

Reaching the standard – past, present and future

IT HAS TAKEN 17 YEARS, BUT THE GLOBAL STANDARD FOR IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT HAS FINALLY ARRIVED. JENNY DUGMORE OF SERVICE MATTERS WAS ONE OF THE KEY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF THE FINAL PRODUCT AND HERE SHE OUTLINES HOW IT WAS ACHIEVED, WHAT IT MEANS FOR CURRENT PRACTITIONERS AND HOW IT WILL BE SHAPED FOR YEARS TO COME.



In 1989, the process was put in place to develop a global standard for IT service management, with the British Standard (BS 15000) recently evolving into that end goal: ISO/IEC 20000. The work towards an international standard was the driver behind an early adopters scheme based on edition 1, publication of edition 2 and a request to itsMF to establish a certification scheme.

ISO/IEC 20000 was fast-tracked to completion - a 14-month process that included discussion and voting by national standards bodies, resolution of comments, final changes and re-formatting to meet international editorial practices. Publication of ISO/IEC 20000, the UK implementation, BS ISO/IEC 20000 and withdrawal of BS 15000 all occurred on 15th December 2005. At the same time, plans for the future of ISO/IEC 20000 was submitted to SC 7, the ISO/IEC JTC-1 committee that produced ISO/IEC 20000.

The service management industry, which is typically dependent on complex supply chains, needs a common standard for best practices. Fast-tracking is allowed when a standard produced by a national standards body has relevance to many nations, meaning that BS 15000 was an obvious candidate. The standard is still in two parts, with part 1 the compulsory requirements and part 2 the optional recommendations.

THE DIFFERENCES

Many organisations are actively adopting ISO/IEC 20000. Some are converting from BS 15000, some are new adopters because they waited for an international standard for reasons of policy or

regulation. Although 450 changes were made, conversion to ISO/IEC 20000 should not be a major problem because the requirements have not been fundamentally re-written and the changes reflect best practices that service providers should have adopted already.

For those that have relied on BS 15000 for training, consulting, service improvement planning, certification schemes, auditing, or tool design, the 450 changes need to be reflected in their material. The BSI has published BIP 0039, "The Differences between BS 15000 and ISO/IEC 20000", based on the log of changes kept during the drafting of the standard to help with this conversion process.

The code:

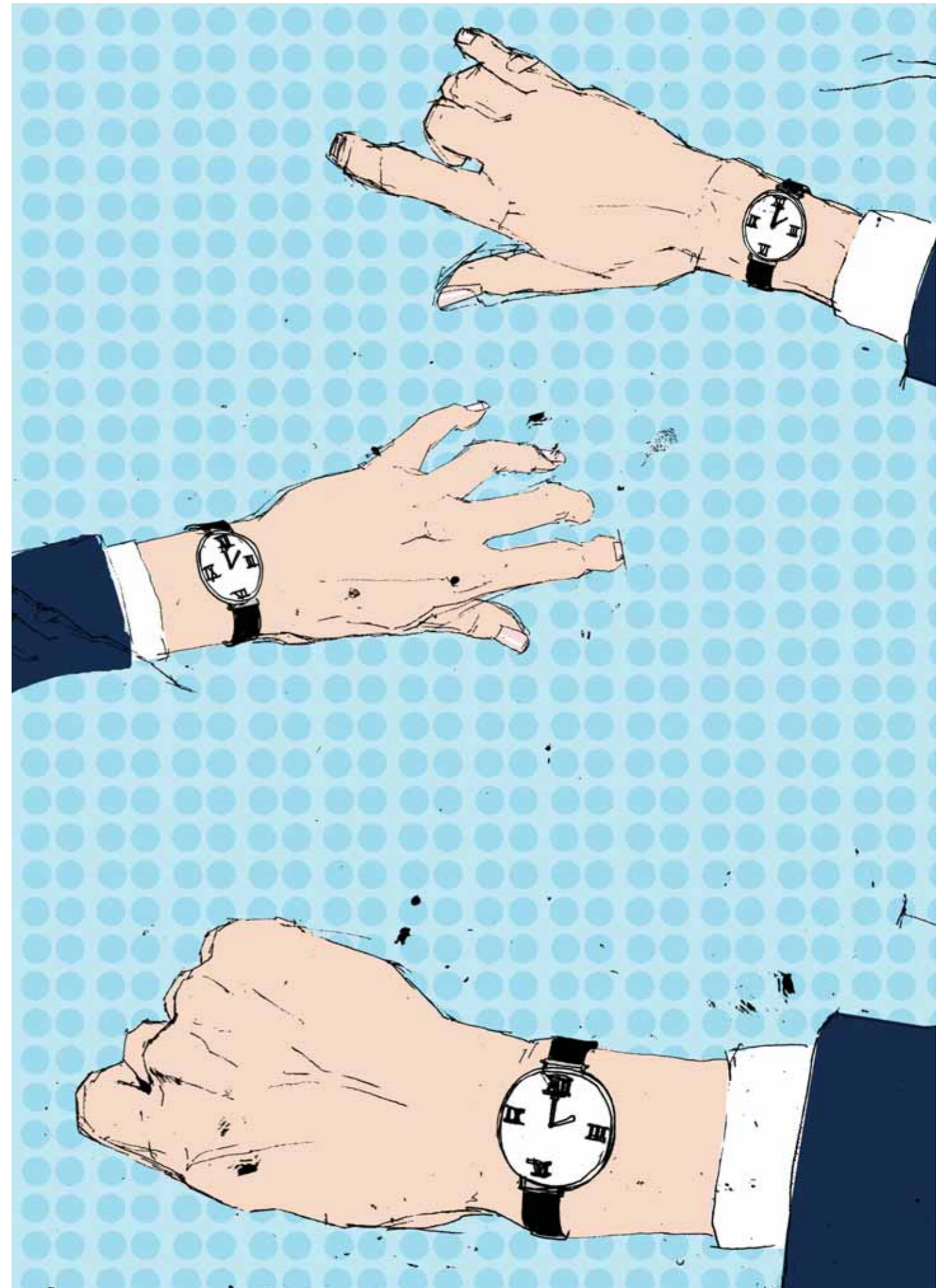
ISO/IEC 20000 is frequently, but incorrectly, referred to as ISO 20000. ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form a joint committee with a remit that includes all IT related subjects. Although ISO/IEC 20000 is aligned to the ISO 9000 group, they are in different categories and are subject to different rules.

