

# **Viewpoint – ITIL: How Will it Influence IT Asset Management and How is it Different?**

**A Management White Paper by:**

**William B. Hesselbaugh**



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## HIGHLIGHT

ITIL is being adopted in large organizations as a means to model IT service management and delivery. It will start at the top and filter down, which means that ITAM practices will eventually be impacted.

## DETAILS

In the ITIL book entitled Best Practice for Service Support, the practice of Configuration Management (CM) is defined. ITIL considers CM to be a superset of ITAM – that is you might start with ITAM and eventually evolve into full CM. Succinctly stated the differences between CM and ITAM are:

ITAM, as it is generally implemented, seeks to document assets so that the information may be used to efficiently manage the asset through its lifecycle. Mostly, the underlying motive is financial – minimizing the cost of “owning” an asset over its life cycle. Often, the ITAM implementation seeks to continuously “discover” assets as they are added, and “dispose” assets as they are taken out of service. Generally, an asset is a tangible hardware item, such as a PC, monitor, printer, or network hub or router.

CM, as it is intended by the ITIL best practices, seeks to document the “as built” infrastructure, composed of one or more Configuration Items (CIs), whose relationships are established and maintained, to ensure change to the baseline is done in a systematic and controlled way. CM is very tightly coupled with Change Management and Release Management. CM, as envisioned, is more proactive than a typical ITAM implementation, and far more coupled with (and with greater dominion over) other service management activities. The CM information, along with all service management information, is stored in one conceptual repository that ITIL calls the Configuration Management Database (CMDB).

Some examples of differences:

In ITAM, an asset is most often a tangible piece of hardware. Under ITIL CM, a CI can be hardware, it can be software, it can be a network segment, and it can be a business process – basically any entity for which change must be systematically applied and controlled.

A typical ITAM repository might accept discovered software from an autodiscovery tool and link that software with an asset, so that aggregate software discovered and per-PC software might be reported.

Under ITIL CM, the software on any given CI has been *authorized* through the Change Management process, meaning that the all PC CIs loaded in the CMDB have a listing of all software that is authorized to be on that PC CI. Therefore, CM would seek to use the autodiscovery tool's discovered software solely as an automated audit process – to find deviations from the baseline authorized by Change Management. The software records from the autodiscovery process would therefore never be entered into the CMDB – the only way information gets into the CMDB is through initial baseline and then through Change Management.

Under typical ITAM implementations, a PC might be ordered through procurement and even pre-staged in the ITAM repository, awaiting reconciliation upon physical receipt.

Under ITIL CM, if the addition of a PC is going to impact the documented “state” of a CI (such as a network segment or business system), then the addition of that CI must be preceded by a Request for Change (RFC), which must then be approved by the Change Advisory Board (CAB) – all before it ever gets submitted to procurement. Therefore, when the PC is eventually “discovered” through CM process, procedures, and tools, it has already been approved as part of the documented baseline.

## About the Author

Brett Husselbaugh has over 20 years of experience primarily in the IT industry. He has consulted with over 25 of the leading Fortune 500 companies on strategies for optimizing the IT investment. With experience as both a CIO and a CEO, Brett brings a unique and practical perspective to IT management, promoting the concept of operating as a "business within a business" to deliver measurable value. Brett is a proven business leader, an innovative thinker, a highly effective writer, and an enthusiastic and motivational public speaker.

Brett has experience as founder and CEO of TOBEK Technical Services, an IT Asset Management firm which he started with no outside investment and grew to 80 people in three years. He then positioned the firm and sold it to Inacom, a Fortune 500 company. Brett also has experience as a CIO, Managing Partner for Managed Services, VP of Strategic Development, VP of Services R&D, Principal Consultant, Industry Analyst, and Program Manager.

Brett has published several magazine articles as well as over 50 industry white and position papers. He has spoken on numerous occasions to audiences of senior and executive management teams on optimizing IT investment, developing strategy, and effective IT management.

Brett holds a Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Bachelors of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Maryland at College Park. He is currently a member of American Mensa.

William Brett Husselbaugh  
<http://www.husselbaugh.com>