



Standards for lightweight
IT service management

 **APMG** International

FitSM Case Study

University of Zurich (UZH) - EnhanceR Project

Q&A with Sergio Maffioletti

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Q: Can you explain the background and what you were trying to achieve?

A S3IT supports UZH researchers and research groups in using IT to empower their research, from consultancy to application support and access to cutting-edge cloud, cluster and supercomputing systems.

The University of Zurich is a major Swiss University founded in 1833, with around 6,500 staff and 26,000 students. S3IT is a specialist unit within the central IT services, to serve the needs of all research groups with specialist research computing services and infrastructures.

S3IT coordinates EnhanceR, a national Swiss effort to federate support in Research IT, involving most of the country's major universities.

Q: Why did you select FitSM as a standard?

A Back in 2014, we heard about FitSM from other colleagues in the research IT sphere in Europe, and at the same time were realising we needed more structure in planning and delivering services for S3IT.

We considered other frameworks but found most were too complex and costly. With FitSM we were able to start with basic training that was affordable and got us started right away.

Q: How did you get 'buy in' from staff to use FitSM

A In 2014 we organised an on-site FitSM foundation training followed by a case-study workshop. Buy-in was fairly easy as staff recognised the need for standard processes, and through the training we felt the balance of effort to benefit was really good.



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Q: Tell us about how FitSM was used in your organisation:

A Within S3IT at the University of Zurich, we chose to use FitSM to support delivery of better managed services to our customers. We started with FitSM training in 2014, as a way to introduce the topic of ITSM to our staff, while we were still deciding exactly what services to deliver. It gave a framework for discussion and a way to create an initial service portfolio. Our senior staff chose FitSM as it seemed more tailored to an organisation without a strong ITSM background, and to the collaborative, federated research environment in which we worked. We assessed other heavyweight traditional frameworks, but it was immediately apparent these were not realistic for us. FitSM was lightweight, cheaper to adopt, easier to understand and more accessible.

Q: What was the nature of the project?

A At S3IT, we use FitSM for key processes that we have implemented, in particular portfolio and service level management as well as customer relationship management.

We have also really benefitted from the freely available templates for documents such as SLAs and OLAs.

Within the EnhanceR project we have delivered FitSM training nationally and used it as a basis for joint delivery of services by multiple universities to research customers.

Q: What key problems or challenges have you been experiencing with the planning, management & delivery of service management projects?

A At University of Zurich (UZH), changing staff outside the unit led to varying levels of buy in from top management, and a less clear assignment of a service management owner.

As a result, implementation proceeded more from the bottom up as issues arose in different areas of activity, which then required the ITSM processes supporting them to be better implemented. We also had to cope with the general level of service management maturity in the university sector, which is very basic, and centered on a helpdesk and best effort restoration of services. Some critical services are provided with SLAs, but there is not a general background of ITSM awareness and knowledge within IT teams.

Within EnhanceR, it is difficult to implement ITSM across organizations, but would not have been possible at all with anything heavier than FitSM. It was hard to get people speaking the same language and understanding the general approach to ITSM before we adopted FitSM.

Q: What was your initial experience with FitSM?

A We found that all of FitSM made sense right away, despite being a new area for us, and we could immediately see the benefits of implementing such a standard. It helped that the content was all free and available in relatively plain language, as our organisational culture had not really adopted ITSM previously.

We felt the barrier to entry was very manageable, even as a unit with no experience in ITSM previously. The availability of guides and templates also really helped to start with something concrete right away.

Q: What is the initial feedback on FitSM from your colleagues?

A Those at the management level were positive right away, and they understood the need and language. More technical staff, as expected, had questions about the benefit of implementing ITSM given the overhead, but were brought around over time as they understood the benefits to their work.

Q: How do you envisage FitSM addressing the problems and challenges highlighted earlier, and have there been any initial 'quick wins'?

A We were able to create a service portfolio in a workshop directly after our initial training, which made it easier to explain our offer to other parts of our organisation.

We were also able to create a generic unit-wide SLA for services as well as start considering which services needed more specific SLAs.

The availability of guides and templates also really helped to start with something concrete right away.

Q: If you had to specify three top features of FitSM, what would they be?

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A

- Shorter distance between the formal process and the real life day to day activities. We could understand how this would be used right away, and the transition to management services was easier to envisage
- Availability of templates for key documents, that could be customized and deployed.
- Practicality. That FitSM felt like it was targeted at those of us delivering services every day, not a high level administrative management tool.

Q: Would you recommend FitSM to other professionals and organizations and do you see any restrictions in terms of industries and types of projects?

A

Yes, and we have recommended it to colleagues we work with. We started to implement FitSM in a distributed network through EnhanceR. It is in its early stages, so we cannot see the full impact as yet, but early responses are very positive.

While maybe for very large and well-established services providers, the lightweight approach is less interesting, in our market we have little formal ITSM experience and FitSM is a really good 'fit!'. I think it would work well across the research IT, and in fact University and academic IT sector, in a way that other approaches would not.



Starting with training right away was really helpful.

Q: Are there any specific tips, advice or recommendations you would offer to others to get the most out of the standards and resources?

A Starting with training right away was really helpful. We then combined this immediately with a consultancy workshop to build on the initial enthusiasm. Afterwards, we made sure we had staff with a background in ITSM that could act as internal consultants, to support implementation.

Q: Final word?

A Working with FitSM made getting started with IT Service Management achievable, even though our sector has little ITSM background.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO



**University of
Zurich**^{UZH}



Enhancer

Further Information

More information on FitSM

- <https://fitsm.itemo.org/>

More information about certification

- <https://apmg-international.com/product/fitsm>

More information about Enhancer

- <https://www.enhancer.ch>





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