The name:

The name also changed to Information Technology – Service Management – Part 1 Specification (and –Part 2 Code of Practice).

References:

International formatting rules meant only international standards can be referenced, unlike BS 15000. The UK implementation (BS ISO/IEC 20000), which has identical requirements and recommendations, also has an additional >





Jenny Dugmore, Service Matters

national foreword and national annex. The latter includes references to ITIL.

Definitions:

There are some minor changes and a 15th term: 'Service provider' meaning the organisation aiming to achieve ISO/IEC 20000. This was added to assist in the understanding of the requirements, especially for scoping of service management.

Objectives:

Some objectives have changed, e.g. for the capacity management process. This is to ensure that the service provider has, at all times, sufficient capacity to meet the current and future agreed demands of the customer's business needs. Objectives are not part of the requirements, being similar to a note or a clause on part 2. The alignment of objectives across both parts simplifies use.

Formatting and editorial:

This is the largest category. This is partly due to differences in the rules for drafting UK and international standards and partly the alignment of clause numbering for both parts, e.g. Part 2, 4.4.3, planning and implementing new or changed services is now part 2, 5. Extra sub-clause headings, shorter paragraphs, use of notes and alpha bullets help to simplify cross-referencing.

140 changes were made to clarify wording, particularly for those who do not speak English as their first language. These included standardising on the use of terms such as service provider, supplier, user etc. In some cases the original wording may have been misinterpreted and the new wording may seem to be a change to requirements or recommendations.

One change applied many times is 'the service improvement plan' becoming 'a plan for improving the service'. BS 15000 was sometimes misinterpreted as requiring a special and separate plan with a compulsory title 'The Service Improvement Plan (SIP)'. The need was, and remains, that the requirement is for there to be a plan (or plans) suitable for the circumstance faced by the service provider. The service provider may opt for a single plan, several plans or a programme with many work streams. In practice many service providers will have what they refer to as 'The SIP'.

Recommendations:

An audit is based on the requirements in clauses 3 to 10 of part 1, all other clauses and the whole of part 2 provide context or recommendations. There are approximately 35 changes to recommendations, the majority are in part 2, but some are notes in part 1. As was the case for BS 15000 a note provides context or recommendations and is never a requirement, even in part 1. ►



Requirements:

The 16 changes in this category are new or changed requirements, or removal of a requirement by conversion to a note. Examples include a change from 'continuous' to 'continual' improvement in the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle in part 1, 4.4. This is in alignment with other management system standards, such as the ISO 9000 group.

