

serviceTALK

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IT service design: should we include UX/UI?



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What a difference a year makes

Glancing back at last year's ServiceTalk Conference Edition, it's hard to believe how much has been achieved across our membership over the last 12 months.

Last November our Women in ITSM Community of Practice (CoP) was still in its infancy, with one online event under its belt and an in-person gathering planned for early '25 at CenterParcs. Similarly, the Service Design CoP was little more than an idea at that time, with a group of enthusiasts reaching out to colleagues in other organisations.

Fast forward to November 2025, and both groups are flourishing. Women in ITSM, led by BT's Valerie Wilson, now has a regular programme of events focusing on leadership and inspiration within service management; and, following on from last month's very successful online forum, they will be meeting up at Bombay Sapphire Distillery in Whitchurch in March. That's just one of our exciting line-up of signature events for 2026 – you can find out about the others on the following pages.

As for the Service Design CoP, you need only browse through this issue of ServiceTalk to appreciate just how busy the group has been this year. On page 7, their chair Chevonne Hobbs shines some light on the reasons behind the CoP's rapid membership growth, and unveils a new white paper for those on the nursery slopes of service design and transition (or even a little higher up the mountain). Chevonne has also contributed to this issue an excellent article on user experience and service design, while fellow CoP member Rachael Elliot describes a day in the life of a service architect.

Those communities of practice, along with our regional meet-ups and regular events on topics such as XLA, SIAM, ITIL and AI,

lie at the heart of itSMF UK's role as a forum for sharing knowledge, expertise, and different approaches to common issues. They are also the perfect place to work together on new guidance – in the form of papers, presentations or webinars – to help others find their way in the complex and ever-evolving service management world. If you have a burning desire to help lead a community in a new or under-represented area of ITSM, we'd love to hear from you.

Also in ServiceTalk this month...

- Ian MacDonald proposes a value-related rebrand for ITIL-based roles, offering a refresh for some of the legacy job titles that have served us in the past. As he says, names do matter, and getting them right helps us to communicate our purpose more effectively to our customers.
- Is it a product or a service? Roman Zhuravlev creates a lifecycle model to help clarify the relationship between these two key entities.
- Richard Horton applies some sound service management thinking to his recent house renovation – and considers how a little certification goes a long way; and
- Rosemary Lott has some tips for potential volunteers after 20 years in the itSMF community: it's all about professional growth, networking, and giving back.

It must be Conference time

Right now, of course, we're gearing up for ITSM25 - Europe's favourite service management conference. The itSMF UK Team are really looking forward to meeting everyone at the event's new home at Stadium MK in Milton Keynes, with well over 400 attendees, 52 great presentations, and a lot more space for networking and interaction.

If you're reading the print edition of this publication, you'll find your Conference Guide in the centre pages. If you're reading it online, you might have just missed out on a great event, but we'd love to see you next year.

Speaking of which, 2026 will be the 35th anniversary of the annual conference, which has served the ITSM community faithfully since 1991 – even going online in 2020/21 when COVID prevented an in-person meeting.

Never one to miss the opportunity for a good retrospective, I'd love to hear your recollections of past conferences – the changing faces, the presentation topics that came and went, that discussion over coffee during a break that maybe changed your career direction or gave you a whole new perspective on a pressing issue. What did you prefer in past years, and what do we do better today? Let me know your thoughts via the email address below.

And if you are in Milton Keynes this year, I'll see you there!



Mark Lillycrop
Head of Professional Services, itSMF UK
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New faces on the itSMF UK Board

Following the recent member election, we are pleased to announce that two new members have joined the Board: Dave Gordon and Chris Kingsbury.

Dave Gordon is Global Service Manager at Arcadis. In his 20+ year career in ITSM, he has led large teams through complex service transformations and managed stakeholder relationships at executive level. With experience as a trustee of a local mental health charity and qualifications in ITIL, PRINCE2 and Lean Six Sigma, he says he appreciates the value of the strong professional networks and knowledge sharing that itSMF provides to our community.

As Director of Business Consulting at CGI, Chris Kingsbury has led a team of consultants delivering strategic ITSM transformations across defence, government, utilities, and education. With hands-on expertise spanning SACM, data strategy, configuration

management and IT controls, he was awarded itSMF UK's Ashley Hanna Contributor of the Year award in 2021 and Content of the Year award in 2023.

itSMF UK Chair Claire Drake said she was delighted to welcome Dave and Chris to the Board, with all the knowledge and experience that they bring to the organisation. She also expressed her sincere gratitude to Rosh Hosany and Nathan McDonald, who are stepping down after an impressive eight years on the Board.

Meanwhile, Cristan Massey and Kevin Sharp continue on the Board for another year as Vice Chair and Leadership Council Chair respectively. Jason Hamer also serves another year, while Yogesh Patel, Val Wilson, Vawns Murphy and Keith Reeves are re-appointed for two years.



Dave Gordon



Chris Kingsbury

Maria joins the team

We are delighted to welcome a new member to the itSMF UK team, with Maria Bellon Berlanga joining as Event Administrator. Maria will be helping to ensure the smooth delivery of our ever increasing event schedule moving forward.

Graham McDonald, itSMF UK General Manager commented: "I'm thrilled to have Maria join our small but mighty team. With her support, we will have even more time to connect with the ever expanding member community. Looking forward to the great things we'll all achieve together!"



Maria Bellon Berlanga

Discount prices on service management publications

If you're attending ITSM25, why not call at the bookstore during your visit? Run by our publishing partner TSO, the store will be offering a wide range of new and established books at 10% discount. From the latest guidance on ITIL and customer experience to design thinking and humanising IT, you will find something for all interests.

