

ITIL[®]: Theory into Practice

Introduction

It is testimony to the complexity of today's technology systems that even one of the most widely-used frameworks for simplifying and standardizing IT management is, in itself, a daunting piece of work. Implementing the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®) set of guidelines to aid the implementation of a lifecycle framework for IT Service Management (ITSM) is now a major priority for a growing number of organizations, but remains a task where external help is often of critical importance.

This white paper, first published in 2007 by Touchpaper (now part of Avocent's LANDesk division), aims to assist today's Chief Information or Technology Officer with a number of critical issues relating to ITIL, including:

- What exactly is ITIL and what are the key differences between Version 2 and Version 3 of the library?
- Where do you start when implementing best practice frameworks, and is this particular one suitable for every organization?
- How do you make the business case for adopting ITIL and how do you ensure it will help align your IT strategy with organizational objectives?
- What are the cultural implications of adopting ITIL?
- What will you need to know about ITIL qualifications and certification?
- Do you need to create a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) for ITIL?
- How can software tools help with the adoption of ITIL?
- What happens once your organization has assimilated ITIL?

Prior to Avocent's acquisition of Touchpaper in 2008, this white paper was developed following a series of ITIL panel sessions featuring speakers and contributors from a wide range of industry, public sector and consultancy organizations. The output from the first of these debates was captured in the Touchpaper 2006 discussion paper **Pragmatic ITIL: A Panel Debate**. This more recent paper complements and augments the 2006 document with views and information gathered from two subsequent panel events, held at the Institute of Directors in London, England, and the Stirling Management Centre of Stirling University, Scotland.

Speakers' Biographies

David Allanson, Information Systems Customer Services Manager, NSK Europe

David joined NSK in 2005 to bring together its European information systems support teams into one function. He began his career more than 20 years ago in engineering software at the CiSi Group, moving on to financial systems development for Lloyds, SG Warburg, and GE Capital before managing support teams at the Cookson Group and Kingston Communications.

Daniel Demonakis, Technical Services Manager, London Borough of Lambeth

Daniel joined the London Borough of Lambeth in early 2006. Since then he has been the Borough's ITIL Project Manager, implementing the framework in the IT department of the council. A member of the British Computer Society, he previously worked for Essex Police and was heavily involved in its implementation of ITIL and ITSM.

Elaine Hutcheson, ITIL Project Manager, Perth & Kinross Council

Elaine has 18 years' experience in IT, covering mainframes, data input, help desks, desktop support and networking. Her current post is Principal Engineer in the Infrastructure Server team, seconded to the position of ITIL Project Manager for the Council. She has an ITIL Foundation Certificate and has taken ITSM course and exams.

Tom Mortimer, Director of Computing Services, University of Dundee

Tom has been involved in managing the delivery of IT services, both in the private sector (with BP) and in higher education, for 28 years. He has considerable experience in the management of organizational change, development of change strategies and use of tools such as ITIL as part of the framework for managing change.

Jack Robertson-Worsfold, Service Manager, iCore

Jack is a consultant for iCore and on projects with the Euroclear group in Brussels and the UK, implementing service support and delivery systems according to ITIL best practice. He is a member of the Institute of Service Management, which exists in order to provide guidance and support to individuals throughout the ITSM community.

Megan Pendlebury, Service Management Executive, itSMF UK

Megan joined itSMF UK in January 2007. She is a qualified Information Systems Examinations Board ITIL Manager and an accredited ISO/IEC 20000 Consultant. Previously she worked in the service management practices at both Serco and Atos Origin, with day-to-day ITSM responsibilities for both external and internal customers. Megan has also spent some time consulting on ITIL and ISO/IEC 20000.

Glen Ralph, Practice Manager, iCore

Glen is a practice manager for iCore and an experienced senior manager with 19 years' experience in investment banking, retail and government IT services. He has overseen operational teams of 70-plus people delivering numerous process and service improvement projects. He has worked with such companies as BP, Barclays Capital, Fujitsu, Lehman Brothers and Credit Suisse.

Shirley Lacy, Managing Director, ConnectSphere

Shirley is an industry-recognized specialist in service management and configuration management. ConnectSphere has a track record in enabling customers to achieve true business and IT integration competitively and cost effectively. Shirley's practical experience enables her to bring a business and real-world perspective to her work on standards and best practice development. She is co-author of the Service Transition core volume of ITIL Version 3.

