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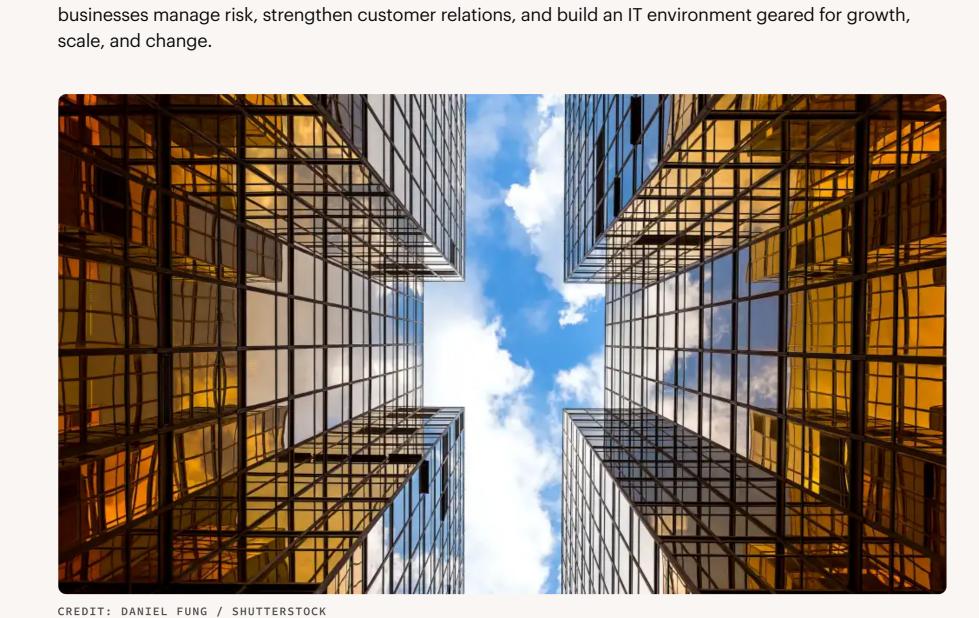
What is ITIL? Your guide to the IT Infrastructure Library

How-To May 16, 2022 • 11 mins Data Center IT Governance IT Leadership

by Sarah K. White and Lynn Greiner

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ITIL is a framework of best practices for delivering IT services. ITIL's systematic approach to ITSM can help



What is ITIL?

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is an IT service management framework that outlines best practices for delivering IT services. ITIL's systematic approach to IT service management (ITSM) can help businesses manage risk, strengthen customer relations, establish cost-effective practices, and build a stable IT environment that allows for growth, scale, and change.

ITIL has gone through several revisions in its history and currently comprises five books, each covering various processes and stages of the IT service lifecycle. The books contain recommendations and a framework that can help organizations standardize their service management processes. ITIL promises to reduce IT operations cost, improve productivity and employee satisfaction, and manage risk, failure, and disruption throughout the organization.

The goal of ITIL is for organizations to create predictable IT environments and to deliver the best customer service possible to customers and clients by streamlining processes and identifying opportunities to improve efficiency. ITIL has always focused on integrating IT into the business — something that has become increasingly important as technology becomes a vital aspect of every business unit. ITIL 4, the latest iteration of the ITIL framework, maintains the original focus with a stronger emphasis on fostering an agile and flexible IT department.

What's in the ITIL?

ITIL has gone through several revisions in its history. The original 30 books of the ITIL were first condensed in 2000 (when ITIL V2 was launched) to seven books, each wrapped around a facet of IT management. Later, the ITIL Refresh Project in 2007 consolidated the ITIL to five volumes consisting of 26 process and functions — this is referred to as the ITIL 2007 edition. In 2011, another update — dubbed ITIL 2011 — was published under the Cabinet Office. The five volumes remained, and ITIL 2007 and ITIL 2011 remained similar.

ITIL 4, which was released in 2019, maintains the same focus on automating processes, improving service management, and integrating the IT department into the business. But it also updates the framework to accommodate and answer to modern technology, tools, and software. Since ITIL's last update, the IT department has grown to become integral to every business and the new framework accommodates this by being more agile, flexible, and collaborative.

What are the ITIL 4 guiding principles? ITIL 4 contains seven guiding principles that were adopted from the most recent ITIL Practitioner Exam,

which covers organizational change management, communication, and measurement and metrics. These principles include:

 Focus on value Start where you are

management.

