

*"Don't worry about people stealing an idea. If it's original, you will have to ram it down their throats."  
Howard Aiken, 1900-1973, engineer and physicist who developed the IBM Mark I computer*



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## Best practices: ITIL Help

By Thomas F. Shubnell, Ph.D., Principal

*Have you heard the buzz? Has the ITIL bug bit your organization yet?  
Has your IT staff been discussing the benefits of adopting ITIL standards?*

### What is ITIL?

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is a series of guidebooks intended to facilitate the management and delivery of information technology services. ITIL outlines a set of best practices intended to support organizations in achieving quality and value in IT operations.

Development of ITIL began in Britain in the 1980s and has become the most widely adopted approach to information technology management worldwide. Until about five years ago, interest in the US lagged. However, in 2000, Microsoft used ITIL as a basis for developing its operations framework. Other big organizations – IBM, Hewlett Packard, the US Army – have adopted and adapted ITIL principles. In the health care industry, United Health Group and some of the Blues plans have done the same.

### ITIL guides cover a variety of topics

The IT Infrastructure Library can be purchased from the BSI Group<sup>1</sup> and includes the following titles:

- *ITIL: Service Support*
- *ITIL: Service Delivery*
- *ITIL: Security Management*
- *ITIL: The Business Perspective*
- *ITIL: ICT Infrastructure Management*
- *ITIL: Application Management*
- *ITIL: Planning to Implement Service Management*
- *ITIL: Software Asset Management*

### ITIL is applicable in any industry

Organizations are increasingly dependent on information technology. This dependency has led to a requirement for quality IT services matched to business needs and user requirements. But this is a real challenge as IT grows ever larger and more complex. New regulations and budget constraints require flexible and nimble change processes. ITIL provides guidance to match the best IT quality against business needs and costs. It provides a framework for development and improvement of IT department services and support.

<sup>1</sup>More information about purchasing ITIL guides can be found here: <http://www.bsi-global.com/en/Standards-and-Publications/Industry-Sectors/ICT/IT-service-management/ITIL-guides/>



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### **How does ITIL compare to Six Sigma and other methodologies?**

ITIL is being touted as the new best thing in US technology circles. ITIL describes a framework of processes for the management of IT, but does not describe *how* a process should be implemented. Although some believe that it will replace Six Sigma, PMI, balanced scorecard, CMM, TQM, ISO9000 and other methodologies, that is not ITIL's purpose. It is not a project management methodology. Rather, ITIL addresses running IT as a service and support to the organization. Therefore, adoption of ITIL complements rather than replaces other methodologies.

### **Health care organizations can adopt ITIL in piecemeal fashion**

Health care information requirements are insatiable. An organization can target a particular area of IT management that most needs improvement and apply the appropriate ITIL methodologies. The areas of service delivery and service support tend to produce a quicker return on investment.

### **ITIL certification programs are available**

As with all good methodologies, there are professional certifications available. The three recognized individual certifications are:

- Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management
- Practitioner Certificate in IT Service Management
- Manager Certificate in IT Service Management

There is also an organizational certification, BS15000, which is the world's first standard for IT service management. Foundation certification training can be accomplished in less than one week. Loyalist Certification Services<sup>2</sup> administers the certification test for individuals in North America.

### **Why should my organization explore ITIL?**

Investing in ITIL should lead to improved quality of information technology service and support at current, or reduced, total cost of ownership. Since IT support costs are typically 70 percent or greater of the total cost of ownership, managed support should lead to increased funds availability for investment.

Adoption of ITIL is not quick, easy, or inexpensive. It can take years. It requires a solid plan, an investment in additional resources, initial budget increases, and support from the top. But in return, your organization can expect to receive:

- Worldwide de facto best practices for running IT
- Improved financial management of IT
- Cost effective and better quality IT services
- Improved utilization of IT infrastructure and personnel
- Improved reputation of IT and relationship with the organization
- Increased coordination and control of distributed systems
- Increased capacity to meet changing requirements
- Increased problem anticipation and resolution
- Reduced risk of failure

### **Bottom line**

Industry has determined that information technology is essential and a growing part of doing business. Because IT is integral to day-to-day operations and because of the growing need for better, quicker and cheaper solutions, a more efficient and effective way of delivering service and support is critical to survival.

<sup>2</sup> Information about Loyalist Certification Services ITIL exams here: <http://www.lcsexams.com/services.html>



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Technology is pervasive, complex, and consuming. Delivery of knowledge and information is time dependent and critical to success, especially in health care. Business has taken the first steps by identifying strategies for success. It has defined the rules and proven that a solid framework implemented appropriately is good for business. Healthcare is now able to make use of the results from 20 years of business practice. Adopting proven and accepted practices for delivery of technology service and support makes good business sense.

