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CERN to push forward with ServiceNow as long as it isn't left exposed

By Sooraj Shah   28 May 2013 0
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The European Organisation for Nuclear Research, CERN, is on the verge of signing a new contract for IT service management (ITSM) software with ServiceNow - as long as the vendor provides enough visibility to ensure that CERN will not be left exposed.

CERN, which has recently been in the news for the discoveries of the Higgs Boson and atoms with pear-shaped nuclei, first selected ServiceNow in October 2010, following a thorough investigation into the best fit for CERN users.

"It took us a couple of months. We had a long list of about 60 or so products and we reduced it very quickly by looking at the documentation and with the help of consultants who knew what these products looked like," Reinoud Martens, service manager, general services at CERN told *Computing*.

After reducing the shortlist to 10, CERN sent a questionnaire to a number of the companies. Among the respondents were ServiceNow and Hornbill, both of which went through a proof-of-concept at CERN's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

"I cannot say how [Hornbill] would compare today, but at the time they were trying to provide software-as-a-service or SaaS, but the architecture was not as modern [as ServiceNow]. There was still a lot of legacy stuff to carry forward, so there were some issues from a functional point of view," Martens said.

CERN has now been live with ServiceNow for over two years, with the software being used for the both IT services management and a number of non-IT services management functions - something that Martens emphasised was an important shift away from the typical use of service management tools.

"The strength is that everyone uses the same tool and same process, meaning that you can move tickets across from non-IT to IT. There are often grey areas such as a problem with a bill - is it an issue with billing, finance or IT? These can be transferred in the same portal," he said.

The CERN service manager said that this approach has since been adopted by many of ServiceNow's customers, including Volkswagen.

At CERN, ServiceNow's ITSM tool is limited to the things that are not scientific. It covers the 500-room hotel operation, a car pool, transport, waste management, the lights, the heating, the air con, and more, said Martens.

"For hotel management we have a dedicated system that manages the schedule for cleaners and manages room reservations. If you have a burst of 50 people coming to stay they don't [book] it using the normal hotel booking procedure, they use ServiceNow. We also use ServiceNow if there is an issue, such as no Wi-Fi in a room," he said.

Aside from this, ServiceNow is used for the service management of IT infrastructure, networks, desktops, the computer centre and events.

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