

When am I requested to open an IT problem ticket?

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Problem Management cares about issues with unknown or unresolved causes of existing or potential incidents. There are three possible information sources to identify issues with a potential for new incidents or an existing repetition of incidents:

Incident tickets Bugs (known from projects or identified during other activities) Future: Events

Incident tickets as trigger for problem creation

From the process perspective, you should create a problem ticket in two situations when there is no existing problem which causes the incidents:

You resolved an incident with a workaround You recognized a repetition in incidents with the same symptom

Both situations above point to the fact, that the underlying cause is not eliminated and new incidents can be expected.

Known Bugs turn into problems

It may also make sense to open problem records for

known bugs which were not resolved before project goLive misbehaviour of your application you recognize during other testings and activities

Bugs you identify during other test activities or bugs, which are accepted to be not resolved before a project goes live, imply a risk for incidents at some point in time. Since those bugs have not been recognized by the business yet, it seems more appropriate to create problem tickets instead of incidents.

Note:

You need to care about the affected user during creation of problem records for bugs you identified, since the affected user may have an impact on subsequent changes you process in terms of requirements for "customer order" etc. .

Please look at knowledge article "What to consider during problem creation for subsequent changes?" linked under references at the end of this article.

Examples

Classical case: Host or application server restarted

When you restart a server in order to recover availability or performance of a particular service, you know that this will not eliminate the root cause and there is a potential for new incidents.

To avoid spending a lot of time on analyzing causes of one time issues, it may make sense to wait for another incident of the same symptom, before you open a problem ticket and start analyzing.

Classical case: Broken record/transaction to be corrected

Incidents are not related to performance or inavailability issues only.

Often the business users are not able to perform a certain action in an application in first place for whatever reason, e.g. a broken record, wrong sequence of actions, missing master data or locks by concurrent database operations.

As a first action we are requested to correct the broken record, restart a job or a batch process to fix the current issue. This is more or less a workaround to make the user able to work again.

The decision about the creation of a problem for a single incident is very subjective and depends on your expectation about new incidents and their criticality. But if you recognize repetitions already, it makes sense to open a problem ticket.

Note: At this point, it does not matter if the incidents are caused by wrong usage of the application or if a technical issue leads to the incidents. It matters, that you create the problem and document the workaround which can be applied to new incidents. The actual solution depends on the root cause and beside pure technical solutions, this may also include trainings in alignment with the business.

Cause elimination requires a change with high lead time

Very often the real solution to eliminate the cause of one or more incidents will take some time - either because it needs to wait for a maintenance cycle or due to the complexity and the need to prepare and test the change sufficiently. So if you will have to wait for the maintenance cycle or if preparation, implementation and testing of the required change simply will take too much time, it makes sense to think about resolving the incident with an acceptable workaround and handle the changes on the basis of a problem record.

References:

The following knowledge articles provide further information, you might be interested in

Why shall I close an incident and open a problem? What is the difference between master/major incidents and a problem? What to consider during problem creation for subsequent changes?