- Progress iteratively with feedback
- Collaborate and promote visibility Think and work holistically
- Keep it simple and practical
- Optimize and automate

collaboration between IT and other departments, especially as other business units increasingly rely on technology to get work done. There is also a strong emphasis on customer feedback given that it's easier than ever for businesses to understand their public perception, as well as customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. For more information on the benefits of the latest version of ITIL, see "ITIL 4: ITSM gets agile."

ITIL 4 focuses on company culture and integrating IT into the overall business structure. It encourages

How do I put ITIL into practice? ITIL is a collection of e-books, but merely going on a reading binge won't improve your IT operations. To

effectively implement ITIL, you need to have everyone on board to adopt new procedures and best practices. Consider what type of consulting, training, and certifications you might want to take advantage of to prepare for the transition as well. From the early 1990s, certifications were administered by two independent bodies: EXIN and ISEB,

Since 2014, Axelos is the owner of the ITIL personnel certification, and exams are administered by Accredited Training Organizations (ATOs). Accreditations are administered by **Strategic Examination Institutes (Els).** Els need to be accredited directly by Axelos to offer accreditation to ATOs.

depending on your location. The two bodies formed an alliance at the end of 2006 to further IT service

Before implementing ITIL at your organizations, there are several questions you should answer, such as what problems your organization is trying to solve and what is your route to continual service improvement.

For a deeper look at putting ITIL into practice, see "7 questions to ask before implementing ITIL" and "How to get started with ITIL."

What is ITIL certification and is it worth it?

The ITIL 4 certification scheme includes the ITIL Foundation and the ITIL Master exams. After passing the ITIL Foundation exam, the certification scheme splits into two paths with the option of the ITIL Managing Professional (MP) or ITIL Strategic Leader (SL) certifications, which each have their own modules and exams. Those who complete both paths will qualify for the ITIL Master designation, which is the highest level of certification offered.

The ITIL Managing Professional (MP) exam is designed for IT practitioners who are involved with technology

and digital teams throughout the organization, not just in the IT department. This path will teach professionals everything they need to know about running successful IT projects, teams, and workflows. Modules include:

- ITIL Specialist Create, Deliver and Support
- ITIL Specialist Drive Stakeholder Value ITIL Specialist – High Velocity IT

• ITIL Strategist - Direct, Plan & Improve

The ITIL Strategic Leader (SL) exam is designed for those who deal with "all digitally enabled services," and not just those that fall under IT operations. This path focuses on how technology directs business strategy and how IT plays into that.

Modules include:

- ITIL Strategist Direct, Plan & Improve • ITIL Leader - Digital & IT Strategy
- For an in-depth look at ITIL certification, see "ITIL certification guide: Costs, requirements, levels, and paths."

How does ITIL help business? A well-run IT organization that manages risk and keeps the infrastructure humming not only saves money but also enables everyone in the organization to do their jobs more effectively. For example, brokerage firm

Pershing reduced its incident response time by 50% in the first year after restructuring its service desk according to ITIL guidelines, enabling users with problems to get back to work much more quickly.

ITIL provides a systematic and professional approach to the management of IT service provision, and offers the following benefits:

- Reduced IT costs Improved IT services using proven best practices
- Improved customer satisfaction through a more professional approach to service delivery Standards and guidance
- Improved productivity Improved use of skills and experience • Improved delivery of third-party services through the specification of ITIL or BS15000 as the standard for service delivery in services procurements
- According to Axelos, ITIL can also help businesses improve services by: Helping businesses manage risk, disruption, and failure

• Strengthening customer relations by "delivering efficient services that meet their needs" Establishing cost-effective practices

- Building a stable environment that still allows for growth, scale, and change For a deeper look at how to get the most from ITIL, see "6 tips for ITIL implementation success."
- What will ITIL cost?

Getting started involves the purchase of the ITIL either as hardcopy, PDF, ePub, or through an online subscription directly from Axelos. Then there's the cost of training, which fluctuates each year. The course

leading to the initial Foundation Certificate typically runs for two days, and courses leading to higher certifications can be a week or more. Add to that the inevitable cost of re-engineering some processes to comply with ITIL guidelines, and

adjustment of help desk or other software to capture the information you need for tracking and generating metrics.

