



Customer service in Pasila, near Helsinki

IT Service Management

CHANGE TO BEST PRACTICES

National Land Survey of Finland implements a new IT service management solution to further improve the quality of their service. The expectation is that better quality can be achieved by using ITIL® processes in the most important areas. The plan is to switch their processes to ITIL version 3 best practices. MATERNA supports the authority with consulting and implementation services.

The National Land Survey of Finland (NLS) produces and provides information and services concerning real estate, topography and the environment for citizens, other customers and the community at large. The National Land Survey is responsible for Finland's cadastral system and general mapping assignments. It also promotes the shared use of geographic information. The NLS has 2,000 staff, over 80 per cent of whom are employed in the District Survey Offices.

NLS's Computer Centre is responsible for providing the authority with IT production and support services and for the proper functioning of their communication networks nationwide. They have offices in Jyväskylä, in Hämeenlinna and in Helsinki. The Computer Centre employs 46 people in 17 locations. They provide IT support for approximately 2,000 NLS internal users.

Better service quality has a strong relation to good IT management processes and tools

The decision to build the new IT management on ITIL V3 processes was made in autumn 2009. The project manager Asta Forsström-Ekholm describes the situation as follows:

“We had had serious complaints about the service from a very important customer. When analysing the case we understood that we had been unable to control changes due to the fact that different groups or persons made system changes without being aware of each other in a very complicated environment. The responsibilities were unclear and we could not identify the person that should have been in charge of the service. Installations failed due to a lack of up-to-date instructions and approvals. Everyone did (and does) their best but it is difficult to control changes without proper systems and common policies.”

The project manager goes on: “We knew that the same kind of quality problems had happened before and were likely to happen again. We came to the conclusion that better quality needed better IT processes. We identified the change management process as the most important key factor that had to be developed to make it possible for the service quality to improve. We also needed a well-functioning problem management process with systematic root-cause-analysis. And we had to have a better understanding of the services, service components and responsibilities.”

The old system also lacked a service level management process, so the requirement for the new system was to improve monitoring of service warranty fulfilment. To round it off, it should be easy to produce the required reports in order to control the processes and services.

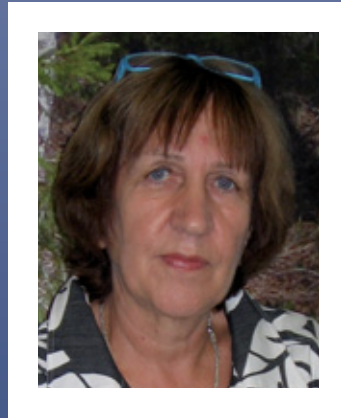
“After making the decision to implement a new IT service management system, we also made plans (for the long term) to expand the CMDB to include applications, servers, and their inter-relations,” Asta Forsström-Ekholm explains.

From tailor-made processes to out-of-the-box solutions and best practices

The National Land Survey of Finland had had some ITIL-like processes for quite a long time. These processes had been developed during the last ten years and were highly automated. The solution covered a basic incident process and a “home-made” standard change process and also included an asset register and a self-service portal so that employees can order assets, software and user accounts. The current solution is based on Remedy Action Request System from BMC.

After the decision to go for new best practice processes it became evident that it was technically too difficult and it would be too expensive to further develop the existing system. Therefore, NLS decided to convert the old processes into standard ones and to build the new ones based on a new ITSM solution which is aligned to ITIL V3 best practices.

The goal of the Computer Centre was that new implementations should be based on “out-of-the-box” solutions to further minimise their own expenditure.



Asta Forsström-Ekholm
IT manager at the Computer Centre
National Land Survey of Finland

“In order to support services and processes, the configuration of an ITSM system requires a common view of the services, classification and processes as well as of the skill groups and roles of the people involved. Clarifying this view and defining responsibilities is time-consuming. We are still working on this. But plain abstract design is no good on its own. We needed to model the processes within the system to understand the logic of the system. Implementing changes and new ways of working as part of an organisation’s processes is very slow. Therefore, it is essential to reserve enough time for this implementation.”

Benefits of the solution

- ITIL best practices
- Out-of-the-box solution to minimise their own expenditure and work loads
- The solution contains modules and possibilities that can be implemented later.
- Documented processes
- Improved quality of service and customer satisfaction



Duty officer Leena Simola

After determining a more precise definition of needs and demands NLS started the search for an ITSM solution that could handle IT operations and management properly, that was easy to use and to configure.

