

CA Technologies Spotlights a “Modernized” Approach to ITSM With CA Service Management 17.0



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Abstract

CA Technologies has quietly evolved a compelling set of features and capabilities that go hand in hand with the evolving role of IT service management (ITSM) as EMA has documented through extensive research.¹ CA's April 2017 announcement spotlights key components of this critical evolution—with a clear focus on modernization, improved look and feel, accelerated time to value, and relevance that serves both service analysts and end users. Other recent developments have also significantly broadened the reach and scope of CA Service Management in areas such as service desk, IT asset management (ITAM), integrated support for agile and DevOps, service catalog and dashboard enhancements, and the introduction of the xFlow Analyst Experience, which plays a central role in the April announcement. This impact brief addresses these and other CA advances in industry context.

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Event

On April 27, 2017, CA Technologies introduced significant enhancements to CA Service Management, targeting *improved user experience, enhanced analyst insights and collaboration, and a streamlined approach to product delivery and upgrades*. The following summary includes background on relevant core functionality as well as a list of enhancements made in CA Service Management 17.0:

Existing Core Functionality

- **xFlow Analyst Experience Features (pre-17.0)** – Introduced in 2016, xFlow is a unique capability for addressing the old bane of trouble ticketing in a very modern, and very human, context. A feature of CA Service Desk Manager, xFlow leverages the following options:
 - **Automated ticket assignment** – CA discovered that analysts often struggled when trying to match a list of rigid, predefined categories to their trouble-ticket options. Service Desk Manager addresses this by leveraging natural language processing and machine learning to automatically create tickets based on user descriptions. Elasticsearch can then be used to examine ticket categories created.
 - **Weather** – Much like a weather forecast helps plan for the day ahead, this feature provides an aggregated set of insights on what's awaiting a given analyst on a given day. It also consolidates analyst and team queues into a single view and highlights day-to-day and real-time changes.
 - **Heat** – This capability allows analysts to prioritize their work across multiple dimensions, rather than just providing them with a single “1, 2, 3” linear ranking. Some of the dimensions might involve the user, the age of the ticket, severity level, service-level agreement (SLA) violations, or

¹ Recent EMA reports on ITSM include “Optimizing IT for Financial Performance” (October 2016), “Digital and IT Transformation: A Global View of Trends and Requirements,” (September 2015), and “What Is the Future of IT Service Management?” (April 2015).

any number of other factors. Heat also leverages user profiles that in themselves can be quite multi-dimensional, with sources including Active Directory, asset management data, and security-related access specifics.

- **Cardview work list** – At the heart of xFlow, Cardview provides immediate context for taking action on incidents and requests in a compelling card-like graphical format. Through Cardview and xFlow’s back-end analytics, analysts can aggregate related tickets into a single concern, link tickets with common attributes, associate multiple tickets by owner, or address pending requirements—for example, a patch needed to address issues concerning multiple users.
- **Assistive command box** – This feature leverages key words to drive more efficient resolution of both incidents and requests.
- **Story timeline** – The timeline feature helps analysts to better understand historical, time-based activities associated with incidents and requests. For instance, it can provide a summary view of all activities and collaborations associated with a given incident.
- **Service genius** – By providing integrated troubleshooting to guide analysts through their investigations, Service Genius promotes faster issue resolution.
- **Suggested solutions and experts:** – This feature delivers automated, context-based recommendations for similar incidents as well as links to appropriate subject-matter experts (SMEs) in Operations or other areas of IT as well as other ITSM analysts.

Enhancements

• xFlow Analyst Experience

- **Contextual Team Collaboration** – This new feature provides enhanced contextual dimensions for collaboration associated with a given ticket, capturing applicable conversations on the story timeline and relevant background information in the Service Desk Manager knowledgebase.
- **Quick Profile** – This feature, which delivers enhanced insights in support of interactions with business and other end-user service consumers, now provides expanded user profile information including pictures.
- **Ticket Follow-Up** – This new feature allows for custom creation of automated, scheduled reminders directed at relevant timelines and processes in ticket resolution.

