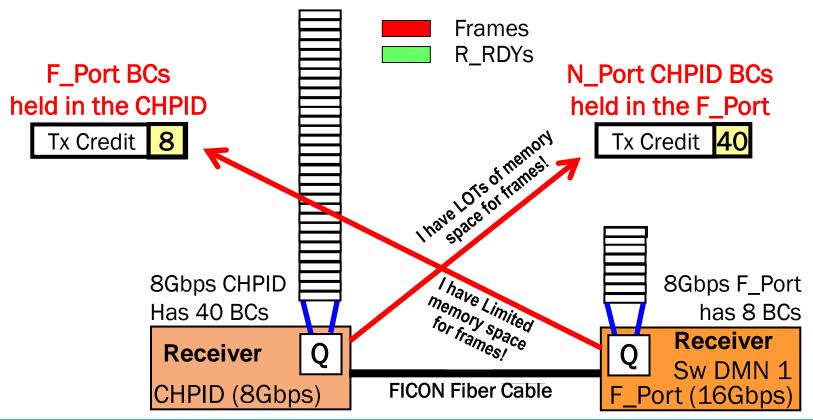
Each receiver on the fiber cable can state a different value!

Once established, it is transmit (write) connections that will typically run out of buffer credits

Buffer-to-Buffer Credits Buffer-to-Buffer flow control



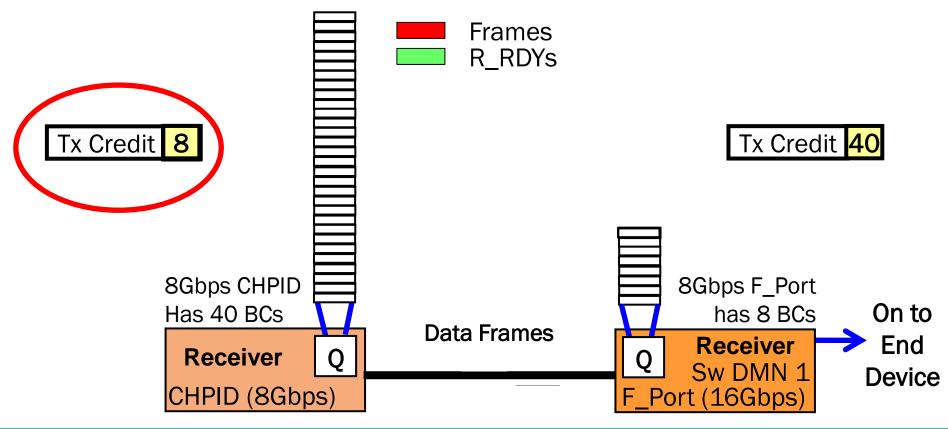
- After initialization, each port knows how many buffers are available in the queue <u>at the other end of the link</u>
 - This value is known as Transmit (Tx) Credit



Buffer-to-Buffer Credits Buffer-to-Buffer flow control Example

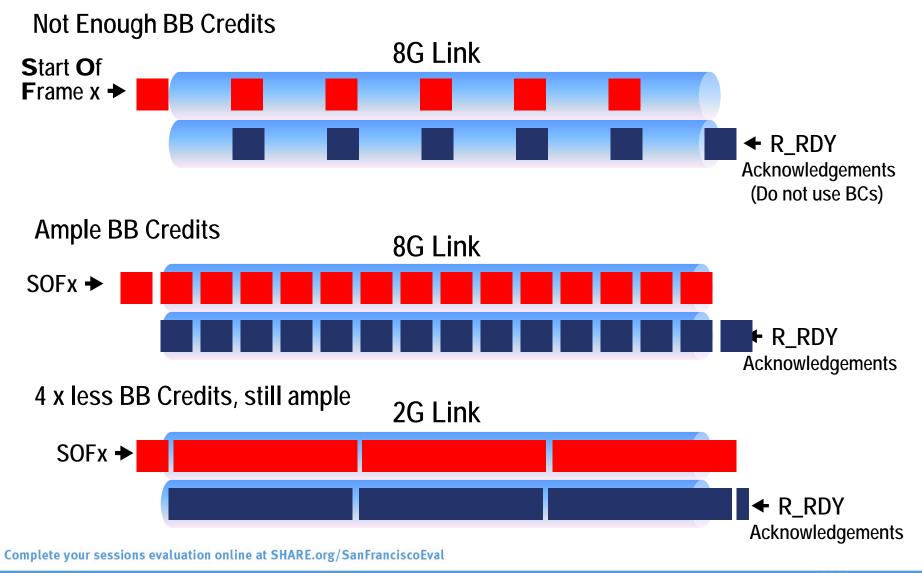


- Tx Credit is decremented by one for every frame sent from the CHPID
- No frames may be transmitted after Tx Credit reaches zero
- Tx Credit is **incremented** by one for each R_RDY received from F_Port



