



Monash University

» BMC Remedy IT Service Management Suite delivers University-wide ICT support processes and systems

BEFORE

- » The University operated over fifty IT teams within departments across the various campuses; each was responsible for its own maintenance, upgrade and development programme.
- » Little coherence within the University computing network; need to migrate to a Shared Services architecture was identified.
- » IT projects were difficult to initiate and manage within time and cost forecasts. There also was a lack of University-wide ICT performance reporting.

AFTER

- » Data centres have been consolidated with BMC Remedy IT Service Management Suite underpinning the delivery of IT services for over 74,000 students, academics and staff.
- » ITIL has been adopted.
- » A University-wide Shared Services model, with IT Shared Services at its core is being adopted. This comprised a University-wide service desk managing incident response, service change requests and systems to deliver comprehensive management reporting to measure performance and reduce risk.



GEOGRAPHY

Australia

INDUSTRY

Education

SOLUTIONS

BMC Remedy IT Service Management Suite

An information technology transformation is profoundly impacting one of Australia's most respected universities, delivering the institution with a platform for 21st Century growth. The traditional department-and school-driven heritage of universities often leads to widely dispersed and fractured information networks being developed over time. That was exactly what had happened at Monash University, which by the end of 2009 had numerous IT teams operating within departments across the various campuses. In order to provide a more effective and streamlined information service, the University undertook a strategic decision to implement a Shared Services programme and transform the information services provided to University stakeholders. It adopted ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) as the supporting framework and selected BMC Remedy IT Service Management Suite to deliver University-wide ICT support processes and systems.

TRANSFORMATION REQUIRED

Universities have traditionally been forged in a manner quite different from commercial entities. They tend to focus on individual academics, and with regard to information systems, that has meant many academics have been historically able to request computer systems engineered solely for their use and operated within a particular school or department.

At the same time, universities are often spread over multiple campuses, compounding the IT sprawl. Monash presently has six campuses in Australia, with international campuses and learning centres in South Africa, Malaysia and Italy. The university has over 59,000 students and 15,000 staff in addition to adjunct personnel and alumni contacts. This means that at any one time it may have up 130,000 valid email addresses to manage.

At Monash, this sprawl led to the University engaging over fifty IT teams to service academic and administrative needs. It was a situation which did not lend itself to holistic service management or IT efficiency, and was clearly unsustainable given the economic and political pressures facing tertiary institutions today.

In mid-2009 Monash adopted a University-wide Shared Services model, with IT Shared Services at its core. That programme is under the stewardship of Dr. Ian Tebbett, Monash Chief Information Officer, who believes that “the cornerstone of a successful IT organisation is a strong and successful service desk working together with local services.”

PLATFORM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr. Tebbett acknowledges that there was limited coordination of the desktop and tools for workflow tracking. “To some extent it looked like private enterprises did in the 1990s and needed to be brought up to 21st Century speed.”

The Shared Services model established a single division responsible for the operation, maintenance and support of University IT systems and facilities. This group is comprised of over 500 professionals.

Another component of the Shared Services initiative is the migration of faculty server platforms from local machines in individual rooms to a virtual platform in the university’s main data centres. Deployment of a unified Windows 7 based operating environment is scheduled to take place on all 14,000 Windows PCs within the University.

In 2009 Monash went to the market with a request for proposal for what Dr. Tebbett describes as a “comprehensive service management system” addressing tracking and reporting whilst offering consistency of language. The system also needed to be able to provide the underpinnings for the service desk to log tickets and oversee change management.

An initial group of six vendors were approached, and after a comprehensive evaluation BMC Remedy IT Service Management was selected. The University already had some experience with BMC Remedy having implemented the CMDB (configuration management database) in 2008. This was initially used to manage server configuration details at the Clayton campus data centres before being extended to manage PCs, ports and appliances.

The university signed the contract in late 2009 and went live with BMC Remedy 7.6 in October 2010.

Dr Tebbett explains that by early 2011, Monash was approximately a third of the way through the Shared Services journey, underpinned by ITIL and BMC Remedy. “We wanted a comprehensive Service Management System. We were migrating to ITIL at the same time – and we wanted all features such as tracking, reporting and consistency of language so that we were able to log tickets for the service desk, and also implement change management auditing.”

BMC DELIVERS MORE TRANSPARENCY, LESS RISK

The IT Service Management solution provided by BMC Remedy handles incident, change and release management, supports the Service Desk and provides IT asset management. It also provides the transparency that allows management to generate a variety of reports providing a window on the University’s IT efficiency.

