serviceTALK

Who wants to be a chaos monkey?

Also in this issue:

The importance of effective metrics

A night on the Data Crisis Hotline

Protecting our universities: cyber attacks and major incidents in the spotlight.

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Contents

Welcome to the latest issue of ServiceTalk!

As last year, the Autumn issue of ServiceTalk comes in two versions. The print edition will be distributed to delegates at ITSM23 as part of their conference guide, while the online version will be available to all delegates through the website.

Along with the latest news and event details from itSMF UK, you'll find articles this month on chaos engineering, ITSM in the healthcare sector, service metrics, assessment and accreditation, and legacy data migration. For similar content on other service management related topics, don't forget to check out our blog at itsmf.co.uk/blog.

Most of the articles in this issue and our spring edition have been shortlisted for the new Content of the Year award – one of the awards that will be presented at the PSMA23 gala dinner on 13th November. On this occasion the winner has been chosen by the members through an online vote but they are all well worth a read, highlighting as they do our members' diverse challenges and priorities as they adapt to face changing business requirements. If you'd like to be on next year's shortlist, why not give some thought to a topic that you feel strongly about and put pen to paper?

The Content award is not the only addition to the line-up at this year's PSMA dinner. We will also be presenting the first itSMF UK Challenge Cup to the winner of SXP's RUN-IT Simulation contest, a new initiative which, as the winning captain put it, "really demonstrates the value of itSMF membership." You can read the story behind the Cup in this issue. Maybe your team would like to take part next year?

Whether you're with us at ITSM23 in Reading or browsing the pages at home, I would welcome your feedback and ideas. Please feel free to contact me at mark.lillycrop@ itsmf.co.uk or reach out to any of the Team members listed in the blue box on the right.

Mark Lillycrop
mark.lillycrop@itsmf.co.uk

Healthcare and ITSM: hey they are so related!

13

Armed Forces CoP – one year on

Last year, as part of itSMF UK's proud commitment to the Armed Forces covenant, we formed a Community of Practice to bring together military veterans, reservists, employers, and service providers with an interest in supporting those transitioning from the Forces to mainstream service management.

One year on, we have delivered multiple internal community events to existing itSMF members. We currently have 20 existing members and are encouraging more to join. If you have any affiliation to the Military, or you would like to join out of interest, please contact the Armed Forces COP **afcop.chair@itsmf.co.uk** for more details.

We also successfully delivered our first external community event as a CoP, offering an introduction to ITSM with a veteran's perspective and outlining some success stories of group members. You can hear a more detailed update on this session at ITSM23 (Tuesday, 15.50), where we will sum up the achievements of our first year as a community.

To complete the year, we have final event in December, focusing on military transition, mental wellness and interview hints and tips.
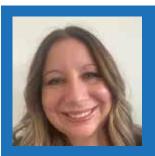
Cristan Massey, chair

Three new board members at itSMF UK...

We are delighted to welcome Cristan Massey, Keith Reeves, and Vawns Murphy to the Board of itSMF UK following recent elections.

Cristan is Head of Service Management at Pearson and an Army Reservist; he is chair and co-founder of itSMF UK's Armed Forces Community of Practice and past chair of our Design & Transition CoP.

Keith is Service Management Team Manager at Digital Health and Care Wales, a member of the itSMF UK Leadership Council and a keen contributor to many of our events, helping to launch the digital healthcare sector spotlight as well as participating in masterclasses and conferences.

Vawns is a Service Management Architect, Consultant and Evangelist at i3works, a long-standing member of itSMF UK and formerly chair of our Transition Management Special Interest Group.

In other changes to the Board, Valerie Wilson of BT has been re-elected to a second term as Groups Director.

Richard Horton (NIHR CRNCC) and Daniel Breston (Independent) stood down in October after many years' excellent service to the organisation, but both have expressed their intention to continue supporting itSMF UK in other ways.

itSMF UK Chair Karen Brusch thanked Richard and Daniel for their great contribution to the Forum, and said she was looking forward to working with Cristan, Keith and Vawns in the months ahead.

...and a new face on the team

We're also very pleased to announce a new addition to our operations team, Gail Knight.

Gail joins us as a Member Engagement Manager, working alongside Andrea Dell and helping to reach out to a growing number of members and prospective members within the ITSM community.

Gail brings a wealth of service management experience to the team, having previously worked with Pink Elephant, BCS, and the International Software Quality Institute, and is looking forward to e-meeting many of our membership contacts over the coming weeks.

itSMF UK General Manager Graham McDonald said he was delighted to have Gail on board, and that she would be key to helping the Forum fulfil its membership expansion plans in the months ahead.

Gail can be reached at **gail.knight@itsmf.co.uk.**

Webinars, masterclasses, meet-ups and spotlights: take your pick!

itSMF UK has always sought to provide the right information and guidance to members to help them excel in their service management roles, and to this end we've developed a range of webinars, masterclasses and forums to fit event need.

Although the majority of our events are still delivered virtually – via Zoom, Teams, or ClickMeeting – we will be running a greater number of face-to-face meetings and member meet-ups in the months ahead. Going forward, we aim to offer a balance of online and physical events to suit all members, so please let us have your views and feedback.

Our webinars – all free to members – offer a great opportunity to join one of our subject matter experts for a focused hour of content and Q&A. And after the event, a recording can be found in the member area of the website.

Our in-depth masterclasses take a fresh approach to the challenges faced by today's ITSM practitioners. They are presented by experienced facilitators from within the industry, providing real-world guidance and practical advice – with the objective of developing new skills and sharing experiences with other members.

We've recently an Introduction to ITSM is for apprentices, graduates and those moving into ITSM for the first time, focusing on best practice in key areas in ITSM and how they work together. The Intro comes in two parts. Part 2 is an interactive business simulation that allows the theory learned during Part 1 to be applied in a realistic educational and fun environment. Step by step the team will apply basic ITSM processes and learn how to deal with different business and IT situations.