BB Credit Droop

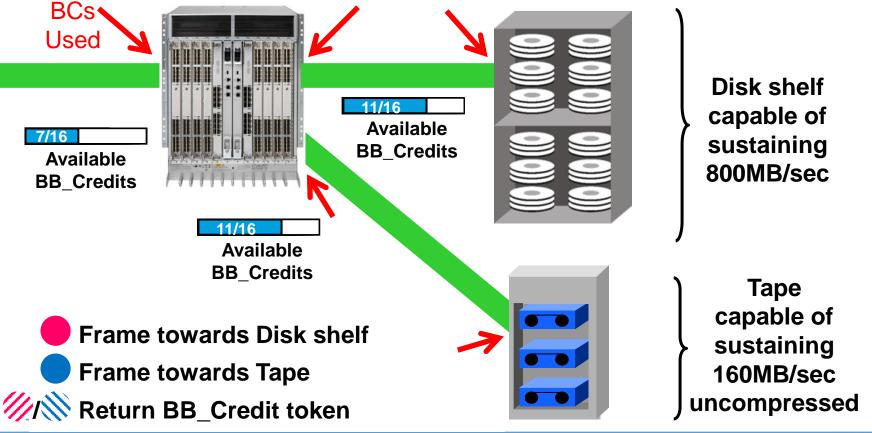




Buffer Credits Working Ideally

Buffer Credits are a "Flow Control" mechanism to assure that frames are sent correctly (engineers call this "Frame Pacing")

In an ideal FC network all devices can process frames at the same rate and negotiate equal levels of BB_Credits)









Data Encoding – Patented by IBM 8b/10b compared to 64b/66b



8b/10b (since 1950s but patented in 1983)



Payload Area of Frame – up to 2112 bytes of data

8b/10b: Each 8 bit Byte becomes a 10 bit Byte - 20% overhead

64b/66b (available since 2003) Sync Header – copy/save hi-order bit

E-of-F		8 BYTEs	8 BYTEs	8 BYTEs	8 BYTEs	C of T	
E-01-F	000			$\mathbf{CC} \Diamond $		2-0I-F	-

Payload Area of Frame – up to 2112 bytes of data

64b/66b: Two check bits are added after every 8 Bytes – 3% overhead

- At the end of every 32, eight byte groups, we have collected 32 hi-order ck bits
- This is a 32 bit check sum to enable Forward Error Correction to clean up links
- 1/2/4 and 8Gbps will always use 8b/10b data encoding
- 10Gbps and 16Gbps will always use 64b/66b data encoding

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FICON Cascading

Forward Error Correction (FEC) and Proactive Transmission Error Correction

- ASIC-based functionality that is enabled by default on Brocade 16G ports and allows them to fix bit errors in a 10G or 16Gbps data stream
 - FEC is a standard 16Gbps mechanism
 - Enabled via the 64b/66b data encoding process
 - Available on Brocade 16Gbps Gen5 switches
 - Works on Frames and on Primitives
 - Corrects up to 11 bit errors per each 2,112 bits in a payload transmission
 - 11 bit corrections per 264 bytes of payload
- Used on E_Ports that are 16G-to-16G ASIC connections
 - Not for F_ports or N_Ports
 - Does slightly increase frame latency by ~400 nanoseconds per frame
- Significantly enhances reliability of frame transmissions across an I/O network

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Some of my favorite photos In Technical Sessions, Your Brain Should Be Allowed To Take A Break!







Bryce Canyon, USA

Big Sur - California



Alesund, Norway

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Lock Lomond Scotland from Lock Lomond Castle

Brain Interlude Is Over....

Back to Work!