• CA Service Management User Interface

- The improved CA Service Management UI is a portfolio-wide enhancement to provide a fully consistent look and feel, as well as consistent UI functionality across the full set of CA Service Management Solutions—*CA Service Desk Manager*, *CA Service Catalog*, and *CA IT Asset Portfolio Management (CA ITAM)*. Some of the specific features included are:
 - **Consistent display and access** for calendars, text boxes, list screens, detail screens, search results, and other solution-wide visual components
 - An **updated Change Calendar** with new drop-downs and icons
 - **Service Catalog UI accessibility** compliant with Section 508 (an amendment to the U.S. Workforce Rehabilitation Act), which allows all users—including those with disabilities—to easily navigate and interact with the catalog without a mouse

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- **Semi-Automatic Customization Upgrades**

- In order to minimize the trials of balancing customization with upgrades, CA has introduced a new capability that automatically identifies customizations to CA Service Desk Manager that don't require changes—merging them into a new product upgrade or a new release. It also flags all customizations needing additional attention, with support for comparing and editing before-and-after files side by side. CA estimates that up to 80–90% of Service Desk Manager customizations can be automatically merged, depending upon the type of customization and other parameters.

- **Simplified Installation** – In support of CA's move to a more agile approach to its own product development, the company has updated the technology stack for CA Service Management for easier installation and updates. The new single-step install also requires only one installer across the entire Service Management portfolio.

EMA Perspective

CA has consolidated what had been multiple product offerings, including Service Desk, Service Catalog, Support Automation, Knowledge Management, and Collaborative Self-Service, into one solution. The focus has been on modernizing CA Service Management for more automated, analytically smart, and user-friendly analyst and end-user access. In addition, CA has focused on more agile and user-responsive software development, with an active user community of more than 3,000 members. Although CA Service Management is currently offered as an on-premises option, the solution is increasingly being offered in the cloud by managed service providers (MSPs) and hosting partners.

An ITAM and SAM Powerhouse

CA's recent advances in ITAM and software asset management (SAM) also deserve mention, even if they're not part of the April 27 announcement. By "OEMing" and fully integrating Aspera's SAM capabilities, CA is delivering on what EMA calls "next-generation asset management," in which service and asset management come together for full lifecycle optimization. These advances include not only far-reaching savings in financial planning, vendor management, and contract management; they also include if/then analytics so that asset planning, service planning, and IT capacity planning can be brought together across a common ledger with common insights.

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CA Service Desk Manager and Next-Generation ITSM

EMA's research on next-generation ITSM suggests that there are two roads taken in the broader ITSM marketplace. One typifies the caricature of the old-fashioned service desk: reactive, slow to respond, deliberative, and often even inhibiting support for the increasingly dynamic needs of IT. But the other face of ITSM shows a more progressive, more integrated, more analytically aware, and more automated hub not only for ITSM, but in many respects for IT as a whole. CA's Service Desk Manager integrations with Agile Central (for DevOps support) and Service Operations Insight (for integrated operations) are testaments to CA's pursuit of "next-generation" versus "last-generation" ITSM.

Some of the other characteristics of next-generation ITSM mentioned here include the following:

- Next-generation ITSM teams are *more than twice as likely to be slated for growth*, and they get more substantial budget investments.
- These teams become a resource both for *accelerating and governing operational efficiencies* through integrated processes and governance.
- They are *twice as likely to have a service catalog deployed*.
- They are *twice as likely to have a CMDB deployed*—with improved efficiencies in asset management, change management, and even service performance management.
- They are more likely to provide *higher levels of automation* across IT overall and twice as likely to invest in advanced levels of automation for change.
- They are *nearly twice as likely to leverage cloud* both as a resource and as an environment to optimize for IT effectiveness.
- They are significantly more likely to provide proactive support for DevOps and agile requirements.
- They are *more than twice likely to have strategic priorities for ITSM* across the board.

CA's ITSM solution set does address all of these next-generation functional requirements (although not all of these features in CA Service Management have been detailed here), and it does so with a consistent focus on usability and relevance. For instance, in dialog with deployments, EMA has seen CA's Service Desk Manager rated highly for the usability of its CMDB and its capabilities for streamlining change management. More generally, CA has received user accolades for its pragmatic approach focused on analyst experience—an all-too-common complaint from these analysts is that they are often presented with a maze of ITSM functions in which anything seems possible but nothing really makes sense.

EMA looks forward to watching the CA Service Management solution suite continue to evolve in functionality and integrations as it moves to supporting a yet broader array of stakeholders, without losing its strong focus on usability, time to value, and analyst relevance.

With CA Service Management 17.0, CA's ITSM offering should be viewed as an excellent choice for IT organizations seeking to gain immediate and significant value from their ITSM investments, with clear options and an easy path toward functional growth in support of their most strategic ITSM objectives.

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