

ONE IT HELP DESK FOR UNISA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The University of South Australia is a modern, flexible, vibrant and innovative university which aspires to international reach and impact. With over 32,000 students locally and internationally and an annual budget in excess of \$A300M, UniSA is the largest university in South Australia. UniSA has four campuses in Adelaide (City West, City East, Magill and Mawson Lakes) and one in Whyalla, together with study centres in other parts of the state including Mt. Gambier. More information on the University can be found at <http://www.unisa.edu.au/>. Aside from its size and geography, UniSA's IT environment is made more complex by a federated service delivery model comprised of a central service unit with independent IT support teams located in Divisions, Schools, and Units.

As UniSA's IT infrastructure becomes more critical and complex, it is crucial that the underlying processes that deal with fault restoration, configuration and change management are both efficient and effective. To achieve this, the University is implementing a Service Management Framework based on ITIL principles. This framework is championed by senior management and governed by the Service Management Framework Steering Group. Its full implementation is expected to drive the development of consistent service standards for IT support across the University.

UniSA has adopted a phased approach to its Service Management Framework beginning with the Incident Management, Change Management and Configuration Management processes.

As a key part of implementing the Incident Management process, the University needed to establish a single point of contact for all Information Technology requests by merging the operations of multiple and disparate "help desks" into a single IT Help Desk which is now the main focus for getting help with any IT problems across the University.

2. ITIL AT UNISA

UniSA has created a staffing infrastructure that supports the implementation strategy by appointing key management staff as designated "service managers" for each component of the framework: Incident Management, Change Management and Configuration Management. Various focus groups including the Incident Management Technical Advisory Group, the HP Service Desk (HPSD) Planning Group, the Change Advisory Board and the Configuration Management Project Team have been created and all of these groups are coordinated by one central Service Management Framework project manager.

3. UNIVERSITY WIDE IT HELP DESK

Prior to the implementation of the Service Management Framework, the University operated 7 separate “help desks” with wide disparities in sophistication. There was no common database for recording incidents, little consistency in service delivery and no opportunity for analysing trends or reporting on workloads. In addition the loosely coupled three-tiered support structure caused confusion for both staff and students. In close co-operation with Divisional, School and Unit IT support staff, the central IT Unit has used the Service Management Framework project to transform the previously uncoordinated and confusing support arrangements into a single point of contact for IT assistance for the entire University. The new institution-wide integrated support arrangement is depicted in Figure 1.

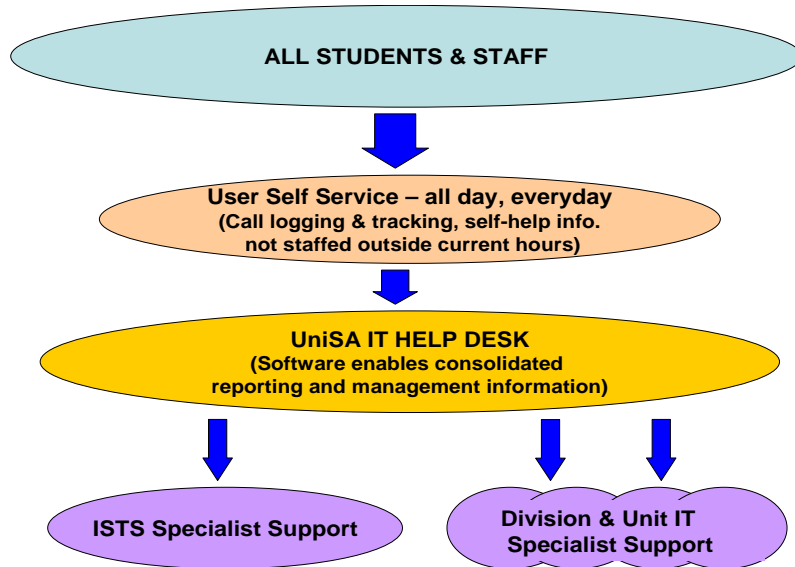


Figure 1: UniSA IT Help Desk – Single Point of Contact

This new arrangement is a significant improvement over the uncoordinated support previously offered by separate divisions, schools, and units. It has helped to break down existing IT support silos and has effectively eliminated the many ad hoc procedures and processes that underpinned the previous support arrangements. Service calls are now logged centrally, making tracking easier and allowing greater analysis of the types and numbers of user requests.

