



Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Statement of Ability

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ITIL STATEMENT

ITIL Background

The delivery of services is shifting the purpose and agenda for IT as the business demands it plays a more expansive role in the organisation. It's time for IT to come out of the back office and face the business. ITIL has evolved and now provides a trusted and proven framework against which IT Managers can determine the types of services they want and can provide the business.

ITIL was developed in the UK during the 1980's and its sponsor was the CCTA (today known as the OGC) so it was not surprising that its earliest adopters were the Public Sector. Today the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) has become a worldwide Best Practice standard for those providing IT Service Management, regardless of the size or type of organisation.

The bottom line for IT however still relates to the provision of an infrastructure capable of supporting the requirements of the business. The emphasis though has now shifted to ensuring that services, applications and systems resident upon that infrastructure are available and have the capacity to meet the "commercial" demands placed upon IT.

In May 2007 ITIL3 was launched and it represented a step change from a practical process framework to providing guidance designed to promote the benefits of this best practice model to the business via management. Consequently what has evolved is a lifecycle approach to how an organisation can better deliver services from IT to the business and beyond; ITIL3 provides guidance on forming a consistent IT strategy for the business, how service is designed and how to transition the service delivery group to face the business and change the way it operates while encouraging an holistic lifecycle management of all aspects of service delivery

The promise of Business alignment found in ITIL2 is now truly realised in ITIL3 with emphasis on Business and IT integration through to full service lifecycle management but that is not to demean the value of how the actual process modules of ITIL2 evolved. These processes remain current today and still require deployment even if the start point for an organisation adopting ITIL as its framework begins with version 3. These process modules take care of the daily task of service delivery.

Adherence to Best Practice

ITIL is often referenced by IT managers seeking a framework against which to improve and deliver services. The guidance given in each service module allows existing support and service processes to be improved and additional "business-required" services to be developed and expedited.

Yet ITIL is not prescriptive and nor should it be. After all there are many IT departments who have mastered their own good practices and have processes they have developed which ensure they deliver well-aligned support services.

For the purposes of this paper we will be looking at the essence of ITIL2 and its modules and how best an organisation selects what it needs to better control the IT it has deployed for the benefit of the business it serves:

- Incident Management
- Problem Management (incorporating knowledge authoring and presentment)
- Change Management

- Configuration Management
- Software Control and Distribution *or* Release Management
- Service Level Management
- Cost Management
- Capacity Management
- Availability Management
- Contingency Management

Corporate Governance is also driving compliance in another form and Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) has already begun to change best practice adherence with the introduction of COBIT (Control Objectives for Information and Related Technologies) and many ITIL practitioners are embracing this new set of modules to present the “management view” of best practice adoption.

Regardless of the best practice framework (ITIL, COBIT or even Basel II) the recurring deliverable is the business demands services, applications and systems to be available.

Network Management – Just More Enabling Technology?

ITIL best practice demands best-of-breed because there is no ‘one-stop shop’ for ITIL enabling technology; not even from the Big 4 enterprise vendors whose modular approach will still be cobbled together from 3rd party acquired applications.

In isolation of each other solutions such as network management, asset management, IT help desk or IT service management are at best reactive. Yet with integration they provide the basis for proactive management and delivery of availability of services, applications, systems and devices critical to the business. This is especially true of IT help desk vendors where most, if not all, nurture strategic partnerships with network management vendors. The reason why is clear; it is a pragmatic response to enabling customer needs.

Emereo is a provider of network management solutions that enables IT support and service delivery groups to keep services, applications and systems available to the business when it needs them. More than this the information Emereo|NMS collects from the network can be used to populate a CMDB which in turns improves incident and problem management resolution and can help control change projects by providing a level of visibility to assess risk, manage dependencies and minimise impact.

“Having NetCrunch provide the operational benefits it does is a massive improvement on where we were however analysing downtime and uptime, for example, is not just about device performance its also about support group performance and to be able to blend these metrics into tangible management information requires integration with our IT helpdesk solution; Hornbill Supportworks.” Anton Benjamin, Network & Operations Manager, Victoria & Albert Museum



Emereo partner with complementary vendors to ensure adherence with the chosen best practice modules of ITIL. Emereo|NMS powered by NetCrunch allows organisations to manage and monitor the performance of the IT infrastructure and measure the impact IT is having on the business.

Emereo and ITIL

Emereo makes no claims to provide solutions that enable all of ITIL yet we can provide guidance on how the configuration of NetCrunch and integration with other technologies will provide a strong foundation for a best-of-breed solution. Our core competence for ITIL resides in these process areas as originally listed in version 2.

Emereo for Configuration Management (CMDB)

Emereo|NMS has the ability to discover and map devices across a network and importantly illustrate the relationships and dependencies devices have on each other. As a base level configuration management tool Emereo|NMS quickly makes support and network analysts aware of the possible impact failing devices will have on a configuration and its users.