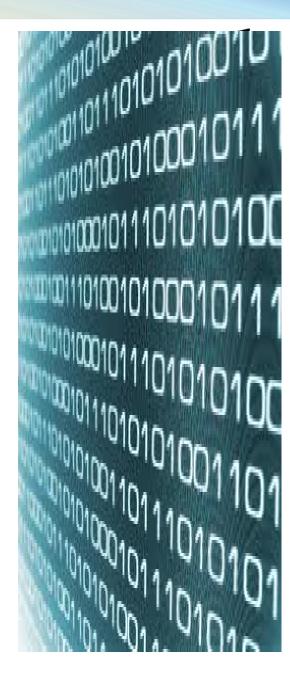


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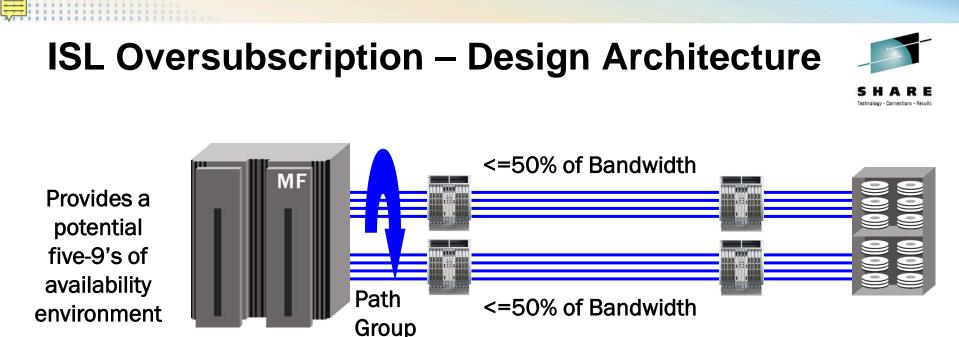
ISL Oversubscription

NOTE:

There is also fabric oversubscription and link oversubscription. In this session I think that **ISL Oversubscription** will demonstrate how serious a concern that oversubscription really can be to the enterprise.



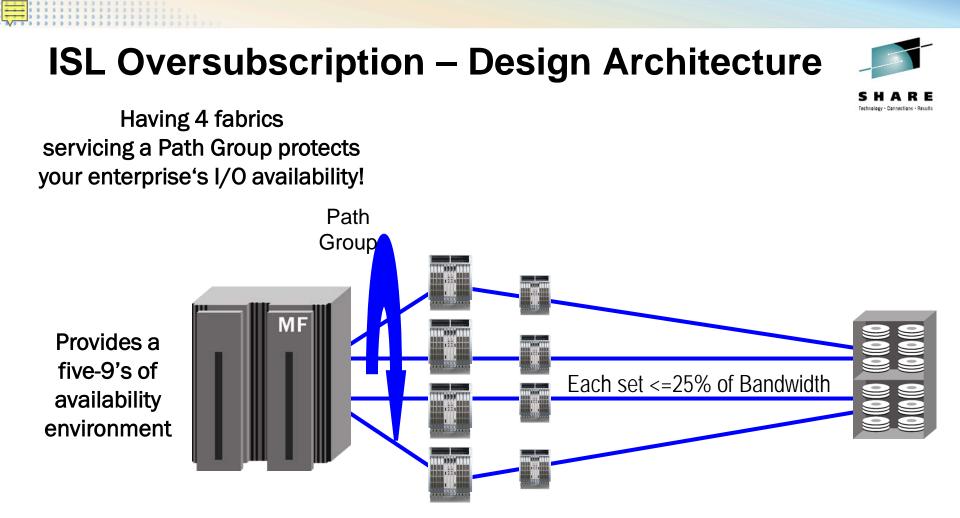
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But each fabric really needs to run at no more than 45% busy so that if a failover occurs then the remaining fabric can pickup and handle the full workload z/OS's IOS automatically load balances the FICON I/O across all of the paths in a Path Group (up to 8 channels in a PG)

- Although this *potentially* provides a five-9s environment, when a fabric does fail how devastating will it be to you in the event that <u>another event occurs</u> and the remaining fabric also fails ?
- Especially when humans get involved, multiple failures too often do occur!

