

REVIEW: Freshservice

Proactive Problem Management Review

By Rebecca Beach

Freshservice is a straightforward solution for users with straightforward needs. Simple and easy to use, the drag and drop workflow and form templates make for an easy set up of proactive problem management as well as the main solution.

Problem management is dealt with in much the same way as incident within the solution and although this will be perfectly acceptable for the majority of Freshservice's customers those with more mature proactive problem requirements will likely find that this solution lacks the automation they will expect. The addition of automation to distinguish between the different types of problems would be useful together with the ability to smartly decide which problems are, in actual fact, a problem. The issue many IT teams are experiencing at this time is not that events and alerts are not being received but that so many are received that it is difficult to sort through to find the ones that actually matter. If Freshservice can master this then their worth to their customers would dramatically increase.

The ability to set a "book value" for a particular type of asset is a useful feature, providing the ability to report on those assets that are perhaps experiencing continued faults to see whether continued endeavour is of benefit, I would like to see this area expanded to help track the cost of faults. My impression of the solution is that it would be suitable for all small to large organisations of low to medium proactive problem management maturity. For the vast majority of these organisations, I believe that Freshservice has all the functionality required to perform proactive problem management to a successful level. However, if your organisation is likely to grow in the near future then I believe a more sophisticated solution would be suitable. The number of manual actions required within the solution would be counterproductive to organisations with large numbers of reported proactive problems.

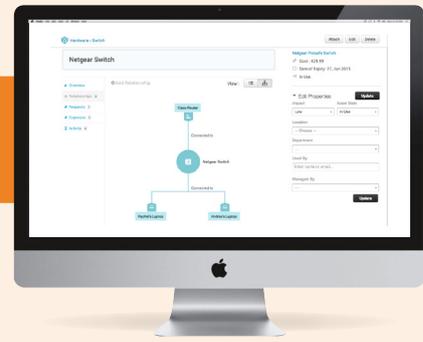
General

User configuration possible for:

Forms	Tables	Workflows	Dashboards
✓	✓	✓	✓

N.B. every form and workflow can be customized through the admin module

- Open API
- Existing standard integrations with Event Management tools such as Nagios and Solarwinds
- Default forms and structure as basic starting point
- Easy linkage between Problems and other types of tickets (i.e. Incident)
- Proactive solution suggestion as ticket details inputted
- Implementation support available



Executive Summary

• Elevator Pitch

Freshservice is an uncomplicated and attractive ITIL service desk solution. The simplicity of Freshservice allows customers to provide basic proactive problem management services whilst easily linking to the other areas of the solution.

+ Strengths

- Simple easy to use interface
- Easy linkage between processes
- Proactive suggestion of possibly related records when creating description

- Weaknesses

- Internal monitoring within the solution could be improved
- Financial management capabilities require extending
- Lack of automation in areas such as setting records as proactive

👤 Primary Market Focus

Based on the information provided, Freshservice is primarily a small to mid market solution

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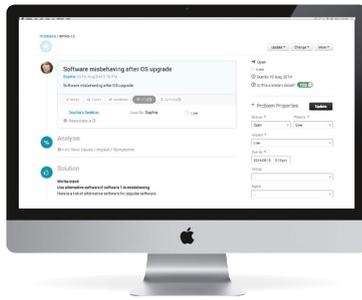
Identification

Freshservice defines the difference between a reactive and proactive problem management record within the solution by the addition of a "known error" tag next to the problem subject. This is done manually by agents within the Problem Module and then provides the ability for reports to be run on "known errors". I would like to see the ability for Freshservice to automatically recognise these and tag accordingly without the need for the manual process. For organisations receiving large numbers of proactive problems I imagine this would become quite an onerous task. Freshservice's internal Discovery probe is able to scan networks to populate the CMDB and is able to monitor the available disk space of relevant items.

Freshservice advise that although currently this is all that is able to be monitored, additional capabilities are to follow. Alerts from monitoring and networking tools such as Nagios and Solarwinds, which can be integrated via existing standard integrations, can be sent to Freshservice using Email commands and then automatically create a record within the solution.

Assessment and Alerting

Freshservice calculates an objective risk assessment of the proactive problem and is able to flag this against an associated CI as low, medium or high (colour coded) depending upon how the CI's business propriety has been set. Assets are able to be attached to all proactive problem records with the importance of the asset viewable from within the record screen.



The solution also contains a basic visual relationship map for impact assesment. Freshservice is able to manually route proactive problems to relevant resolver groups by assigning the particular record to the respective group or agent from the Problems module, alternatively workflow rules can be used to automatically assign records to assign proactive problems to resolver groups or agents. Once a group or user has been assigned an email notification will alert the relevant people.

Implementation

Freshservice provides the ability to link records to each other in one click. Workflow rules within the system can be utilized to provide the ability to update all linked records upon the update of the problem record. All file types and in solution notes can be attached to a proactive problem record ensuring that all relevant information is available to agents. Changes of status are possible by the use of a dropdown box within the record screen. Although there is no ability to set individual assets and CI's as unavailable, the solution can be used to advise users of planned outages using both email and the self-service area. In the future I would like to see the ability to set items as unavailable, when affected by a fault that causes it to be so, in order that users can easily see the state of the item. Freshservice state that their customers main need is automatic notification when there is an issue and as a result I believe that development of this area would be very beneficial to both them and their customers.

Auditing and Accountability

Freshservice's simple workflow rules can be utilised to set thresholds to notify of impending SLA breaches to both individual users and groups. Escalation emails can also be set to once breach has taken place. Each asset has a history of all requests associated with it – problem, change, release etc. that can be viewed after the request has been closed.

Commercial Summary

Product

Freshservice

Version reviewed

n/a

Date of version release

n/a

Year founded

2010

Customers

1200

Pricing Structure

The licensing structure is based on the number of agents. Freshservice is a SaaS only offering

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[cont.]

In Summary

Freshservice provides basic yet capable functionality for use by users with low to medium proactive problem management maturity. If you're after bells and whistles such as sophisticated visual service mapping then this is probably not the solution for you, however, if you are after a good basic package, with ticketing, that has the proactive problem management essentials then Freshservice is a good option.

In Their Own Words

Freshservice is an online ITIL service desk with a fresh twist. It puts a refreshing user experience on top of powerful ticketing and asset management capabilities, and is the most user-friendly app in the space. In addition to core functionalities like Incident, Problem, Change, Release and Asset Management, Freshservice also lets you put your knowledge base on the cloud. Freshservice offers a plug and play ITIL solution for organizations looking to align themselves to best practices without getting any expert implementation help. It has been developed by the team of experts behind Freshdesk, the leading customer support software that is currently being used to support over 5 million customers across the world.

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