Our new Sector Spotlights have been well received. Based on the highly popular format of our online SM Forums, they discuss key service management topics through the lens of a particular sector, such as healthcare, higher education, central government, or finance. Sector Spotlights are open to all so keep an eye out for new dates in 2024.

We hope you can join us for one of our virtual or face-to-face events in the near future. The list continues to expand, so please watch the website – https://www.itsmf.co.uk/ – for the latest news.

EVENT SCHEDULE 2024

	PRICE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MASTERCLASSES													
AI Feasibility	£295			7 (O)									
Availability and Capacity Management	£295					14-15 (O)							
Business & IT Alignment	£295						11-12 (O)						
Change & Release Management	£295		6 (O)										
Continual Improvement	£295					16 (O)							
Demonstrating the Value of IT	£295			5 (O)									
Designing the right XLAs	£295			14 (O)						19 (O)			
Digital Operating Model	£295					21 (O)							
Implementing XLAs	£295						13 (O)					7 (O)	
Introduction to XLAs	£295	30 (O)			23 (O)			9 (O)			1 (O)		
Human-centred design for ITSM	£295			19-20									
Introduction to ITSM (Part One)	£99				24 (O)						3 (O)		
Introduction to ITSM (Part Two)	£99				25 (O)						4 (O)		
IT Service Continuity Management	£295					23-24 (O)							
ITAM	£295		29 (O)										
Knowledge Management (KCS)	£295		27-28 (O)										
Major Incident Management	£295		27-28 (O)							24-25 (O)			
Post Incident Review	£295						18-19 (O)						
Problem Management	£295			21-22 (O)							10-11 (O)		
Re-imagining the CAB	£295				23-24 (O)								
Sustainability	£295						20 (O)						
SIMULATIONS													
Challenge Cup 2024	FREE					Dates TBC							
ITSM/DevOps	FREE					Dates TBC							
MEMBER MEET-UPS													
Member Meetup	FREE					Dates TBC							
Communitites of Practice	FREE					Dates TBC							
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL													
Council Meetings	FREE	17 (O)	21 (O)	20 (O)	17 (O)	15 (O)	12 (O)	10 (O)		11 (O)	16 (O)	TBC	11 (O)
FORUMS & WEBINARS													
Service Management Forums	FREE					Dates TBC							
Webinars	FREE					Dates TBC							
ANNUAL CONFERENCE													
ITSM23 Conference & Awards	SEE WEB											11-12 (R)	

Key: (B) Belfast, (G) Glasgow, (L) London, (M) Manchester, (R) Reading & (O) Online. For the exact location, or where location is not listed, please visit the website for latest details.

Challenge Cup off to a great start

We'd like to thank all 28 teams for taking the time to participate in our inaugural itSMF UK Challenge Cup competition – we've had a brilliant time facilitating the heats and have been delighted with the feedback received.

Each team, with a maximum of 4 players per team, competed against other member organisations by playing the RUN-IT simulation from **SXP**. The essence of the RUN-IT simulation was for each team to run the IT services for an airline, 'Global Air'. Although fictitious, the Global Air business model is based on a real airline and the strategies and their impacts in the simulation are based on industry researched and recognised metrics, adding to the realism of the experience.

Henry and Jason from SXP said that they were really impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm given by all the teams throughout a very intense experience, and everyone should be very pleased with how

they performed; the high scores and very close competition across all the heats were testament to the calibre of the teams that entered. Furthermore, they were delighted with the learning takeaways, which showed that there was more to the event than just points.

Alongside the learning experience, there was of course a competitive element and we're delighted to announce the organisation with the top score, and winner of the 2023 Challenge Cup, is:

informa

Upon hearing the news, Team Captain Holly Chapman commented, "The challenge cup offered a great opportunity to bond as a newly

formed team and to envisage IT decisions and the impact they have on the business. It was a real eye-opener and good reference point for some of the IT business change that we are currently trying to achieve. Thank you to itSMF UK for a great initiative that really demonstrates the value of membership."

Holly and the team will be presented with their trophy at the **PSMA23** awards dinner in November – along with a prize of £1,000 for their selected charity.

We've received amazing feedback from this year's participants and so will be repeating the Challenge Cup next year – watch this space for the 2024 announcement! If you can't wait that long, and would like to have a dedicated delivery of the RUN-IT simulation for your organisation, please contact us to discuss your requirements and pricing.

A sweet treat for ITSM23 attendees

Delegates at ITSM23 will find a tasty bar of milk chocolate in their delegate bag, a little treat for those with a sweet tooth. And with a nod to that most famous chocophile Willy Wonka, we've hidden golden tickets inside the wrappers of three bars, entitling the bearer to a free two-day pass to ITSM24 in November next year. So don't forget to check the small print when you open the bar!

There's a story behind our chocolate giveaway that starts close to home. Our supplier, Steve Rehmat Victor, is actually an ITSM professional, an ITIL-qualified Service Manager with 14 years' experience in the industry.

itSMF UK
GOLDEN TICKET
This ticket entitles the bearer to one two-day pass to ITSM24

Please contact conference@itsmf.co.uk to claim your place

Grasping the opportunity to follow his dream with his company My Chocolate Shop, Steve and his colleagues recently secured funding for their high-protein product from BBC's Dragons' Den.

"Participating in this year's BBC Dragons' Den

has been an extraordinary journey, fulfilling a promise I made to my father: 'One day, Dad, I will appear on that show.'" said Steve.

"We are thrilled that our pitch received investment from entrepreneur Sara Davies, an outstanding investor, mentor, and, most importantly, a believer in us! Our business is wholly committed to crafting premium-quality chocolates with sustainable packaging. We take immense pride in our 100% recyclable paper packaging, aligning with our dedication to eco-friendly practices and delivering exceptional chocolate experiences."

