

TECHNOLOGY AUDIT

EasyVista

Staff&Line

SUMMARY

CATALYST

As enterprises expect and demand more from their IT, IT functions need to consistently deliver high-quality IT services and cost efficiencies, optimize IT performance and demonstrate delivered business value, and increase IT-to-business alignment or integration. In addressing these challenges, business adoption of the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) IT service management (ITSM) best-practice framework has raised the profile of ITSM and increased the necessity for tools to support related processes. IT organizations are also being forced to evolve beyond the basics of incident management and adapt customer-facing IT processes to accommodate the realization that what was once the IT helpdesk should now operate as a customer-focused service desk. Staff&Line targets EasyVista at companies with aged ITSM technology that no longer meets the performance-led demands of modern IT service delivery, has a high total cost of ownership (TCO), and requires heavy manual coding to operate in line with business needs.

- EasyVista is applicable to mid-sized and large enterprise organizations across all verticals, worldwide.
- EasyVista Classic is an on-premise ITSM offering, and EasyVista.com is software-as-a-service (SaaS)-based.
- EasyVista can reduce TCO, streamline IT operations, and help improve IT-to-business alignment.

KEY FINDINGS

Strengths:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ EasyVista delivers against the core ITIL v3 processes. ✓ It offers codeless customizability and scalable architecture. ✓ Staff&Line says that EasyVista.com can reduce TCO by up to 50% over five years due to its codeless development environment. ✓ It has an easy to use interface.
Weaknesses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ No vertical-specific ITSM offerings or variants for non-IT functions. ✗ Lower level of public product awareness relative to other large ITSM technology providers in some territories.
Key Facts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i The solution has two flavors: EasyVista Classic (on-premise); and EasyVista.com (SaaS-based). i The first vendor to be certified against 15 ITIL v3 processes by Pink Elephant.



OVUM VIEW

Corporate IT functions are not only being squeezed by the enterprise-wide mandate to “deliver more with less,” but also by the need to demonstrate business value through business alignment, and to ensure that the availability of business-critical IT services is maximized. IT departments within medium-to-large organizations have also long faced the increasingly complex task of provisioning IT services to business users (via multiple IT teams or functions acting in unison) to support business priorities. This complexity, along with the need for IT to demonstrate business value and maximize the availability of business-critical IT services, is continuing to focus the attention of corporate IT on the ITIL v3 framework of ITSM best practice. The adoption of ITIL has both raised the profile of ITSM and increased the necessity for tools to support it and IT service delivery optimization.

Staff&Line’s EasyVista Classic (licensed on-premise) and EasyVista.com (subscription-based SaaS) are enterprise-grade ITSM toolsets that can aid organizations of all sizes in optimizing their IT support functions and delivered IT services. Staff&Line was one of the early adopters of SaaS-based delivery for its ITIL-aligned offering (the company’s SaaS-based ITSM toolset was available over 10 years ago), and this first-mover advantage has helped the company to establish itself as one of the leading vendors in the competitive ITSM software landscape. Its current installed base includes banking, insurance, financial services, the public sector, retail, healthcare, utilities, telecommunications, managed service providers, and IT consulting. EasyVista offers what Ovum considers to be comprehensive ITSM functionality (with the exception of demand management process support) through a simple, easy-to-use interface that embraces Web 2.0 functionality. Other aspects of note include the simple licensing options, flexible delivery model, codeless customizability, and scalable architecture.

Recommendations

- EasyVista Classic and EasyVista.com should be considered for any medium-to-large organization looking to introduce ITSM processes and/or supporting technology.
- EasyVista is a vertical-agnostic offering that is appropriate for organizations across a wide range of industry sectors. It can replace legacy ITSM toolsets that are hard-coded, offer limited flexibility and customizability, and have a heavy footprint.
- EasyVista.com can remove the burden of providing and supporting an IT-focused support solution internally. It can also offer greater financial control over provision while ensuring its consistency.
- EasyVista.com is also appropriate for smaller organizations and those starting out on the journey of ITIL adoption (or non-ITIL-based ITSM optimization).

