

Help Desk Services

Campus Networking Best Practices

This Presentation and related materials will be available at:

<http://nsrc.org/tutorials/2008/sanog12/>

Getting Started

What are some of the first questions to answer?

- Are you going to offer support?
- What if you don't?
- Is that an option?
- What do you want to or need to support?

Scalability

- Do your tools scale? If not, design them so they will.
- Be flexible
- Do What's easier but, don't do...
- Quick “fixes” = Big overhead later

Starting from Scratch

- Plan
- Design and optimize traffic flow
- Use available tools
 - Ticketing systems
 - Wikis/Document management
- The Web - Use it!
- Some typical scenarios
- Be ready for spikes – graceful failure mode.

Resources

- You'll probably need more than you can get.
- Where will you get these resources?
- What are resources?
 - Money, space, staffing, talent, administrative support, phones, networks, hardware, software, classes, etc.
- Become efficient and prioritize.

Protecting Your Group

- Set hours
- Backup your consultants
- Write down your policies
- Second line of defense
- Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs)
- Issues you can't resolve... How do you deal with failure?

Creating Your Help Desk

- **Remove roadblocks!!**
- Getting talent - What's the draw?
- The logistics
- Customized installs
- Make software available
- Document

Creating Your Help Desk Cont.

- Use the Web
- Use Email and tickets
 - trac: `http://trac.edgewall.org/`
 - rt: `http://bestpractical.com/rt/`
 - Auto-response? (email, tickets)
 - Searchable index (Mhonarc) vs. Mailman

Creating Your Help Desk Cont.

- Phone Systems
 - Hold queue - yes!
 - Can users leave voice mail?
 - Depends on your support
 - Very high overhead
 - Phone trees - Good and bad (escape?)
 - Phone traffic flow (Reception, hardware, network group, consulting, etc.)

Creating Your Help Desk Cont.

- Using other tools
 - Live chat
 - Wikis
 - Blogs
- Scheduling and scheduling software.
 - Scheduling is “n” complex to do

Proactive Steps

- Train your clients
- Offer free or fee-based training
- Push your documentation on your users.
- Push your Website
- Train your staff and train them some more
- Assign staff projects
- Stay up-to-date with what you support

Ticketing Systems

From yesterday:

rt

- Heavily used worldwide.
- Can be customized to your location.
- Somewhat difficult to install and configure.
- Handles large-scale operations.



trac

- A hybrid system that includes a wiki and project management features.
- Ticketing system not as robust as rt, but works well.
- Often used for "trac"king group projects.



Ticketing Systems - 2

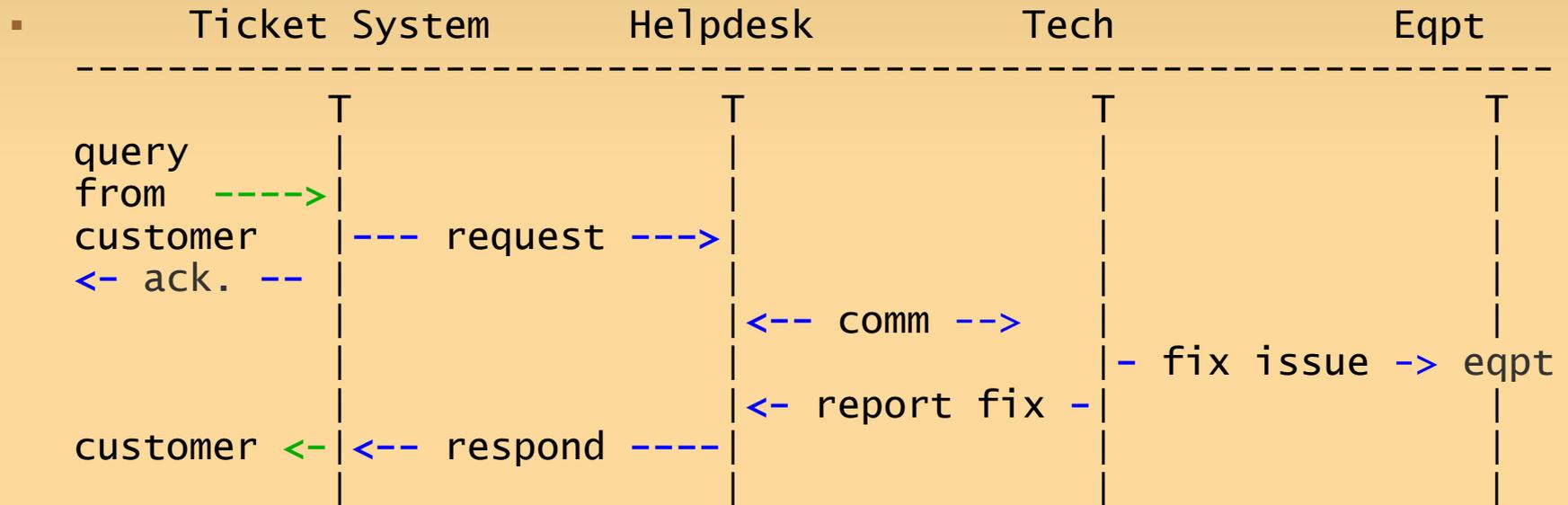
- Why are they important?
 - Track all events, failures and issues
- Focal point for help desk communication
- Use it to track all communications
 - Both internal and external
- Events originating from the outside:
 - customer complaints
- Events originating from the inside:
 - System outages (direct or indirect)
 - Planned maintenance / upgrade:
Remember to notify your customers!

Ticketing Systems – 3

- Use ticket system to follow each case, including internal communication between technicians
- Each case is assigned a case number
- Each case goes through a similar life cycle:
 - New
 - Open
 - ...
 - Resolved
 - Closed

Help Request Flow

A sample top-level view of flow of a help request



Sample trac Projects

An open project:

<http://ws.edu.isoc.org/trac/afnog08/>

Closed projects:

<http://nsrc.org/trac/afnog09/>

<http://nsrc.org/trac/pacnog/>

Fully available live demo:

<http://www.hosted-projects.com/trac/TracDemo/Demo>

Installation Cookbook (Ubuntu):

<http://nsrc.org/tutorials/2008/sanog12/day2/trac/>

Sample rt system

Live demo:

<http://rt3.fsck.com/>

Sample screenshots:

<http://blog.bestpractical.com/2008/07/today-were-rele.html>

RT for example.com
RT at a glance
Logged in as root | Preferences | Logout

New ticket in General [Search]

10 highest priority tickets I own

#	Subject	Priority	Queue	Status
1	Office has run out of coffee	0	General	(pending 1 other ticket)
2	Obtain Series-C funding	0	General	(pending 1 other ticket)

10 newest unowned tickets

#	Subject	Queue	Status	Created	
3	Obtain Series-C funding	General	new	16 min ago	Take

Bookmarked Tickets

#	Subject	Priority	Queue	Status
1	Office has run out of coffee	0	General	(pending 1 other ticket) ★

Quick ticket creation

Subject:

Queue: Owner:

Content:

Create

Reminders

Quick search

Queue	new	open	stalled
General	3	0	0

Dashboards

Name	Subscription
SLA Performance	daily at 06:00

Refresh

Don't refresh this page.

Go!

Summary

- Quick fixes hurt
- You may be short on resources
- Set expectations
- Remove roadblocks
 - Calculate expense with, without and to remove.
- Lots of staff training.
- Use software to your advantage (rt/trac)
- Is the customer always right?

Questions?