Steve's career spans nearly two decades of IT service management experience at world-class companies like Computacenter, Schroders, and currently AXA XL. In this time his focus has primarily been on delivering reliable IT solutions to businesses while efficiently managing vendors and partners, experience that has significantly contributed to his new business success.

"Thank you to itSMF UK for giving us

the chance to share our story, he said, "and thanks too to my mentor, itSMF UK member Steve Ruby, who played a pivotal role in shaping my ITSM career. Now, we hope you find the golden ticket and indulge in our chocolate."

The importance of effective metrics

Have you ever asked yourself, "Why do we measure things?" It's a question that often goes unasked, yet it lies at the heart of our desire to understand the world around us. In a recent itSMF UK member meet-up, we explored the various reasons why we measure and the importance of doing so effectively.

After all, why bother measuring something if it's not going to help us make better decisions? The conversation delved into the dangers of measuring things just for the sake of it, using examples of meaningless metrics from the past.

Meaningless metrics

We've all seen a dashboard or a report where everything is green right? How could we possibly improve if everything already looks perfect?

In the example above, the word 'successful' means 'was it deployed in production?'. It's easy to measure but ultimately meaningless. Surely a better measure would be 'did the update provide the value to the users as expected?'

The stakeholder 'so what?' test

We need to consider who needs the information contained in a report and what they may value. Is it going to help them make better decisions or is it a 'nice to have'? It's powerful to ask 'so what?' and be brutal. 'We've always measured that' isn't a good enough response!

Another consideration is the importance of context in understanding the impact of metrics. For example, one incident can have a significant impact while multiple incidents may have a relatively low impact. Counting the number of incidents therefore doesn't tell us the full story but it is worth measuring for context.

Experience Level Agreements (XLAs) can be used as a tool to bridge the gap between implied and actual metrics (more on that later). XLAs focus on the experience and measure the effectiveness of services in achieving their intended outcomes.

Another important point often overlooked is dimensioning the data in a meaningful way that is relevant to different stakeholders. Using incident data as an example, a service desk manager will need to see data relating to their service desk. A service manager dedicated to a customer will only need to see data for their specific customer, while a product manager will need to see data for their supported product. The same data but dimensioned in a different way to make it relevant.

Implied metrics versus value metrics

One of the most interesting parts of the meet-up was the discussion around implied metrics versus those that actually measure value. It's all too easy to fall into the trap of assuming that a metric implies more value than it delivers. We shared examples of both implied and actual measurements, and considered which were more valuable. Examples are provided above.

	Implied Metrics	Value Metrics
Continual Improvement	Number of successfully completed initiatives	Business value of successfully completed initiatives
Knowledge Management	Number of new knowledge articles created	Time saved resolving incidents due to knowledge articles
Change Enablement	Number of change related incidents	Total downtime caused by change related incidents
Service Desk	Number of issues solved by self-service	User satisfaction with self-service Time saved due to user self-service

Easy metrics can be obtained out-of-the-box from tools like ServiceNow or Remedy. But do they measure value, or do they imply it? Measuring value is often more difficult. It can't be automated as value can be perceived differently by different stakeholders. Sometimes the only way to ascertain whether what you deliver is valuable is to ask.

Closing thoughts

In conclusion, measuring is only useful if it helps us make better decisions. Otherwise, it's a waste of time. By identifying actual metrics that matter to stakeholders, organisations can better understand the impact of their actions and make informed decisions that drive real value. Effective metrics are crucial to understanding the world around us and making better decisions that positively impact our lives and businesses. They take effort, lots of effort. But should that stop us measuring value?

Sean Burkinshaw

Sean is an ITIL Specialist at BT, an itSMF UK Group Chair and Winner of the Ashley Hanna Contributor of the Year award 2022.

Happy, shiny people – service management and healthcare

"Success is all about collaboration." DHCW's Liz Wride shares her impressions of itSMF UK's recent Sector Spotlight for service management professionals working in healthcare.

What do a customer feedback system, NHS England, sustainability, a service management tool, NHS Wales' Welsh Nursing Care Record and a Shiny New Thing (that really helps) have in common?

The (first) answer is, of course: they all appeared on the bill at itSMF UK's recent *Sector Spotlight: Service Management in Healthcare,* which gathered colleagues from across the UK for a three-hour Zoom extravaganza.

But the second (and possibly the most important) answer is people. The thing all those elements have in common is people.

Digital Health and Care Wales *(DHCW)* (Keith Reeves, James Braun) and Hywel Dda University Health Board's Lesley Jones kicked proceedings off with the Cinderella story of digitalisation, as their award-winning *Welsh Nursing Care Record (WNCR)* took them from paper-based assessments to iPads. For the staff involved in the project (which now boasts 17,000 users across Wales), it was people, not the absence of paper, that was key. "Service management was part of the process from the beginning," DHCW's Lee Everett-Pride told the (virtual) room. One of the lasting legacies of the project was the sense of pride and ownership the nurses and health care workers (the largest qualified workforce in the NHS) felt for the system. "We had a workforce to take with us on the digital journey."

This people-centred ethos was echoed across the borders in NHS England and NHS Scotland, as Robert Marsh talked us through NHS England's *NHS App and Covid Pass;* while Trickle CEO Paul Reid demonstrated that you don't make a customer feedback system without breaking a few windows. Marsh spoke of "pushing Agile to the limits"under pandemic pressures, making his team into 'social entrepreneurs' via coffee mornings and 'lunch and learns'. Reid, on the other hand, used a criminology theory from the 1980s (the Broken Window Theory) to pave the way for workplace champions, transparent conversations, and a sense of increased trust. (Reid's presentation even

demoed MoodSense™ to truly gauge how *shiny and happy* the people were).