As management commitment and accountability are important the role of a 'senior responsible owner' has become a requirement, not just a recommendation. The new wording in part 1, 4.1 is: "The plans shall at a minimum define...d) the framework of management roles and responsibilities, including the senior responsible owner, process owner and management of suppliers."

The hierarchy of policy under-pinned by process and process under-pinned by procedure is as important to ISO/IEC 20000 as it was to BS 15000. For both the term process is 'what is to be done' and procedure is 'how to do it'. The new wording in part 1, 4.4.3 adds processes to: "The service provider shall perform activities to:... g) revise the service management policies, processes, procedures and plans where necessary."

As with BS 15000, ISO/IEC 20000 recognises that there are differences across types of process, so that not all requirements refer to both process and procedure. There has also been a change in which 'There shall be a complaint procedure' is now worded: "There shall be a complaints process" in part 1, 7.2. An auditor needs to check the input and outputs and need not now check the detail of how the required outputs are achieved.

Service reporting is still a separate process as information flowing between processes is critically important to process integration and efficiency. Six report types have also become compulsory due to deletion of 'typically' from: "typically service reporting shall include..." in what is now part 1, 6.2. The six report types listed as compulsory are unchanged from BS 15000, ranging from performance against service level targets through to satisfaction analysis.

There is also an additional requirement to re-test availability and service continuity plans: "The availability and service continuity plans shall be re-tested at every major change to the business environment." This has been included in part 1, 6.3, to cover changes to the circumstances of the customer's organisation from legislation, re-location, mergers etc. This is in addition to the annual review and the testing of service continuity plans in accordance with business needs.

THE FUTURE OF ISO/IEC 20000

Work Group 25 will look at the differences including how the standard will be managed. The BSI committee that produced BS 15000 is UK-based with representatives from organisations such as BCS, itSMF, OGC, commercial service providers, end users, training, consulting and tool vendors. Work Group 25 has been established by the international committee SC 7 to manage the standard. This group involves many national standards bodies. itSMF International is also an SC 7 liaison body, allowing involvement in SC 7 meetings, although not to vote. An individual formally accredited to

attend each meeting must represent an itSMF International consensus, rather than personal views.

These are a balance between a period of stability for use of ISO/IEC 20000 and a commitment to improve the standard. Proposals include:

1) New part 3 (scope and applicability)

Options include advice on scoping for service management planning and improvements and scope statements for certification audits. Suggestions on applicability include adding communications (i.e. ICT) or the even wider 'technology enabled services'. It may be possible to agree a new part 3 within 12 – 18 months of the Work Group 25 meeting in May 2006.

2) Part 1 and 2 – Detail and style

Improvements to part 1 are planned long term, but priority is likely to be given to part 2 where changes are likely to take some years to develop and agree. They include:

- Consistency in the level of detail in part 2, relative to part 1
- Recommendations that reflect the interests of an international audience
- Style of advice to be targeted at junior management and practitioners
- More advice on planning and process integration
- PDCA and service improvements

3) Harmonisation and ISO/IEC 20000

ISO/IEC 20000 is to be harmonised with other international standards whilst retaining the benefits of alignment between ISO/IEC 20000 and ITIL. It is expected that the benefits of alignment will be a feature of new editions of ITIL. With this in mind ITIL revisions are being mapped against ISO/IEC 20000, with members of Work Group 25 actively involved.

The policy for BS 15000-1 was to use words with the meaning found in an English language dictionary, avoiding the need for many special terms, which also applies to ISO/IEC 20000. Harmonisation will take into account ITIL terms and the work of SC 7's vocabulary group. Spelling in international standards is UK English with some unusual but valid variants such as 'organization' with a 'z', not an 's'. Under this rule 'z' is not universally substituted for 's', e.g. 'analyse' not 'analyze'.

The objectives in ISO/IEC 20000 do not align to other SC 7 process-based standards. It has been suggested that ISO/IEC 20000 should conform to ISO/IEC 15504-2 requirements for process reference models. ■

Jenny Dugmore is director of Service Matters, a service management consultancy company. She is also the Chair of the BSI committee that produced BS 15000, upon which ISO/IEC 20000 was based, and is a member of the itSMF's Certification Management Board.

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