

RightAnswers Client Profile

University of Missouri



University of Missouri Makes the Grade with RightAnswers Self-Service Solution

The University of Missouri has provided teaching, research and service to Missouri and the nation since 1839. Today, the University of Missouri is one of the nation's largest and most prestigious public research universities, with more than 63,000 students across four campuses and hundreds of thousands served statewide through University of Missouri Extension.

Challenge

With more than 90,000 users – including students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, retirees and employees across other networks – the University of Missouri sought ways to keep pace with the growing day-to-day technology needs of their IT service and support operations.

In an effort to improve service delivery, senior university IT leaders tasked the help desk at the University of Missouri to identify the top support requests received. Research showed that technical requests such as password resets and other routine issues inundated the help desk support queue, crowding out the ability to address and resolve more complex problems. Making this knowledge available through a self-service system would enable the University of Missouri to reduce costs, better leverage the support analyst skill sets, and most importantly, empower end-users with tools with 24x7 availability.

Solution

After an exhaustive evaluation, the University of Missouri selected RightAnswers Self-Service for use by its system of campuses in August 2006. The solution would complement existing help desk processes. Working together, RightAnswers, the University of Missouri's IT Service Desk Manager, Nathan Eatherton, and his team first implemented a central system for self-service knowledge at the University's flagship campus in Columbia. They subsequently introduced the solution to campus users in January 2007. Building on the momentum, they also initiated a marketing campaign later that spring in conjunction with the "Summer Welcome" program for incoming freshman students. Promotional channels and marketing collateral included email, campus TV station bulletins, orientation programs, buttons, magnets, screen savers, etc.

"In the University environment, we try to offer a variety of support channels and technologies to satisfy our diverse customer base," explained Mr. Eatherton. "Prior to RightAnswers we had static content on various Web sites, and other scattered and uncoordinated knowledge bases. There was no central repository."

Resources

In addition to the software, RightAnswers provided consulting and integration services as well as value-added content to ensure the University of Missouri had a strong and successful self-service adoption. They assisted university IT staff with a detailed analysis of help desk business objectives, processes, service metrics and types of inquiries fielded by support analysts. (Cont'd).

Challenge

Implement self-service system to augment existing help desk operations

Applications & Services

- RightAnswers Self-Service
- RightAnswers Support Analyst
- RightAnswers Solution Manager
- RightAnswers Client Success Program

Key Benefits

- Ability to deflect common requests to self-service
- Improved first call resolution rate
- Ability to share knowledge among users and support analysts
- 24/7 support
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Reduced training time for new employees

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With RightAnswers, the University of Missouri has automated a number of help desk processes, including the use of self-service tools, which minimized the number of tier 1 inquiries requiring a live support analyst. If users cannot find a solution to a specific problem in the knowledge base, they can instantly create a trouble-ticket, which is routed to a support analyst. In addition, users can now update and check status of tickets via the RightAnswers Self-Service portal. Previously, users would submit online requests via email using a "mail to" form. Unfortunately, help desk staff had to monitor the email account, and had to copy the details manually into the existing help desk ticketing system.

The IT help desk at the University of Missouri uses RightAnswers Self-Service as its primary knowledge base. As part of the help desk's workflow process, Help Desk support analysts use the knowledge base extensively to resolve complex issues before escalating to tier 2 or 3 support analysts. In addition, IT management encourages support analysts to share new or updated knowledge using RightAnswers' Solution Manager tool. Content is therefore dynamic, current, and relevant.

"We chose RightAnswers because of its ability to integrate with our existing Remedy infrastructure and its vast library of standard content," said Mr. Eatherton. "More importantly, the team at RightAnswers understands the nuances of what makes self-service initiatives successful, and we leveraged their expertise to launch a platform that will allow us to keep pace with our growing needs."

Driving Adoption

RightAnswers Self-Service helped the University of Missouri streamline its support processes by serving as the front-end channel to field tier 1 technical inquiries. Since the deployment, Mr. Eatherton and his team surveyed users on their experience with and adoption of the new self-service system:

- **86.9%** of users say the knowledge base provides the answers/solutions they are seeking
- **83.3%** of users say that the knowledge base has improved their overall support experience
- **95%** of users say they will use the knowledge base again

With RightAnswers Self-Service, Mr. Eatherton noticed several positive effects, including the reduction and/or deflection of commonly requested issues. As a result, support analysts can focus on addressing escalated issues and other complex tasks. Additionally, with the system, support analysts now have publishing tools to expand the knowledge base, essentially improving the quality and quantity of resources the users can draw from to resolve issues. To date, there are more than 400 custom solutions.

"RightAnswers is an important tool for our help desk," explained Mr. Eatherton. "Our campus culture requires around-the-clock assistance, but staffing a 24/7 help desk is not cost effective. RightAnswers has enabled us to drive self-service initiatives that satisfy this need, and have improved the overall quality and responsiveness of our help desk operations."

Future Projects

Looking ahead, the University is looking to expand the self-service knowledge base to include subject areas other than IT. Additionally, the University is looking to expand the footprint of the knowledge base by integrating RightAnswers Self-Service with other applications. ■

Getting Self-Service Right

Nathan Eatherton, University of Missouri's IT Service Desk Manager Shares his Thoughts on Best Practices

What is the Key to Improving Self-Service Adoption?

Self-service is not a "set it and forget it" type of technology. Users and support analysts need to invest time to continually develop new content and keep it fresh and relevant. It is an organic process that must be nurtured from day one.

What can you do to Motivate Personnel to Contribute to the Knowledge Base?

Promoting a culture to share knowledge can be challenging. You must first have a system to identify the types of content needed, and then encourage support analysts to author it by giving them tools and most importantly recognition. The greater the volume and quality of knowledge, the more beneficial it is to the overall performance of the help desk.

How Important is Marketing Self-Service Initiatives?

Technology and process automation represent the starting point. Once you've deployed your self-service platform, you must continuously build awareness. Using conventional and non-conventional methods— everything from user orientations to email to voicemail signature files—you must highlight the availability and value of self-service resources.

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