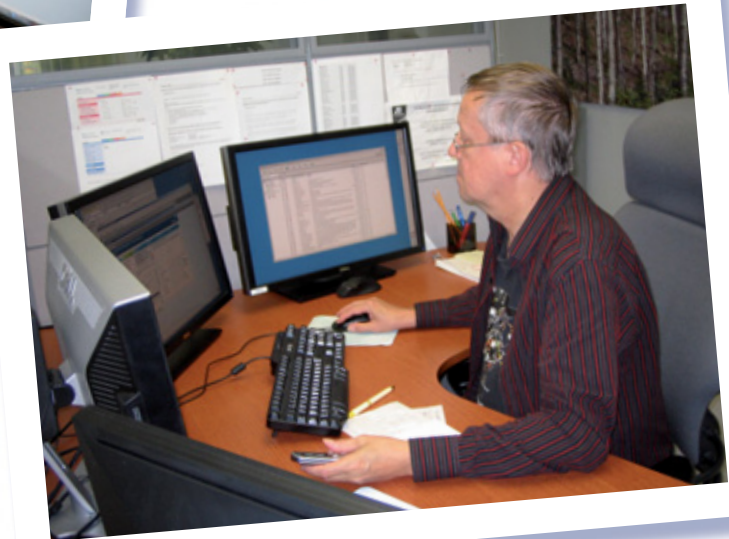
Implementation carried out in close cooperation with MATERNA

As the old system was to be used during the transitional period, an interface had to be built between the old and the new systems. This was one of the main reasons for short-listing and eventually selecting BMC's ITSM Suite 7.6. BMC is also one of the leaders in IT service management. NLS selected MATERNA as the implementation partner because they are experts in IT service management due to their experience gained from several similar customer projects. "They have the know-how for the product implementation, project management, project resource allocation and apportionment. In addition, they have technical and process skills within the ITSM system that were utilised during the project workshops," says Asta Forsström-Ekholm, IT manager at the Computer Centre.

Since MATERNA delivered most of the migration work during implementation, NLS also involved them in the project steering group. Both project partners allocated their own

resources. This arrangement allowed problems to be followed up and handled immediately thus avoiding bottlenecks.

"Unfortunately, we had to lower our expectations that the out-of-the-box solution was ready for deployment. It took us and MATERNA quite some time to define the new system. For example, automated features in the



Duty officer Simo Uusitalo

old system had to be migrated to the new system," says Asta Forsström-Ekholm.

NLS have also held meetings with BMC due to ITSM system bugs. "These have slowed down our own development. The biggest problems have concerned the purchase management and service request management modules – but there are also problems with reports due to the lack of local Finnish support," says Asta Forsström-Ekholm.

More convenience, ease for IT support and "wins"

The new solution makes routine tasks easier for support staff when using ready-made templates in the incident management process. Using templates is effective when having to submit frequent incident tickets. It has become new practice to create



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a template for an on-going situation when more related contacts are expected.

Also, it is easy to create a problem ticket from the incident process. In general, the ticket transfer between productive units has been streamlined. Separating problems from incidents enables NLS to move long-term and unresolved issues to a different process. They can dedicate different groups of experts to resolve problems, which helps to eliminate customer interference as quickly as possible.

With the introduction of the new system, process managers are named to monitor process performance and to develop it.

There is an email interface to make creating tickets easier so that email messages can be sent much more easily. Tickets and asset information are both easy to handle and can, for example, be filled in during service calls. These things make the work of the Computer Centre easier, faster and more efficient.

By using ITIL the Computer Centre can harmonise their terminology and will act according to established processes. Both will also improve future cooperation with external service providers.

“We have to understand that organisations that are second generation ITSM solution users get fewer wins than new users. NLS incident and standard change management processes were highly automated in the old ARS Remedy solution. We knew that there would be few “quick wins” in the new solution. Therefore, the overall goal was to change processes and to transform the Computer Centre so as to follow the best practices from ITIL V3 and to adapt existing functionalities to the standards,” says Asta Forsström-Ekholm.

Optimised and automated processes will not only improve operational efficiency and productivity but will also relieve staff from time-consuming routine tasks.

Open for further processes

The new system will go into operation during the year 2012. Incident and problem management had already been installed by June 2010 during the first phase. MATERNA implemented incident and problem management and started to populate the CMDB (BMC CMDB 7.6) with selected asset information (workstations). The target of the second phase in 2011/2012 is to build an effective self-service portal (service request management) as well as change and release management processes. The advantage of the new self-service implementation is that support requests can be channelled directly to the right service

group. Change management is currently being implemented to further improve the handling of standard changes in particular. An automated process is to be implemented to produce assembly or installation tasks based on templates when assets, software or user accounts are requested. The Computer Centre expects the new change management processes to increase efficiency and improve service quality. One of the targets of the third phase is to expand the CMDB to cover services, servers and their inter-relationships.

Today, NLS is in the transition phase. In future, problems will be identified quickly and incidents will be reduced. Change requests will be recorded, risks identified and implementations of changes will be well under control. Processes and services will have owners who follow and develop operations.

The plans for the future are to get these new processes implemented in the Computer Centre but in the long run the strategy is that all departments responsible for IT service production, IT development and core business should be included in the ITSM change management process. ■

Technology

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| ITSM solution: | BMC ITSM version 7.6.03 |
| Application server: | Windows 2003 Server, Apache TomCat 6, AR System Portmapper |
| Web server: | Windows 2003 Server, Apache TomCat 6, Java JDK 1.6.0_17, Java JRE 6 |
| Database server: | Windows 2003 Server, Microsoft MSSQL 2005 |
| Desktop Capture server: | Windows 2003 Server, IIS, Desktop Capture |
| Workstations: | Windows® 7 |