Previously, 32,000 incidents per year were logged in the central IT unit. The introduction of One IT Help Desk has enabled the central Incident Management process to capture an additional 11,000 incidents per year assigned to IT support teams across the University (Figure 2).

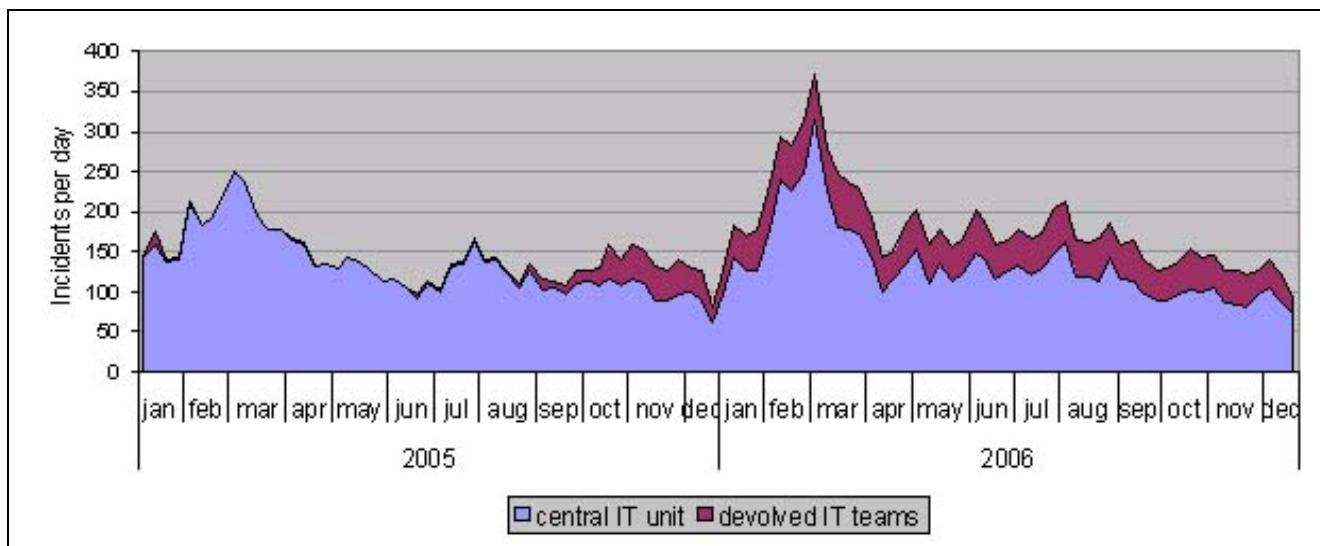


Figure 2: Capture of incidents for devolved IT support teams by implementing One IT Help Desk

In order to facilitate appropriate controls and monitoring for Service Calls, a customised three-tier escalation hierarchy was implemented where a service call, when unresolved and past its deadline date, is escalated to successive tiers of IT management, centrally and in each of the devolved support areas.

The One IT Help Desk project was implemented at a cost of approximately \$235,000. The integration and rationalisation of help desk functions has realised an ongoing saving of approximately \$80,000 per year.

4. IMPROVED SELF SERVICE (LEVEL 0 SUPPORT)

As part of the process, new self-service software was written by the University to allow staff and students to raise their own IT Help Desk calls and track the progress of these service calls online (Figure 3).

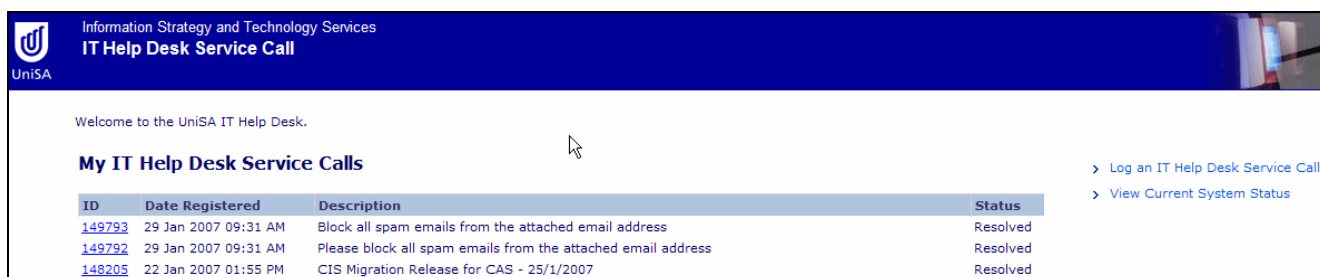


Figure 3: Online Service Call system

To further empower end users to be pro-active and solve problems for themselves the University has implemented the following “self service” enhancements:

