

Case study



CLIENT FEEDBACK

Netrics

• TELECOMS • CMDB • VIRTUALISATION • CLOUD • MODERN WORKPLACE



A custom-designed CMDB reflecting the specific features of equipment used by connectivity service suppliers



A detailed repository of equipment



A link between the equipment and contracts, and the services delivered



1500 equipment items to be managed

Netrics

Swiss company Netrics Basel AG (formerly Tineo) markets BtoB connectivity and IT infrastructure solutions: mainly site interconnections and high-speed internet access. To boost its service quality and enhance the efficiency of its field technical teams, Netrics decided to set up a configuration management database (CMDB) using iTop. Thierry Prudat, Technical Manager at Netrics Basel AG, shares his feedback from this project.

Challenge

Centralise information spread between different tools, reference the components used to deliver the services as configuration items (CI), and analyse the impacts of changes on the network.

Solution

A customisable CMDB software application, which can be adapted to meet the specific needs of a telecoms service provider.

Benefits

Centralised information and an accurate impact analysis to respond proactively to clients.

About iTop

iTop is an open-source solution for managing IT production infrastructure. The iTop database (CMDB) describes the information system components and their functions (hardware, virtual units, software assets). iTop's service catalogue provides a description of ITSM processes – incident/help desk management, change requests, etc. – monitors them, and ensures that they run smoothly.

Custom-developed features

Netrics asked Combodo to adapt iTop's CMDB to a number of features that are unique to its business. "We started by adopting the concept of "POP" (Point Of Presence), corresponding to specific connection points on the equipment we administer (such as port 1 on router ABC). iTop tells us which POP the equipment used by a given client is connected to. Then iTop's impact analysis function tells us which services delivered to a client are affected during changes or incidents on the POP or further upline on the backbone. This means we can respond proactively to our clients."

Netrics also enhanced its CMDB with the "Service Access Point" concept. "When a client has five access points with Netrics, it only subscribes to a single interconnection service (this service being available in five different locations). With iTop, we were able to link a service subscription to a specific access point for the client. In doing that, we save time for everyone!"

Delighted with the benefits they have gained from using iTop, Netrics' teams would like to expand its use to other purposes. Starting with **supplier contract management**, which is currently still based on Excel. "With iTop, we will be able to schedule automatic follow-ups. We are also in the process of migrating our **change management** process to the tool. Our aim is to notify clients automatically whenever we make a change that affects them".

Interconnection service providers: a complex environment

Netrics had previously always stored its technical data in Excel files. The information was not always kept up to date, and the spreadsheets contained numerous duplicates... "We needed a real CMDB-type database to centralise our information and make it reliable", explains Thierry Prudat, Technical Manager at Netrics Basel AG.

The company had identified several CMDB applications on the market that were capable of meeting some of its needs, but **none of them was wide-ranging enough to adapt to all of its specific features**. "The nature of our business as an interconnection service provider means that we operate in a complex environment: we manage more than 1500 equipment items which are spread over different networks (ours, those of our clients, the Internet backbone, etc.). So we needed a **highly specialised CMDB tool and, most of all, we needed to be able to customise it in line with the issues we face in the field.**"

A customisable, open-source CMDB

"In this respect, iTop stands head and shoulders above the competition: we knew straight away that it was the right tool for us! **Not just because it offers a high degree of customisation, but also because it is an open-source solution**".

Indeed, the solution publisher, Combodo, offers support and training resources enabling users to roll out the tool themselves. "In other words, with iTop, we did not limit ourselves to the standard features: we knew we could customise new ones and rely on the community to develop the product further.

The iTop Designer is impressive: it makes it very easy to model the technical equipment items and their impacts, and these are then automatically factored into the ITSM processes (in the context of a change or a support ticket, for instance). **Without the CMDB, we used to waste a lot of time looking for the components concerned in order to carry out work on them. Now, everything is connected!** The tool is now the nerve centre of our activity."

Partial overview of the impact analysis linking equipment and customer contracts