How does ITIL reduce costs? Corporations and public sector organizations that have successfully implemented ITIL best practices report huge savings.

practices into an organization is as much a PR job as it is a technical exercise.

activities, and improved success in the delivery of programs and projects.

Office, bringing updates to the 2007 version published under OGC.

For example, in its **Benefits of ITIL** paper, Pink Elephant reports that Procter and Gamble saved about \$500 million over four years by reducing help desk calls and improving operating procedures. Nationwide Insurance achieved a 40% reduction in system outages and estimates a \$4.3 million ROI over three years, and Capital One reduced its "business critical" incidents by 92% over two years.

Without buy-in and cooperation from IT staff, however, any implementation is bound to fail. Bringing best

Other criticisms include the fact that it's impossible to plan for every failure, event, or incident so it's not an exact science. You won't know the exact ROI on ITIL until you implement it within your organization and use it effectively. Ultimately, since ITIL is a framework, it can only be as successful as corporate buy-in allows. Embracing certifications, training, and investing in the shift will help increase the chances of success and

savings. History of ITIL

Developed by the British government's Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) during the 1980s, the ITIL first consisted of more than 30 books, developed, and released over time, that codified

public- and private-sector organizations.

best practices in IT accumulated from many sources (including vendors' best practices) around the world. In April 2001, CCTA, along with several other agencies, were rolled into the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), which is now known as the Cabinet Office. The OGC adopted the project as part of its

The goal wasn't to create a proprietary product that could be commercialized; rather, it was to gather best practices that could assist with what the government recognized was an increasing dependence within the government on IT combined with a lack of standard procedures that were increasing costs and allowing

errors to perpetuate. It quickly became apparent that distributing these best practices would profit both

mission to work with the UK public sector as a catalyst to achieve efficiency, value for money in commercial

Over the years, ITIL's credibility and utility became recognized, and in 2005 its practices contributed to and aligned with the ISO/IEC 20000 Service Management standard, the first international standard for IT service management; it is based on British standard BS15000.

Since 2013, ITIL has been owned by Axelos — a joint venture between the Cabinet Office and Capita. Axelos gives businesses the license to use the ITIL framework, while managing updates and process changes. But

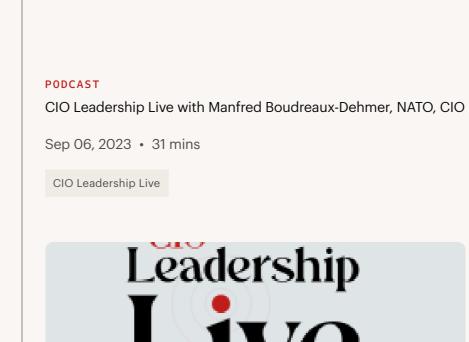
to use ITIL internally, organizations do not need a license. ITIL v3 was released in 2011, under the Cabinet

In 2018, Axelos announced ITIL 4 — a major overhaul to the entire framework and the biggest change since ITIL v3 was published in 2007. ITIL 4, which started rolling out in Q1 of 2019, offers a more agile, flexible, and customizable version of ITIL that is updated for modern businesses. The latest version encourages less siloes, more collaboration, communication across the entire business and integrating agile and DevOps into ITSM strategies.

More on ITIL and ITSM: • ITIL 4: ITSM gets agile

- What is ITIL? Your guide to the IT Infrastructure Library • 7 questions to ask before implementing ITIL
- ITIL certification guide: Mastering IT services management • 6 tips for ITIL implementation success
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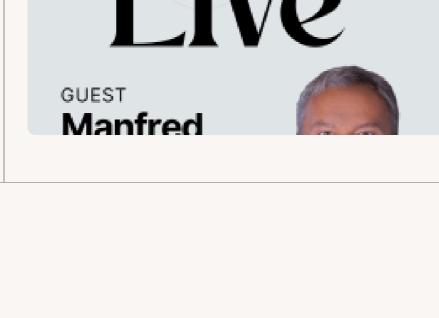
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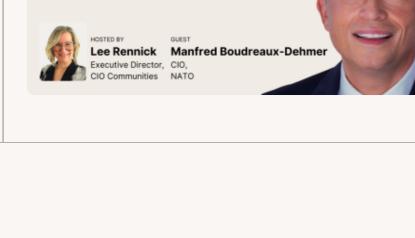




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