

Exploration of the ServiceNow® Istanbul Release



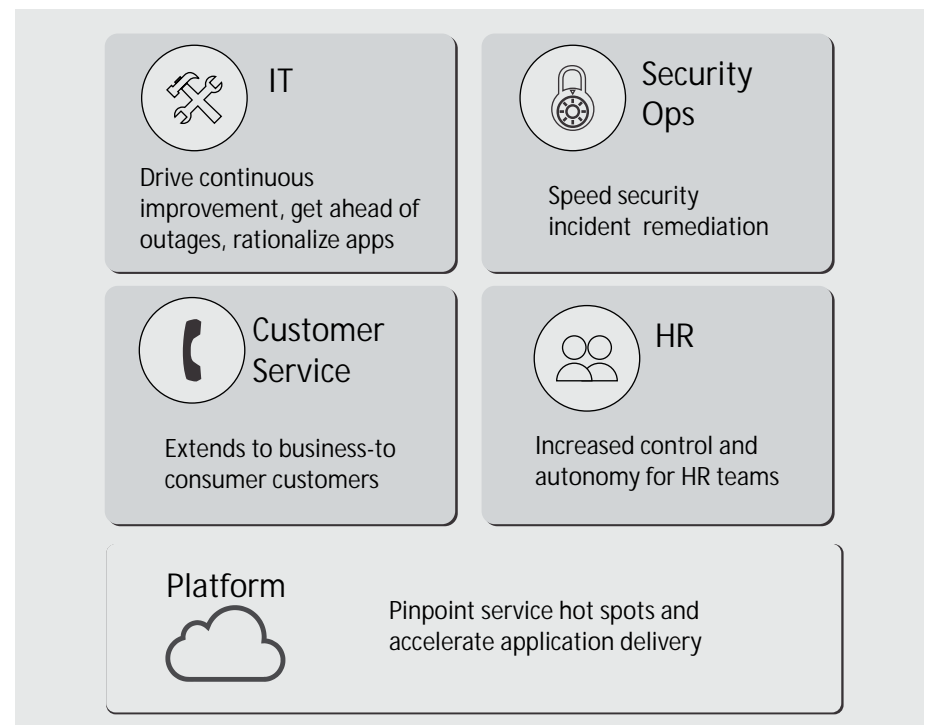
INTRODUCTION

ServiceNow's long-awaited latest installment "Istanbul" was released on January 10, 2017. This release integrates multiple frameworks to present a holistic platform for businesses and IT departments – much like the city of Istanbul which has a deep history of integrating multiple cultures.

In this new release, ServiceNow® has added a lot of new capabilities within its Service Portal and the platform. The mobile functionality has also been enhanced. Automated Test Framework, CAB Workbench, and Benchmarks are some of the many features the ServiceNow® community is especially excited about.

In this paper, we will have a look at some major features of the ServiceNow® Istanbul release and also have a look at why and how to upgrade to Istanbul release.

KEY FEATURES IN ISTANBUL RELEASE



The Istanbul release has introduced many new exciting capabilities across ServiceNow® products and platform. Here are some of the major features introduced in this release.

Automated Testing Framework

The ServiceNow® community has always been struggling with testing and it was one of the highly demanded features by ServiceNow® customers. With this release, there is something to





start with. Using the Automated Testing Framework (ATF), the ServiceNow® users can eliminate the risks associated with automated validation tests for new applications and functionality and accelerate their release cycles. ATF allows them to create tests which mimic user actions such as submitting a form or validating field values – all this without the need of any scripting. Using JavaScript and the Jasmine Test Framework, the server-side scripting can be used for performing complex operations. While ATF provides a lot of out-of-the-box testing steps, it also has provision for custom test steps which can take input variables and return the defined output variables. The framework also automatically tracks the automation testing and, therefore, the developers don't have to worry about the roll back of changes. It provides batch, hierarchical, and nested suites testing.

