

INTRODUCING

# Social IT Operations Management:

A new approach for solving persistent IT problems

A WHITEPAPER FOR IT PROFESSIONALS



[www.ITinvolve.com](http://www.ITinvolve.com)

# Social IT Operations Management: A new approach for solving persistent IT problems



## INTRODUCTION: IT Operations Struggle to Manage the Social Enterprise

The IT operations team today is experiencing unprecedented demands and challenges as most organizations transition to the era of the social enterprise. By now it should be clear that social is not a fad. Everything from how we process and consume information to how we engage with customers, partners, co-workers and employees has changed forever.

The social revolution is upon us. At the same time, IT environments have continued to become more complex, more distributed, and harder to understand. Existing IT management tools have not kept up with the rapid innovation in technology paradigms. Wouldn't it be remarkable if we could apply the technologies and methodologies that have been so effective in social networking, communication and collaboration to the understanding and managing IT environments?

Today, forward thinking IT professionals are looking for new solutions to help manage and transform their IT organizations. They are seeking effective ways to capture the power of the collective information that is unstructured within the organization or resident in the collective minds of the employee base. If that information could be harnessed, companies could define dramatically more efficient ways to solve their daily IT challenges.





From speaking with hundreds of IT professionals, we found a consistent set of challenges related to current IT management practices.

- They find it difficult, if not impossible, with current tools to get an accurate picture of rapidly evolving IT environments, struggling to fully grasp the multiple dependencies and layers of relationships that typify today's enterprise.
- They spend far too many valuable hours trying to fix issues or problems that result from unintended consequences of both routine and emergency changes that occur every day in IT environments.
- They waste considerable effort and time trying to coordinate communications among a vast and diverse group of IT operations staff and other stakeholders involved in IT decisions--with no easy way to facilitate, record, and learn from shared experience and knowledge
- According to industry analysts, "Eighty percent of unplanned downtime is caused by unforeseen impacts from changes made."
- Eighty percent of the time spent to resolve an incident (MTTR) is spent investigating the question "what changed" in the IT environment
- Most frontline IT staff are forced to rely on past experience or intuition when making changes as there are currently no automated analysis tools available on the market.

### **Current Tools Fail to Address the Most Critical Issues of the Social Enterprise**

From system administrators to CIOs, IT professionals are looking for new tools and processes to try and break down traditional barriers to collaboration and operate more efficiently and effectively.

The fact is, too many IT teams are forced to operate without a comprehensive understanding of their IT environments, making decisions that can pose risks to the organization, its business and its reputation.

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Unfortunately, most of the IT management tools they use today were not designed to operate in, or leverage, the potential and opportunities presented by a more collaborative, open and transparent enterprise.

That's because many of today's conventional solutions such as service desks, CMDBs, asset management systems, etc. were designed for a previous era. They are missing critical intelligence needed to understand IT environments. They were built well before the social paradigms currently used by millions even existed. Thus, they were never intended to exploit the power of collaboration to help capture collective knowledge, improve communication and build rapid alignment around fundamentally better decisions. Current tools systems don't work as well because they:

- Fail to provide access to a single up-to-date source of information on physical and virtual devices, policies, people, relationships and knowledge that is necessary to effectively solve a myriad of IT challenges
- Fail to help users visualize and easily comprehend impacts and risks from diverse and unique vantage points
- Don't make it substantially easier to get answers, find experts and share information
- Don't facilitate effective collaboration between silos
- Are far too technology focused and as they do not capture and utilize the knowledge resident in the real users managing IT infrastructures

Most IT professionals acknowledge that there is a strong need for next generation IT operations management solutions. The next generation of solutions must encompass methods that enable staff to work together more effectively and efficiently by leveraging new social corroboration methods combined with knowledge currently available in disparate locations throughout the IT environments.

