

CASE STUDY

SERVICENOW AT SCALE - AFRL'S SWEET SPOT BETWEEN GOVERNANCE AND AGILITY



CONTEXT

The USAF Research Labs needed an Enterprise-level ServiceNow Managed Service Provider (MSP) service for cost-effective deployment of ServiceNow across Directorates, without a heavy “centralized” approach - allowing more agility to respond to local Directorate needs.

CLIENT CHALLENGE

AFRL DCD needed to cost-effective ServiceNow deployment and governance of standardized common ServiceNow data to avoid "re-inventing the wheel", but also needed better cross-directorate collaboration while providing autonomy.

- Enterprise DCD wanted to deliver AFRL-wide ServiceNow governed services, while granting autonomy to tech directorates without their own instance.
- Tech Directorates, with distinct budgets and commands, required autonomy, a challenge in the face of existing silos and limited collaboration.
- Disparate ITSM platforms and processes hindered a unified operational view, complicating data analysis across AFRL - for example, RW needed to decide if they should use simpler tools (like Jira ServiceDesk) and opt out of ServiceNow.

For optimal ITSM service rollout, LSA Digital installed and maintained collaborative enterprise process design tools (see our [ARIS case study](#)) and worked with ServiceNow architects to design a federated ServiceNow architecture, aligned with processes, key data and community governance standards.

SNAPSHOT

-  Digital Governance & ITSM, Process / Data design
-  DoD - Air Force Research Labs & Munitions
-  ServiceNow, ARIS

PAIN POINTS

- Enterprise DCD wanted low-cost, governed ITSM approach, but Directorates value flexibility & autonomy.
- RW / Munitions had their own priorities, and needed an ITSM / ServiceNow investment roadmap.

RESULTS

- Enterprise DCD ServiceNow domain-separated instance architected for lower-cost, faster adoption by tech directorates.
- ARIS web-based process & data modeling were deployed with "community governance" for better collaborative design.
- One directorate (RW) did impartial analysis and found that DCD's services delivered lower cost and faster value.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

LSA Digital helped AFRL to apply Digital Operating Model principles to balance a federated ITSM approach, delivering a balanced roll-out of ITSM processes, training and technology:

Benefits - from Enterprise DCD perspective:

- **People & Processes** - In addition to regular community governance meetings, enterprise DCD invested in Software AG ARIS enterprise process design system, helping improve enterprise DCD & local technical directorate web-based collaborative process design efforts -- and speeding up the development, analysis and adoption of ITSM processes.
- **Key Data** - The design of a federated data model and approach for AFRL pinpointed the essential data fields to enhance IT processes within ServiceNow's architecture. This model integrated unique data fields from AFRL's existing IT processes and enabled the foundation for supporting data-driven insights across AFRL - such as automation, analytics and Generative AI.
- **Technology** - A domain-separated configuration in ServiceNow enabled DCD to offer all technical directorates a lower-cost option to tailor their ServiceNow configuration, avoiding the cost and delay of installing their own instance.

Benefits - from Directorates' perspectives (see [Leveraging ServiceNow](#) case study for more detail)

- **People, Process & Data** - The establishment of a federated community governance model encouraged broad tech directorate buy-in, enhancing collaboration and maximizing centralized investment. ARIS enabled faster process design "starting points" and collaborative web-based review - helping to avoid some meetings, and putting key ServiceNow data in process context.
- **Technology** - An impartial ITSM tool analysis steered the RW towards a decision to onboard with DCD's ServiceNow managed service, with the decision-making process considering cost, interoperability, and future scalability, among other operational factors.

WORDS OF ADVICE

Scaled Agile [principle #9](#) recommends to decentralize decision making when possible, and this case study is a good example to explain why: Enterprise-wide, heavily centralized investments have common challenges being accepted and adopted by individual directorates / departments (whether commercial or federal). It's important to consider the right "balance" of centralized ITSM / ServiceNow governance vs. local flexibility & control -- such as lower-cost bulk-purchase licensing and high-level process and local configuration accelerator templates. This balance should be delivered with good communication (e.g., "community governance") and effective digital ITSM process design collaboration, alignment and re-use.