

Version 3: ITIL make life easier

The introduction of ITIL version 3 is no cause for panic.

ITIL (the IT Infrastructure Library) is the most widely accepted approach to IT service management in the world. ITIL provides a cohesive set of best practice, drawn from the public and private sectors internationally. It is supported by a comprehensive qualifications scheme, accredited training organisations, and implementation and assessment tools, which is due to be updated with the release of version 3 at the end of May.

"ITIL was developed by the CCTA, now the OGC, during the late 1980s when the UK government's reliance on IT was increasing," says Rosemary Gurney, an industry expert and director of Wardown Consulting, an organisation which was specifically established to help businesses capitalise from the substantial benefits that IT Service Management can deliver. "A working party set out to document a common sense approach to managing IT services that would improve reliability while maintaining costs efficiency. The result was a published collection of best practice and common sense and the first IT Infrastructure Library was created."

"During late 1999 ITIL version 2 was introduced and the library then consisted of 7 central books which dealt with the processes widely accepted as the best practice framework for IT Service Management (ITSM)."



"Although this wasn't perfect, the core we teach from for certification purposes concentrates mainly on two of those books, Service Support and Service Delivery and we've all been quite happy with that, but cracks had started to appear" said Gurney.

Therefore in 2005, the ITIL Version 3 (v3) refresh project began, with Sharon Taylor appointed chief architect.

"Sharon led a very robust benchmarking and consultation exercise within the industry asking what was liked about the existing system, and what wasn't? It also asked the customers about it – these are the people who implement it and use it on a day-to-day basis."

The outcome of the consultation was that v3 is to differ from v2, changing from being process driven to lifecycle driven.

"We've now got five books," says Gurney. "These are: Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation and Continual Service Improvement."

The books for v3 are to be published at the end of May 2007 and some of it will be familiar: "The processes we all know are, by-and-large, still there, but there are new processes, new functions and new roles.

"From a training provider point of view, it means we will see a whole new certification scheme, we will need to devise new training courses and we see new syllabuses and exam structures. So an awful lot of work is required to meet the publication deadline."

Gurney is one of 15 members of a global panel designing the new certification scheme:

"It has been our job to make sense of the five books and construct a new syllabus and new exam structures. In addition, we will need to provide an upgrade path for those who require it and training so that our trainers are equipped with sufficient information to lead the new courses and prepare the students for the new exams."

The introduction of v3 has caused some customers to

wonder how things might change. However, Gurney is quick to reassure these people:

"With regards to the new version, there is no need to worry or panic. I understand that people have been worried that it's really different. Just because we're moving from v2 to v3 doesn't mean the older version isn't relevant anymore. The new version provides transition models whereas previously it didn't – you couldn't easily make the transition from design to operation. Version 3 improves the way we implement things and it improves how we measure value, which was one of the biggest concerns.

"Because Service Management is about people and culture and the way we work, how do you demonstrate that you're actually providing value? Version 3 helps to improve the way we measure that," says Gurney.

"We're emphasising much more the integration of IT and the business," continues Gurney. "Previously we used to use the word alignment. We now need to talk about integration. And we shouldn't really be talking about IT Service Management anymore, it is just Service Management and how IT fits in with the way the business itself wants to develop."

For customers currently working on a v2 project or putting staff through a v2 certification programme, there is provision within the new scheme for transition and upgrades to v3.

"If they don't want to do another course, but want to understand what v3 is all about there will be plenty of material available," says Gurney.

"The five books are the 'core' but around the core there will be a lot of other information and complementary material available and much of it is web-based. Life is going to be much easier and much more readily updated."

And, as the transition from ITIL v2 to v3 looks set to improve IT service management around the world, experts are on hand to make the process as seamless as possible.

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