Benchmarks

ServiceNow® Benchmarks is an excellent feature which allows companies to compare themselves with other companies using ServiceNow® and see how they stack up with other similar size companies in the industry. The benchmarks are available for Key ITSM Performance Indicators for Continuous Service Improvement. All the benchmarking data and metrics can be harnessed in real-time. ServiceNow® has taken due care in ensuring that the data shared by the customers is secure and the data integrity is maintained. Benchmarking is part of the HI portal. One needs to login to HI to access the information.



Customer Service Management

ServiceNow® has now added support for addressing the needs of B2C (Business to Consumers) customers. For companies which want to handle a bigger crowd of anonymous consumers through things like anonymous chats or portals, ServiceNow® now offers “Consumer Service Portal” plugin. Using the Customer Service Portal, companies can leverage the visibility into sales and service records without crossing platforms. The Intelligent Case Assignment allows them to set up rules so that the support case can be quickly assigned based upon agent availability, skills to speed resolution. It can now also track orders and defects to enhance the customer service. The possibility to engage with customer service anonymously, a customized service portal and a more customer-friendly end user experience are great features that can help business enhance their overall customer service.



Change Advisory Board (CAB) Workbench

The CAB Workbench is an excellent new addition for CAB Manager to keep track of meeting agendas, attendees, and decisions. Using a single UI, the CAB Managers can now see details of all the meetings, attendees, schedules, agendas, decisions, and approves. The participants are notified exactly when they are needed in the meeting, so that they don't need to attend the part of the meeting where they are not required. This feature is aimed at increasing the efficiency of the CAB Manager and saving the resource time.



Anomaly Metrics

With this new release, ServiceNow® offers “Anomaly Metrics” in ITOM and Event Management. Using these metrics, one can set threshold triggers against baseline data and quickly identify the unusual behavior of infrastructure elements. Catching the issues ahead of time can help in avoiding possible service disruption or outages. The CIs with the highest anomaly score over a times pan are highlighted through a nice graphical interface.



Application Portfolio Management (APM)

Application Portfolio Management is the new application in the Istanbul release. It helps IT leadership teams and CIOs to build and evaluate the application inventory. Using the data about the applications in use, they can build an application rationalization roadmap which is more tightly aligned with the strategic business goals. Through reports and dashboards, it offers the real-time data and helps the stakeholders make better business decisions. With this feature, IT can more effectively and efficiently track its portfolio and present more accurate reports to the stakeholders.



IT Operations Management (ITOM)

The enhancements in the IT Operations Management module allow the customers to get alerts for specific CIs well ahead of time and gives them an opportunity to avoid possible service outages. Based on the historical metric data and the key performance indicators of cloud resources across multiple providers, it calculates the anomaly scores for the defined CIs and provides appropriate alerts. Through the early detection of an unusual behavior of infrastructure elements, service disruptions and outages can be effectively avoided. The Service Map Planners allows deployment of service maps to streamline and centralize the key tasks.



Governance, Risk and Compliance

The new release integrates a new module for risk scenarios. This module detects risk and compliance events. The out-of-the-box integration with Performance Analytics allows continuous monitoring of controls and detects failing controls in between assessments. The Advanced GRC Dependency Modeling helps the companies to speed up business impact analysis by quickly understanding the risk dependencies across assets, services, and processes. Using the GRC Assessment Designer, one can design powerful assessments that are specific to risk controls. It avoids the need of manual reconciliation of the evidence data.

Security Operations

The new feature adds integrations for Palo Alto Networks, IBM QRadar and Tanium. The configuration dashboard allows the configuration of any security integration and lets the customers see what is enabled and available. The Automated Threat Intel Lookups speed up the rededication by eliminating the manual process. The Embedded Orchestration packs allow the security teams to automatically execute basic tasks through integrations from within ServiceNow®. The packs have workflows which are included when a plugin from the configuration dashboard is activated. Field mapping, workflow triggers, escalations, filter groups, and email parsing are some of the other features which help in effective and efficient threat detection.



