ALCOR
ENABLING CLOUD™

ServiceNow® Jakarta - A Giant Leap Forward

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INTRODUCTION

46% of enterprises surveyed by ServiceNow® believed they would need to automate more to handle the sheer volume of tasks their enterprises generated and 86% believed that automation levels would have to increase by 2020.[1]

ServiceNow® has, over the last 12 years, established itself as a leader in the space of IT Services Management. The Jakarta release in June 2017 enables the company to expand into other areas of Enterprise operations in line with its wider business process automation vision. The Jakarta release integrates key elements from some of ServiceNow® 's recent acquisitions ITApp, Bright Point Security, and DxContinuum.

This Whitepaper will look at the key new features of the ServiceNow® Jakarta release. It will then examine in greater detail significant additions to the Cloud Management and Machine Learning capabilities of the platform.

Key Features and Benefits of the ServiceNow® Jakarta Release

ServiceNow® , with Jakarta, is clearly looking to address the Enterprise beyond the IT department. The objective is to leverage the workflow-based approach to automating service delivery in departments like HR, Security, and business operations, and thus to transform the Enterprise. The ServiceNow® Platform gets a new name – it has now been named the Now Platform. Some of the new features in this release are[2]

Software Asset Management : This feature aims to extend the management of the infrastructure to the software deployed across the Enterprise and to alleviate the pain of software audits. This feature promises transparent visibility to the users into the license compliance status at all times. This will also allow better control of costs by providing proactive information on over-provisioning of licenses. A very significant feature is the proactive advice on potential license breaches that could cause issues when caught in an audit.

Additionally, to allow greater control over Apps, Projects, and Financials in the Enterprise, a new Financial Reporting feature has been added.

Security : Security in the Cloud has always been a key focus area and the Jakarta release has addressed these needs with two new features.

With the creation of "Trusted Security Circles," ServiceNow® users who opt into a community can share information and their experiences of recent security incidents with their peers. There is an element of anonymity built into the "Circle" as comments are slated to be unattributed, but the aim is to provide a space for users to discuss and get information on emerging security threats, and thus be better prepared.

Security threats can also emerge from within the products deployed in the infrastructure. To address this issue, Jakarta adds "Vendor Risk Management". This feature allows automated discovery of the security profile of each vendor while they get on-boarded and offers suggestions to promote better communication between the vendor and the enterprise to better manage security.

Customer Service: ServiceNow®'s aim to expand its influence within the Enterprise to beyond IT is most visible in its focus on Customer Service. The objective is to leverage the automated workflow based approach to make the delivery of service to the customer more effective and efficient. Jakarta enhances the tools available in this area. It is possible to create a comprehensive list of all activities associated with customer service and to then bring together all the departments, groups, and business processes needed to deliver those activities. Jakarta also extends those tools to automating field service.

A significant new feature is the ability to create "Customer Communities". This will allow users to create their own forums, product support documents, and to support each other.

In addition, there are several new features added in a variety of areas:

▸ To update ITSM – 10 new KPIs have been added to promote better bench marking.

▸ To reduce service outages – Operational intelligence has been provided in the form of Predictive alerts.

▸ To make the HR experience more consumerized – features have been added for Enterprise onboarding and transitions.

The focus on Business Apps also continues with the addition of a Guided Tour Designer.

A CLOSER LOOK

Among the most significant new features in ServiceNow® Jakarta are two which demand a closer look. Both these features have been influenced by ServiceNow®'s acquisitions.

Machine Learning / AI Capabilities

Potentially the biggest change in Jakarta is the Intelligent Automation Engine, a Machine Learning-driven feature that will allow the automatic routing of service requests and predictive performance management. The initial focus will be on security, customer service, and HR. The Machine Learning capabilities address areas like:

▸ Preventing Outages by identifying patterns and discrepancies that may point to possible upcoming outages.

▸ Intelligently categorizing and routing service delivery tasks and predicting the potential outcomes.

▸ Predicting Performance, in conjunction the existing Performance Analytics applications, to identify when service delivery goals will be achieved.

▸ Benchmarking performance against anonymized data shared by ServiceNow® customers.

Much of this capability has come in with the DXContinuum acquisition and some powerful use-cases are emerging of how the capabilities could be leveraged. For eg. service requests could be routed to whoever is most likely to be able to address it, or outages could be predicted, and hence prevented by taking remedial action in advance.

Cloud Management

ServiceNow® has always been a cloud-based platform, and as such has generally had robust Cloud management capabilities. The acquisition of ITApp has given a significant boost to that capability. The enhanced cloud management capability allows users to create a single source of reference of all their cloud resources, and to then manage them easily through a portal. This unified view makes it easier to keep an eye on costs and also to provide users the cloud resources they may specifically need.