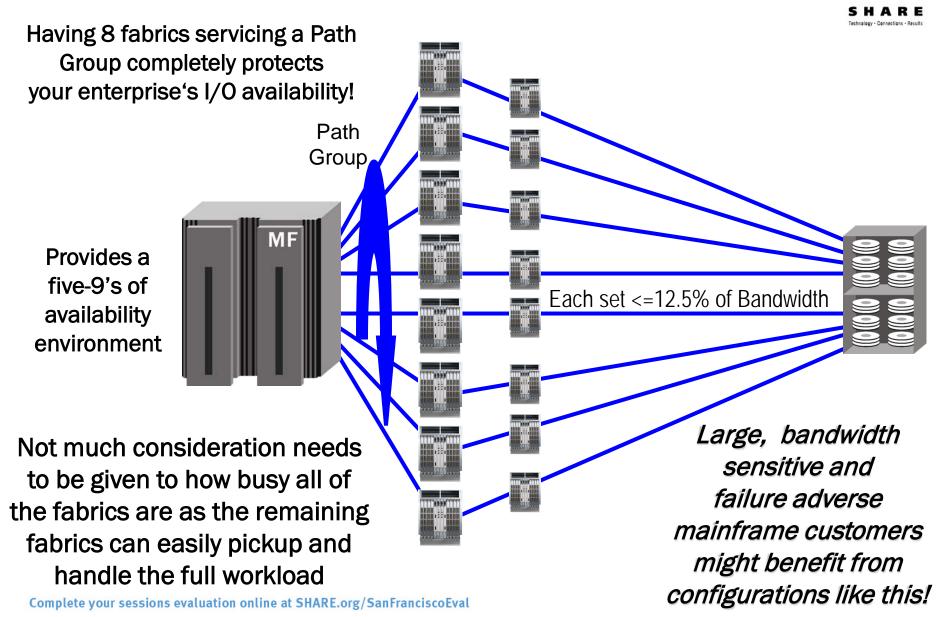


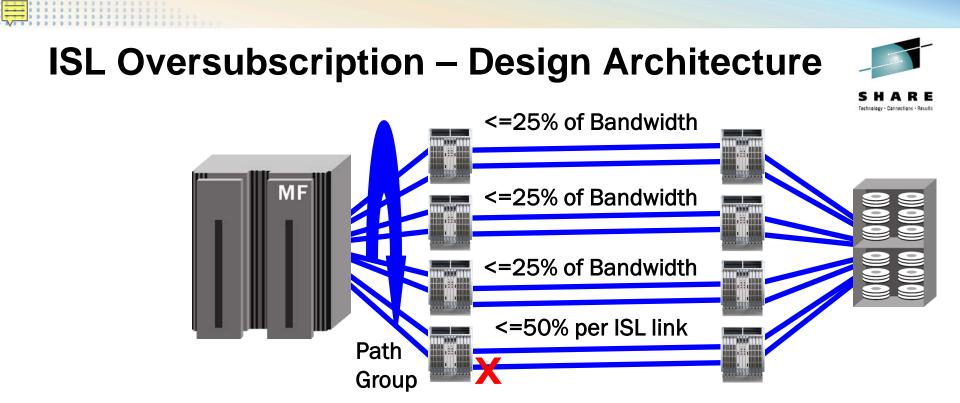


A little consideration needs to be given to how busy all of the fabrics are but the remaining fabrics should easily pickup and handle the full workload

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ISL Oversubscription – Design Architecture



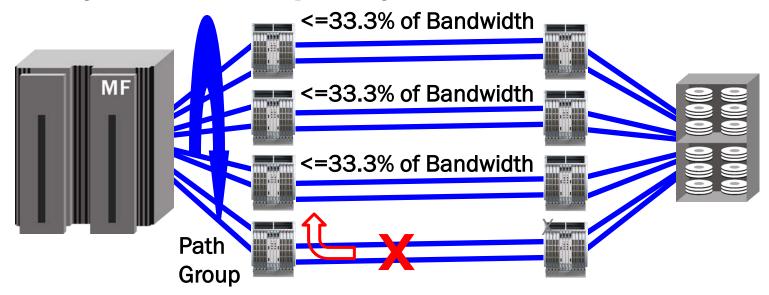


- Risk of Loss of Bandwidth is the motivator for deploying FICON fabrics like this
- In this case, 2 paths from an 8 path Path Group are deployed across four FICON fabrics to limit bandwidth loss to no more than 25% if a FICON fabric were to fail
- Each fabric needs to run at no more than ~50-60% busy so that if a failover occurs then the remaining fabrics can pickup and handle the full workload without over-utilization and with some extra utilization to spare per fabric
- If an ISL link in a single fabric fails then that fabric runs at only 50% capability

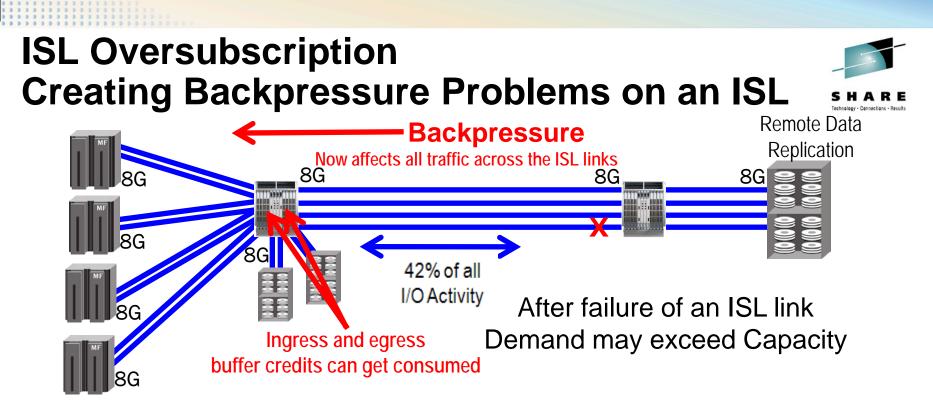
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ISL Oversubscription – After a Failure Demand may exceed capacity