CGI's Howard Gray didn't just give us people in his presentation – he gave us the whole sky (and the ground below it). 'Towards a net zero NHS' started with 1980s milk floats (the original electric vehicle!) and ended with CGI's/University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust's case study (understanding data to create a strategic, actionable roadmap to net zero). Tom Monaghan's (Halo ITSM) session, *'The move to hybrid working in the NHS'* was people-centric rather than people-adjacent. Yes, Halo-integrated technological solutions (such as MS Teams) were placed front and centre – but the figures spoke for themselves: "1.6 million *co-workers* on the same (MS Teams) system platform". For me, nothing highlighted people more than Halo ITSM's integration with emergent AI technology ChatGPT (I was the first in the chat box, asking questions – fuelled by a lifetime of watching sentient-AI-filled Sci-Fi). I needn't have worried. This was not Orwellian nightmare fuel. Halo ITSM came down firmly on the side of early adopter and demonstrated agent-focused value.

Last but not least was Paul Wilkinson's *The Shiny New Thing that really helps!* The psychology of the whole talk crystalised in the opening slide, as Wilkinson recounted a time he posted on LinkedIn as a joke that he'd invented a new thing… and got a ton of hits. Paul Wilkinson's slides could be described, but I would never do them justice. His talks are delivered at pace, and his slides are something that need to be seen to be believed. The interactive style is unique (there are links, things to cut out and stick onto noticeboards, and Wilkinson's' infamous *Top Scoring Cards).* Wilkinson's talk had people running right through it (from his ABCs of Attitude, Behaviour, Culture) to his closing remark that, if anyone uses elements of his slide to transform their workplace, they're to let him know. That's not just people, that's people-centred feedback in action.

itSMF not only put the service management healthcare sector in the limelight but allowed them to shine in it. This was service

management at its very best, because everyone was willing to tell you how they got there and the pitfalls to avoid. TrickleCEO Paul Reid gave us a glimpse of the downward trend that can occur when the broken windows process is promptly stopped, while Hywel Dda University's Lesley Jones also said that they would do the WNCR Project, but "better… as [they] have learnt so many lessons."

As I logged off after the 3-hour session (that flew by!) and accompanying Q&A, the closing words of DHCW/Hywel Dda University Health Board's presentation rang in my ears: "Success is all about collaboration".

itSMF UK's event highlighted the people-centric side of ITSM. It was all about collaboration as a way to bring about positive change and work together to utilise technology for the better. For me (and this is just my opinion), service management often appears misunderstood – it possesses no clear definition. Yet the people involved are true trailblazers. It takes a special group of people to take their projects and ideas, overcome the challenges, deal with emerging technology, tackle the big-scale problems, and emerge on the other side with shiny, happy people.

itSMF UK's Sector Spotlight: Service Management in Healthcare took place on 24th April 2023 via Zoom.

Liz Wride

Liz Wride is a Specialist (Transition and Service Level Management) at Digital Health Care Wales. The views expressed in this article are her own, and may not be representative of the organisation.

PROTECTING OUR UNIVERSITIES:
cyber attacks and major incidents in the spotlight

The main topics of discussion at itSMF UK's recent sector spotlight on the higher education sector were cybersecurity and major incidents: the showstoppers for which we all rigorously plan but hope to avoid.

Looking back on this event just a few weeks later, it is not lost on me that since then the sector has unfortunately suffered at least another two serious cyber incidents, both leading to extensive disruption to the daily routine of the institutions.

So what lessons can we learn from the day's presentations?

Our first session from Kevin O'Brien and Andy Dunn from CSI offered some excellent advice on what we can do to help prevent a cyber incident – credential management, device management, MFA, traffic/log monitoring, air-gapped backups to name but a few. We then segued into preparing for the worst, and having plans in place should this ever happen – a theme that would run through all the presentations that followed.

We have all (hopefully) documented and tested our major incident processes – not something you want to be working out after the event, and the same is true for cyber. We need a playbook to help us focus on the task(s) in hand, who does what (roles and responsibilities), lines of communication, impact assessment – the list goes on…

In short, prepare for the worst, and be ready to adapt your response to the nature of the attack or system failure.

Our next presentation, from the University of Oxford's Andrew Dixon and Ian Teasdale, highlighted the great work that they've done in the major incident management space, using lessons learned from previous incidents to drive forward a well-defined and understood process, together with a continual improvement culture which has dramatically reduced the number of major incidents.

Again, there was a strong focus on being ready, and for everyone to know what to do, and who was doing it – clear comms being every bit as important as all of the other activities. Business continuity readiness/testing also came through strongly in this session – don't wait until you need your data or power backups to find out that you can't read them or that the fuel tank is empty. The same goes for failover infrastructure.

What can I say about the next session, "Northumbria University's cyber-attack – lessons from managing a major incident" presented by their CIO, Simon Corbett?

It had all the ingredients of a best-selling thriller, but unlike fiction, this was very much for real…

Simon expanded on the events of September 2020 with real conviction and honesty; not an easy thing to do, given the nature of what they'd been through. We heard first-hand accounts of the situation that Northumbria's staff and students were faced with, together with a candid walk through of events. The session focussed not just on the incident's impact and the technical steps to regain control of their landscape, but also plenty of detail on the human side of the event; the whole gamut of anger, stress, and disbelief.

There were obviously many things that couldn't be said, but we felt your pain, Simon – thank you for sharing!

Last, but not least, we heard from OpenText's Mike Rutherford who presented the findings of their extensive research on the state of cyber security in HE. At least a couple of the stats made uncomfortable reading – close to 90% of respondents reporting at least one "successful" cyber attack in the past year, with 70%+ of the same group admitting to still not being as ready to deal with future threats as they would like to be…

All in, and in spite of the dark corners that we explored, it was a very positive event, with plenty to take away whether you work in HE or not.

Mark Temple

Mark Temple is Assistant Director - Service Management at the University of Glasgow and Scotland Chair of itSMF UK.

Who wants to be a chaos monkey?