At a deeper level Emereo Consultants can extract a dataset of the network layer and “blend” this with audited desktop information from inventory tools such as Centennial or AssetWorks. Working with an SQL database a schema can be modified in such a way that prompted updates can be captured and the support organisation will have a complete CMDB of the organisation’s IT estate through its chosen help desk application.

Having such a federated CMDB, fed by multiple technologies, becomes the cornerstone for the IT service delivery unit; speeding resolution activities from those in 1st, 2nd or 3rd line support as well supporting change and release management decision making. The added capability of Emereo|NMS to illustrate the relationship of networked elements will also provide the true basis for management of support activities where inter-element dependencies down to a user level and the impact and risks of activities and problems can be planned and predicted.

Emereo for Incident Management

Emereo|NMS can provide status alerts and information of any networked device, providing services, applications and/or systems so as incidents are logged, typically using automated e-mail alerts, 1st line support analysts can quickly take control of the resolution process and escalate the event to the appropriate support groups.

If no IT help desk solution has been deployed Emereo|NMS can be configured to visually display all failed elements to those in IT so corrective actions can be taken. Similarly alerting media can be used to escalate issues to specialist support analysts.

Emereo for Problem Management

Problem Management is all about avoiding an unenviable state of down-time and long-term disruption by having decision support information available. Emereo|NMS constantly monitors network devices and is able to measure and report on changing operational status.

This information will alert the IT Help Desk to issues and warn of looming critical failures. The integration with the IT Help Desk will leverage the problem profiles/call subjects resident within the system. Emereo|NMS will use these 3-level categories to auto-log and escalate the issue and once logged this issue can be trended to assess true mean-time failure rates of a network element. Where recurring issues potentially have a wider impact upon other networked element Emereo|NMS can visually display the relationships which exist at a device, system, application and/or service level.

Emereo|NMS provides the metrics to identify, control and resolve problems in a timely manner and consider how scheduling preventative procedures can further reduce problem tickets being raised by the help desk. Beyond this additional reporting will drive decisions concerning investment and replacement.

Emereo for Change Management

Emereo|NMS, powered by NetCrunch, does not provide a configurable workflow engine but the information it generates can and will justify change requests and projects.

The ability to measure and report on the health or demand of any networked device will allow management to take informed decisions for any change request. What’s more with specific monitoring parameters in place Emereo|NMS can be used to analyse device de-commissioning and commissioning periods to avoid capacity and availability issues during periods of transition (for example migrations from Novell to Windows or Linux).

The trending found within Emereo|NMS can also be used to justify and cost requests and projects.

Emereo for Service Level Management

Service Level Agreement (SLAs) are usually stored and measured within the IT Helpdesk Solution but rather than being a static set of performance indicators for support teams to be measured against Emereo Consultants can take them and apply them within the monitoring parameters and alerting policies for critical devices.

When alerting and escalations patterns are being set within Emereo|NMS typically our consultants will use published SLAs to determine timings that work within response and fix times for the device, service, application or system residing in the IT help desk or Service Management application.

Once the SLAs have been set and the alerts are being fired into the help desk solution reports can be generated to support end-to-end service level management; not only assessing the failure rates of network elements but also the ability of support groups to resolve incidents and problems.

Emereo for Capacity Management

Emereo Consultants will ensure NetCrunch provides the trended management information needed to highlight where capacity issues exist based upon known demand for a device or the services and applications being delivered against predicted changes which the organisation and its environment may undergo.

The reports generated by Emereo|NMS can be used by management to consider further network investments or even completely replan the entire IT infrastructure.

Emereo for Availability Management

Emereo understands down-time and Emereo|NMS is not just geared-up to monitoring and alerting to potential availability issues but also to report on device resilience so revisions to preventative maintenance procedures can be addressed and the justification for device overhaul and/or replacement can be made.

Emereo|NMS provides availability reports which can be scheduled to run, delivered by e-mail or collected from a designated network drive. Emereo|NMS availability reports show management, in real-time, the status of business critical devices, systems, applications and services. Additionally real-status can be graphed to appear as a dashboard.

Note on Best Practice Accreditation

Pink Elephant's PinkVerify™ is a vendor independent certification process designed to test software vendors' solutions against specific IT service management criteria. PinkVerify™ does not measure ITIL compliance but the tool's compatibility with the ITIL framework, Emereo is testing its solution against the Service Monitoring certification level.

Sources

The following sources were used to research this document:

Office of Government Commerce - www.ogc.gov.uk

IT Service Management Forum - www.itsmf.co.uk

Pink Elephant - www.itilalumni.com

Further Related Reading

Please also refer to the following Emereo documentation:

Sarbanes Oxley Act Statement - available from www.emereo.eu

IT Service Desk Integration - available by e-mailing sales@emereo.eu



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