Here's how a new Forrester report describes the challenge facing IT operations today:

*“The once-promising configuration management database (CMDB) has failed — but the original CMDB promise has not. To benefit from trends such as automation, cloud computing, DevOps, and big data, infrastructure and operations (I&O) professionals need trustworthy information more than ever.”*



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## ***At last!*** **An IT Operations Management Solution Designed for the Social Enterprise**

While everyone has jumped on the bandwagon to promote social media for end users, IT departments have been left to cope with daily IT operations management equipped only with conventional, unsatisfactory tools from the past. Until now. Until the introduction of Social IT Operations Management from ITinvolve.

Imagine your IT work environment where:

- You have access to complete up-to-date information including structured and unstructured data that accurately reflects and helps you understand all the dependencies and relationships within your entire IT environment---and that you can use to improve change, incident, problem and asset management
- You can visualize and easily comprehend potential impacts and risks when you propose a change such that unintended consequences are identified before they have a devastating effect on service levels.
- You have the ability to solve incidents much more efficiently by finally understanding the root cause effectively because you can easily see dependencies never before visible.
- You have a communication vehicle that enables ideas, expertise and knowledge to flow across your organization, making it easier to get answers, find experts, share information and speed up review and approval processes.

**All this is possible with ITinvolve.** Because we have made it our mission to make this dream a reality for IT professionals by providing unique tools that help you to better understand and manage your IT environment while capitalizing on the benefits of the social enterprise. Our unique cloud solution for IT Ops doesn't just tack on a social media app but rather has been designed to integrate the elements of social media that can work to the advantage of the IT operations team. And, it is the only solution designed from the ground up to equip IT professionals with the tools needed for the next generation of Social IT Operations Management.

### **ITinvolve:** **A Transformative Catalyst and Game Changer**

A new white paper from Enterprise Management Associates, entitled, "Delivering Cross-Domain Change Management with ITinvolve," gives a detailed introduction to ITinvolve's new social IT operations management solution. EMA calls ITinvolve a "transformative catalyst" and game changing new solution that will dramatically reduce change management risks.



*"By leveraging a combination of object-modeling for context and impact analysis, with Social IT for stakeholder and executive interaction, with a core, self-populating knowledgebase for trending, analysis and governance, ITinvolve is providing a compelling new facility for actively managing change by optimizing and sharing tribal knowledge with minimal technological complexity and administrative costs."*

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## Introducing ITinvolve: The Foundation for IT Ops in the Social Enterprise

One of the biggest challenges for IT departments in the social enterprise is simply understanding, and keeping up to date, with the growing complexity and dependencies in their IT environments.

Teams are spread out across time zones. Key services and applications are located across multiple facilities and data centers including Cloud-based services that they may have little control over. Structured and unstructured data is scattered everywhere with no practical central source of information. Visibility across functional silos or business services is severely limited, and collaboration is often informal, fragmented and difficult to track or preserve for future reference. As a result, IT staff constantly faces the risk of creating problems, or unintended consequences when performing even the most routine operational tasks.

In fact, the urgent need for an accurate repository of collective knowledge is recognized in the latest version of ITIL v3 that focuses on ITIL Knowledge Management. The goal of Knowledge Management, according to ITIL, is to gather, analyze, store and share knowledge and information within an organization to improve efficiency by reducing the need to rediscover knowledge.

ITIL suggests creating a Service Knowledge Management System (SKMS) to serve as the central repository of the data, information, and knowledge that the IT organization needs to manage the lifecycle of its services. Its purpose would be to store, analyze and present the service provider's data, information and knowledge as needed. ITIL also notes that SKMS is not necessarily a single system – in most cases it has to be a federated system based on a variety of data sources.

Along this same line of thinking, Forrester analyst Glenn O'Donnell has called on vendors to reinvent the CMDB and create what he calls a Service Information System (SIS)

*“A new information model is hereby proposed that escapes the pitfalls of CMDB and greatly expands the domain of information. This new model is tentatively named the service information system (SIS). Visibility offered by the SIS goes far beyond structural configuration data to also include behavioral information, process models, and many other potential dimensions. Such visibility will pave the way for powerful automation of not just infrastructure and other systems, but of critical decisions themselves. A bold new future for business technology will be built atop a SIS that I&O professionals must embrace.”*

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At ITinvolve, we agree. This is precisely the challenge that we have taken on with the introduction of ITinvolve.