And don't forget that itSMF UK members can also enjoy 10% discount at our online store. Next time you're online, visit the bookstore at itSMF.co.uk – but remember to sign in first.



itSMF UK events: dates for your diary

	PRICE	CPD POINTS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MASTERCLASSES														
Configuration Management	£295	7					06-07 (O)							
Continual Improvement	£295	7						18 (O)						
Creating a Digital Management System	£295	7						16 (O)						
Cultural Change	£295	7												
Enterprise Service Management	£295	7			26-27 (O)									
Human-centred Design for ITSM	£295	7			TBC									
Introduction to ITSM (Part One)	£99	7		TBC										
Introduction to ITSM (Part Two)	£99	7		TBC										
IT Asset Management	£295	7												
IT Service Continuity Management	£295	7				14-15 (O)								
Kanban for ITSM	£295	7						4 (O)						
Re-imagining the CAB	£295	7							7-8 (O)					
XLA Design	£295	7			24 (O)									
XLA Implementation and the XMO	£295	7	27 (O)				TBC							
SIGNATURE EVENTS														
AI in ITSM	FREE	7									29 (O)			
Challenge Cup 2026	FREE	4										TBC		
Cyber in ITSM	FREE	7		26 (BL)										
Digital Transformation Simulation	FREE	7			26 (M)				15 (N)					
Health & Wellbeing at Work	FREE	4	29 (O)											
ITIL Case Study Day	FREE	7									17 (B)			
ITSM Tooling Day	FREE	4				23 (O)								
ITSM26 Conference & Awards	SEE WEB	15											09-10 (MK)	
SIAM	FREE	4						09 (O)						
Women in ITSM	FREE	7			05 (W)									
XLA26	FREE	7							07 (SC)					
MEMBER MEET-UP/LUNCH & LEARN														
Communitites of Practice	FREE	1			05 (O)			11 (O)			17 (O)			10 (O)
Member Meetup/Lunch & Learn	FREE	1		TBC										
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL														
Council Meetings	FREE	1	14 (O)	11 (O)	11 (O)	15 (O)	20 (O)	17 (O)	15 (O)		16 (O)	14 (O)	09 (MK)	09 (O)
FORUMS & WEBINARS														
Service Management Forum - Sector Spotlight	FREE	4												
Webinars	FREE	1												

Key: (B) Birmingham, (BL) Bletchley, (GI) Glasgow, (Le) Leeds, (L) London, (M) Manchester, (MK) Milton Keynes, (N) Northamptonshire, (O) Online, (SC) Sutton Coldfield, (S) Scotland, (W) Whitchurch *Number of CPD points is dependent on the duration of the event or ticket type purchased - please see specific event outline for details. For the exact location, or where location is not listed, please visit the website for latest details.



Planning for service design

Some of the co-authors of the paper: Sarah Routledge, Bhuvana Sriharimohan, Anthony Steer, Rachael Elliot and Chevonne Hobbs.

With the publication of a new paper on service design and transition, written by members of our newest Community of Practice (CoP), ServiceTalk's Mark Lillycrop caught up with lead author Chevonne Hobbs to discuss the focus of this important contribution to ITSM guidance.

ML Chevonne, this has been a busy year for the Service Design CoP – there's clearly a great thirst for information around design and transition, and lots of new content coming down the line. Why do we need it now?

CH In recent years, service design has not had a strong presence within ITSM. We have service design in the industry but it's been more broadly focused on products and services used in the public domain. There's not been much content around for those working in IT-related design. There are numerous people doing IT service design either as a dedicated role or blended with other responsibilities within their own organisations, but I think they have been feeling isolated and have lacked an operational network to help them share their ideas and seek inspiration. As a result they were left wondering whether they were doing things the right way, and what the alternatives were.

The biggest gap, in my view, is in leadership. Many organisations don't have a service design practice lead, and those performing the design tasks sometimes need that leadership vision for the practice to be successful. Design and transition are often reporting into an operational director who is managing a number of different teams so they never get to focus solely on what a design & transition practice should look like and how it's delivering value to the business.

As we started to set up the community of practice, I wanted to help IT leaders understand what service design is all about, why we need it, and what governance and KPIs need to be in place to bring it to life. Having been head of service design with a number of previous employers, I feel I can help others to build those teams effectively, and in a way that will help reduce risk and cost within ITSM.

ML Yes, that makes complete sense. Now, when you set up the CoP, you split into strategic and operational working parties. What was the thinking behind that?

CH At the beginning I thought that this CoP would be about strategic direction – helping businesses to understand where design and transition fits in. Initially I assumed there was

enough information around to address the day-to-day design issues, so that wasn't my main concern. I soon realised, though, that many design professionals were looking for support at an operational level as well.

I didn't think I could do justice to both roles at the same time. But after a chance discussion with Simon McCarthy at the Department for Work and Pensions, I discovered that one of this team in DWP, Katie Edwards, had already put together a network to address these operational design considerations. She was more than happy to lead this group within the CoP, and expand her existing public group and include the private sector as well.

That has worked extremely well and left me free to focus on the strategic side, so I'm very grateful to Katie for joining forces with me on this project.

ML So moving to the new Service Design white paper that we are launching at ITSM25, has this emerged from the strategic group or the operational team?

CH The paper comes from the strategy team and is aimed at IT leaders and practitioners who are either setting up a design practice or looking to improve one. That has always been the principal aim of the CoP – to provide the tools to support leaders in this area, and make sure they have the guidance in place to make everything work as it should.

ML The paper is nicely structured, with sections on vision, roles, tools, KPIs, governance, etc. How do you recommend readers use the content? Is it a case of dipping into the relevant sections or absorbing the whole paper?

CH I would recommend reading through the whole paper and then going back and picking out the parts that are most relevant to your specific needs and current situation. The paper was written by an eclectic group of experienced design professionals from various backgrounds – Anthony Steer (Lead Design Architect, University of Birmingham), Bhuvana Sriharimohan (Head of Service Design & Transition, ITV), Lisa Jeffrey (IT Technology Manager, TJX), Rachael Elliot (Principle Consultant, CGI), Sarah Routledge

(Service Design Manager), Simon McCarthy (Head of Service Design & Transition, DWP), Tim Hughes (Service Design & Transition Manager, Independent Consultant) and myself. You couldn't ask for more relevant guidance, and there will be something in there for every organisation and design function.