Why do monkeys love bananas? Because they have appeal.

Okay, let's move on from jokes and delve into the fascinating world of chaos engineering. In this blog, we will explore the history, value, and synergies between chaos engineering and IT service management (ITSM).

Chaos engineering is the practice of conducting experiments on a system to cultivate confidence in its ability to withstand turbulent and unexpected conditions. By continually running these experiments, we can bolster the resilience and reliability of our systems. As Dr. Kolton Andrew, Co-Founder and CEO of Gremlin, aptly describes it:

"Chaos Engineering increases the resilience and reliability of our systems."

In today's fast-paced world, organisations of all kinds require resilient and reliable services. Rather than reacting to unforeseen challenges, chaos engineering encourages proactive behaviours. It allows us to test challenging scenarios before they impact our businesses. By investing in resilience and reliability, we can ensure uninterrupted operations and exceptional customer experiences.

A brief history

A team of engineers working at Netflix embarked on an innovative experiment—intentionally introducing chaos and failure to systems. Their objective was to test the resilience and identify weaknesses in the system. This ground-breaking approach led to the creation of Chaos Monkey, a tool that autonomously shut down instances of Netflix's services in production, simulating failures.

"The Chaos Monkey experiment showed that by deliberately introducing controlled chaos, we could uncover hidden failures, isolate them, and fix them before they caused major outages or customer impacts."

Recognising the value of chaos engineering, Netflix open-sourced Chaos Monkey in 2011 and continued to expand its arsenal of tools. Today, chaos engineering has evolved into a discipline with multiple tools, processes, and organisations embracing its concepts and principles.

Even within the realm of ITSM, chaos engineering has found its place in ensuring the development of more resilient, reliable, and customer-centric systems. In my recent roles, I have witnessed first-hand the transformative impact of combining chaos engineering with ITSM.

ITSM is vital for maintaining stable IT operations and aligning services with business needs. However, without integrating chaos engineering, organisations miss proactive testing opportunities. Without intentional experimentation, hidden failures and weaknesses can go unnoticed, leading to major incidents and customer dissatisfaction. The absence of chaos engineering hinders continuous improvement and limits system resilience.

Cristan Massey considers how we can use chaos engineering to test our service processes.

Combining chaos engineering with ITSM brings proactive measures to identify vulnerabilities, improve incident response, minimise business impact, and foster a culture of improvement. This synergy enables organisations to deliver reliable, customer-centric services and stay ahead in our modern digital landscape.

My own journey

In my own professional journey, I had the opportunity to be part of a team that facilitated chaos days – an integral component of our chaos engineering practice. Our responsibilities revolved around planning, preparing, and executing these interactive sessions. To ensure the success of chaos days, we assembled a group of individuals known, aptly enough, as the chaos monkeys. These individuals typically included development leads and those with a deep technical understanding of the systems in question.

The chaos monkeys' role was to create controlled chaos by designing and implementing various scenarios that would intentionally disrupt the development environment. Working closely with the service managers, who acted as facilitators during these scenarios, the chaos monkeys orchestrated incidents that mirrored real-business major incidents. By leveraging the existing major incident process, we not only

promoted process maturity but also gained a better understanding of how well we worked under pressure.

Once the engineers swung into action and resolved each scenario, a retrospective and post-incident review took place. During this critical phase, the ITSM team collaborated closely with the development teams to identify areas for improvement. These insights and recommendations were transformed into tangible chaos actions, which the team documented and managed through to completion.

The chaos actions became a vital measure of progress and served as key performance indicators for our team. We reported on them regularly, leveraging the data to drive continuous improvement and track our success in strengthening system resilience and reliability.

Through this journey, I witnessed the transformative power of chaos engineering and its ability to foster collaboration between different teams. By creating a safe environment for controlled chaos and enabling cross-functional cooperation, we could identify and address vulnerabilities, streamline processes, and build stronger relationships across departments.

Incorporating chaos engineering principles into our ITSM practices allowed us to go beyond traditional testing and monitoring approaches. It empowered us to proactively challenge our systems, learn from failures, and constantly improve our ways of working.

The continuous feedback loop established through chaos days and the subsequent actions generated a culture of innovation and adaptability within our organisation.

By working together to conduct experiments, identify weaknesses, and implement improvements, relationships between teams are strengthened. This collaboration fosters a culture of continuous improvement and drives innovation across the organisation.

The value of chaos

As a service management professional, embracing chaos engineering principles can bring a multitude of benefits:

- **Increased system reliability** – Chaos engineering empowers ITSM professionals to proactively identify and address vulnerabilities in system architecture. By intentionally introducing controlled chaos and conducting experiments, you can uncover hidden failures and weaknesses in the system. This proactive approach allows for timely remediation, leading to increased system reliability and minimising the risk of unexpected disruptions.

- **Enhanced incident response** – With chaos engineering, ITSM professionals can simulate realistic outage scenarios and test the incident response capabilities of different teams and stakeholders. By running these simulation exercises, you can fine-tune incident management processes, strengthen coordination among teams, and optimise communication channels. This leads to more efficient incident response and reduced downtime during critical, real-time situations.

- **Reduced business impact** – By conducting chaos and addressing weaknesses beforehand, chaos engineering helps ITSM professionals minimise the impact of potential failures on the business. Uncovering vulnerabilities in advance allows for proactive measures to be taken, preventing major outages or customer impacts. This reduction in business impact translates to improved operational continuity, customer satisfaction, and overall business performance.

- **Improved stakeholder confidence** – Chaos engineering builds confidence in stakeholders, including business leaders, customers, and end users. By actively testing and ensuring the resilience of systems, ITSM professionals can demonstrate their commitment to delivering reliable services. Stakeholders gain assurance that potential failures have been identified and addressed, fostering trust in the organisation's ability to provide uninterrupted services.

