DESKNET

EMORY COMMITTEE FOR CLIENT TECHNOLOGY LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT

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Context and Rationale:

- Like most large organizations, Emory’s support model for desktop computing is very distributed and includes a wide range of approaches. Those approaches run the gamut from centrally managed virtual desktops to individually managed laptops.

- In nearly all cases, desktop support is mediated by an officially recognized desktop support organization that may range from one individual to more than a dozen staff.

- With the continued proliferation of various forms of mobile devices and smartphones, the definition of what constitutes desktop support continues to blur.

- Given the fiscal and market pressures in higher education and healthcare, it is critical that Emory’s IT organizations seek out models that optimize the experience of our customers and reduce costs where possible.

Given all of these factors, it is desirable to have a coordinating body that can serve as a communications bridge between the staff that are delivering desktop support and the governing bodies that are charged with creating the standards and guidelines for desktop and mobile computing at Emory.

Role of Desknet:

The specific charge of Desknet is to understand current desktop support practices in the context of the evolving needs of our customers, and to make recommendations for improving the user experience and efficiency of our desktop support practices.

The key responsibilities of DeskNet are as follows:

1. Define and promote computing technology hardware and software standard recommendations. Examples include recommended mail applications, browsers, spam/virus protection software and the physical hardware deployed to end-users. These recommendations will be based on collective experience, supportability, infrastructure, testing results and financial/contractual considerations.

2. Identify, prioritize and propose changes and enhancements to service management best practices and tools, such as the Enterprise Service Management System and Desktop Management Systems (DMS). These tools are critical components of service management used to support the user community. DeskNet will serve as the vehicle for local support to submit needs and concerns and will debate changes based on need, cost and available resources. Using tools such as Service-Now to track incidents, request, changes and anti-virus/malware software to protect our desktops.
from viruses, are only two examples of such tools the Emory Community has added to the portfolio of support tools that can be leveraged to provide the best possible environment to the end user.

3. Foster improvements in communications between the University enterprise and user community. This includes monitoring and seeking changes to documentation in the IT Knowledge Base. DeskNet will support and assist in the training of service desk employees. DeskNet will advocate changes in how technical information is disseminated to the user community.

4. Ensure that recommended standards are communicated to the distributed local support community including Service/Help Desks that support the University.

DeskNet members are the desktop technology stewards for the campus community. Members must lead by example in support of the “greater good” of the enterprise.

MISSION

DeskNet will develop, communicate, educate, promote and continually improve technology life cycle management best practices via the distinct local support perspective to further the missions of Emory University, Emory Healthcare and affiliates. DeskNet will strive to provide a unified user technology experience across divisional boundaries.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

For DeskNet to be effective, it must have executive sponsorship and support from the Information Technology Planning Committee (ITPC). Additionally, the members of the IT community must promote the recommendations.

TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS

Due to the complexities of integrating numerous applications and devices, the DeskNet committee members consist of representation from a wide variety of departments and organizations throughout the Emory Community. The recommendations will be communicated throughout the community via the different members of the committee as well as mailing lists and web sites.

DeskNet is responsible for providing standard recommendations as they relate to the desktop and portable computing devices. Examples include:

• Hardware and OS recommendations
• Browser recommendations compliant with Emory web applications
• Email client recommendations compliant with Emory systems
• Calendaring Software compliant with Emory systems
• Other desktop specific software evaluation and recommendations
• Ensure the coexistence of multiple applications
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- Smartphone and Tablet recommended devices compliant with Emory systems and supported by Emory procurement.
- Evaluation of new enterprise applications that meet with DeskNet standards
- Provide suggested standards for Service Management

All local support providers must advise customers to upgrade to the recommended standard and provide technical assistance to execute the upgrade. Users requesting support for a non-standard technology must be respectfully informed that the technology is not supported or that it is not recommended in the environment. This excludes legacy equipment that cannot be upgraded.

DESKNET PROCESS

The process of taking a recommendation to a defined standard involves participation and agreement of the DeskNet Committee members and signoff by the ITSC Infrastructure governance group. Additionally, when applicable a newly introduced technology will have a defined standard and possibly one or two other supported alternatives. After the committee agrees to an approach, the LSP meeting is convened. In the event of a disagreement in a standard, a vote will be taken. All of the steps are outlined below:

1. DeskNet identifies an initiative
2. DeskNet Committee members assign resources
3. If needed a taskforce is convened and makes a recommendation
4. Recommendation is presented to the DeskNet Committee
5. DeskNet Committee supports the recommendation and prioritizes implementation
6. Communication plan is identified
7. DeskNet receives feedback from the community and re-evaluates standards when necessary.

COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

All DeskNet standards are published on the OIT website and will be updated as the broader computing environment evolves. Users will be directed to Emory preferred vendors for hardware and software procurement.

It is extremely important that all information on the DeskNet website remain current. DeskNet will use the University academic calendar to review and update all standards and their supporting documentation at the beginning of each Fall semester.

The user community will be informed of standards through the OIT website as well as applicable listservs. Communication will identify the new standard and may detail a
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Communication of DeskNet best practices may also be incorporated in a bi-annual/semi-annual email newsletter distributed to local support technicians.

ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS

DeskNet assists in providing desktop design, testing, and support for various enterprise applications having desktop clients or other desktop implications. Engaging all parties early in the service definition process is critical to the launch of a new or upgraded service to be effective. DeskNet requests its involvement in the early design and testing phases of projects and software rollouts/upgrades. As a minimum requirement, DeskNet requires at least six weeks for normal testing of enterprise applications and must be given advance notice of a planned rollout. DeskNet’s responsibilities for a new service rollout include:

- Test the client software on the DeskNet defined supported operating systems and hardware. This includes DMS packaged installers.
- Provide detailed installation instructions and automated installers, when possible/applicable
- Communicate to applicable local support providers
- Provide any necessary installation training to local support providers and help desk employees
- Ensure current and approved software is loaded onto the Emory software server when applicable per licensing agreements.
- Provide secondary support for installation problems

MEMBERSHIP

Membership to the Emory University DeskNet Committee shall be open to local support providers from all divisions, schools or business units within the Emory University community. Representation from all divisions and business units is encouraged, although voting rights will be limited to a maximum of two representatives from any one division or business unit.

The committee will be co-chaired. The co-chair positions will serve terms lasting one year, one elected in January and one elected in June to ensure continuity. Should the January or June meeting be cancelled then the election will take place at the next DeskNet meeting. In the event that a co-chair needs to resign during their term an election will take place at the next regular DeskNet meeting for a temporary replacement. In addition to regular duties, the co-chair positions are also members of the ITPC where they will attend meetings and deliver proposals to the ITPC on behalf of DeskNet.

Nominations for co-chair will be accepted from any DeskNet Committee member, but co-chairs must be from different divisions, schools or business units. Co-chair positions are
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elected on a simple majority vote; in case of a tie where no agreement could be made to break the tie; then another vote will be held at the next regular meeting.

Membership includes but is not limited to individuals from:
- Campus Life
- Center for Comprehensive Informatics
- Emory College
- Development and Alumni Relations
- Emory Healthcare Information Services
- School of Business
- School of Law
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Public Health
- School of Theology
- Goizueta Business School
- Office of Information Technology
- Oxford College
- University Libraries
- Winship Information Technology
- Yerkes

In addition to the groups listed above, there are resources from other departments that work closely with Local Support and may be requested to attend meetings with DeskNet for discussions on various topics by invitation.

VOTING

The DeskNet Committee will at times vote (formal or informal) on suggestions or mandates for a variety of purposes. In order for a measure to be considered as passed, any vote will be based on a simple majority.