- In this case if a switching device fails ...or... if the long distance links in a fabric fails then the frame traffic that was traveling across the now broken links will be rerouted through the other fabrics to reach the storage device
- Those remaining fabrics must have enough reserve capacity in order to pick up all of the rerouted traffic while maintaining performance
- Congestion and potential back pressure could occur if all fabrics are running at high utilization levels – again, probably above 50% or 60% utilization
- Customers should manage their fabrics to allow for rerouted traffic



- In This Example:
 - Each 8G CHPID / ISL is capable of 760MBps send/receive (800 * .95=760)
 - Two CHPIDs per mainframe (1520MBps) and 4 mainframes (6080MBps)
 - About 42% of I/O activity is across the ISLs and requires 2550MBps
 - Four ISLs provides 3040MBps (760MBps * 4) and a little extra
 - Then one ISL fails leaving only 2280MBps (760MBps * 3) not enough redundancy
 - 2280MBps / 2550MBps = 89% of what is required (Congestion Will Occur)
 - Each CHPID experiences backpressure as the remaining 3 ISLs become congested and unable to handle all of the I/O traffic



This Section

Slow Draining Devices



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Slow Draining Devices



n Francisco

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- Slow draining devices are <u>receiving ports</u> that have more data flowing to them than they can consume.
 - This causes external frame flow mechanisms to back up their frame queues and potentially deplete their buffer credits.
- A slow draining device can exist at any link utilization level
- It's very important to note that it can spread into the fabric and can slow down unrelated flows in the fabric.
- What causes slow draining devices?
- The most common cause is within the storage device or the server itself. That happens often because a target port has a slower link rate then the I/O source ports(s) or the Fan-In from the rest of the environment overwhelms the target port.

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Slow Draining Devices – DASD (Revisited from Session 13010) (Adding 8G DASD with only 4G CHPIDs)

FICON Director

8GB

Buffer credits can get used up trying to hold the DASD data while they are waiting on the CHPID to provide back the acknowledgements.

DASD

BG Source

8 Gb link rate 8Gb

- This is potentially a very poor performing, infrastructure!
- DASD is about 90% read, 10% write. So, in this case the "drain" of the pipe is the 4Gb CHPID and the "source" of the pipe is the 8Gb storage port.
- The Source can out perform the Drain!

4Gb / 4 Gb link rate

4G Drain

Systemz

 This can cause congestion and back pressure towards the CHPID. The switch port leading to the CHPID becomes a slow draining device.

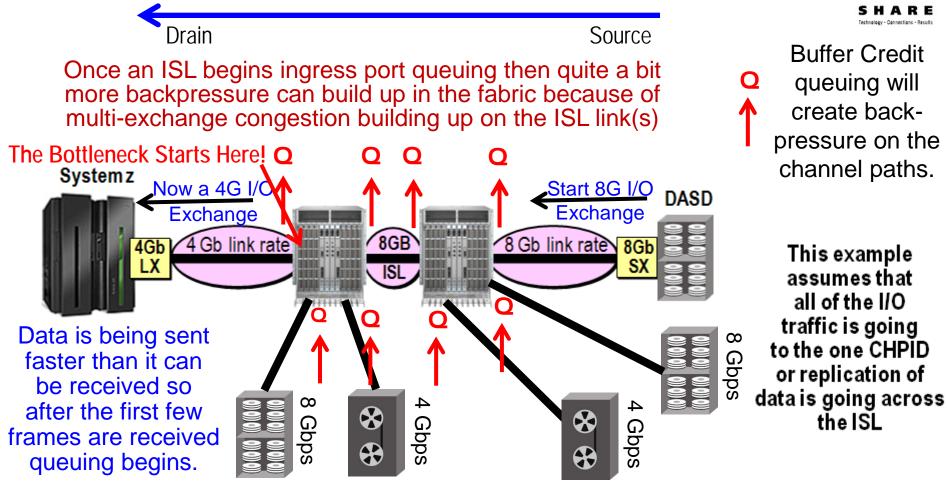
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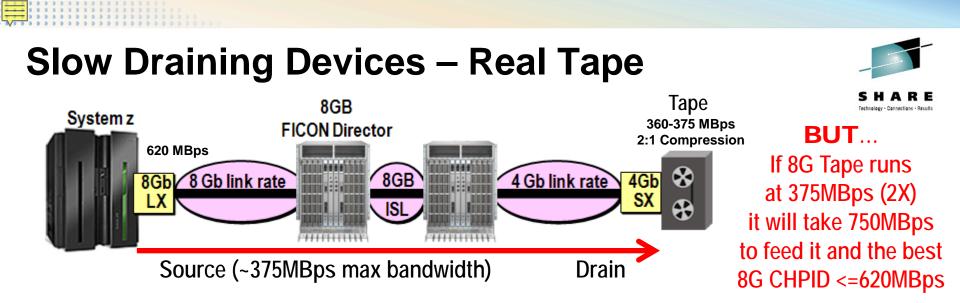
in San Francisco

2013

The Affects Of Link Rates (watch out for ISLs!)