Prior to contacting the IT Help Desk, staff and students have the option of using [Ask IT](#) (Figure 4) to find an answer to their problem. AskIT makes answers to Frequently Asked Questions easy to locate and aids in self-diagnosis of IT-related issues. This new functionality is accessible both as a standalone application and as an integrated part of the University’s student

portal. Brief answers are supplemented with links to more detailed web pages where appropriate. A user feedback request is incorporated into each answer (Figure 5). On-line reports for AskIT page hits, user ratings and free text responses are used to identify which FAQs users find most helpful.

AskIT (search facility for IT FAQs)

Enter keywords for your search below

Alternately enter keywords in "quotes" to perform an exact-match search (e.g. "internet connection")

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We aim to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) of the UniSA community. These FAQs are organised by topic in alphabetical order, as shown below.

Figure 4: AskIT FAQ search

Why can't I find my favourites in Internet Explorer 7?

Return to: [ISTS FAQ Home](#) > [Applications](#) > [Ie7](#)

- You can now access your favourites through the new favourite centre icons

The star will open your favourites list and the star with the green plus sign will let you add any open page to your favourites and gives you access to organise your favourites.

- If you prefer to access your favourites through the menus you may need to reconnect the toolbar as Internet Explorer version 7 hides some of the toolbars by default. Please see [Why can't I find my menus in Internet Explorer 7?](#)

Did this content help you?

Yes No Maybe, I haven't had the chance to try it yet

Comments

Figure 5: An AskIT answer with feedback request

A self-service password reset application has been made available for students (Figure 6). This new functionality allows students to store personal information in the system and in the event that they forget their password, it will allow them to authenticate themselves by answering their previously prepared questions and subsequently reset their password online at any time.

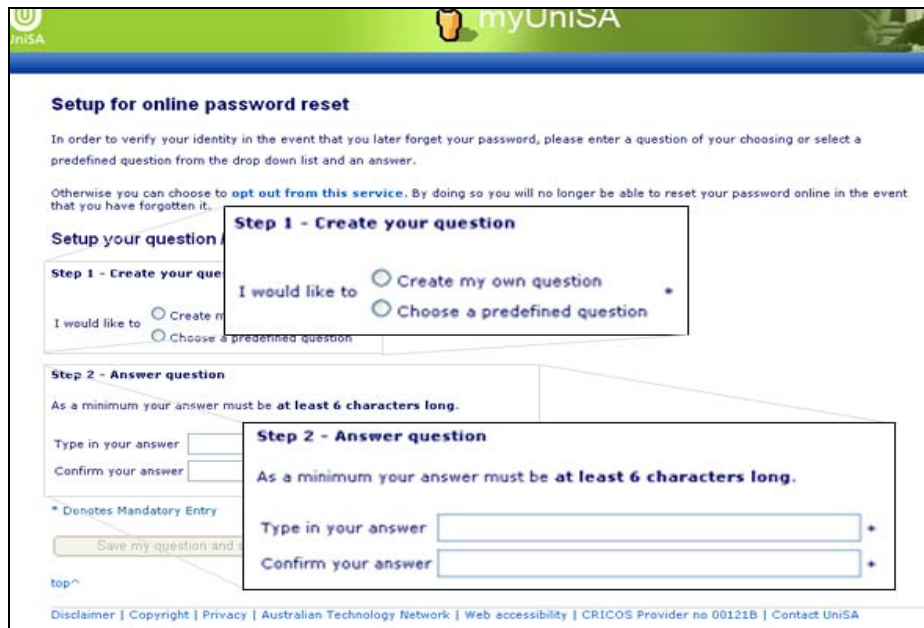


Figure 6: Self-Service password reset

5. EXTENDING LEVEL 1 SUPPORT

To support a wider range of services and improve first level incident resolution, the IT Help Desk staffing has been reviewed and restructured to provide a team of IT professionals at a higher classification (HEO5 and HEO6). The new team was provided with an extensive induction and training program delivered by staff from the technical and support teams from both the central IT unit and the devolved support areas across the University. This is being supplemented with regular ongoing training sessions and meetings with second level support teams.