Ian Aitchison, Global Presales Director, Touchpaper

Ian joined Touchpaper in 1995. As Global Presales Director, Ian defines and communicates Touchpaper's presentation of its solutions to the marketplace through a distributed team of presales staff around the world. With more than 15 years' experience in the IT industry, Ian has advised many hundreds of organizations on the provision of an effective knowledge-enabled IT or customer support solution.

1. ITIL and the Key Differences between Versions 2 and 3

As a best practice framework for service management, panel members concurred that ITIL's main attribute is that it is more of a Highway Code for IT than a set of cast-iron instructions. Implemented correctly, it should be able to overcome the problems associated with silo structures by introducing a set of common tools covering not just IT infrastructure but also people and processes. For many organizations, the main benefit of the library is in helping to create a flexible road map for IT development that will allow the organization to avoid pitfalls and mistakes.

Jack Robertson-Worsfold, iCore

I very much agree with the ITIL framework being a set of codes of practice. But it's also a way of setting a vision, understanding where you are now, where you want to be and how you get there. Those are the key questions that ITIL will have helped you to answer. If you implement it, the key is to understand where you're going first.

Version 3 of the library is based on two years' worth of public review and consultation carried out worldwide by the IT Service Management Forum, with resources and support from the UK Office of Government Commerce. It expands on a number of areas more relevant to today's organizations, such as globalization, virtualization, consolidation, outsourcing and other sourcing models. The content, while remaining non-prescriptive, has more of a case-study feel to it, making it easier for organizations to work out how to carry out recommendations. And, critically, there is more of a service lifecycle approach throughout, which means service delivery is treated in a holistic fashion with due concern for issues such as strategy, governance, management systems and knowledge requirements.

Version 3 naturally builds on Version 2, so many of the processes covered in the earlier version have been fine-tuned and better documented, while some of the less relevant items have been dropped. The new texts address issues such as how to organize IT departments, what functions to have, how to stop silos and so on.

2. Best-Practice Frameworks: Where to Start and Is It for You?

A glance through the different types of best practice frameworks related to IT management reveals a bewildering array of models and schemes, including Control Objectives of Information and Related Technology (CoBiT), Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI), the ISO/IEC 20000 international standard for IT service management and Six Sigma, among others. Although these frameworks all have different characteristics and origins, the panel recognized that they all have a broadly similar objective: to foster best practice, or the best way to do a certain activity.

As such, achieving success in any given framework is likely to equate to a certain degree of success in others, and at the very least is likely to make it a lot easier to succeed in other frameworks. The degree of overlap depends on the frameworks being compared, however. Thus, ISO/IEC 20000 is closely aligned to ITIL (although the former is more prescriptive, in line with its requirement for compliance), so achieving an ITIL standard is likely to help with the attainment of the ISO standard. CoBiT, on the other hand, is more focused on IT governance, so there is little overlap with ITIL but the two frameworks complement each other well. And CMMI can work with any other framework in helping to gauge what stage of maturity has been achieved in the implementation of best practices.

Where to start implementing your best practice framework is debatable, but the consensus seems to be that beginning with service desk management can often yield a number of quick wins since this environment is one where people are likely to be pursuing best practice already and where it is easy to measure the impact on the rest of the organization.

Daniel Demonakis, London Borough of Lambeth

I would never recommend anyone try and do the entire thing all in one hit. It is just far too vast. Unless you have got the resources to buy in an extra 30 or 40 people, then I thoroughly would not recommend it. But it is good to do it as a serial event: I'm going to do this process, then this process, then this process.

Because it is a non-prescriptive framework, ITIL can be applied in just about any organization of any size in any sector that has a significant IT component; the only issue for the organization is how much of the guidance to adopt and how much to ignore. Because they can typically get by with a smaller part of the ITIL content, smaller organizations often find it easier and quicker to implement ITIL than large ones.