We're very aware as an authoring team, though, that we don't know everything. We were all learning from each other as we went along, and we know that every business is unique and has distinct requirements.

As we discussed the processes and artefacts that we were recommending, it gave us an opportunity to reflect on our own organisations and consider further improvements that we could put in place.

ML I guess that's the value of co-authoring a paper of this kind. You're giving of your knowledge and expertise, but at the same time you're learning from your colleagues about different approaches and exploring other alternatives.

CH Yes indeed. And another thing that we quickly realised was that we all had a different perspective of the relationship between service design and service transition. In some organisations the two can be inextricably linked, with design professionals covering transition or vice versa; or they can be more distinct with service architects following ITIL and maybe TOGAF principles and the transition team moving more into PRINCE2 and AGILE.

So you can't say for sure what that relationship between the two practices should look like, and there's no right or wrong answer. But we did feel that we needed to address both design and transition roles and responsibilities within the paper, and as we move forward we can see the CoP branching out to cover both sides in more depth.

ML Chevonne, thank you for your insights into the new paper. Good luck with the CoP!

Anyone interested in joining the Service Design Community of Practice should contact membership@itsmf.co.uk. The new paper can be downloaded from our Blogs and Whitepapers area.



A day in the life of a
service architect

Ever wondered what a typical day looks like for someone juggling the hats of a service architect? It's a dynamic blend of strategy, collaboration, and relentless attention to detail, says Rachael Elliot.

This 'day in the life' provides a representative snapshot of the activities carried out by a service architect, particularly where outputs from the Service Acceptance Criteria (SAC) are captured and fed directly into the Service Design Pack (SDP). The SDP, in turn, defines the assurance levels necessary to support a successful Early Life Support (ELS) phase and ongoing live service operations.

While this account captures a typical day, it is important to recognise that the role is dynamic, and its scope can vary significantly across different industries, organisations and programme landscapes.

Here's a behind-the-scenes glimpse into a day in the life of this multi-faceted role.

Morning kickoff: the daily check-in

Every day begins with two key check-ins:

- Service design practice check-in. This is the daily sync with peers to discuss the day's priorities and surface blockers, and tap into collective intelligence for guidance.
- Project check-in. Here, the focus shifts to providing progress updates on service design and transition activities to project managers and escalating any project-specific issues.

This dual-check-in structure ensures alignment both within the service design practice and with broader project teams.

Stakeholder engagement: the engine behind service design

A big part of the role involves identifying and working closely with the right stakeholders. From collaborating on service acceptance criteria to capturing and refining inputs into service design packs, communication is constant and critical. Key steps include:

- Identifying and agreeing service requirements.
- Reviewing the SAC checklist to track progress and priorities.
- Organising meetings to define expectations and outstanding deliverables.
- Updating SAC statuses using RAG indicators.
- Iteratively building and refining the SDP through stakeholder input.

Building the SDP: deep, not long

The SDP is the cornerstone and living artefact – it must be comprehensive yet concise, a single point of reference for IT operations once the service goes live. Activities feeding into this include:

- Documenting end-to-end service responsibilities across multiple service providers.
- Engaging service owners for commercial and contractual details.
- Drafting the service model to connect all service components seamlessly.
- Collating testing and validation inputs, ensuring everything has been thoroughly vetted.

The goal? A robust, end-to-end view of how the service is designed, costed, governed, and supported.

Bridging technical and service worlds

Regular attendance at technical design meetings ensures the service perspective is represented throughout the solution lifecycle. Likewise, participation in testing readiness reviews and test collaboration is crucial to guarantee service completeness.

Governance and approval: getting to go-live

Progressing a service to live status involves navigating the governance maze:

- Writing and presenting ORR (Operational Readiness Review) and FOR (Final Operational Readiness) packs at a Service Transition Board (STB).
- Confirming that all transition review meetings are completed, and the SDP reflects the accepted service state.
- Gaining formal approval through a STB, while capturing and resolving any caveats or observations.

Continuous improvement and knowledge sharing

Beyond delivery, there's a strong focus on evolving the Service Design and Transition (SDT) function:

- Sharing lessons learned and process improvements.

- Participating in the monthly or quarterly SDT CSI (Continual Service Improvement) review meetings.
- Logging enhancements in a CSI register for future iterations.

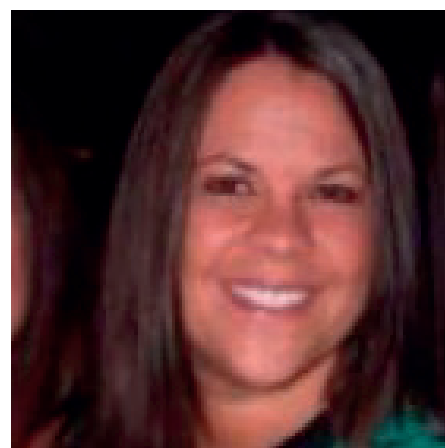
Monthly 1:1s and looking ahead

Finally, monthly 1:1s with the service design practice manager offer a moment of reflection; discussing progress, receiving guidance, and preparing for the next wave of service engagements.

Final thoughts

Whether championing new services, aligning stakeholders, or ensuring seamless go-lives, the work of a service architect is both challenging and immensely rewarding. It's not just about ticking boxes, it's about building services that are resilient, operationally sound, and truly fit for purpose; having a foot in all IT and business camps.

If you're considering stepping into this role or already navigating it, remember: your SDP is your story, your stakeholders are your collaborators, and your service is your legacy.



Rachael Elliot

Rachael Elliot is a highly experienced and qualified leader in IT operations, service design & transition, and service management. She partners with clients across sectors to deliver insight-led improvements and measurable business outcomes.

**Is it time to
ditch our
Ronseal[®]
job titles?**

Does
what
on the

Ian MacDonald proposes a value-related rebrand for our ITIL-based roles.