First and foremost, ITinvolve provides an affordable, comprehensive and up-to-date source of information that accurately captures and depicts any IT environment. ITinvolve delivers on the promise of knowledge management by presenting key information in an easy to comprehend manner and transparently sharing this information with those who need to see it and rely on it to make operational decisions each and every day.

Unlike any other tool, ITinvolve delivers the world's first social, open and secure cloud solution to help you understand your IT environment – and drive consensus and alignment by giving you:

- A single source for all technology and social objects, relationships and federated knowledge to help you understand your IT environment—providing a single version of the truth with **Social Object Manager™**
- A powerful way to visualize this information in an easy to digest and in a far more meaningful manner using **Perspectives Manager™**
- A faster, more effective way to communicate in a timely fashion in order to share critical information among all those who need it through **In-Context Collaboration™**
- A convenient means to monitor and measure management processes and results using powerful reports and trend analysis through **Results Manager™**

Developed and delivered on Force.com, the proven, secure and scalable cloud platform from Salesforce.com, ITinvolve for Social Knowledge Management can be accessed via the Internet at any time, from any location, with any device and is priced on a monthly fee-per-seat basis.

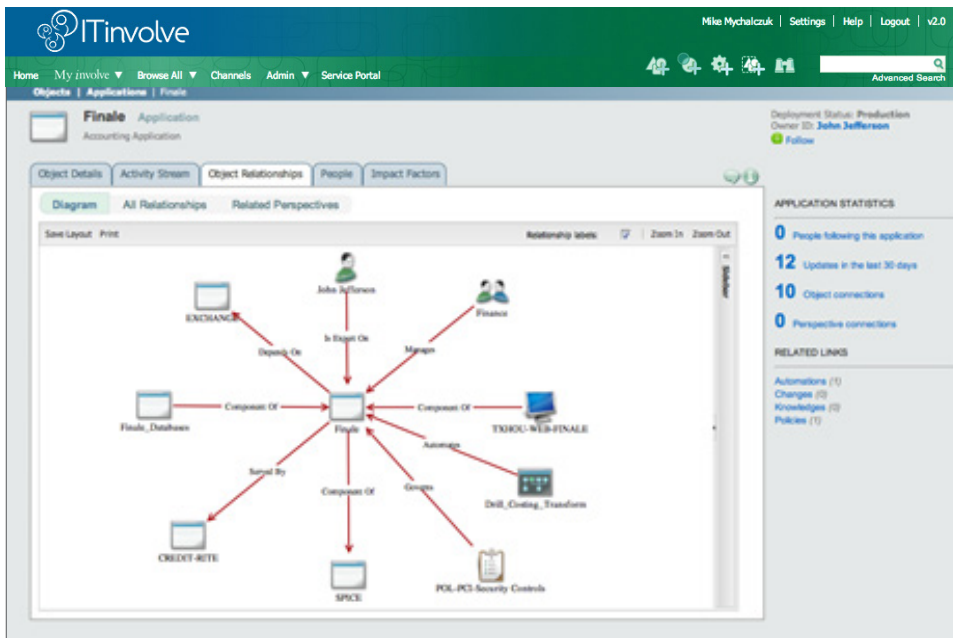
## How ITinvolve Delivers on the Promise of Social Knowledge Management

Social Knowledge Management from ITinvolve directly addresses the challenges facing IT Ops by leveraging the collaborative power of today's social enterprise with a flexible and comprehensive approach to defining social objects and relationships. Here is what differentiates ITinvolve's approach from any other conventional solution.

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**Social Object Manager:** Provides you with a relevant view of your IT environment, using a single federated location for storing and linking information about relationships between physical and virtual devices, business services, policies and people. You now have a holistic tool that can profile your IT environment and related knowledge available in one place that ensures assessment, collaboration, decisions and reporting are based on shared understanding across the enterprise. This unique approach for building collective intelligence provides IT staff on the front lines substantially more value without adding administrative burden. And, our powerful data-loader means you can import existing data so all information is quickly and effectively leveraged by all teams.