- **Builds business relationships** – Chaos engineering provides opportunities to collaborate closely with development, customer operations, and other teams involved in the system's life cycle.

By embracing chaos engineering principles, we become a catalyst for positive change. You can actively contribute to building reliable, resilient, and customer-centric systems.

Conclusion

Embracing chaos engineering can unlock a world of possibilities for enhancing system reliability, incident response, reducing business impact, building stakeholder confidence, and fostering strong business relationships. However, it's important to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Each organisation is unique, and you must tailor your implementation of chaos

engineering principles to align with your specific business needs, your goals and, in some cases, your limitations.

One of the keys to success is making your work fun or, at the very least, not mundane. Chaos engineering introduces an element of excitement and curiosity as you navigate uncharted territory. Embrace the opportunity to learn, experiment, and grow.

Collaboration between teams is crucial when integrating chaos engineering into ITSM processes. Break down silos and foster a culture of collaboration, where different teams can come together to conduct experiments, share knowledge, and drive collective improvements.

Lastly, to fully embrace chaos engineering, you must be comfortable with being uncomfortable. This practice challenges traditional norms and encourages you to step outside your comfort zone. Embrace the unknown, push boundaries, and be willing to face the uncertainties that come with testing and experimenting.

As you embark on your chaos engineering journey, keep in mind that the path to success lies in tailoring your approach, infusing joy into your work, fostering collaboration, and embracing the discomfort of the unknown. By doing so, you will not only enhance the resilience and reliability of your systems but also transform your role as an ITSM professional and drive sustainable value for your organisation.

Cristan Massey

Cristan Massey is Head of Service Management at Pearson and Chair of the itSMF UK Armed Forces Community of Practice.

A NIGHT ON THE DATA CRISIS HOTLINE

Mark Herring offers a light-hearted view of legacy data migration.

It was 7 p.m. on a Friday. I was on call, but it was a holiday weekend so I expected a quiet evening. I had just settled in to binge-watch my favourite show—The IT Crowd—and less than five minutes into the first episode the phone rang.

I drew a heavy sigh and waited for the second ring, hoping the caller had just misdialed and would hang up. No such luck: the second ring came and I picked it up.

"Data Crisis Hotline, Morris speaking," I said. *"What's your emergency?"*

At first there was no response, and I thought it might be some kind of prank call, but soon enough I heard the tell-tale sounds of someone in the throes of a data crisis: the muffled cry, the heavy sobs, the exasperated voice of someone on the brink. Eventually she—or he, it was hard to tell—was able to pull together enough to speak.

"It's my ITSM data," the voice on the other end said. *"They're telling me I can't have it."*

"OK, slow down," I said. *"Start from the beginning. First of all, what's your name? What's the situation?"*

"My name is Pat," said the voice on the other end. *"We're migrating from our legacy ITSM system to a new one, a nice fancy one in the cloud with all the bells and whistles. Our integration partner said it would be easy-peasy and we would love all the new functionality. And then—and then..."*

More sobbing. I knew what was coming, because I had seen it dozens of times before, but I didn't want to jump to conclusions. I waited patiently for Pat to calm down a bit, and then:

"THEY SAID I HAVE TO LEAVE MY DATA BEHIND!" The voice was nearly hysterical at this point, and several minutes went by before Pat could regain his composure. (Or hers? I still couldn't tell, and it was driving me batty. And the name "Pat" was no help at all.)

"All my contacts, all my notes, every customer, all the knowledge-base articles, all the asset information. They're not migrating any of it. I don't see how I can function without that data. They said I could just start over, and it would be easier than migrating the legacy data. I can't believe this – what am I going to do?!"

"Steady, Pat. Is your integration partner there? Can I speak to them?"

"Yes, she's here," Pat answered.

A moment later, a new voice—this one bright and cheery—came on the line. "*Hi, this is Kelly from Super Integrators. Honestly, I don't know what Pat's problem is. It's just legacy data, and everyone knows that legacy data is 90% garbage. It's a great opportunity for them to make a fresh start. Besides, it's too complicated to extract the old data, cleanse it, and massage it into a format that's compatible with the new system. It will add six months to the project, minimum. It's just not worth the effort!"*

None of this was new to me. When you're a data crisis counsellor, it doesn't take long to hear every argument. I waited until Kelly took a breath, and I started in.

"Kelly, how is Pat's team supposed to run trending reports if there is no historical data to report? And what about their accumulated knowledge—do you really expect them to reconstruct it all over again from scratch?"

"What's wrong with that?" she replied. "*They have all that knowledge in their heads anyway, right?"*

"Not in everyone's heads. Without their knowledge data, resolution times will go up and new technicians will take longer to get up to speed. Ultimately this will mean a poorer post-migration experience and customer experience. You wouldn't want that kind of feedback would you?"

"No... no I wouldn't. But how am I supposed to move all of the data and stay within the project budget and timelines? They are not going to accept adding many months to the project, let alone going significantly over budget so they are just going to have to do without their data."

"Kelly, what if there is a way to make transferring the data quicker and easier?"

"Sure, that would be great but we've already looked into this. It is not just moving the data, it has to be translated from one system to another and some of these translations are quite complex. We even had a couple of developers look at building some scripts. They actually started the work to try it out but quickly realised that there were so many different cases it had to cope with it would be too complex and take too long. It gets back to the same point; is the data really worth it? I am not sure it is."

"Imagine if you wanted a new phone, and the people at the phone store said you couldn't transfer any of your photos, saying surely these photos are not that important, just a bunch of people and places we don't know. How would you feel?"

"Awful! All my family photos, children, pets, all my friends, everything!"

"Precisely. It is difficult to know the value of data if you are not one of the people who rely on it every day and, in the case of phones, that is why there are tools to migrate all data to another phone."

"Yes, but this is different. There aren't any tools to automate the migration of ITSM data between different platforms."