Ronseal® is a well-known UK brand, best known for woodcare and DIY products. They are known for their no-nonsense marketing of their products with their long running iconic slogan “Does exactly what it says on the tin” providing customers with clarity, simplicity, and trust.

So, what’s this got to do with ITIL?

In many ways, ITIL has long embraced the same philosophy. Since its origins in the late '80s, through V2, V3 and now ITIL 4, the job titles associated with core ITIL processes have barely changed. Think: *Service Desk Analyst. Incident Manager. Problem Manager. Service Level Manager.* These job titles are functional, familiar and describe exactly what the role entails. In essence they’ve become the ‘Ronseal’ labels of IT... they do exactly what they say on the tin.

But here’s a thought: ITIL has evolved and maybe our job titles should too. Why not, as ITIL 4 has significantly changed the ITSM mindset?

ITIL V2 and V3 focused extensively on defining the internal processes, roles and metrics that focused on delivering service

quality. ITIL 4 now shifts the emphasis from delivering service quality to creating value and facilitating customer outcomes through products and services. Every service provider now needs to recognise the commercial imperative in demonstrating the value of its services and their IT capabilities. Remember if customers don’t perceive value, they will recognise cost!

The observation is that the ‘traditional’ ITIL titles are deeply rooted in internal operations. They describe what you do, but they fail to express the value you bring. In some cases, they may even carry unhelpful or negative connotations. Consider:

- Problem Management, the name itself is tied to failure. It doesn’t exactly promote a compelling value proposition centred on protecting service.
- Major Incident Management conveys an image about firefighting and damage limitation rather than resilience to recover quickly.
- The Service Desk has become synonymous with break/fix and the place to go when things go wrong rather than user enablement.

In a world where IT now needs to constantly prove its strategic value, persisting with our legacy team and job titles is a missed opportunity to better convey their purpose and value to the wider organisation.

Some organisations are already doing this. Here are some rebrands that I’ve seen or personally used that better align job titles with purpose and value: **See figure 1.**

These titles feel more relevant and compelling and better communicate why the

team/role exists and the value it brings to service provision.

Names matter, they signal purpose, value, and identity. The right title makes it clear what a team does and why it matters, highlighting its strategic role across the organisation and its value to customers. But it’s not just about perception. Meaningful titles also build pride and clarity within teams. When roles are named to reflect their true mission, e.g. Service Protection instead of Problem Management, people feel more connected, motivated, and aligned. A purposeful title can change how work is seen and how it feels to do it.

What team and role names in your IT organisation could benefit from a rebrand?

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Ian MacDonald

Ian MacDonald is an award-winning ITSM consultant, author and trainer.

Figure 1

Traditional function title	Value focused rebrand (function)	Value focused rebrand (job title)
Major Incident Management	Service Recovery	Service Recovery Manager
Problem Management	Service Protection	Service Protection Manager
Change Management	Change Enablement (ITIL 4 gets this right!)	Change Enablement Manager
Service Desk	User Experience Centre	User Experience Analyst
Service Level Management	Customer Experience	Customer Experience Manager
Capacity Management	Service Performance & Scalability	Service Performance Manager
Release Management	Service Readiness	Service Readiness Manager
Computer Operations	Digital Operations Centre	Digital Operations Analyst



Digital products and services: better together

How we define and combine digital products and services is now the source of some debate within the industry. Roman Zhuravlev sets out to dispel the confusion.

In today's digital economy, the once-clear boundaries between goods and services have blurred into a continuum, where most offerings combine both elements. With the rise of service-based models and digital transformation, the focus has shifted from ownership to outcomes—access, experience, and value creation now take precedence. This shift has led to the emergence of *digital products* (technology resources configured to offer value) and *digital services* (economic relationships enabling value through access and use, without transferring ownership).

Rather than viewing digital products and services as separate entities, it is more practical to treat them as two perspectives on a single, customer-focused solution. They share a common lifecycle—from discovery and design to delivery and support—and should be managed together to ensure alignment between intended and actual value. Organisations may take on roles as product vendors, service providers, or consumers, and successful value creation

depends on clear ownership, collaboration, and integration across these roles. This approach supports a holistic, value-driven strategy aligned with ITIL principles and modern management practices.

The history of terms

Goods and services

Historically, there was a clear distinction between goods and services:

- Goods are tangible, transferrable, and change hands in the course of economic relationships.
- Services are intangible and based on providing access to resources and/or performing service actions. Resources used to provide services remain under control (and often remain a property) of the service provider.
- In practice, 'goods-services' is a continuum

and real-life economic relationships are almost always a mix: goods sold in a shop may come with delivery and assembly services, and services such as hospitality may involve transferring some goods to the customers (water bottles and toiletries provided in a hotel room).

- The term 'product' was often used a synonym of 'good', with emphasis on the difference from 'service'.

Service economy

The service economy of the 21st Century has introduced a significant shift towards the 'service' side of the continuum. Renting instead of owning has become an important trend in both private and business sectors. The benefits of 'achieving the desired outcomes without having to manage specific costs and risks' combined with greater scalability and reduced CAPEX (compared to the resource ownership) have made service

consumption attractive to organisations and individuals. This, in turn, has led to the rise of service providers in various industries.

- The term 'product', although still sometimes used as a synonym of 'good', has evolved into "something that is produced with a purpose" or, in ITIL 4, "a configuration of an organisation's resources designed to offer value for a consumer."
- The focus on the **intended value** is also manifested in another group of definitions similar to "something that has the potential to create value for customers and generate revenue for the company".

As a result, depending on the adopted definition of product, services are seen either as *a form of product* or as *a form of economic exchange based on products*. In the latter case, it is assumed that **value is not embedded in products but emerges when customers use products or interact with service providers** (service-dominant logic).

Adding digital

At the same time, digital transformation has significantly increased the role of technology in business and private life. Organisations and individuals are now **enabled by digital technology to do business significantly differently, or to do significantly different business**. This has introduced the concepts of *digital products and services*. The definitions and relationships between the two concepts depend on the approach to the definitions of 'products' and 'services' adopted.