FIGURE 1 – *Social Object Manager*



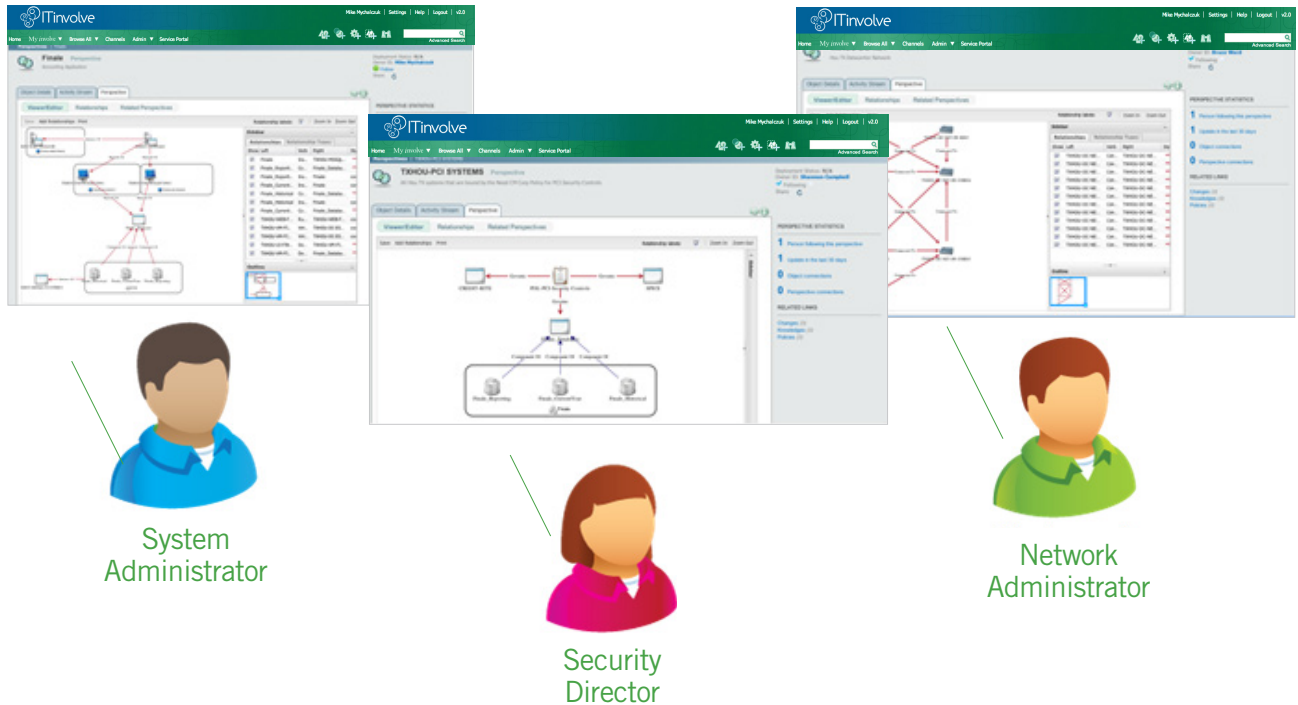
**Perspectives Manager:** A visualization tool that gives you the ability to view relationships and dependencies from any vantage point. It gives you the visibility to grasp and manage the complexity of your IT environments with individually meaningful views or perspectives of all relationships between physical and virtual devices, business services, policies and people. Thus, with a click, you can view all databases subject to a particular policy. Or, see all servers managed by a particular administrator. When resolving an incident, upstream and downstream relationships are available to you instantly. Or, when planning a change, relationships and dependencies are visually presented to allow you to quickly assess risk and impact



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FIGURE 2 – *Perspectives Manager*

