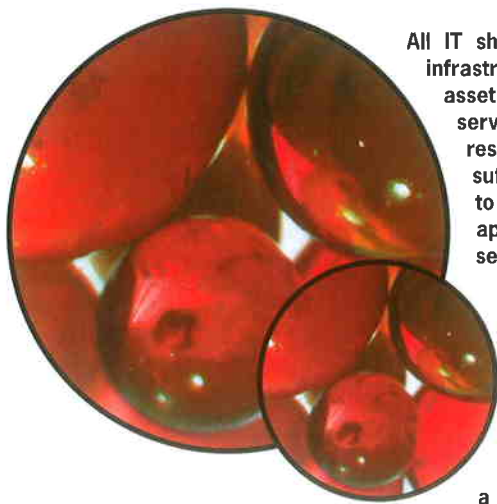


Kevin White tracks the evolution from systems management towards IT service management.

Service culture



All IT shops try to operate a stable IT infrastructure. They look to manage asset lifecycles in ways that ensure servers, storage and network resources are closely monitored and sufficiently provisioned to be able to support the enterprise application payload and meet service level agreements. Now, with new service management mandates such as IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) on the agenda – and moves afoot to tighten IT governance with project portfolio management deployments – a good many IT shops have started to take a fresh look at their systems management routines.

ITIL is certainly driving new rounds of investment in enterprise IT service

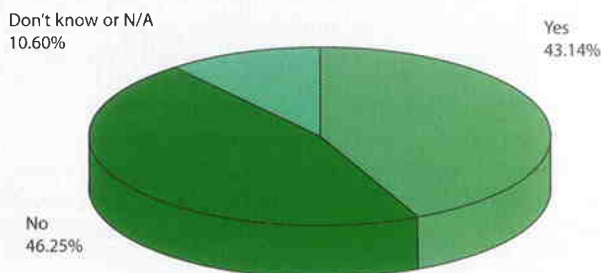
management projects, with market researchers estimating that over 70% of Global 2000 companies are working to adopt it. ITIL is a set of procedures that covers various aspects of IT service delivery from development, through systems management, availability and maintenance, to the support of business services through the helpdesk and service centre. In providing a set of comprehensive and coherent processes, ITIL underpins the delivery of IT services that are reliable, consistent and of optimum quality.

So far, most of the action has been at the helpdesk, but companies like Touchpaper and FrontRange Solutions, or the popular Magic and Track-It! software assets have been rejigged of late, in ways that underline the need for a broader service delivery stance. Most ITIL compatible helpdesk products now also take in change control, configuration management and asset discovery features and various permutations of customer service, network and systems management capabilities.

It is the central configuration management database (CMDB) which is becoming the hub and repository of all information gained by all other systems management processes, allowing systems administrators the appropriate access levels to be able to query from a single logical location all relevant information about any configuration item that makes up the service delivery asset base.

But while organisations find the concept of the CMDB appealing and the benefits self evident, there are wide variations when it comes to how they should be constructed. While the notion of the CMDB is true to ITIL, it is often

HAS YOUR IT DEPARTMENT INVESTED IN AN 'IT GOVERNANCE' SYSTEM THAT ENABLES IT TO PLAN, IMPLEMENT, MANAGE AND MONITOR ALL IT ASSETS AND PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFECYCLE?



Source: CBR survey, 550 respondents