The entire process of managing tasks related to Cloud Management can be controlled by members of virtually created provisioning groups. These members, based on their roles, can perform tasks like configuring and provisioning, approving requests, operationally fulfilling the requests that come in from users, and other tasks associated with using the cloud resources.

The roles associated with the members of these groups are:

▸ Virtual Provisioning Cloud Administrator

▸ Virtual Provisioning Cloud Approver

▸ Virtual Provisioning Cloud Operator

▸ Virtual Provisioning Cloud User

One significant benefit is the ability to easily manage Cloud activity, and costs across Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure Cloud, and VMWare Cloud.

WHAT NEXT FOR SERVICENOW® – KINGSTON & BEYOND

"Our company is rapidly evolving from being a very IT-centric company. We were really the CIO system, [but we are now] tapping into service domains that are not IT. For example, human resources, customer service, security, and general business applications that are line of business. Our conversation, our narrative, needs to evolve from being IT-centric to being enterprise-centric. We needed to learn to speak to CEOs, CFOs, really the entire C-suite." – Frank Slootman

ServiceNow® has been the leader among IT Service Management solutions used for automating IT service delivery for a while now. Following that, solutions addressing IT Operations Management and specific areas of customer service delivery helped consolidate its position in the Enterprise market. Recent releases have seen a greater focus on areas like Performance Analytics, Security Operations, and now Cloud Management in Jakarta. The direction is clearly towards finding a much wider play within the Enterprise and to enable automation of service delivery across a variety of business processes.

This wider play will involve addressing business issues beyond just IT issues and dealing with users outside of the IT domain that ServiceNow® has traditionally played in. This will drive some significant changes in the offerings as well. ServiceNow® has already begun a focus on issues like usability, and look and feel. The clear sense is that the business users value the overall experience more than the nuts and bolts holding it all together and this is a clearly visible direction from ServiceNow® for Kingston and releases beyond.

ServiceNow® also sees itself as aiming to deliver a transformational impact to Enterprises. The management has spoken of being more than just a "moderniser". This translates into a desire to fundamentally alter the way several business processes are run, and ultimately to how the business itself functions.

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Recent releases have seen an increasing emphasis on Automation, and Jakarta takes that further with the addition of the Machine Learning / Artificial Intelligence capability driven by the acquisition of DXContinuum. Significant enhancement of the predictive intelligence capability is projected in the Kinsgton release. Future releases of ServiceNow® will further push this agenda as Enterprises seek to automate more functions to reduce manpower and control costs. McKinsey has reported that 49% of all time spent on work activities can be automated, and ServiceNow® in future releases will aim to set up the platform on which this automation can take place.

SERVICENOW® INTRODUCTION

IT Service Management is defined as a combination of people, processes, and tools that are deployed to support the production environment or for delivering other IT services to the organization's internal & external customers. ServiceNow® is aleading cloud-based ITSM tool focused on the enterprise.

ServiceNow® focuses on the workflows within the enterprise and helps enterprises define, codify and automate these workflows to ensure predictability and scalability on a day to day basis. Enterprises deploying ServiceNow® leverage the capabilities of the product inIncident Management, Issue Management, Request Management, Knowledge Management and for Tracking and Reporting.

ServiceNow® focuses on a variety of business domains including Financial, Healthcare, Higher Education, Managed Services and various Government sectors.

ALCOR CAPABILITIES IN SERVICENOW®

Alcor is a global cloud advisory and implementation services company serving Fortune 500, Government establishments, 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®, Microsoft® and Bomgar®. 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.

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[3].

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 Solutions deploys the best in class enterprise solutions to exploit the full measure of Performance Analytics across the business to deliver optimum benefits. This customized business solution has helped their clients gain insights into the performance of the IT systems critical to several areas of business operations, like human resources, finance, legal and administration. Their solution provides both performance reporting and predictive analytics, which in turn help's their clients gain insights that can help them get maximum benefit from their investments into their IT infrastructure.[6]

Alcor achieves this by leveraging their integrated business process design and technology implementation capability. Their professionals are the top talents in the business with a 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 eco-system like Financial and Procurement Management systems. You can get more information about Alcor and their capabilities by writing to information@alcortech.com

CONCLUSION

ServiceNow Jakarta has made a couple of extremely significant additions to the already comprehensive feature-sets of previous versions with Artificial Intelligence and Software Asset Management. This is in line with their vision of the software-execution model of the Enterprise where they expect their solutions to operate at light speed as they go about automating business processes across the Enterprise. This is the clearest signal yet of ServiceNow's intention to transform the Enterprise and that's why it may be the biggest release of ServiceNow yet.

REFERENCES

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2. https://community.servicenow.com/thread/265227

3. http://www.alcortech.com/enterprise-service management/itsm/

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.