"Ah hah, but there are!" I had Kelly's attention then. *"Really?"* she asked in a surprised and slightly sceptical tone. I knew I still had some work to do here but I was now certain we could find a solution that would help Pat and Kelly and took a deep breath before my next words...

Can Morris persuade Kelly that it is worth looking into another way of moving Pat's ITSM data? Can they find a solution that will not add too much time or cost to the project? Will Pat be able to leave the call reassured that they will have all their ITSM data on the new system? Tune into the next episode to find out!

Mark Herring

Mark Herring is CEO and Co-Founder of Precision Bridge (www.precisionbridge.net)

Healthcare and ITSM: hey, they are so related!

Reflecting on my hospitalisation with intestinal and heart issues in June 2023, it remains clear that the fundamentals of communication, cooperation, and collaboration (the 3Cs) require consistent and constant attention in healthcare and service management. Like a medical ward, ineffective 3Cs in IT service management can put the organisation and the customer at risk.

The 3Cs, SPOC, data and value streams

During my stay, the lack of a comprehensive triage process led to missteps in diagnosing my condition, highlighting the importance of thorough 3C team practices. The issues I experienced were reminiscent of problems in service management when Team A failed to communicate fully with Team B or senior management or vice versa. Effective communication channels enhance cooperation and collaboration platforms, which are crucial to ensure that all relevant information is shared, enabling teams to work together seamlessly.

Furthermore, the hospital experience highlighted the importance of having a single point of contact and a collective plan for problem resolution. As I was attended to by multiple teams, such as Surgical, Cardiac, Gastro, Anaesthesia, and A&E, I was unsure who was in charge of my case. This lack of clarity and ownership created confusion. It hindered the development of an effective care plan for the doctors and the nurses caring for me. Similarly, in ITSM, having a designated service owner or incident manager as a single point of contact ensures accountability and streamlines problem resolution, avoiding unnecessary delays, miscommunication and wasted effort or materials.
My experience underscored the importance of better coordination regarding patients' medical histories. Despite their knowledge of my glaucoma and taking eye drops daily, the medical team prescribed a drug that significantly affected my heart rate. This was the second time I was given a heart drug that jeopardised my life or, at least, complicated any remedial steps during my stay. This highlights the necessity for senior consultants to override documented practices when necessary to prioritise patient safety.

Think of it in terms of an old ITSM data cycle known as DIKW – data becomes information when grouped such that knowledge can be applied to the management of a service. Wisdom develops over time, and the senior consultants, like technical or advanced ITSM support, need to interject that wisdom so that the entire care team (service team) can provide the best possible resolution.

Moreover, my hospitalisation emphasised the need for continuous improvement by applying value stream management principles. In the hospital setting, as in service management, a culture of constant improvement is essential to optimise workflows and deliver better outcomes. Regularly reviewing processes, identifying bottlenecks, and implementing enhancements can improve patient care and service delivery. Applying value stream management principles, such as mapping patient or service journeys, helps identify areas for improvement, ensuring that people, processes, and tools are effectively utilised.

Well-being or mental health

The array of patients with varying conditions and needs can cause significant mental distress. Although hospitals cannot avoid this mix, healthcare professionals must prioritise attentiveness and empathy towards each patient's emotional well-being. Unfortunately, in my case, only one nurse recognised and addressed my growing depression and stress, indicating the need for improved attention to patients' mental health.

The same thing happens in ITSM, where a customer becomes frustrated, especially when information transparency is lacking. Think about service outages impacting hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals at airports, trying to reach their destination yet stymied by any single point of contact or information. Stress, depression, anger and worse can all develop. A well-managed service team works hard to avoid this, guaranteeing the safety of all involved.

Who is best placed to run the incident?

On day 9 in hospital, unable to contain my frustration, I simultaneously confronted all the teams and senior consultants. Drawing on my extensive experience managing incidents as a former CIO, I led them through a reflection on my stay, compelling them to design and implement corrective actions with a clear resolution strategy and path towards my discharge. This sense of empowerment resulted in my release and created an agreed approach for future problem resolution. We often hear that the one closest to the customer is best placed to be the single point of contact. I submit that sometimes the customer, being closest to the issue, is the best person to be that SPOC. You'd be surprised at how well teams respond to working directly with the customer driving up satisfaction across the board.

Back home, I realise senior consultants can only visit some patients daily. However, they are critical in removing obstacles along the patient's journey and preventing repeated failures. The cardiac consultant

acknowledged his team's shortcomings and took ownership of the situation, emphasising the importance of accountability and continuous improvement. I expect senior management in IT or other areas to also step up to the plate, admit failures or shortcomings, and then help their teams remove obstacles to success.

Takeaways:

- **Effective communication and collaboration:** prioritise clear and consistent communication between different teams and departments, sharing information and collaborating on solutions to prevent avoidable mistakes.

- **Single point of contact and ownership:** establish a single point of contact, such as a service owner or incident manager, to coordinate actions, improve accountability, and streamline decision-making.

- **Incident and problem management:** apply structured but flexible (empowered to the team) incident and problem management practices, promptly identifying and triaging incidents, investigating root causes, and

implementing preventive measures to enhance patient care and minimise errors.

- **Continuous improvement and value stream management:** embrace a culture of constant improvement, regularly reviewing processes, identifying bottlenecks, and implementing enhancements to optimise workflows and deliver better outcomes.

In conclusion, my hospital story serves as a powerful reminder of the core principles of ITSM: effective communication, cooperation, collaboration, problem management, and continuous improvement. Organisations can enhance patient care, streamline operations, and minimise risks by incorporating these principles into healthcare and service management.

Whether in a hospital ward or an IT service desk, prioritising these fundamentals enables us to deliver better services and provide optimal support to those who rely on us. No one wants a scenario whereby the operation (process) was a success, but it was a shame that the patient died (the customer became dissatisfied and went to another organisation).