People and organisations with a software development background tend to describe digital products as intrinsically valuable ("products deliver value"). This approach works better with digital products than with 'analogue' because consumers often use products by accessing digital resources directly (via apps or web), with no goods transferred or actions performed by the provider. Digital products are operated (maintained) by the product vendor, but no direct service delivery interactions with customers may be needed. Advanced monitoring of the product performance allows product malfunctions to be detected and corrected (or predicted and prevented) before they affect customers, and even when they do, most or all restoration work is performed on the provider's side.

Conversely, people and organisations that have been using service-dominant logic could describe digital products as follows:

- **A digital product is a combination of the organisation's technology resources designed to offer value to consumers.**
- **A digital service is a means of enabling value for consumers through the use of digital technology, without transferring the ownership of the related digital products to the consumer.**

In this approach, digital services are always based on digital products, and digital products' value is always realised through digital services.

The primary form of digital service delivery and consumption is access to the respective digital products; however, in some cases, service actions and transfer of goods may be used. Consider a smart watch: the service includes transfer (sale) of the device; access to the app and through the app – to the cloud-based product resources; and in some cases, service actions such as initial setup of the device and the app.

Where are we now?

Although the brief history of the terms shows that different people and organisations are likely to have adopted different definitions of digital products and services, it seems reasonable and practical to agree that:

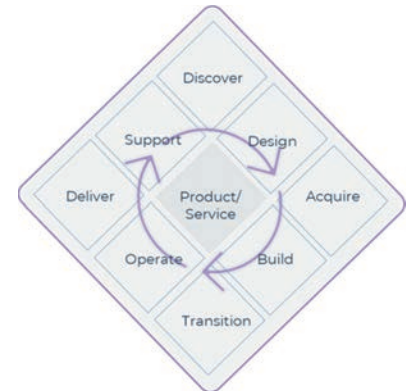
- Digital products are combinations of technology resources designed to offer value to a target consumer group. They were previously known as IT systems and may also be referred to as digital solutions. Digital products are offered to the consumers 'as-a-service' and rarely transferred to the consumers.
- Digital services (previously known as IT services) are a form of economic relationship between digital service providers and consumers. Digital services are always based on digital products. The intended value of digital products is realised through digital services.
- Digital products and digital services are two perspectives of one technology-based solution for customers' needs; they share the same lifecycle and should be managed as one, rather than contrasted.

The shared lifecycle

The shared lifecycle of digital products and services can be described as eight key stages:

- **Product and service discovery**, where product and service positioning and roadmap are agreed and continually updated;
- **Product and service design**, where digital product and service specifications and prototypes are created;
- **Resource and service acquisition and allocation**, where resources and external services needed for the next stages are acquired and/or allocated;
- **Product and service building and testing**, where digital products and services are built, configured, and tested;
- **Product and service transition**, where tested digital products are deployed to the live environment, and required service delivery and support capabilities are established or updated;

- **Product operation**, where the digital product is operated and maintained. This enables service delivery;
- **Service delivery**, where services based on the digital product are delivered and consumed. This may include providing access to the product resources, transferring goods, and fulfilling service requests;
- **Product and service support**, where normal product operation and service delivery are restored in case of incident.



Six out of the eight stages should be applied to digital products and services, and ignoring one of these two aspects almost inevitably results in a misalignment between the intended and experienced value for the consumers.

From the lifecycle to a value chain

To manage digital products and services, organisations develop respective management capabilities. For example, to design products and services, we need to have relevant knowledge, skills, tools, and so on. The eight lifecycle stages can be translated into eight value chain activities, each supported by multiple management practices: to do product and service design, the organisation might need such practices as business analysis, availability management, risk management, and others.

The lifecycle model is useful as a representation of the product and service statuses, but it does not work as a model of the organisation's activities:

- All eight activities may be performed at the same time, applied to different products and services, and to different versions of the same product and service.
- Not every organisation performs all eight activities; many decide to delegate some of these activities to other organisations.

In line with the proposed definitions of digital products and services, organisations may adopt the roles of product vendor, service provider, and service consumer.

- Product vendors are responsible for the creation and continual improvement of digital products;

- Service providers are responsible for the delivery and support of digital services;
- Service consumers are responsible for the procurement and use of digital services.

Some organisations (and teams) combine the roles of digital product vendor and service provider; others prefer to focus on one of these roles. Those who prefer to act only as a service provider or a product vendor should nevertheless consider both perspectives when they perform management activities. They should also know who is responsible for the product and service lifecycle stages outside their control, and how this impacts the quality and experience of the customers and users.

Value chain activities may be performed in different combinations, depending on the product and service they are applied to and on the organisation's context. Combinations of these activities form the organisation's value streams.

Summary and practical recommendations

Focus on value, think and work holistically. 'Digital product' and 'digital services' are two

perspectives of one solution. They have a shared lifecycle and should be managed as one.

Organisations may decide to take responsibility for all or some of the digital product and service lifecycle stages. In the latter case, it is important to understand who is responsible for the rest of the lifecycle and to establish appropriate relationships with those parties. **Collaborate and promote visibility.**

Start where you are. Today, some organisations may have isolated 'product' and 'service' teams who do not collaborate well. The first step is to recognise that they manage different aspects of the same solutions, and to discuss the current distribution of responsibilities. Product and service tribes have more in common than they might think. **Progress iteratively with feedback.**

Keep it simple and practical. Integration of digital product and service management does not need complicated tools or new processes. It is based on a shared view of the solution lifecycle and a shared understanding of the intended and realised value for service consumers and other stakeholders.

Optimise and automate. Once the responsibilities for each stage of the product and service lifecycle are clear, use value stream mapping to understand and optimise the flow of work, information, and artifacts. When optimising, consider automation opportunities.



Roman Zhuravlev

Roman Zhuravlev is ITIL Senior Architect at PeopleCert and a popular speaker, author and trainer.

IT service design: should we include UX/UI?