3. Making the Business Case for ITIL and Aligning It to the Organization

While adopting ITIL makes intuitive sense for an increasing number of IT department leaders, getting the organization to agree to the considerable cost involved can be a tricky affair. Panel members intimated that, not infrequently, the impetus for ITIL adoption came from a point event which made it easier to justify the project. Important considerations when putting together a business case include:

- Senior management can be more easily convinced if there is evidence that ITIL could have helped solve a critical issue; therefore it is useful to catalog these beforehand.
- It also helps to be able to provide metrics, although in some cases these very metrics may be difficult to establish until ITIL has been implemented.

- It is critical to align the plan with business objectives, such as cutting costs, reducing risks or improving service, and to define how progress against these objectives will be measured, such as through a reduction in incidents or increase in customer satisfaction.
- These considerations apply in the public as much as the private sector, although in the former funding issues may be more critical.

Ian Aitchison, Touchpaper

IT is in a position to influence the way the business operates now. What we do with ITIL is great for the IT department in offering a service out, but you should expand that a bit more. IT can change and improve the way the business works. IT can offer services out to the business. Those who own the business processes are those who own business innovation.

Increasingly, the factors driving IT strategy will be the same as those driving the business strategy overall. In many areas, service level management is now effectively converging with business level management, which can have a bearing on the viability of the business case.

4. The Cultural Implications

David Allanson, NSK Europe

There are three things that change. There's technology, which is really easy. You can buy a package like Touchpaper and you can put it in. That's the easy part of it. That's two days work, that's not a problem at all. Then there are the procedures around it, which are reasonably easy, but it depends on the processes. The biggest problem you have is culture.

As stated earlier, ITIL adoption is not just about technology. In fact, in many respects the technological changes required by ITIL are quite minor. Much greater is the impact on processes and, perhaps more than anything else, the culture of the people who work in the IT function. ITIL can provide demonstrable benefits not just to the business but also to those tasked with implementing the changes. However, the idea of any form of change, and particularly a transformation of the magnitude usually demanded by an ITIL implementation, is bound to be unpalatable for some people who have become accustomed to working in a particular way. Four keys to success in enabling cultural change throughout your ITIL implementation are:

- Be clear about roles and responsibilities. Having a clear idea of the requirements of each role will help you to map roles to individuals within the organization. It will also help identify areas where personal development may be required, which in itself can be a powerful instrument in helping secure loyalty for the project.
- Identify champions and laggards. The former will help foster cultural change, while the latter, typified by the 'I've been here for 20 years and nobody can tell me how to make it work better' mentality, will need to be won over in order for the change to be a success. There are varying views on how to deal with laggards; some schools of thought recommend trying to get their buy-in from the outset, while others espouse focusing initially on the champions so that the momentum for change spreads and the laggards' perspective ultimately becomes unfashionable.
- Consider creating a Change Advisory Board or similar oversight body to help deal with 'cowboys' in the IT organization and identify elements of ITIL that will appeal to people in specific posts.
- Demonstrate the consequences of not adhering to ITIL; this may be easier with individuals once the project is underway and the management information is there to show what will happen in the event of a failure to take a particular action.

5. ITIL Qualifications and Certification

Version 3 of ITIL brings with it a whole new certification scheme. Elements are still under development and subject to change, but most of the basic details are already known. There is a basic level, equivalent to the Foundation Level in ITIL Version 2, followed by an Intermediate Level (comprising Lifecycle and Capability streams) and an ITIL Diploma Level (ITIL Expert), equating to Version 2's Practitioner and Manager stage, then an Advanced Service Management Professional Level. The certification is credit-based, with different elements garnering different amounts of credit. Importantly, Version 2 qualifications are still valid and, for organizations where Version 2 is already entrenched, there is no immediate requirement to move to Version 3 qualifications. Additionally, there is a bridging course which allows people with ITIL Version 2 training to qualify in Version 3. Depending on current levels of expertise with Version 2, it is envisaged that some people may be able to take Version 3 examinations without further training.

Megan Pendlebury, itSMF UK

The bridging course will be four days. There will be a 90-minute exam at the end of it. It will be complex multi-choice rather than written, as it was in the past, but the test will all be based on scenarios. And what makes it complex is that one answer is wrong, three answers are actually right, but they're almost gold, silver and bronze in the levels of correctness.

For more information, see the qualification scheme material posted on ITIL's website, at <http://www.itil-officialsite.com/home/home.asp>.