### **Interested in reading more about IT project management?**

Dr. Shubnell has written a book about implementation project management:

- *The Art of Installation and the Science of Implementation* (2007)

For more information about the book: <http://www.lulu.com/tshubnell>

## Six new principals join CCI Group

The CCI Group is pleased to welcome six new principals to our firm. They include:

- Sheldon Chizever, formerly a management consulting partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers, with special experience with Blues plans and financial and strategic planning
- Lawrence Sharrott, founding director of informatics at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield, also with expertise as a CIO of a multi-institutional system
- Walter Wieners, international expert and thought leader
- Dr. David Hellerstein, a board-certified physician, with expertise in electronic medical record development
- Rose Kennedy, an RN with expertise in implementation of computerized practitioner order entry systems
- Bill Wellman, with expertise as a CIO in the academic medical center setting

For more detailed information about these principals, or to contact any of us, click on the links under our photos in this newsletter.

## Disaster recovery plan tested

Ochsner Health System (New Orleans, LA) had a well-rehearsed disaster recovery plan in place prior to Katrina that allowed the hospital to function continuously through the hurricane and afterwards. Since then, the plan has been improved by adding additional back-up generator power to cool the computer system problem. On a larger scale, Ochsner is participating in development of a health information exchange along with other area hospitals and the local Blues plan.

Sources:

Hagland M: After the storm. *Healthcare Informatics*, August 2007;24(8). Full text free here:

<http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/ME2/Segments/Publications/Print.asp?Module=Publications::Article&id=9D3F22376ADE4AAF81AD8D71CE99E888>

Ochsner Health System: *Testimony of the Oschner Health System Before the HELP Committee, US Senate*, July 14, 2006. Full text free here:

[http://help.senate.gov/Hearings/2006\\_07\\_14\\_b/Quinlan.pdf](http://help.senate.gov/Hearings/2006_07_14_b/Quinlan.pdf)

Mardi Gras is back; what about IT? *Computerworld*, March 3, 2006. Full text free here:

<http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=printArticleBasic&articleId=109198>

Hurricane shows faults in hospital planning and potential liability. *Healthcare Risk Management*, November 2005;27(11):pp 1+. Full text free here:



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## UCLA prepares for earthquakes

Like Ochsner, UCLA Health System (Los Angeles, CA) has done extensive disaster recovery planning. The new 520-bed Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, scheduled to open in 2008, will be the flagship of the system and is designed to withstand an earthquake with a magnitude of 8.3. The new hospital is designed with redundancies such as multiple communication closets and sources of power.

Sources:

Hagland M: On shaky ground. *Healthcare Informatics*, August 2007;24(8). Full text free here:

<http://www.healthcare->

[informatics.com/ME2/Segments/Publications/Print.asp?Module=Publications::Article&id=D3539C884B484B56919BAE542BF83372](http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/ME2/Segments/Publications/Print.asp?Module=Publications::Article&id=D3539C884B484B56919BAE542BF83372)

UCLA unveils hospital of the future: Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. *Press Release*, June 4, 2007. Full text free here: <http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/page.asp?relnum=7997>

Client spotlight: UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA. *Turner Healthcare Monitor*, Fall 2004;4. Full text free here: [http://www.turnerconstruction.com/corporate/files\\_corporate/fallnews.pdf](http://www.turnerconstruction.com/corporate/files_corporate/fallnews.pdf)

## Priorities different in Northeast

Disaster recovery issues tend to seem less pressing in the Northeast. However, there are still blizzards, power outages, and fires, so organizations such as Partners Healthcare System (Boston) must have business continuity plans in place. Partners has divided critical applications among two separate sites and requires business units to update their disaster recovery plans every three months. They recommend building in a disaster recovery plan from the beginning for any new critical application.

Source: Lawrence D: Sense of security. *Healthcare Informatics*, August 2007;24(8). Full text free

here: <http://www.healthcare->

[informatics.com/ME2/Segments/Publications/Print.asp?Module=Publications::Article&id=314D51AAA6FA4C5A980FEF9766FF5B22](http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/ME2/Segments/Publications/Print.asp?Module=Publications::Article&id=314D51AAA6FA4C5A980FEF9766FF5B22)

## Document management systems

Document management technology provides a way to digitally scan, index, and access paper records. Some health care organizations have introduced the technology in niche applications or as a complement to an electronic health record system. Small health organizations lacking the resources to invest in a full-blown EHR may find document management systems an affordable alternative.

Source: Schuerenberg BK: Document management: putting together the pieces. *Health Data Management*, August 2007;15(8). Full text free here:

<http://www.healthdatamanagement.com/html/current/CurrentIssueStory.cfm?articleId=15524>

## Medicaid HIE initiatives profiled

Twelve state Medicaid agencies have implemented some sort of health information technology initiative and another 25 state agencies are developing statewide health information exchange networks, according to this survey conducted by the Office of Inspector General of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Most of the Medicaid HIT initiatives that are in place are electronic health records or e-prescribing.

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General: *State Medicaid Agencies' Initiatives on Health Information Technology and Health Information Exchange*, August 2007. Report OEI-02-06-00270. Full text free here: [http://www.oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-06-](http://www.oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-06-00270.pdf)

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