FUNCTIONALITY

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

EasyVista is Staff&Line’s enterprise-class ITSM offering which delivers against key ITIL v3 processes. To this effect, the product is PinkVerify certified against 15 ITIL v3 processes: incident management, problem management, change management, service asset and configuration management, event management, request fulfillment management, release and deployment management, knowledge management, service level management, availability management, IT financial management, capacity management, service catalog management, IT service continuity management, and service portfolio management. A solution overview is shown in Figure 1. The company also offers an asset management solution – EasyVista Asset Management – which provides key asset management capabilities in hardware and software discovery, license rationalization, and contracts management. Both offerings are tightly integrated and can be delivered as a single solution. However, EasyVista Asset Management is not covered in this Technology Audit.

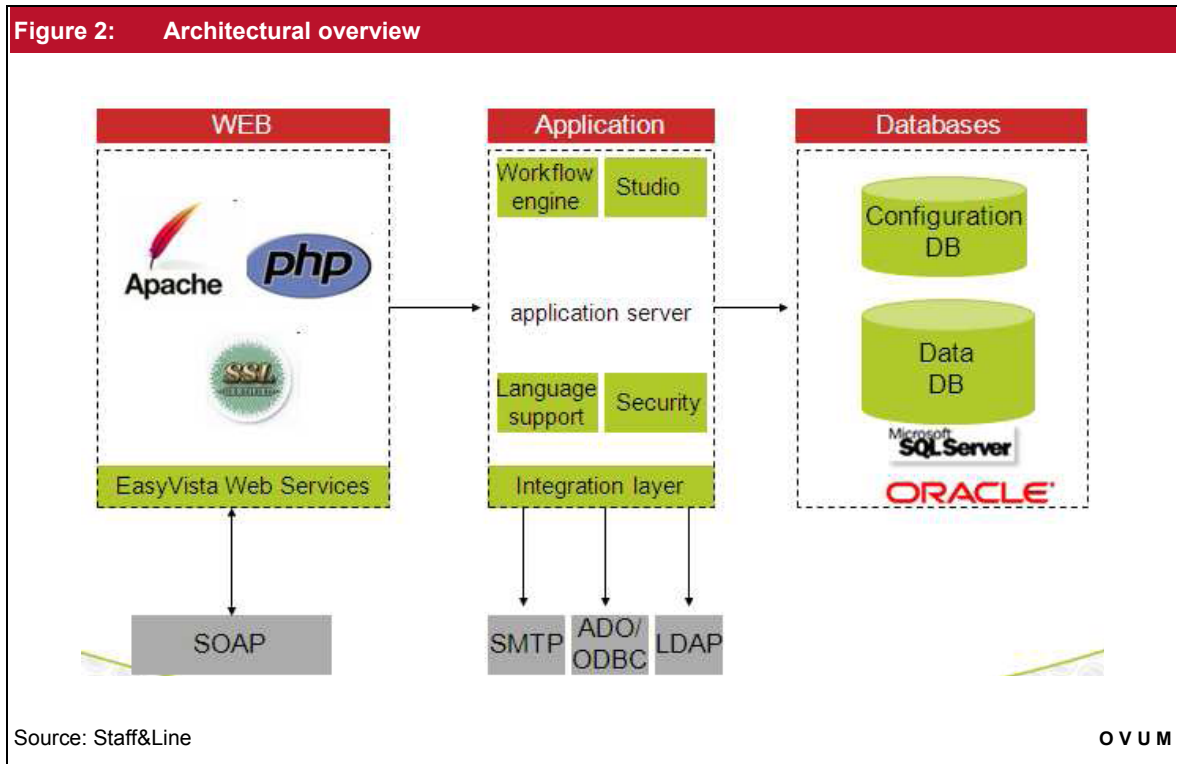


Staff&Line offers two flavors of EasyVista: EasyVista Classic, a traditional on-premise ITSM offering delivered on a perpetual licensing model; and EasyVista.com, an SaaS-based offering that is hosted and managed by Staff&Line and is delivered to customers on a subscription-based model. EasyVista.com is a full-featured solution that offers enterprises the same capabilities and functionality as EasyVista Classic.

Staff&Line believes that, as a business-facing support application, EasyVista should require minimal support resources. Therefore, EasyVista was built with “simplicity” as its core theme. According to Staff&Line, many legacy ITSM solutions have a heavy footprint and are hard-coded, with acquired technology tightly integrated with middleware technologies. Any further changes, such as customization, feature enhancements, and integration, require significant development resources. Staff&Line says that EasyVista has been developed to address these specific pain points, positioning the solution as a “codeless” ITSM tool that can be rolled out quickly and managed with significantly lower overheads.