“While many universities are attempting to move to a Shared Services model, we’ve perhaps set a more ambitious and comprehensive target. You absolutely could not do that without service management tools. Today, as a result of introducing BMC Remedy, Monash has access to real data on how quickly the IT team is addressing incidents and also a clear log of all recorded incidents and requests.”

DR. IAN TEBBETT
CIO

The University's Service Desk is increasingly the primary point of contact for users to log service disruptions, service requirements and many requests for change. The system is provisioned to accept requests via online forms, emails, the telephone or walk up requests.

The solution then allows operators to record, prioritise, resolve, document and communicate how the service tickets were handled, in accordance with the agreed service level for the particular situation.

"It gives us the ability to know where every piece of work was requested, where it arose and the status of the request. It then manages all the general reporting with regard to service level targets. We haven't moved to data centre automation – but we are using the end-user service management products," Dr. Tebbett said.

The granular view that the system provides will also provide the foundation for any future Shared Service chargeback system that the University may choose to implement.

Besides the technical changes, the University needed to address associated cultural issues. It ran a comprehensive training programme offering both online and classroom BMC Remedy training for all staff before the system went live.

BMC Remedy provides operators with a range of on-screen consoles to capture incoming information.

For example, an incident response console guides the operator through capturing all necessary information and then uses the auto assigning rules in BMC Remedy Incident Management to automatically assign the incident request to the most appropriate group. Other consoles guide the Service Desk operators through change requests, including inquiries regarding services laid out in the university's ICT service catalogue.

RIGOUR REPLACES RANDOM RELATIONSHIPS

As Dr. Tebbett explains; "We are trying to formalise the capture of requests. In the previously small and intimate nature of the university's multiple de facto IT departments, it was a personal relationship between users and technicians that led to computers being repaired or updated. In the massive Shared Services model, this approach does not work. There was a prevailing culture that if anyone could not get what they perceived to be adequate IT service, they would voice that complaint all the way through to senior executives where it would then pass back down the IT tree. It was highly inefficient but typical."

The migration to Shared Services demands a new level of professionalism in IT function, which would allow better use of resources as well as set appropriate expectations.

Just prior to BMC Remedy's installation, there were 1,100 outstanding service tickets across the University – with several hundred of them over a year old. Part of the problem was that the previous system had no published service levels, according to Dr. Tebbett.

Today there is far more rigour, and university administrators receive reports which track the performance of IT services.

"The metrics have been planned for very open accounting. We have just produced our first quarterly reports that analyse the volumes of service requests, the volumes of incidents, and in some areas set performance targets and measured how well we have performed. For example we aim to resolve 90 percent of incidents in ten hours – how did we actually do?"

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On-screen reports can be generated to track incident targets or service level targets, for example, and performance tracked on screen using traffic light alerts to indicate the status of individual issues.

For some of the areas where the University had no service level targets it has imported benchmarks from professional service type organisations.

AMBITIOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE TARGETS

“While many universities are attempting to move to a Shared Services model, we’ve perhaps set more ambitious and comprehensive targets,” Dr. Tebbett said. “You absolutely could not do that without a service management solution.”

Today, as a result of introducing BMC Remedy, Dr. Tebbett says that he has access to real data on how quickly the IT team is addressing incidents, and also a clear log of all recorded incidents and requests.

“The IT service management system can also help determine requirements and classification for service requests. It forces you to consider your risk matrix,” he said.

One of the benefits of the system has been the transparency that it affords. The University previously lacked a clear picture of the service issues its IT departments were facing. This impacted both its ability to be efficient and manage risk. By early 2011 the BMC Remedy system was being used to log about 1,000 fault calls and 10,000 service requests each month.

For January 2011, BMC Remedy’s reporting shows 635 low, 103 medium and 15 high priority incidents were handled; no critical incidents occurred that month.

“We set our Service Level Targets on the basis of achieving a 90% incident resolution within the 20 hours for low priority, 10 hours for medium priority and 4 hours for high priority,” explains Dr Tebbett, “and we achieved 89% in the 20 hours for low priority, and 80% in 10 hours for medium and 61% in 4 hours for high priority”.

While there are still challenges ahead, Dr. Tebbett believes that the transparency afforded by BMC Remedy has delivered the organisation a clearer view of its processes and provides valuable metrics that allow performance to be measured and refined.

ABOUT MONASH

Established in 1958, Monash is the youngest member of the highly-regarded Group of Eight universities. In just over fifty years it has grown to become the largest university in Australia, renowned for its global reach and extensive alumni network (now extending to more than 250,000 members across the world.) Monash encompasses eight campuses and one education centre across four continents, including six campuses in Victoria, Australia; one in Malaysia; one in South Africa and one in Italy.

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