*Patented Value: Impact Analysis from Unique Perspectives*

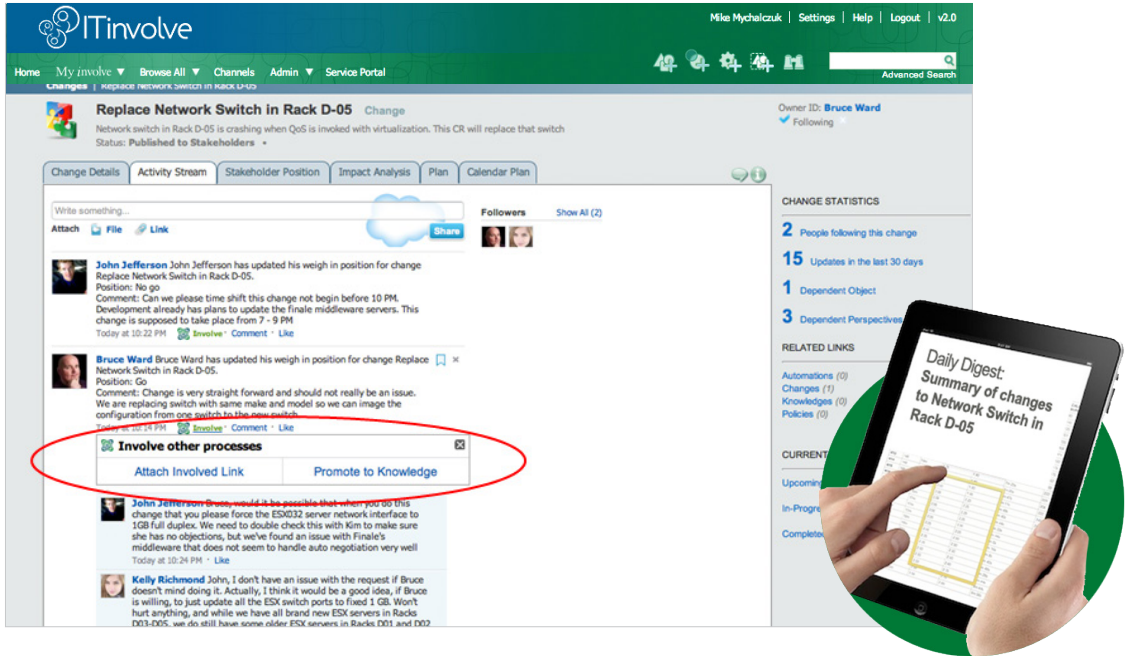


***In-Context Collaboration:*** Enables everyone in your IT organization with true collaboration tools that facilitate open, shared communications. *In-Context Collaboration* leverages familiar social media-style formats to ensure the right people are effectively communicating making faster and more informed decisions. But the real value is derived from the ability to connect the discussion to the particular device, policy or application being impacted thereby limiting the participants and eliminating the noise inherent in other social environments.

***Results Manager:*** As expectations have changed with social collaboration technologies, IT needs to be more effective and transparent to promote a results-driven workplace. Results Manager enables you to measure results, compare important trends and demonstrate compliance, from the perspective of any device, business service, application or policy. For example, you can measure incidents by application. Or, you can see if a particular change to a policy was made to all appropriate devices. Our revolutionary drill down capabilities help ensure accountability throughout the IT environment.

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Figure 3 In-Context Collaboration



Facebook, LinkedIn, and Chatter collaborative concepts to change the way technology objects are managed

To summarize, ITInvolve provides the foundation for IT operations to improve its efficiency and effectiveness through a unique cloud solution that utilizes the concept of social objects to define relationships between physical and virtual devices, business services, applications, and people.

This knowledge management system works at a practical level because:

- **Every object has its owner** – Every object in ITInvolve has an initial owner/creator who is responsible for that specific object. Each object has a variety of information in varied formats associated with it, all accessible through the ITInvolve interface. Others can contribute information to the object with the approval of the object owner, with full accountability and transparency built into the system. This is especially useful when an object relates to more than a single person or team. Only through collaboration can a true picture of your environment be created and understood.
- **Every object has its own collaboration stream in context** – Every object has an associated collaboration stream that utilizes a social media-like interface that enables communication among stakeholders in the context of a specific problem to be solved. ITInvolve cuts out extraneous “noise” or unrelated discussions, and automatically keeps, and publishes, a record of the collaboration stream for reference at any time.