- The is a simple representation of a single CHPID connection
- Of course that won't be true in a real configuration and the results could be much worse and more dire for configuration performance



- For 4G tape this is OK Tape is about 90% write and 10% read on average
- The maximum bandwidth a tape can accept and compress (@ 2:1 compression) is about 360MBps for Oracle (T1000C) and about 375MBps for IBM (TS1140)
- A FICON Express8S CHPID in Command Mode FICON can do about 620MBps
- A 4G Tape channel can carry about 380MBps (400 * .95 = 380MBps)
- So a single CHPID attached to a 4G tape interface:
 - Can run a single IBM tape drive
 - Can run a single Oracle (STK) tape drive

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(620 / 375 = 1.65) (620 / 360 = 1.72)

This Section

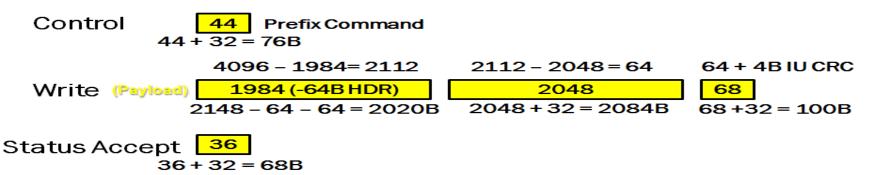
- Determining Buffer Credits Required
- RMF Reports for Switched-FICON
- Brocade's Buffer Credit Calculation Spreadsheet



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- There are three things that are required to determine the number of buffer credits required across a long distance link
 - The speed of the link
 - The cable distance of the link
 - The average frame size
- Average frame size is the hardest to obtain
 - Use the RMF 74-7 records report "FICON Director Activity Report"
 - You will find that FICON just never averages full frame size
 - Below is a simple FICON 4K write that demonstrates average frame size



4K will not fit into 2 BCs because of headers for FC as well as SB3 protocol that is used and the 64 byte FICON header that is placed into the payload field of the 1st frame of every FICON exchange.

Average = (76+2020+2084+100+68) / 5 = 870 Bytes

Buffer Credits for Long Distance The Impact of Average Frame Size on Buffer Credits



A distance	of 20KM wi	th 100% link	utilization	2Gbps	4Gbps	8Gbps	10Gbps	16Gbps
SOF			Smaller than	Buffer	Buffer	Buffer	Buffer	Buffer
SOF,	Dayload	Total Frame		Credis	Credis	Credis	Credis	Credis
Header,	Payload	Bytes	full frame by	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
CRC, EOF			xx%	8b10b	8b10b	9610h	64b66b	64b66b
36	2112	2148	0.00%	20	40	80	99	159
36	1055	2002	6.80%	22	43	05	107	170
36	1824	1860	13.41%	23	46	92	115	183
36	1682	1718	20.02%	25	50	99	124	198
36	1540	1576	26.63%	27	54	108	135	216
36	1398	1434	33.24%	30	60	119	149	238
36	1256	1292	39.85%	33	66	132	165	264
36	1114	1150	46.46%	37	74	148	185	296
36	072	1008	53.07%	43	85	160	211	338
36	830	866	59.68%	50	99	197	246	393
36	600	724	66.29%	59	118	225	294	470
36	546	582	72.91%	74	147	293	366	585
36	404	440	79.52%	97	194	387	484	773
36	262	298	86.13%	143	286	571	714	1142
36	120	156	92.74%	273	545	1090	1363	2180
36	36	72	96.65%	591	1181	2362	2952	4724

Created by using Brocades Buffer Credit Calculator

Buffer Credit Starvation Why not just saturate each port with BCs?