As organisations embrace digital transformation, the once-clear boundaries between service design and UX are starting to blur, says Chevonne Hobbs. This convergence offers an opportunity for designers to rethink how we define, design, and deliver services, not just from a technical standpoint, but a human-centred one.

At its core, service design has always been about delivering value, increasing customer satisfaction and helping teams deliver high quality services efficiently. It's about designing real experiences that capture customer touchpoints, technologies, and the teams used to deliver them. Ensuring the experience is a pleasurable one relies on service designers being human and having a deep understanding of human behaviour.

UI and UX in service design

The user interface sits at the heart of the design of a product or digital service; it's where designers create wireframes and prototypes or beta versions of their apps. They re-iterate the design of said product or digital service once the UX has been fully tested by the customer and employees, and before releasing it into the live public domain.

When creating your service design journey map or blueprint, you need to identify what tasks are being worked on and by whom (customer or employee) to begin to understand these touchpoints; this should be the basis for a requirements list for your UI, and later tested for service readiness and operational readiness. Once testing is successful and complete you can start creating your XLA metrics for continuous improvement.

From SLA to XLA: measuring customer experiences

In traditional IT service management, Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have been the standard for defining IT performance. But in today's environments, SLAs fall short. They measure what IT can do, not what users *experience*. That's where Experience Level Agreements (XLAs) come in.

Unlike SLAs, XLAs focus on the emotional and cognitive experiences of end users. They ask: *Did the user feel supported? Did the service help them achieve their goals? Was the interaction smooth and satisfying?*

For this reason, XLAs don't just belong in the ITSM domain, they demand close integration with UX/UI design. In fact, this evolution points to a larger shift, as it's about designing end-to-end service experiences that align user needs with a more natural form of human behaviour.

Service design approach

When designing ANY service, ITIL 4 offers an excellent guide: namely the four dimensions of service and product management. This guidance can be used to shape your service design journey map and blueprints under the headings of:

1. Organisation and people
2. Information and technology
3. Partners and suppliers
4. Value streams and processes

When building out your map or blueprint, I would recommend including the following:

1. Data capture
2. AI, RPA and automation
3. Cost to deliver
4. PESTLE (Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) factors.

The road ahead: AI in service design

In a world of non-stop discussions on AI, there is an undercurrent of how this will impact human lives. Do we figure out how AI can simply run all of our services? This may be a possibility, even a goal for some, but the service design aspect will still require a human touch if we need to ensure services are meaningful and delivering value, even if they're automated through AI platforms.

AI platforms can and will provide enhanced data metrics for user experience if configured to capture them correctly. But to configure your AI platforms correctly, you need to design those services to identify the touchpoints in the first place. Otherwise, what are you measuring?

Final thoughts

As service leaders, we're called to design with empathy, align with business value, and use the tools available, digital and human, to improve the experience. The future is blending UX and UI with service design. It's about uniting them to deliver smarter, more

responsive services, rethinking SLAs to embrace XLAs, and building multi-disciplinary teams that speak both IT and human. Then we're ready.

There's often a debate about whether UX/UI should sit in product or service design, and it can sit in both. The design of our tooling platforms for IT services should be designed and built in a way that uses UX/UI methodology and frameworks to help ensure a successful delivery. When these functions operate in silos, opportunities are lost.

What are your thoughts on this?



Chevonne Hobbs

Chevonne Hobbs has worked in IT for 25 years with organisations as diverse as Coca Cola, Leeman Brothers, CAP Gemini and Ricoh. She is currently Senior Manager IT Consultant at Illuminet Solutions.

Moving house: some notes for service managers



As he surveys his new property, Richard Horton reflects on certification, contract management, new technology and the need for a waterfall approach.

There was a crazy period in 2022 when we had 3 prime ministers, 4 treasurers, and 2 monarchs in the space of less than 63 days. I remember it well because in those 63 days my wife and I went from offering on a house to completing the purchase.

It was a 1930s house in need of significant work, epitomised by the gas check we had done on our first day which condemned the boiler. The EPC had declared it 'Good' but we weren't surprised or bothered, as we were already planning to have a major eco-retrofit project done, and we wouldn't be using gas in the future. It just meant we weren't able to use the house at all until the work was done.

The journey has been a long one. I like to say that no one thing we have done has been radical, but doing them all together has been groundbreaking to say the least. We used the best local architect for eco-work, and builders who are experienced in this space. But there was still a sense that everyone was learning on the job.

One of the best things we did was decide to seek a certification. Our contract with the builder only had this as an aspiration as no one knew how achievable it would be. This approach really sharpened both thinking and practice on the project and led to a

significantly better result. However, despite this, when we got towards the end of the project it became apparent we weren't going to meet the certification.

At that point we adopted a novel technique that sounded wild and whacky but which was spectacularly successful. We have ended up achieving certification for AECB Carbonlite Retrofit <https://aecb.net/aecb-carbonlite-retrofit-standard/>. This was sufficiently new that our architect and our assessor needed to go on training specifically so that they could conduct our certification. We think we might even be the first house in York to get it.

It's been quite a journey. Some elements of it cried out for a 'waterfall' approach. Once you have put the mechanical ventilation pipes in, you are not going to be raising the floorboards to move them. With this sort of project attention to detail is really important, and that doesn't stop at the design – the builders need to understand exactly what it is they are doing and why standard building techniques can give a bad result. Working with other suppliers could prove excruciatingly painful – I've previously written about this in [Could Do Better](#).

However there are other aspects that felt more 'agile' in nature. As customers we really benefited from being bought into the process.

My wife's knowledge and observation both helped get the design right and highlighted some potential problems before it was too late.

The thing that particularly makes me think of this in a service management context is the impact of the certification. Without that as a target we would have been a long way off where we wanted to get to. An air pressure test gives you an objective measure that what has been done is not achieving the target. As a result of this, approaches were altered and it really emphasised the importance to the builders of attending to detail.

At the end of the day we still needed some magic to be applied, and fortunately technology had advanced sufficiently to do this. I describe this as being an application of Ockham's Razor – the simplest solution being the best. All the other work had laid the foundation, but the simplest way of finding and filling holes turned out to be pressurising the house and spraying a sticky substance into the air that then got sucked into the holes. Clever.

