WHITE PAPER

Creating 'Best Practice' Platforms for Continuous IT Service Delivery with AMPTRAC – Mapping Intelligent Infrastructure Management Systems to ITIL (IT Infrastructure Liabrary)

Corporate information networks of the 21st century have become the very core upon which successful organisations are based and their competitive advantage derived. The critical nature of the corporate network is beyond doubt and its importance as the primary source of commercial activity and communication is growing exponentially. Consequently, there is a rapidly growing demand for network infrastructures that offer levels of IT service availability akin to those provided under a utility business model. This demand has also been fuelled by the trend toward the convergence of voice, data and video services, a move which will only be possible if the near 100%, 24/7 service availability currently enjoyed by voice networks is not compromised.

The migration toward the goal of high availability, converged corporate networks is set to provide a considerable challenge to those wishing to reap the undoubted business benefits. It will require system downtime reductions in excess of 80% to achieve this goal and it is extremely unlikely that improvements of this magnitude can be delivered by the manual infrastructure management systems and processes in use today. If high availability, converged networks are to become a reality, a fundamental change in network infrastructure change control, configuration and problem management processes is required.

The realisation that the 100% availability of IT services will assume ever-greater significance has led to the introduction of IT Service Management. Setting the benchmark for 'best practice' in service management is ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) which has been adopted as the de-facto global standard for IT Service Management. While past attempts at service improvements were primarily focused on investments in technology, the ITIL approach differs in that it defines the processes within the particular services to be performed, thereby providing a 'best practice' framework for continuous IT service delivery and management.

At the core of the ITIL framework are the network configuration and change management processes (see Fig 1). The accuracy & quality of the information contained within the main configuration management database (CMDB) is fundamental in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of all associated IT Service Management processes, particularly in complex environments. Similarly, the management of changes to this information is also critical as the network manager must know the exact implications of carrying out any changes before they take place. Avoiding the potential for a 'butterfly effect' to develop as a result of a poorly executed change or problem resolution is essential if 100% service availability is to be maintained.

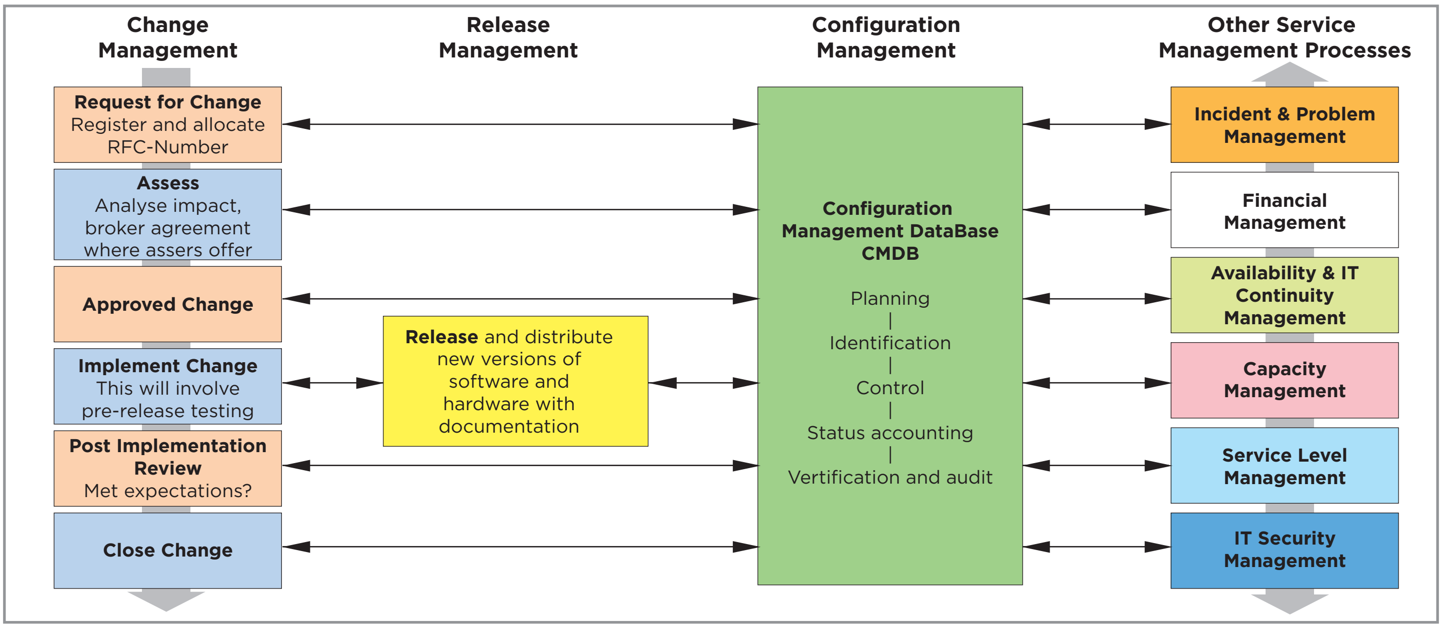

Fig.1: The IT Infrastructure Library Core Processes

Creating such systems and processes based upon a traditionally managed cabling infrastructure is an impossible task as the connectivity and asset information contained within traditional tools and documentation processes, being manually maintained, is inevitably inaccurate, outdated and therefore cannot be integrated into the core CMDB. This creates a large degree of uncertainty concerning the physical location and associated connectivity of network devices. This severely limits the quality of IT service delivery.

By adopting the correct 'intelligent' sensor technology and management software tools as a key part of their cabling strategy, organisations can create a platform capable of addressing these problems, providing a 100% accurate, real-time, trusted source of connectivity and asset information that can be integrated within the core CMDB and consequently, the associated IT Service Management tools and processes. Any physical changes to the network configuration are automatically updated and reflected across all management processes, aiding communication between organisational work-streams and co-ordinating events.

AMPTRAC / iTRACS Infrastructure Manager

- **Administrator: Documentation, Management and Supervision in Real-time**
- **User: Automatted Management of Moves, Add and Changes with Auto-routing**

The optimisation of ITIL processes and the resulting improvements in work-stream productivity & efficiency, ensure organisations that automate and integrate the management of the physical layer as an integral part of the IT Service Management platform, will attain the goal of continuous service delivery and maximize the return (ROI) on their IT investments.

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