- If a malfunction occurs in the fabric or....
- If a CHPID or device is having a problem...
- It is certainly possible that some or all of the I/O will time out
- If ANY I/O does time out then:
 - All frames and buffers for that I/O (buffer credits) must be discarded
 - All frames and buffers for subsequently issued I/Os (frames and buffer credits) in that exchange must be discarded
 - Remember queued I/O will often drive exchanges ahead of time
 - The failing I/O must be re-driven
 - Subsequent I/O must be re-driven
- The recovery effort for the timed out I/O gets more and more complex – and more prone to also failing – when an over abundance of buffer credits are used on ports

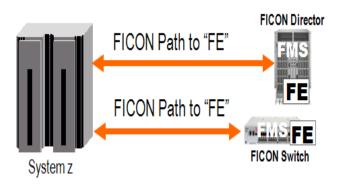
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Buffer Credit Starvation Detecting Problems with FICON BCs



Produce the FICON Director Activity Report by creating the RMF 74-7 records – but this is only available when utilizing switched-FICON!

 A FICON Management Server (FMS) license per switching device enables the switch's Control Unit Port (CUP) – always FE – to provide information back to RMF at its request



 Analyze the column labeled AVG FRAME PACING for non-zero numbers. Each of these represents the number of times a frame was waiting for 2.5 microseconds or longer but BC count was at zero so the frame could not be sent

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F	I	0 0	N	D	Ι	R	E	С	Т	0	R	A	C	T	I	V	I	Τ	Y	
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GE 1

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				RPT VERSIO	ON VIR8 F	MF END	04/12/2009	9-04.45.00	CYCLE 1.000 SECONDS
IODF =	A2 CR-	DATE: (03/27/2009	CR-TIME: 16	5.43.51	ACT: ACTIVA	ATE		
SWITCH	DEVICE:	032B	SWITCH ID:	2B TYPE:	006140	MODEL: 001	MAN: MCD	PLANT: 01	SERIAL: 00000131656G
PORT	-CONNEC	CTION-	AVG FRAME	AVG FRAM	E SIZE	PORT BANDWI	DTH (MB/SEC	C) ERROF	ł
ADDR	UNIT	ID	PACING	READ	WRITE	READ	WRITE -	COUNT	
0.5	CHP	05	0	849	1436	8.63	17.3	34 0)
07	CHP-H	6B	0	1681	1395	0.87	0.3	32 0)
09	CHP	15	7	833	1429	11.96	20.4	19 0)
OC	CHP-H	64	0	939	1099	0.39	0.5	50 0)
OD	CHP	6B	1	1328	1823	3.56	12.	73 0)
OF	CHP-H	66	0	1496	1675	1.85	2.	51 0)
10	CHP	64	0	644	1380	0.03	0.1	13 0)
13	CHP-H	19	0	907	885	0.58	0.4	15 0)
16	CHP	12	0	1241	1738	0.97	1.7	72 0)
17	CHP	OB	0	685	1688	0.10	0.8	32 0)
1A	CHP	15	0	1144	1664	0.65	1.1	18 0)
1B	CHP	OD	0	510	1759	0.12	1.7	12 0)
1E	CHP-H	05	0	918	894	0.59	0.4	15 0)
1F	CHP	21	0	1243	1736	0.97	1.7	70 0)
20	CU	E900	0	1429	849	17.66	8.8	85 0)
	CU	E800							
	CU	E700							
22	CHP	10	0	923	1753	0.55	2.	78 0)
23	CHP	54	0	1805	69	0.80	0.0	00 0)
24	CHP	64	0	89	1345	0.00	0.0	00 0)
27	CHP	6B	0	1619	82	0.01	0.0	00 0)
28	CHP	95	27	918	1589	10.32	30.5	56 0)
28	CHP	70	0	69	2022	0.00	0.1	71 0)

FICON Director Activity Report With Frame Delay

Using Buffer Credits is how FC does Flow Control, also called "Frame Pacing"