HR Service Management

Since the HR departments handle sensitive and confidential data, they need the ability to administer their application outside IT. With the Istanbul release, ServiceNow® allows this separation of data of users from the main platform. It now allows for delegated administration between the Admin and HR Admin. With the additional levels of control over HR data, the HR teams can configure several aspects of the solution without the need for IT involvement. The Lifecycle Event Model facilitates a simplified employee experience through displays like-services based on employee life events such as promotion, transfer, marriage, and more. Using the Case Management Optimization, fulfillment instructions can be added by case type on how to respond to a case and HR teams can increase the efficiency of HR agents and ensure faster resolution to HR issues.





Performance Analytics

Performance Analytics can help customers establish priorities. The Performance Analytics Spotlight monitors performance against the defined KPI's and helps in identifying the service performance hotspots. The simple WYSIWYG drag and drop design allows quick changes to the dashboard entities and also allows easy sharing of the dashboard with various stakeholders.

OTHER FEATURES IN ISTANBUL RELEASE

Apart from the key features mentioned above, Istanbul release also includes several other impressive features such as -

Survey Widget : The survey tool included in Istanbul is very contemporary and offers an easy to use interface appearance. It includes new question types such as emojis, multiple selection questions, and ranking questions.

Improved Email Functionality : With the advanced email capabilities, employees can enhance their email communication by including logos and other branding features in the email – all this is possible without having to do extensive system configuration.

Authentication : In case the LDAP server is down when the users are trying to log in, they can receive a one-time password to access the instance.

Automated Security Intelligence : Through an integration with Virus Total, this release includes automated threat intelligence lookups.

Application Edit Icon : The Application edit button, which was removed in Geneva, has been reintroduced in this release. It allows you to edit the application and module menus in the Left Navigation bar without having to go to the Application Menus to find and edit the apps.

CMDB Query Builder : The CMDB Query Builder allows you to easily build complex infrastructure and service queries. The queries can span across multiple CMDB classes and can involve many CIs connected by different relationships.

Plugin Activation Checks : This release reveals the use of plugins and helps the IT teams maintain license agreement compliance.

UPGRADE TO SERVICENOW® ISTANBUL

With the latest release, ServiceNow® users need to know that the support for the older versions might soon be disappearing. Considering that ServiceNow® supports only the last few versions, if you're running the version Fuji or earlier, it is high time for you to think about an upgrade to the latest version.

Upgrading your instance requires a thorough planning, testing, and validation. To ensure an effective upgrade, you need to create upgrade plans and test the upgrade on staging before upgrading the production instance. At a very high level, here are step-by-step instructions in the upgrade planning checklist –

- Read and review the Istanbul release notes and prepare the upgrade plan based on those.
- Prepare the development instance upgrade based on your current release version, hosting model, target release version, the new functionality that needs to be validated after the upgrade, plan for enabling/ disabling of the newly introduced features, and the supported browsers and gaps.
- Create a detailed project plan for cloning, upgrading, and testing.
- Identify the core team of testers, power users, and key stakeholders whose go-ahead is needed before the upgrade.
- Confirm the availability of other systems required for integration testing.
- Define the testing scope and approach along with a comprehensive test plan, test cases, and testing methodology.
- Define a clear implementation plan including the sequence and timing to upgrade, the instances to be cloned and the instance to be used for integration testing.
- Check if the training materials, Knowledge Base articles, or other supporting documentation needs any update.
- Verify the upgrade configurations and schedule the development instance upgrade in HI.
- Upgrade and validate the development instance using Upgrade Monitor.
- After getting a sign-off from IT and Business stakeholders, upgrade the production instance.

For a detailed checklist, visit [here](#).

