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Configuration Management and the CMDB

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The Configuration Management data base (CMDB) creates and maintains the logical configurations your network infrastructure needs to support a ServiceNow service.

These logical service configurations are mapped to the physical layout data of the supporting network and application infrastructure in each of your respective domains. They track the physical and logical state of IT service elements and associate incidents to the state of service elements, which helps in analyzing trends and reducing problems and incidents.

The configurations are stored in a configuration management database (ServiceNow CMDB) which consists of entities, called Configuration Items (CI), that are part of your environment. A CI may be:

- A physical entity, such as a computer or router
- A logical entity, such as an instance of a database
- Conceptual, such as a Requisition Service

In each case, there are attributes about the CI that you want to maintain, and there is control you want to have over the CI. There are changes that may need to be made and tracked against the CI. Also, a CI does not exist on its own. CIs have dependencies and relationship with other CIs. For example, the loss of disk drives may take a database instance down, which affects the requisition service that the HR department uses to order equipment for new employees.

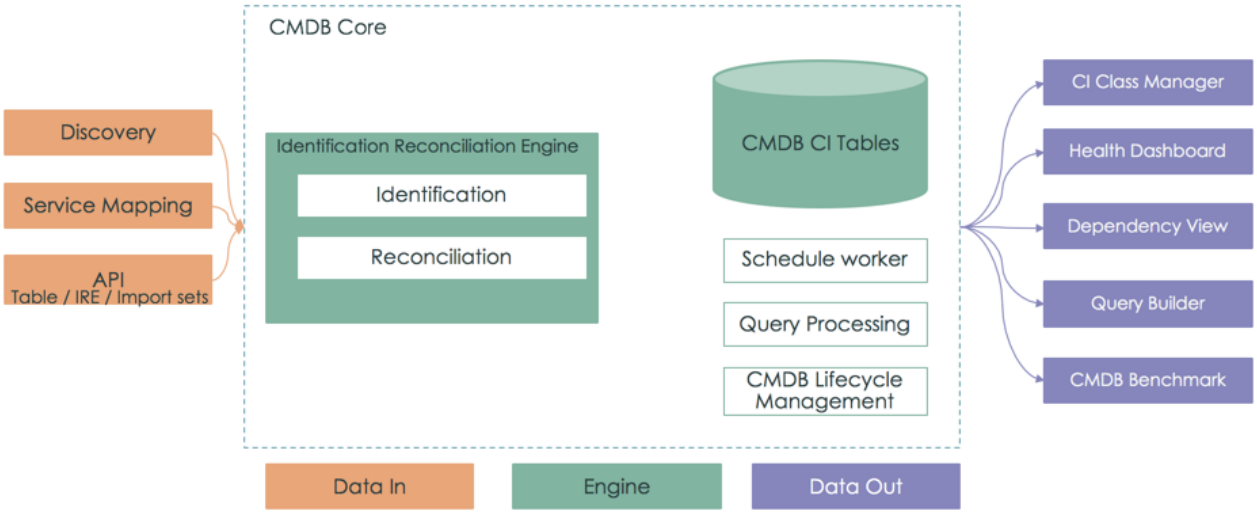
It is this relationship data that makes the CMDB a powerful decision support tool. Understanding the dependencies and other relationships among your CIs can tell you, for example, exactly who and what is affected by the loss of that bank of disk drives. When you find out that a router has failed, you will be able to assess the effect of that outage. When you decide to upgrade the processor in a server, you can tell who or what will be affected during the outage.

Configuration items differ from environment to environment because each customer has unique needs. Details about the exact physical attributes of a computer may be needed by one customer, but may represent meaningless data to another. The NOW Platform provides a

mechanism to easily define new classes of configuration items and new relationships that may exist between CIs. New classes can be defined that extend other classes. For example, a laptop class exists that extends the computer class. The computer class itself extends the base CI class. Customer class extensions are automatically part of the ServiceNow environment and blend seamlessly into the integration points for other ITIL processes.

You can for example, set the Used for attribute in the cmdb_ci_server table to a value such as 'development', 'test', or 'production'. These values indicate the environment that the CI is supporting, and serve as a way of tracking a CI through its lifecycle in a changing environment.

Architecture



Roles required

Reading CMDB tables directly requires the cmdb_read role, however accessing the **Configuration** module requires the asset, itil, or itil_admin roles. For viewing CMDB-related records in the user interface, the itil role is usually sufficient. For updating records and for other manipulation of records, roles with higher credentials are usually required, as noted in each procedure throughout the documentation set.

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