Continuing EasyVista’s simplicity theme, Staff&Line offers a number of ready-to-use capabilities (with codeless customization where needed), including over 250 business process wizards with in-built questionnaires that eliminate the need to author a rules-based workflow; reports and report templates; dashboards; real time key performance indicators (KPIs); alerts; and integration with Lightweight Directory Access Protocol-based directories, infrastructure management tools, enterprise resource planning and financial management applications, business intelligence tools, Office productivity applications, and other ITSM solutions. All of EasyVista’s ITSM functionality is delivered via a Web 2.0-based interface. All objects and object-related data are stored as XML, and EasyVista Studio, a core component of EasyVista which requires no additional license, can be leveraged to provide a graphical user interface to edit these objects. In doing so, administrators can customize EasyVista without having to rely on the availability of developer resources or tackle the issue of funding this resource.

Figure 2 shows the three-tier architecture of EasyVista Classic. The first tier comprises a web layer based on Apache and supports SSL certificates for encryption. The second tier is the application layer, which implements the business rules. The final tier is the database layer, which contains two components: a configuration database (which stores configuration elements such as screens, wizards, and reports), and a “data” database, which contains customer-specific data such as incidents, employees, assets, and locations. These three tiers can be installed on three different machines if required, depending on the size of the deployment.



SOLUTION ANALYSIS

Support for ITIL v3 service operation processes

EasyVista delivers against the core ITIL v3 service operation processes of incident management, problem management, request fulfillment, and event management.

Incident management

Customers can submit support requests via a multitude of sources: telephone, the internet, email, and computer telephony integration (CTI). Upon submission, EasyVista logs these support requests as incidents. Capabilities such as navigation history, personalized bookmarks, and integrated search are all delivered via a Web 2.0 interface. EasyVista also offers an interface optimized for devices with smaller screens, such as PDAs, smartphones, BlackBerry, and iPhone.

Problem management

Frequently occurring incidents are automatically logged as problems, and EasyVista can suggest corrective actions before these problems affect service availability. Problems are managed through the problem management processes via a common, integrated EasyVista workflow. EasyVista also offers capabilities for automatic problem prioritization, problem classification, and problem analysis.



Request fulfillment management

Using EasyVista's request fulfillment management functionality, consumers of IT services can raise service requests for additional IT services. The solution ensures that all request-pertinent information is captured from the end user and routed through existing workflows to the concerned service desk staff or request fulfillment group.

Event management

ITIL defines events as issues that cause a change of state in configuration items (CIs). A fundamental difference between events and incidents is that while incidents visibly affect the services provided by IT, events do not. EasyVista's event management capabilities offer an end-to-end view of all events, and then identify the incidents, requests for change, and releases that caused them, and suggest necessary restorative changes.

Support for ITIL v3 service design processes

EasyVista delivers against the following ITIL v3 service design processes: service level management, service catalog management and employee self-service, availability management, and service continuity management.

Service level management

EasyVista offers capabilities that help define, enforce, measure, and monitor service level agreements (SLAs) and operational level agreements. The solution helps to define KPIs and service level triggers, along with escalation procedures and the appropriate routing workflow. Alarms that help notify deterioration of service can also be set up, thereby helping to minimize the risks and costs associated with service interruptions.

Service catalog management and employee self-service

EasyVista Self Service provides a multitude of capabilities directly to end users, freeing up service desk operatives to focus on other, potentially greater, value-add activities. The web interface can be used to report incidents and make service requests 24x7, the latter via a personalized, dynamic catalog of services. End users can also self-help (Level 0 resolution) via web access to EasyVista's knowledge base, and IT can publish incident information to end users automatically in order to warn them of any business-affecting issues.

Availability management

EasyVista allows organizations to define availability targets against service components within the configuration management database (CMDB) and compare actual availability rates with predetermined availability targets to identify discrepancies. The solution offers industry-standard availability indicators out-of-the-box, such as mean time between failures, mean time to repair, mean time between service incidents, and mean time to restore service. EasyVista also offers simulation capabilities to help ascertain how non-availability will affect SLAs.



Service continuity management

EasyVista's service continuity management capabilities can help organizations to minimize the effects of service interruptions by formalizing the procedures for service restoration. Organizations can define the processes that will enable IT to work with enterprise business continuity management groups to ensure that fit-for-purpose contingency plans are in place in the event of a service outage. EasyVista can also help IT to run regularly scheduled tests on the services offered.

