



EIGHT BASIC SERVICE CATALOG TYPES

In this article I will look at two of the most basic types of service catalogs in use extending these to eight possible service catalogs. This is an area that is simple to understand and lays the foundations for any service catalog initiative.

Now please don't rush off and assume that by two types of service catalog I mean solely what ITIL presents as the IT service catalog and the business service catalog. What I am referring to in this paper is what is known as a '**records**' based service catalog and an **actionable** based service catalog. So, what do I mean by these two terms? Read on, as I explain these in more detail.

Records Based Service Catalog

A service record is a form that contains specific details about each service and its associated attributes. This is in much the same way that a CI (configuration item) record contains information about a CI and the attributes of the CI.

A service record:

- holds information about the service
- is related to other service records which forms the basis for service mapping and service impact analysis



- links to related documentation, for example SLAs, OLAs and work instructions
- identifies the status of the service which denotes its place in the service lifecycle

The service record can be created within a spreadsheet, a document, a service management application, a specific service catalog application or even a bespoke purpose-built system. Obviously, there are drawbacks to creating service records in documents, the main one being that the information exists in isolation from other service records with no direct links. Reporting on services is also manual and time consuming.

Spreadsheets offer a little more functionality but have limitations and may not support anything more than basic service mappings. At the most basic level a service record contains information about a service. Service records can be linked to each other to show service dependencies to help with BIA (business impact analysis).

Actionable Based Service Catalog

The actionable service catalog is published to users and customers and allows them to order goods and services, log requests and interact with the organization providing the services. This service catalog type is a service itself and is considered dynamic.



Actionable service catalogs can be utilized to enable an organization's staff to work more efficiently and effectively and to reduce the cost of supporting them by using IT to automate the delivery of service requests.

Customers are presented with more and more online and internet capabilities that allow them to interact with organizations to buy services directly or to use services to purchase products (online books and product stores come to mind) or self-fulfil requests.

So What About The Business And IT Catalogs?

Good question. I have presented two basic types of service catalog – records based and actionable based. Within each of these we can place a number of additional service catalogs types which are described below:

Records Based Catalog

Type	Description
Customer Service Catalog	The customer service catalog contains a listing of the customer services along with information regarding key attributes for the customer services contained in their respective service record. The customer service catalog should also contain relationships between the business service records which in



	<p>turn are related to the IT services. This catalog represents the services used by the organization's customers and should be detailed from their perspective.</p>
Business Service Catalog	<p>The business service catalog contains a listing of the business services, along with information regarding key attributes for the business services contained in their respective service record.</p> <p>The business service catalog should also contain relationships with the IT service records. This catalog represents the services used by the personnel within the organization and should be recorded from their perspective in language and a format that they understand.</p>
IT Service Catalog	<p>The IT service catalog contains a listing of the IT systems and IT services. Information about the key attributes for these IT systems and IT services is contained within their respective service records.</p> <p>The IT service catalog also maintains the relationship between the IT system and IT service records.</p>



Actionable Based Catalog

Type	Description
Customer Actionable Service Catalog	<p>The customer actionable service catalog is the service catalog service that allows the organization's customers to interact with the organization and allows them to use services and purchase products that are made available to them.</p> <p>Similar to the business actionable service catalog (below), the customer actionable catalog is an interface that provides a list of additional services that the organization's customers can request, similar to a shopping list, which can then be logged, processed, managed, fulfilled and completed.</p> <p>The customer service catalog provides the means to order these additional services, and it is the request fulfillment process that manages the completion of these service requests.</p>
Business Actionable Service Catalog	<p>The business actionable service catalog is the service catalog service that allows the organization's users (staff) to interact with the organization in relation to ordering services and products that are made available to them.</p>



	<p>The business actionable catalog is an interface that provides a list of additional services that the organization's users can request, similar to a shopping list, which can then be logged, processed, managed, fulfilled, and completed.</p> <p>The business service catalog provides the means to order these additional services, and it is the request fulfillment process that manages the completion of these service requests.</p>
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Additional Catalogs

Type	Description
Product Catalog	<p>A product catalog is, at its simplest, a catalog of product listings. Traditionally product catalogs were paper based detailing products available from an organization.</p> <p>More advanced product catalogs can be produced and many are now available online via the internet.</p>



Supplier Catalog	<p>The supplier catalog can be used to record information about the suppliers who provide services, systems and support to the organization.</p> <p>It could also be used to record services that the organization provides to other organizations.</p>
Professional Services Catalog	<p>The professional services catalog is where details of specific services that can be provided by the organization, or within the organization, are recorded.</p> <p>These professional services are generally services provided by people as opposed to applications. Some professional services utilize internal staff, some external personnel and others, a mixture of both.</p>

Simple (or is it)?

If it is that simple, why do organizations struggle with getting a service catalog initiative right? Why do organizations struggle with understanding the basics? Lack of subject matter information is a main contributor to failed initiatives.

Each service catalog type has distinct characteristics and a particular audience.



Each service catalog type requires specific design aspects in order to be effective, efficient and to return value to the organisation.

Each of these service catalog types are explained in more detail in my book “The Service Catalog”. I also include specific details about designing, implementing and managing the different service catalog types.

The reader will also find these eight service catalog types explained in full detail and all represented within a single diagram: the service portfolio pyramid.

Further details are available in my book [“The Service Catalog”](#) which is published by Van Haren Publishing and is available through online bookstores.

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