Daniel Breston

Daniel facilitates challenging discussions and workshops for teams that want to benefit from technology methods. He is also on the board of itSMF UK, helping others share their stories.

Fighting for the ribbons: tales of assessment and accreditation

There is a quote attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte that goes something like "A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of coloured ribbon." Medals to you and me! Our itSMF UK face-to-face session in Manchester in June set out to prove just how true that statement is. For soldiers, read employees of our speakers' organisations and the coloured ribbons in this case were CMMI, SDI, ITIL, ISO 27001 and Cyber Essentials assessments and accreditations.

Nicci Postlethwaite from BT Business Managed Services (our hosts) was our first speaker. Nicci regaled us with the story of their journey to achieve three separate accreditations. First was a CMMI for Services accreditation, followed by a 3-star award for SDI's Service Desk Certification (SDC). Lastly, BT recently became the first organisation globally to complete a fully certified ITSM Maturity Assessment based on the ITIL Maturity Model. The assessment

was conducted by itSMF UK in their role as an Axelos Consulting Partner.

Nicci started by outlining some of the primary business benefits of aligning to industry standards, namely building credibility and trust, ensuring compliance, mitigating risks, increasing compatibility and providing key market differentiators. Giving us her more personalised perspective, Nicci explained that she felt the hidden and somewhat

greater business benefits are achieved by using the standards to inform internal quality frameworks, enabling benchmarking (both internally and externally) and identifying opportunities to improve customer experience and organisational maturity. By using the various ISO, SDI and CMMI frameworks it has enabled her area of BT to thrive and drive a culture of standardisation, maturity and continual improvement.

Nicci then provided a brief overview of how BT Business Managed Services started on the journey using CMMI for Service to provide them with a solid foundation of standardisation in core business processes and ITIL practices. She then followed by talking about the SDI assessment experience along with how they navigated the uncharted waters of being the first organisation to undergo a fully certified ITSM Maturity Assessment.

Nicci said that BT highlighted (during the assessments) the importance of using collaboration tools and digital technology, taking things step by step and engaging stakeholders at every stage.

Reflecting on the journey thus far, Nicci summarised that "the more you look to align with industry standards and frameworks, the easier it becomes when you use an iterative approach hand in hand with a culture of improvement." Using the standards to drive upwards of 650 improvements, Nicci stressed the importance of "embracing the journey as that's where the value lies." The whole BT team are looking forward to seeing where the road leads in the future, but for now they are on a path with clear sight of the next improvement goals.

Are standards worthwhile?

Second to speak was Richard Horton from the National Institute of Health Research's Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (NIHR CRNCC for short!) Richard focused on their journey to achieving the ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials security standards. Despite the importance of this topic, it isn't always easy to achieve engagement within the organisation. Richard started by taking us through the imaginative and diverse set of blogs that he has used to enthuse his stakeholders. His ability to draw parallels through everyday

topics and pertinent cyber concepts was fascinating.

Richard then posed a simple question: are standards worthwhile? "For us at CRNCC, implementing ISO27001 and holding ourselves to account through external assessment has had a significant impact on how secure we are. The plumbline of an external assessor makes a real difference. And, while achieving it involves more work, apart from the external audit itself, I see it as no more than what we should be doing anyway. So, yes, very much worthwhile."

Richard went further adding, "The more interesting angle from my perspective is that our ISO27001 journey has helped us to uncover the power of education. In particular, we talk about information security matters from different perspectives, usually employing stories that have nothing to do with work – for example, how road signs and car MOTs help us to complete journeys and stay safe. These analogies help people to think about the underlying issues rather than just ticking a compliance box."

For more information on this approach, check out Richard's blog on the itSMF UK website: The Inside Story of a popular security management blog – itSMF UK.

His one critical piece of advice is that it's a people thing. "Yes, you need your patching regime to work. But, so much of how secure you are depends on the effectiveness of your education. That starts from the top with senior management promoting and prioritising good practice, and seeps through to your staff. When situations crop up staff are then equipped to make appropriate day to day decisions."

Own the process!

After a sandwich lunch kindly provided by BT it was the turn of Barry Corless from CGI to analyse the whole assessment process from the point of view of the auditor. Barry has delivered many SDC audits for SDI in addition to ITIL audits over the past 20 years. His own organisation has held SDI's 5-star World Class Service Desk accreditation for 11 years. Those exploits and experiences were central to his key messages.

Covering activity in advance of the audit, Barry emphasised the importance of ownership of the process. "It is not an 'end of desk' activity. It must be allocated ringfenced time if you are to get the value you expect from the whole process and give yourself the chance of a result that is a true reflection of your position."

During the audit itself, it cannot be forgotten that some evidence can be difficult to find or articulate. Barry suggested that "the observation sessions that typically accompany an audit should be used to try to fill any gaps in persuading your auditor that you do indeed comply with the standard."

And at the end of the assessment? With a positive outcome you should celebrate success. Audits and assessments are group efforts. Barry added that, in his experience, "auditees often find they are better than you thought they might be. Tell the story of your success but don't forget to add context for external messaging to other parts of your organisation. For example, if a compliance audit opens up new markets or opportunities then don't be afraid to 'blow your own trumpet'."

Barry suggested (tongue in cheek) that his key piece of advice was to ply your auditor with coffee and cake. More seriously, he added, "Don't be tempted to embellish the truth. In evidenced audits, you will be asked to prove it at some stage. Even in non-evidenced audits you are just cheating yourself."

What really struck home during the day was that, despite the variety of organisations, standards and rationales for doing assessments and chasing the ribbons, so much of the key advice was common to all three speakers. The passion that all three had for the journey were backed up by positive business outcomes. The soldiers at their organisations fought long, hard, and successfully for their bit of coloured ribbon and they're not giving them up in a hurry!

Barry Corless

Barry Corless is Director Consulting Expert at CGI and a former Chair of itSMF UK.

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