There came a point where we needed to get into the house before it was finished. After that everything became very iterative. In some ways that was messy and inefficient,



particularly when we moved 80% of our stuff out for 2 days to do the magic bit. But it had got us into our house when we needed to be, and enabled us to start discovering snagging issues while there were still builders working on the house. It also enabled us to host Christmas with my family, an important landmark for us.

Inevitably there were times when we said, "Why did we not think of that earlier?" The answer is because we were juggling a building project with daily life, trying to sell the house we were living in, and with busy jobs to stay on top of. Overall though there is very little that we would have done differently.

For anyone wondering about the basics, we have knocked down and rebuilt the utility rooms, installed under floor heating downstairs and radiators upstairs, an air source heat pump, hot water tank, mechanical ventilation, triple glazed windows and external doors to the same standard, insulated the house internally using kingspan and special insulating tape, removed the chimney stacks (outside the house), put a new roof on, and installed solar panels and two batteries. Doing this led us to move the electric power supply and while we were at it we replaced the lead water pipes and finished it off with a new drive. We mostly kept with the existing structure of the house,

but did significantly remodel the kitchen and bathroom(s).

The builders overran by 7 months and were still working on the house when we moved in. They haven't finished dealing with the snagging list and we are still learning how to set the various controls to work effectively, notably when it is hot outside. However, to compensate, since March we've been in credit on our energy consumption, which is a nice feeling. And it feels like home.

So, some thoughts to finish with...

- What people learn when doing something like this can help with subsequent projects. As such it's helpful if they can see the context they are working in.
- Everything might make sense separately but when you combine them together the complexity factor, along with 'life just happens', can add significantly to the workload.
- Having an external target and a way of measuring progress against it can make a huge difference.
- Alertness to how technology is moving can help you to solve old style problems in new ways.



Richard Horton

Richard Horton is Head of IT Service Management at NIHR RDNCC. He is a former itSMF UK director with a history of running itSMF groups and events, and is the incoming chair of itSMF International.

The life of an itSMF VOLUNTEER

After more than 20 years in the itSMF community, Rosemary Lott reflects on how networking can change your career.

Sometimes the smallest decisions have the biggest impact. In 2001, a training company flyer landed on my desk. I almost threw it away—but something made me pause.

It advertised courses on service desks, planning changes, managing a CMDB—all wrapped up in something called ITIL.

In 2001 I was managing a service desk, a configuration team, the project office, and software licensing—routine responsibilities for an IT operations manager. My teams often asked about professional development. They weren't interested in purely technical certifications—they wanted recognition for their broader professional roles.

Curiosity got the better of me. I booked myself onto an ITIL Foundation course—“just to check it's suitable for the team,” I explained to my director. That decision would transform my professional life.

The power of networking

During the intense three-day course, everything suddenly clicked into place. ITIL gave meaning and structure to the work we were already doing and showed how it could be improved.

But the real turning point was meeting the course leader David Wheeldon. His passion for IT service management was infectious, and he generously offered advice and support as I considered becoming a freelance ITIL trainer. His encouragement—and his network—opened doors I hadn't even known existed.

By early 2003, I was moving into freelance training when David reminded me:

“As a freelancer, having a network of like-minded people is essential.” and he pointed me toward a small but growing organisation near Reading, UK—itSMF.

With nothing to lose, in March 2003, I became an individual member of itSMF UK. That's when the real journey began.

Becoming part of the itSMF community

At the time, itSMF UK was divided into regions. Each region had a Chair, who facilitated events and supported local

members. This structure made it easy for newcomers like me to find a community.

Behind the scenes, Executive Sub-Committees (ESCs) carried much of the workload. They relied heavily on volunteers to support the office staff and board members.

It was relatively easy to become a volunteer; you just mentioned it in passing to someone in the office and they welcomed you with open arms. As I was starting out as an independent trainer, I was interested in joining the Qualifications & Certifications (Q&C) committee. I was subsequently copied into an email from itSMF CEO Aidan Lawes to Vernon Lloyd, the Q&C Chair – possibly by mistake. Aidan said “I don't know who she is, I've not met her, but she seems keen, perhaps you could arrange a chat?”

I was in, and spent many productive hours working with Vernon and the team looking at how itSMF UK could promote ITSM and the relevant qualification schemes and researching some of the emerging standards too.

Vernon stood down as the committee chair in 2005 and an election for his successor was required. I put myself forward and was duly elected. By 2006, three years after joining as an individual member, I was now a committee chair on the itSMF UK board.

However, volunteering quickly became more than just “helping out”—it was now an opportunity to:

- Build lasting professional relationships
- Develop leadership and organisational skills
- Shape the future of ITSM

Of these, being part of the team shaping the future of ITSM has probably been one of my greatest professional achievements. In 2006 Aidan, who by now certainly did know who I was, called me in to the office for a chat. The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) were considering putting the licence to manage their standards and frameworks out to tender. Would I like to be involved and represent itSMF UK on a joint submission with EXIN and BCS? Absolutely, and we set to work. Sadly, however, it became clear that there were bigger players out there with more financial strength and infrastructure and we reluctantly withdrew our bid.

Doors that open through volunteering

Later that year, APMG International became the sole provider of qualifications related to the UK Government's Office of Government Commerce (OGC) methods.

But, as one door seemingly shut, another opened. As the Q&C ESC Chair, I was invited to the handover meeting where APMG formally took over their accreditation duties. I was invited by John Groom who was working at OGC at the time and whom I had only met briefly at a conference. When I asked him why, he said “There will be someone there that I think you should meet.”

He subsequently introduced me to Richard Pharro from APMG during a break, we chatted politely for a few minutes and exchanged business cards, then Richard moved on. It was a very busy day for him, and I left at the end of the day feeling none the wiser, but out there in the ITSM universe another lasting professional relationship had just been created.