=

FICON DIRECTOR ACTIVITY

5 0	called	Frai	me P	acing						PAGE 1
			V1R8	J	SYSTEM ID	ABCD	START	04/12/2009-0	4.30.00 I	NTERVAL 000.15.00
					RPT VERSI	ON VIRS RI	4F END	04/12/2009-0	4.45.00 C	YCLE 1.000 SECONDS
	IODF = A	2 CR	-DATE:		CR-TIME: 1	8.43.51	ACT: ACTIVA	TE		
	SWITCH DE	EVICE:	032B	SWITCH ID: 2	B TYPE	: 006140	MODEL: 001	MAN: MCD F	LANT: 01	SERIAL: 00000HIJKLMN
	PORT -	-CONNE	CTION-	AVG FRAME	AVG FRA	ME SIZE	PORT BANDWI	DTH (MB/SEC)	ERROR	N
		UNIT	ID	PACING	READ	WRITE	READ	WRITE	COUNT	
	05 (СНР-Н	05		849	1436	8.63	17.34	0	In the last
		CHP	6B		1681	1395	50.87	10.32	0	15 minutes
		CHP	15	0	833	1429	11.96	20.49	0	-
		СНР-Н	64	0	939	1099	0.39	0.50	0	
		CHP	6B	0	1328	1823	3.56	12.73	0	V
		СНР-Н	66	0	1496	1675	1.85	2.61	0	This port had a
		CHP	64	0	644	1380	0.03	0.13	0	•
		СНР-Н	19	0	907	885	0.58	0.45	0	frame to send
		CU	C800	0	1241	738	20.97	5.72	0	but did not
		CU	CA00				70.10	3.82	0	
		CHP	15	0	1144	1664	0.65	1.18	0	have any
		CHP	0D	0	510	1759	0.12	1.72	0	Buffer Credits
		CHP-H	05	0	918	894	0.59	0.45	0	left to use
		CHP	21	0	1243	1736	0.97	1.70	0	
		CU CU	E900 E800	0	1429	849	17.66	8.85	0	to send them.
		CU	E700							
		CHP	10	0	923	1753	0.55	2.78	0	And this
		CHP	54	0	1805	69	20.80	7.30	0	
		CHP	64	0	89	1345	0.00	0.00	0	happened
		CUD	6B		1619	82	0.00	0.00	0	270 times
		SWITCH		270	330	789	50.32	10.56	0	
		CIII	70		69	2022	0.00	0.71	ő	during the
	7			Ŭ			0.00	0.72	Ŭ	interval.

And this is an ISL Link!

Indicators of Buffer Credit Starvation

Fabric with zHPF Enabled



We have a BC Calculator that you can use!

A	В	G	D	E	E	G	H	Î	SI.	ĸ	1	М	 0	P
	Brocade's Buffer Cre	edit Calcu	lation fo	r Fibre C	hannel	(FICON a	nd/or SA	AN)						
				· · · · · · · ·		Link	Speed							
			1 Gbps	2 Gbps	4 Gbps	8 Gbps	10 Gbps	16 Gbps	32 Gbps	40 Gbps	100 Gbps			
			1.0625E-0	9 2.1250E-09	4.2500E-09	8.5000E-09	1.0625E-08	3.4000E-08	1.3600E-07	3.4000E-07	1.0625E-06			
Param					A									
	of light in fibre	200000km/s	5.00E-0		5.00E-06		5.00E-06	5.00E-06	5.00E-06	5.00E-06	5.00E-06			
	conds per byte noth in seconds (dependent on cell i19)		9.41E-0 8.05E-0		2.35E-09 2.01E-06		9.41E-10 8.05E-07	5.88E-10 5.03E-07	2.94E-10 2.51E-07	2.35E-10 2.01E-07	9.41E-11 8.05E-08			
	ight in seconds (dependent on cell (19)		0.05E-0				0.05E-07	5.03E-07 0.10	and the second sec	2.016-07	0.05E-00			
Tunelo	gar in kin (dependent on centra)		1,0	0.00	0.90	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.04	0.02			
						10 Gig has 64b/668	8 en/decoding and							
Buffe	r Credit Calculation					therefore a better (performance							
-														
	rmine kilometers from miles, type miles	into cell D15:	45		04									
(1 mile =	= 1.609344 kilometer)		15	Miles Equals	24	Kilometers rounded	to the nearest inte	eger						
		1												
To Calc	ulate the proper number of buffer credits	s that you will need	to keep the ISL I	ink 100% utilized -	especially ove	r long distances:								
Type in	the frame "Payload" size in Bytes (in cell [019)=====>	819	Payload bytes	and 36 overhead	bytes equals a total	frame size of	855	Bytes					
	the total <u>kilometers</u> of the wire run (in ce e calculated kilometers from cell F15 if req		24	Kilometers										
1				-										
		5.859	20489	NRCU .	15769	1025 S.T	2023-02	- 12/22	55512	0253 DT				
	Description	1 Gbps	2 Gbps	4 Gbps	8 Gbps	10 Gbps	16 Gbps	32 Gbps	40 Gbps	100 Gbps				
	igth takes up this many kilometers on the wire of from frame size in cell (19)	1.61	0.80	0.40	0.20	0.16	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.02				
Buffercre	dits @ 100% B/W Utilization raw calculation.	29.83	59.66	119.32	238.64	298.30	477.28	954.56	1193.21	2983.02				
Buffercre	dits @ 100% B/W Utilization rounded up:	30	60	120	239	299	478	955	1194	2984				
		2010												
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This was session:

13009

Thank You For Attending Today!

- 5 = "Aw shucks. Thanks!"
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