ALCOR'S EXPERTISE IN SERVICENOW®

Alcor takes a strategic ITSM implementation approach and focuses on solving the business problems of their clients by leveraging an integrated business process design and technology implementation capability. Alcor's ITSM solutions with ServiceNow® leverage a business view of IT services. The objective is to enable the IT support organization to:

- ▶ Quickly resolve or escalate issues and problems
- ▶ Improve root cause isolation, and
- ▶ Provide higher levels of business user satisfaction.

Alcor brings substantial process expertise, ServiceNow® experience and depth of organizational governance modeling to build solutions that are effective and provide complete life cycle support for Incident Management, Problem Management, Change Management and Configuration Management. Alcor has experience in Automating ServiceNow® with external applications like emails, active directories, Adobe, assets, and Amazon Cloud Provision (LABS). This includes real-world experience of having worked with enterprises in the banking and financial services and retail sector where we have helped orchestrate transaction volumes running into the 100's of thousands.

Alcor has specific expertise in ServiceNow® IT Operations Management across the three levels, Orchestration, Release Management and Service Analytics. Through effective Orchestration Alcor helps clients launch the right automated process consistently and to codify best practices into the process workflows to save time and money. Alcor's expertise in helping their clients manage Release Management better allows optimal usage of the IT assets, hardware and software, available to the client to ensure effective, timely, un-interrupted and on-demand service delivery. Alcor helps their clients put in place Service Analytics solutions that gives them the capability to keep track of each and every infrastructure component that impacts overall service delivery.

Alcor achieves this by leveraging their integrated business process design and technology implementation capability. Their professionals are the top talents in the business with deep personal understanding of the business verticals they service. This allows them to deliver flexible solutions that work in the real world. Their strength lies in delivering solutions that are customized to the specific requirements of their customers including complex integrations with the other systems in the ecosystem like Financial and Procurement Management systems.

Building effective Enterprise Service Management solutions is one of Alcor's key business focus areas. Alcor consultants have deep expertise around implementing and managing key IT Service Management processes such as Incident, Change, Release, Problem, Configuration Management & Asset Management. Alcor provides process maturity & technological sophistication when implementing ESM solutions.

CONCLUSION

Istanbul, the latest version of ServiceNow®, has addressed a lot of enhancement requests by customers. It has introduced a lot of meaningful improvements and new features. Features like Benchmarks, Change Advisory Board (CAB) Workbench are very useful in IT Service Management. The new features of Application Portfolio Management and Project Portfolio Management have made IT Business Management easier. The Security Operations are significantly enhanced with Automated Threat Intel Lookups and enhanced integrations. This release takes Customer Service Management to the next level with expanded support for B2C scenarios, intelligent case assignment, and tracking of orders and defects. With this release, the HR teams can now be the admins for the HR Service Management application and operate it without IT involvement. With many such significant features, this release certainly makes a strong case for an upgrade. Organizations using the older versions of ServiceNow® should seriously consider upgrading their instance to this latest release and enhance their business operations effectiveness by availing the newly added features.

ABOUT ALCOR SOLUTIONS

Alcor is a global cloud advisory and implementation services company serving Fortune 500, Government Agencies, and other leading organizations in multiple industry verticals across the Americas, Canada and India. Alcor is a ServiceNow® Gold Services Partner and also partners to Salesforce®, FireEye™, Microsoft®, Dell, BOMGAR®, and BigPanda® amongst others. They advise leading businesses on cloud platforms, architecture, enterprise service management and integrating IT service delivery. They also provide business process consulting to capture, re-engineer and improve processes that can easily be automated to deliver real value. The Alcor consulting team is derived from a combination of experts in Business strategy, Cloud Technology and Organizational Change Management.

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Alcor is a technology implementation company focusing on Enterprise and Government technology needs in ITSM, systems integration, web development and mobility space. We provide a strategic ITSM implementation approach to our clients and focus on solving business problems by leveraging an integrated business process design and technology implementation capability.

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