Service transition processes

EasyVista delivers against the core ITIL v3 service transition processes of change management, service asset and configuration management, and release and deployment management.

Change management

EasyVista positions itself as the single, centralized tool to manage, track, and optimize changes throughout the change lifecycle. It provides a graphical workflow editor that helps administrators to model a structured, standards-based validation process that incorporates the simplest of rules to the most complex, such as conditional criteria-based validation. The solution's change management capabilities integrate natively with the problem and incident management modules, as well as the CMDB. It can also notify the progress of change requests in real time to all concerned parties.

Service asset and configuration management

All EasyVista modules rely on a common base of the EasyVista CMDB, which enables organizations to manage CIs and the relationships between them. Staff&Line views the CMDB as the heart of ITSM, and the tool allows organizations to check the availability of CIs in real time, resolve incidents and problems, plan requests for change, and simulate how non-availability of IT services affects compliance with SLAs.

Release and deployment management

Once changes have received the necessary approvals, the process of release and deployment management begins. EasyVista provides service managers with a single screen to view and control scheduled releases. It identifies delays as well as the potential impact of these delays on IT services, notifying concerned personnel accordingly.

Support for ITIL v3 service strategy processes

EasyVista delivers against the core ITIL v3 service strategy processes of IT financial management and service portfolio management.

IT financial management

EasyVista can track all costs associated with IT service delivery and help organizations with IT budgeting. Service component costs can be rolled up into an overall service cost, with the ability to identify a per-user cost for each service, and IT expenditure can be viewed from a variety of perspectives. All of this information is presented in real time to alert organizations to potential budget overspend.



Service portfolio management

EasyVista can be used to manage the service lifecycle and includes three categories of service: service pipeline (proposed or in development); service catalog (live or available for deployment); and retired services. This allows services to be managed from cradle to grave.

Ease of adoption and use case scenarios

“Simplicity” is the adopted mantra of EasyVista. The solution was built to address the issues associated with traditional, hard-coded ITSM toolsets, and Staff&Line markets EasyVista as a “codeless” ITSM solution, meaning that custom code does not need to be developed and tested before changes in the ITSM toolset are rolled out across the enterprise. To facilitate ease of adoption, the company offers hundreds of business process wizards, report templates, events, alerts, KPIs, and up-to-date accessibility with an iPhone application, all of which are aimed at getting organizations up and running quickly, as well as ensuring that tool maintenance overheads are kept to a minimum. This is supported by Staff&Line’s “Easy-ITIL” approach.

EasyVista Analytics is another example of how EasyVista makes life easy for its SaaS customers. It offers automatic diagnostics and proactive recommendations – pushed monthly to each customer – to improve the quality of ITSM operations and prevent issues before they appear.

Unlike some ITSM tools, EasyVista is not targeted outside of the IT environment for non-IT use-case scenarios such as HR, facilities, or complaints management. The opportunity to have either multiple service or helpdesk instances in a single solution is becoming commonplace as organizations strive to benefit from economies of scale. There are also no industry-specific flavors of EasyVista for greater alignment and speed of deployment/adoption.

PRODUCT STRATEGY

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

As with most ITSM solutions, EasyVista is applicable across all verticals and geographies. Staff&Line has deployments in banking, insurance, financial services, the public sector, retail, healthcare, utilities, telecoms, and at managed service providers across the globe. In terms of customer size, Staff&Line says that most EasyVista Classic deployments are in IT organizations with 20–200 IT users, while the SaaS-based EasyVista.com is suited to IT organizations with 30–500 IT users.

GO TO MARKET STRATEGY

In terms of operational geographies, Staff&Line has two key markets, Europe and the US, and a local presence in France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and the UK. Direct sales contribute roughly 40% of revenues, with Staff&Line’s value added reseller (VAR) network accounting for the remaining 60%. Staff&Line has a strong partner network, which helps extend its geographical footprint across the globe:

- **EMEA** – Synopse, Infodis, Itamsys, Insight, Idesys, DMI, Expert Line, ECS, Elisasis, Sogeti, Mielabelo, People & Technology, Lanexpert, Advance, Netcom, Dedagroup, FinSoft, Artesys, Lowendal Masai, ITILview, Satec, Morse, Brujulam Clacat, Sumatra, Quint, TeamUltra, ITAMS, Bytes, and CRC.
- **US** – FMX Solutions.
- **Middle East** – ProServ Jordan.
- **Australia/Asia** – BSS.