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- **Every object can be understood and visualized from multiple perspectives or vantage points** – Every object can be visualized in relationship to other objects and individuals. Through unique perspectives, object owners can immediately see links and dependencies with others throughout the IT environment with flexible, drill down capabilities.

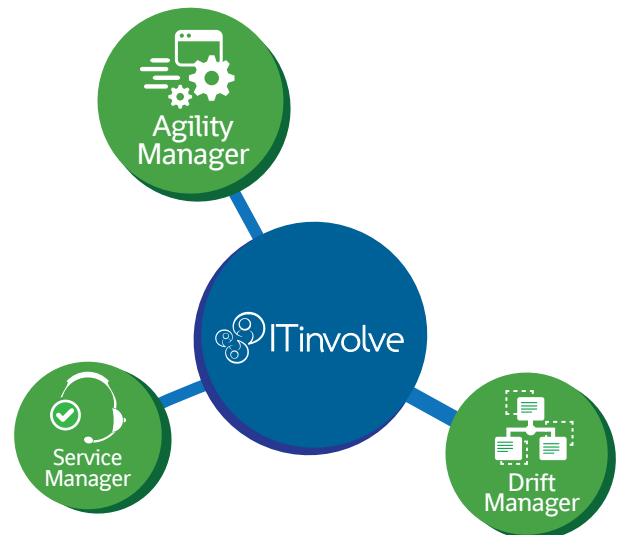
No CMDB, no service desk, no homegrown system can match ITinvolve in delivering a practical, up-to-date, and easy to access and maintain federated knowledge base for IT operations.

## Leveraging the Power of Social IT Operations for Service Management

ITinvolve has leveraged the capabilities of ITinvolve as a core component of a new service management solution unlike any service desk tool on the market today.

Called ITinvolve for Service Management™ this solution captures both the human and machine knowledge necessary to understand complex, hybrid, and distributed IT environments. Using this knowledge, IT professionals can dramatically improve decision making by providing intelligent analysis and combining it with collaboration processes in the context of a specific issue or problem. Only ITinvolve provides these unique capabilities:

- Provides IT professionals with a trustworthy, federated and flexible source of knowledge gathered from any source, including CMDB's, wiki's and the collective knowledge of the IT staff, so they can resolve incidents and discover the root cause of problems faster than ever before, and understand the impact of proposed changes before they are introduced to the IT environment.
- Gives IT team members the ability to visualize and understand relationships and dependencies from your own perspective, or any other stakeholder's perspective, in the IT environment.
- Automatically presents the critical knowledge IT professionals need to solve operational challenges. Through a process called Active Knowledge Delivery, users are automatically alerted to the potential impact of incidents or changes and brought into the discussion, helping teams address operational tasks with unprecedented speed.
- Builds in collaboration channels whereby the right IT stakeholders are automatically included in virtualized, social media style discussions with the right information such that decisions can be made without lengthy meetings.
- Supplies IT professionals with measurement tools to make collective decisions faster and more efficiently, while enabling them to measure progress and analyze trends.



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## Unmatched Benefits at Every Level of IT Operations

The unique advantages of ITinvolve provide unprecedented benefits for IT operations in the social enterprise.

- Social - Promotes collaboration and sharing for collective intelligence and key knowledge
- Complete - One accurate, up-to-date source of technology and social objects and relationships
- Open - Info available and shared with those who need it, supports virtually any device
- Secure - Multi-layered security and compliance with most regulations
- Fast - No hardware or software, “on-the-fly” capture of information, ensures rapid value
- Easy - Automatic upgrades, pay as you go, streamlines processes
- Measurable - Reporting and trending foster results driven workplace

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