6. Do You need a CMDB for ITIL?

The need to create a CMDB, while highly desirable in any ITIL implementation, is often seen as something of an impossible task. However, a view emerging from the panel discussions is that, like ITIL itself, the development of a CMDB can sometimes be seen as an extension of work in progress. That is, there are many Configuration Items that are already clearly identifiable in any organization, starting with its people. Elsewhere there may be many other sources of configuration information, such as asset directories or aged asset lists from Finance, which can form the kernel of a CMDB.

Tom Mortimer, University of Dundee

It is the dependencies held within that are absolutely key. Because that helps the whole team's management to buy it. That is important for us because we control a network where we have 20,000-odd users and one mistake here in terms of implementation can bring down a whole pile of people, which we do not want.

Once a basic CMDB has been created, it is important to consider the best way of developing it in order to maximize the benefit to the business. This applies both to the types of information admitted to it and the architecture of the database itself. What is important is that the information held in and retrieved from the CMDB has intrinsic value to the business, and that it is robustly designed so that it can be augmented without needing major overhauls.

7. How Can Software Tools Help with the Adoption of ITIL?

It is clear that software tools have sometimes, in the past, served as the 'input' for IT projects; the introduction of a new system has on occasion been a catalyst for change in the organization, and not always with the desired results. ITIL points to a more effective hierarchy, where the reason for change is established first and the introduction of software tools is an output of this process. This can help ensure that software tools can effectively help meet business needs, for example by automating tasks and ensuring the right levels of management information are

captured, which in turn should assist with the introduction of ITIL. Given that ITIL Version 3 brings a more holistic view of IT operations into focus, there was a feeling in the panel discussions that vendors would continue to develop their offerings in a similar direction, providing tools directed at solving business needs rather than offering features for the sake of it.

And there are some areas where software tools are already practically indispensable for ITIL, for example in the creation of CMDBs that can help with the standardization of applications and procedures.

Elaine Hutcheson, Perth & Kinross Council

The standardization was about hoping the software was going to assist us to put the whole thing across the department rather than just having pockets of good behavior, with certain people logging incidents properly or resolving incidents properly; other teams maybe don't do it quite as well, but by putting in a new system, we've got to start from scratch with new data, so we're hoping that will help us move forward.

8. What After ITIL?

Clearly, ITIL adoption is in itself quite a serious undertaking for any organization, albeit one that is very worthwhile in terms of producing standardized and documented best practice processes that can measurably meet business aims. But it is not the end of the story. The more holistic approach explained in ITIL Version 3 points to an evolution in ITSM that Avocent's LANDesk division has extended further with its ITBM Maturity Model concept.

The Maturity Model takes an organization through a journey over five defined stages, each with identified organizational goals for the provision of service management, whether for internal customers or employees or for external customers or citizens. An important feature of the Model is that it incorporates measurements based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), a demonstrable way to measure the value that technology brings to the delivery of specific goals.

With different approaches for different types of service management, the Maturity Model enables organizations to establish a long-term strategy for improvement that is based on things that really matter. And for those looking to build effective IT service management, the stages can include the introduction of ITIL best practices. If an organization is more focused on external customer service, then relevant industry or organizational service management principles will be used.

Progression through the Maturity Model relies on KPIs of increasing complexity that map onto ITIL and provide IT managers with a clear development path along which to improve the delivery of services. Since the Model relies on existing help desk systems, the steps required for its adoption, and the subsequent delivery of benefits, are relatively straightforward.

Touchpaper Now Part of Avocent's LANDesk Division

With more than 20 years' experience across Europe, the USA and Asia Pacific, Touchpaper is one of the most established and respected international providers of IT business management (ITBM) solutions, encompassing IT service management (ITSM), customer service solutions, and network and systems management. Located in Woking, U.K., Touchpaper was acquired on July 1, 2008 by Avocent Corporation and has been integrated within Avocent's LANDesk division. Touchpaper solutions now carry the LANDesk® brand name and are offered either directly or through an extensive international network of solutions providers serving commercial and public sector markets that include education, financial services, government, healthcare, IT, law, manufacturing, professional services, retail, transportation and utilities.

Avocent Corporation is today one of the largest companies specializing in local and remote management of IT infrastructure, helping organizations cut costs, reduce risks, boost productivity, and implement ITIL and IT Service Management best practices.

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