A SharePoint portal was created for the Help Desk to provide an easily updated and searchable central repository for IT Help Desk training manuals, procedures and other documentation.

System visibility at the Help Desk is being provided via tools such as Microsoft MOM, InterMapper, CiscoWorks and remote desktop tools. Tools and training have been provided to enable IT Help Desk staff to resolve more service requests such as non-standard account and mailbox creation, print quota adjustments and telephony adds, moves and changes.

The combination of increased skills and knowledge, better system visibility, and access to appropriate tools and training has empowered the IT Help Desk team to diagnose and resolve an increasing number of service calls at first point of contact.

6. COLLABORATIVE AND STRUCTURED IMPLEMENTATION

In order to provide a common foundation for all IT support staff and create a consolidated platform in support of a new Service Management Framework, the central IT unit funded ITIL Foundations Certificate training not only for its own staff but also for other IT support staff throughout the Divisions, Schools and units of the University.

In addition to monthly meetings with all devolved IT support staff, each area was individually consulted to ensure that the Service Desk software met the needs of their local area and that any required customisation such as escalation tiers and customised templates were discussed, tested, and actioned prior to rollout. After meeting with University support staff, a collaborative implementation schedule was developed to determine the sequence of the rollout. This was based on the complexity of the area, the types and volumes of calls expected and the subsequent training required to get the IT Help Desk up to speed on the new support area. Rollout requirements and strategies were discussed in detail with each IT support group prior to their area going live on the customised Service Desk software. Each rollout was coordinated to ensure minimum impact to IT Help Desk support and devolved IT support and to provide a smooth transition for the end user. A universal rollout announcement template was created to ensure that a consistent rollout message was communicated to each of the IT support areas of the University. Centralised support web pages were created to provide both IT Help Desk and devolved IT support staff with detailed support information at their fingertips.

Training was undertaken to ensure that the IT Help Desk fully understood the required actions to be taken for resolution of calls from each area. In addition, each area was given customised training to ensure that they were able to use the Service Desk system proficiently and were familiar with the key contacts should any issue arise. The entire training and awareness process helped to ensure that the transition of service support calls from devolved IT support at the various Schools, Divisions, and Units to the central IT Help Desk, the first point of contact under the new structure, was seamless and that the IT Help Desk was able to address the issues knowledgeably and professionally.

Customer focus and feedback sessions were held after each rollout to ensure that all customer needs were met, all processes were operating smoothly, established processes were followed and that any improvements were made immediately. As part of our continual improvement process, ongoing bi-monthly meetings are scheduled with the devolved support staff to ensure that there is a discussion forum available for the resolution of issues and for brainstorming process improvements.

7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Initial customer satisfaction for the new Service Management Framework was measured as follows:

- Buy-in across the University in support of the new Service Desk software
- Positive Feedback from users regarding service management processes and software customisations
- Uptake of the new Service Desk software as well as a seamless transition to the new single university-wide IT Help Desk structure
- The Service Call Feedback forms that are automatically forwarded to the customer whenever a service call is closed (Figure 7).

Information Strategy and Technology Services
IT Help Desk Service Call
UnISA

IT Help Desk Feedback

Welcome Mrs Angelica Healey, please complete your feedback for the Service Call detailed below. Thank you for taking the time to assist us in improving our service to you.

Service Call Number 147298
Description Please refresh FIN1TEST from FIN1PROD
Additional Information This refresh is needed in order to test the Medici Interface to Finance. DBA Notes: 1. Use export dmp from Thurs 18/01 exp for fin1pprd refresh. 2. Can be done prior to deadline 3. Wait until Angelica confirms
Date Registered 18 Jan 2007 10:44 AM
Date Resolved 18 Jan 2007 05:00 PM

Was your issue resolved? Yes No Partially *

Was this a new call? New Call Repeat Call

How satisfied were you with the service provided? Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the resolution time? Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Did you find our staff knowledgeable? Yes No

Did you find our staff friendly and helpful? Yes No

Any additional comments or suggestions (max 255 characters)

* Denotes Mandatory Entry

Submit Feedback Reset Form

Figure 7: Service Call online feedback form

Based on the results of the 2006 Student Experience Questionnaire there has already been a 5% increase in customer satisfaction with the IT Help Desk. This is an early indication of improvement as many of the changes described in this paper had only just been put in place when the 2006 survey was undertaken.

8. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

As part of our continuous improvement process, we are reviewing customer feedback and incorporating process improvements, including:

- Using student feedback from our Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) to inform future changes in IT Help Desk service provision
- Providing ongoing training for IT Help Desk staff on a variety of topics including network diagnostic and monitoring tools, wireless networking, and Corporate Applications,
- Continuously reviewing and improving the content of our web pages and our IT Frequently Asked Questions
- Enhancing our self-service applications based on consultation and feedback with our customer base
- Monthly follow-ups at IT support meetings with staff from all areas of the University to canvass feedback, raise issues, and discuss improvements to existing procedures and processes
- Quarterly IT Support seminars where technological innovations are shared and discussed
- Creating tailored reports utilising our customised data warehouse catalogues as well as providing a set of standard management reports as specified by University IT support staff

- Sharing our experiences regarding the implementation of the Service Management Framework at UniSA including our technology deployment and automation with other (educational, private, and government) organisations.

9. TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

While implementing the Service Desk software, a number of technical challenges were encountered and overcome.

The University's Active Directory (with 55,000 objects) required customisation and interfaces to facilitate single sign-on to the Service Desk software. During this period, internal resources were redirected to work on other customisations (i.e. escalation) and to develop the complementary self-service applications.

An additional technical challenge was encountered as UniSA has a .NET environment while HP Service Desk (HPSD) utilised Java. Consequently, bridging software was implemented to facilitate the creation of Self-Service Pages that allow staff and students to raise their own IT Help Desk calls and track the progress of these service calls online.

UniSA has customised the basic HPSD status messages so that they are personalised and contain all the pertinent IT Help Desk support information, hours of service and contact details both for IT Help Desk and On-Call after hours support. A process for three-tiered hierarchical escalation was implemented for improved monitoring of outstanding service calls and escalation of those service calls to various levels of management. A feedback form was introduced to provide customers with an opportunity to express their suggestions for improvements and their level of satisfaction with every single service call. Furthermore, customised Service Management reporting was facilitated by the creation of data warehouse catalogues and subsequent reporting on Service Desk information.

10. ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES

The key organisational challenge encountered in the implementation of the Service Management Framework was resistance to change - particularly given that the new Service Desk system provided greater accountability via increased visibility, tracking and reporting of support calls across the University. This overall increase in visibility and service accountability was an obstacle to change in some areas.

The key to the success of such a complex organisational change has been the one-on-one consultation that occurred between the devolved IT support area and the Service Management Framework Project Manager and the Incident Coordinator. This consultation resulted in the Service Desk software being specifically customised for each area (within a broad standardised approach) with training tailored toward the needs of the specific IT support group. Both central and devolved IT support staff worked together and communicated and trained the end-users and the IT Help Desk to ensure that each rollout was a seamless transition from the old devolved system to a new centralised model with a single point of contact.

11. SUMMARY

A single Incident Management process through one IT Help Desk together with a suite of Self-Service applications (Password Reset, service logging and tracking, AskIT) has helped us to:

- Provide one single point of contact for all IT Help Desk calls
- Increase the resolution of service calls at the first point of contact
- Provide consistent service standards for IT support across the University
- Improve our level of professionalism
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Increase sharing of knowledge and resolutions to common problems
- Provide reliable institution-wide management information regarding user issues which can be used to analyse trends and identify underlying problems
- Reduce the workload of devolved IT staff workload by centrally managing the initial contact from staff and students
- Empower end users to be proactive and solve problems for themselves
- Improve IT Help Desk knowledge via a new IT Help Desk SharePoint portal, customised training for all supported services and centralised IT support and contact web pages
- Rationalised and improved Incident Management while realising an ongoing saving of \$80,000 per year

Implementation of One IT Help Desk for UniSA has been an enormously complex project involving more than 100 IT Support Staff and has been a crucial first step in the ongoing adoption of the ITIL service management framework. This project has successfully overcome significant technical and organisational challenges to deliver a greatly increased quality of service to UniSA's 32,000 students and 3,000 staff.

12. REFERENCES

None used – this section not required