Staff&Line has an impressive 3,300-strong customer base, with 600 on the current version of EasyVista (EasyVista Classic and EasyVista.com). It can still, however, suffer from a lower level of public product awareness relative to other large ITSM technology providers in some territories. The company's well-known, reference-able customers include Expro, Inergy Automotive, BioMerieux, Arkema, and L'Oreal. Staff&Line's technology partners include Oracle and Microsoft.

Staff&Line's release strategy for EasyVista is one major release per calendar year. The most recent version, EasyVista 2010 released in September 2010, included: Google Maps integration for geographic display of data; enhanced CMDB graphical display of data supporting baseline management; EasyVista Analytics (a virtual administrator for EasyVista that identifies configuration issues and displays configuration change recommendations on the implemented version of EasyVista); EasyVista Translator (a tool that offers support for more than the six standard languages currently supported); enhanced real time integration with new web services; and out-of-the-box compliance with the configuration management database federation (CMDBf) schema.

IMPLEMENTATION

Staff&Line says that an entry-level EasyVista Classic deployment costs approximately \$70,000, with a 65:35 software-licenses-to-services split (including support and maintenance). An average, mid-sized deployment of EasyVista costs around \$150,000 with a 65:35 software-licenses-to-services split. However, some of the largest deployments cost upwards of \$200,000, with a software-licenses-to-services split of approximately 70:30. Entry-level, mid-sized, and large deployments of the SaaS-based EasyVista.com (on a three-year contract) carry roughly the same cost as their on-premise counterparts.

In terms of deployment timeframes and implementation resources:

- An evaluation/pilot project or small service/helpdesk (roughly one to 10 users and delivering one ITIL v3 process) has a deployment timeframe of five days, using one internal and one external full-time equivalent (FTE).
- A departmental-level or mid-sized implementation deployment delivering six processes takes about 30 days, using one internal and one external FTE.
- A large-scale enterprise-level implementation takes around 70 days to deploy, using one internal and one external FTE. This scale of deployment usually delivers support for eight or more ITIL v3 processes.

Staff&Line also targets a number of professional services offerings at both VARs and customers. Solution training is available to both customers and VARs. ITIL consultancy, on-site installation of EasyVista, and solution roll-out are available only to customers, and are delivered via either Staff&Line directly, or via one of its accredited partners. There are two support and maintenance options. The first option, charged annually at 20% of the full license cost, offers technical and functional support for customers during regular working hours in the US, EMEA, and Asia Pacific geographies. The second option, charged annually at 25% of the full license cost, offers customers 24x7 technical support. Both options offer ongoing software patches, bug fixes, and major and minor release upgrades.

EasyVista Classic offers support for the following platforms:

- **Application server** – Windows Server 2003 and 2008.
- **Database server** – Windows Server 2003 and 2008.
- **Web** – Apache 1.02.28, 2.05, and 2.2.

DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES

Arkema

Arkema is a leading chemical company which has a presence in more than 40 countries, employs 15,200 people, and has a turnover of €5.7bn. It has a leading position in its principal markets, operates six research centers in the US, France, and Japan, and owns some internationally recognized brands. Arkema manages quality of service internationally with EasyVista. Staff&Line says that Arkema uses the offering to improve the modeling of its IT assets and to optimize the management of its service desk across three continents.

Expro

Expro specializes in well flow management, providing dedicated products and services that measure, control, improve, and process flow from high-value oil and gas wells. Headquartered in the UK, Expro operates in over 50 countries including the US. With almost 5,000 employees, and over 100 sites around the world, its biggest operational base is located in Aberdeen, while other main support centers are located in Houston, the US, and Kuala Lumpur. Post acquisition activity, Expro wanted to replace the various incumbent ITSM tools with a single solution. EasyVista was chosen as an SaaS solution that could cater for Expro's geographically dispersed employee base.

Inergy

Inergy is a joint venture, set up between Solvay Automotive and Plastic Omnium Soufflage, which designs, makes, and markets vehicle tanks. Since inception, its business has grown significantly, and today, Inergy is a major player in the "energy engineering" market. Supplying the world's main car makers with fuel systems, it has 24 plants and 50 sites in 18 countries across three continents (Europe, Asia, and America), as well as around 4,500 staff, 2,700 of whom use the company's IT systems. Inergy chose EasyVista via SaaS-delivery to help ensure that trouble tickets are totally traceable and that its global service desk functions optimally.



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