

WHAT IS ITIL?

ITIL is an acronym for the Information Technology Infrastructure Library, the most widely accepted “best practice” approach to IT service management in the world. ITIL was created by Britain’s Office of Government Commerce and draws from both the private and public sectors.

The key objectives of ITIL are to:

Align IT services with the current and future needs of the business

Improve quality of IT services delivered

Reduce the long-term costs of IT service provision

Many benefits are also associated with ITIL, including increased customer satisfaction, increased service availability, decreased downtime, improved business performance, reduced costs, and more timely IT response.

ITIL is also closely linked with ITSM – IT Service Management – which is focused on delivering and supporting IT services aligned to the business requirements of an organization.

According to the ITIL web site, “The ethos behind the development of ITIL is the recognition that organizations are becoming increasingly dependent on IT in order to satisfy their corporate aims and meet their business needs. This leads to an increased requirement for high quality IT services. ITIL provides the foundation for quality IT Service Management.”

Both ITIL and ITSM focus on aligning technology to the business needs of an organization. At GW, the goals and current priorities set by Dave Swartz align with the strategic goals of the University. For example, one of GW’s goals is to maintain tuition influx. By supporting undergraduate and graduate admissions’ strategic business processes, ISS helps the University meet that goal. The demands of the marketplace put pressure on GW’s business units, and the goal of ITIL is to enable ISS to be responsive to those needs and become a true solutions provider.

ITIL is not a strict regimen, and it is not the answer to everything. It is a set of guidelines that provide a framework, shared understandings, and a common language for the IT organization to use in the operation of their business and in the provision of their services.

COMMON ITIL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

Availability Management: Availability Management allows organizations to sustain the IT service availability in order to support the business at a justifiable cost.

Capacity Management: Capacity Management supports the optimum and cost effective provision of IT services by helping organizations match their IT resources to the business demands.

Change Management: Process of controlling changes to the infrastructure or any aspect of services, in a controlled manner, enabling approved changes with minimum disruption.

Configuration Item: A component of an infrastructure that is under the control of Configuration Management. For example, hardware, software, and documentation.

Configuration Management: The process of identifying and defining the Configuration Items in a system, recording and reporting the status of Configuration Items and Requests For Change, and verifying the completeness and correctness of Configuration Items.

Incident Management: An incident is any event which is not part of the standard operation of a service and which causes, or may cause, an interruption to, or a reduction in, the quality of that service. The first goal of the incident management process is to restore a normal service operation as quickly as possible and minimize the impact on business operations, thus ensuring that the best possible levels of service quality and availability are maintained.

Operational Level Agreement (OLA): An agreement made between two internal IT departments—for example, an agreement between the Help Desk and Networking is an OLA.

Problem Management: Problems are a condition identified from multiple incidents – for example, an entire floor of a building experiencing a network issue is a problem.

Release Management: Used for platform-independent and automated distribution of software and hardware, including license controls across the entire IT infrastructure. Quality control during the development and implementation of new hardware and software is also the responsibility of Release Management. This guarantees that all software can be conceptually optimized to meet the demands of the business processes.

Service Catalog: A written list of IT services with descriptions and, where appropriate, costs related to each service

Service Desk: The single point of contact within the IT organization for users of IT services.

Service Level Agreement (SLA): A written agreement between an IT service provider (ISS) and the IT customer (a department at GW) that defines the responsibilities and service goals of both parties. The SLA is a method to create a true partnership between ISS and the department.

Service Level Management (SLM): The process of defining, agreeing, documenting, and managing the levels of customer IT service that are required and cost justified.

Security Management: The process of managing a defined level of security on information and services.

ITIL also has definitions for user and customer. A user is an end-user who consumes but does not directly pay for services. For example, a GWMail user consumes e-mail services but does not directly pay for this service. A customer is an entity who directly pays for services, for example, the ISS service level agreement with the GW Medical Center or the GWorld Office. These offices directly pay for agreed-upon services that include staff and hardware.

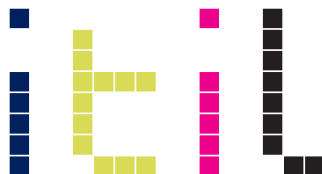
HOW IS ISS USING ITIL NOW AND WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

ITIL recognizes that the business is dependent upon technology, and that the technology area exists to serve the business needs and demands of the organization. This is why technology and business alignment grows ever more critical. Part of the process of adopting ITIL is understanding that IT is a service provider and is, therefore, a customer-facing organization.

The implementation of ISS's customer service architecture has integrated many of the ITIL processes in the Service Level Management (SLM), Resolution and Escalation Implementation, and the Help Desk Improvement and Contact Center Strategy projects. Additionally, Enterprise Systems has begun to incorporate ITIL in their delivery and support of services. The Enterprise Systems team is largely involved in the SLM process, configuration management, capacity management, availability management, problem management, and change management. Engineers within Enterprise Systems manage availability, capacity, configuration, and continuity.

"Many of you have gone to ITIL training to identify where the gaps are between where we are today and where we would like to be," said Dave Swartz in the State of ISS webcast. "I think this is a very structured approach to plan how we will move forward."

ITIL is not the only framework, standard, or best practice that ISS uses. Others include Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), NIST standards, Gartner best practices, EMC best practices, VM World best practices, and AFCOM best practices. In addition, software vendors such as Computer Associates International, Hewlett-Packard, Mercury Interactive, Peregrine, and Remedy are integrating ITIL into their products.



Information
Technology
Infrastructure
Library:

SUGGESTED READINGS AND TRAINING VENUES:

ITIL IT Service Management web site:
<http://www.itil.co.uk/>

"ITIL Power" article, CIO Magazine
http://www.cio.com/archive/090105/itil_frameworks.html

Foundations of Service Level Management
by Rick Sturm and Wayne Morris (ISBN: 0672317435)

BMC Software (web-based and off-site training)
<http://www.bmc.com>

Hewlett-Packard (off-site training)
<http://www.hp.com>

Pink Elephant (off-site training)
<http://www.pinkelephant.com>

QUOTES FROM CIO MAGAZINE ARTICLE, "ITIL POWER":

"There was no focus on process for IT. The contradiction was obvious: The group responsible for developing and enforcing a set of common business processes didn't have a process of its own."

- Jim McGrane, CIO, MeadWestvaco

"With ITIL we now have the ability to assess how we are performing at any point in time. As a result, we can continuously improve our processes. We've identified where we had bottlenecks, and now the total number of problems is going down. And we have evidence to show people that we are improving."

- Suresh Kumar, CIO, Pershing

"A company may have an outstanding network or mainframe group, but if each group is focused on optimizing the value of its area, they may not be creating value for the organization as a whole."

- Jim McGrane, CIO, MeadWestvaco

"To run IT like a business, you need to understand the key services that go into it. ITIL makes that work visible. It allows you to measure what is important, so you can emphasize the things that add value and take out the things that don't."

- Jim McGrane, CIO, MeadWestvaco