A few weeks later, Richard called me. He was putting together a team of examiners for ITIL v2 and he was casting around for names of suitably qualified people for the post of Chief Examiner. I immediately knew who would be a good fit and, shortly afterwards, my itSMF colleague Barry Corless was announced as the new ITIL v2 Chief Examiner. He returned the favour shortly afterwards and I joined the team as a v2 Examiner for the Manager's Qualification.

When ITIL v3 was announced, I became part of the project team designing the certification scheme and later served as Lead Examiner for the ITIL v3 Foundation. The accompanying books were still being written by the lead authors, but there was already a need for a certification scheme. Over the following months, we designed a framework that continues to shape the learning journey of ITSM professionals worldwide. Collaborating with colleagues across Europe, we created a structure that balanced rigour with accessibility. It was intense, rewarding work—drafting syllabi, reviewing materials, and quality-controlling hundreds of exam questions—but the impact has endured.

What was itSMF doing during this time?

While ITIL v3 was gaining traction, itSMF had also been transforming. New chapters were emerging across the world, and in 2004 this momentum had led to the creation of itSMF International—a governance body designed to guide and support the growing community.

By 2008, I had the privilege of chairing the newly formed International Q&C group, working with chapters across continents and partnering with APMG to ensure consistency in qualifications. It was not without challenges—different languages, minimal resources in some countries, and competing priorities—but it showed me just how powerful volunteering can be when it unites people with a shared purpose.

Back in the UK, I continued my board journey and was elected Vice Chair in 2013. It was a turbulent time: membership was under pressure, governance issues lingered, and leadership changes were frequent. Yet these moments taught me something important: *volunteering isn't always easy, but true impact comes from resilience, collaboration, and never losing sight of the bigger picture.*

In 2015, I was elected Chair, working alongside yet another new CEO. By then, most governance challenges had been resolved, but a new question emerged: how could we keep itSMF relevant in a world where ITSM content and events were no longer scarce, but abundant—and often free online?

It was a call to innovate—to reimagine how we served our community and to lean into the values that had carried us so far: adaptability, passion, and connection. We refreshed our Special Interest Groups and gave the annual awards its own dedicated event, allowing us to shine a brighter light on contributors and their supporting organisations.

New topics also began to surface, including a growing awareness of mental health within the ITSM community. I ran the first mental health workshop at the annual conference and was both amazed and humbled by the numbers who attended, the stories that were shared, and the compassion shown by colleagues.

When my term as Chair ended in 2019, these mental health sessions continued—and even when the conference moved online during the Covid pandemic, they remained a fixture in the itSMF UK calendar. Today, they still stand as a reminder that our professional community is about more than frameworks and processes; it's about people.

By this stage, I had been active in the ITSM community for many years, so it was perhaps inevitable that my name had become familiar. Even so, I was surprised when I received a call asking if I would consider joining the itSMF International Board.

This gave me pause for thought. Many people assume itSMFI is just another chapter, but

it isn't. Each national chapter is its own legal entity, largely autonomous, serving its members through the sharing of intellectual property, case studies, experiences, publications, and events.

The International Executive Board (IEB) is a separate entity that provides overall guidance, governance, and support. Serving here demands a very different skillset from leading a chapter. It's less about deep ITSM expertise and more about enabling the global movement to thrive. The IEB needs accountants, salespeople, project managers, social media experts—people who can strengthen governance, support chapters, and encourage new ones to grow.

I accepted the invitation and joined the board in 2019, serving briefly as Vice Chair in 2021 before taking on the role of Chair from August 2021 to March 2025. This was a period of both challenge and renewal. The community was still grappling with the after-effects of the pandemic: some chapters closed and never reopened; others moved entirely online. Yet even in those difficult years, seeds of growth were being planted.

Today, we are seeing chapters rebuild their membership as the demand for face-to-face connection returns. New chapters are also emerging, and it has been especially inspiring to see the Asia-Pacific region and Africa once again represented after such a long absence.

For me, the true lesson of serving at the international level is this: *it isn't about what you know, but about what you can contribute to the collective growth of a global community.*

Lessons learned from volunteering

Earlier this year, in my role as Chair of itSMF International, I hosted the EGM where future plans were set out for Chapter leaders. This meeting was also the moment I announced my decision to step aside as Chair after more than 20 years of service. Richard Horton, the Chair-elect, suggested I share my journey as an itSMF volunteer—and the life-changing benefits of being part of this professional community.

One thing to bear in mind though is that although volunteering has its benefits to you (both professionally and personally and obviously also to the organisation you volunteer for), remember that your employer needs to be kept in the loop too!

I am incredibly grateful to my colleagues at Global Knowledge who have always strived to manage my schedule in such a way to allow me to attend conferences, board meetings and other itSMF events, especially if it also allowed me to connect with our customers, too.

Over two decades with itSMF, I have learned that volunteering gives back far more than it takes. It is not just about giving your time—it's about:

- Gaining perspective – seeing how others approach similar challenges.

- Expanding your network – meeting people who will influence and support your career.
- Creating impact – contributing to a community that elevates our entire profession.
- Building transferable skills – learning to collaborate with people outside your direct control is a critical skill in any organisation.

Looking back, volunteering and networking didn't just shape my career; they defined it.

Why you should get involved

If you're considering volunteering with itSMF, here are the top three benefits you'll gain:

- Professional growth – enhance your skills beyond the boundaries of your day job.
- Networking – connect with inspiring people who can change the direction of your career.
- Giving back – contribute to a community that supports thousands of professionals worldwide.

A call to action

My journey with itSMF started with a chance flyer and a leap of faith. Two decades later, I can confidently say: volunteering and networking can change your life.

If you haven't already, take that step—join, volunteer, help shape the next chapter of IT service management with itSMF.



Rosemary Lott

Rosemary Lott is a Director of Badger and Associates. She is an accredited ITIL trainer and has also contributed to the ITIL framework over as a number of years as an examiner, reviewer and contributing author. Community minded, she has also held voluntary positions as the Chair of itSMF UK and itSMF International.



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