

# 2013 Knowledge Management Review



**BEST IN CLASS:**  
Knowledge Management 2013



**ITINVOLVE:** All 3 products are a good option as they meet the basic requirements requested, however this product looks to be an excellent (if brave) choice that works towards an intuitive KM solution

EasyVista and Cherwell have similar in built functionality and are established ITSM players, whilst ITinvolve is a more innovative product, with good customer results and stories so far. Whilst this is the best product option, ITinvolve are still a new and small vendor and will need to develop their client-base to consolidate this result.

Of the products reviewed, these areas were of particular note:

### Good for practical simple and effective use (with existing platforms)

EasyVista and Cherwell – both provide excellent standard integrated Knowledge functionality with the existing toolsets. Either product is an excellent option for Knowledge Management, integrated with the other ITSM toolset areas – both are recognized and established ITSM vendors.

### Good for an innovative approach using new/social tools

ITinvolve – Nice approach and social integration means the barriers to usage can be radically broken down. There may be challenges for organisations taking this approach on, but it looks to be excellent option (and is also integrated with some other ITSM tools).



### Review by Barclay Rae

Barclay Rae is an experienced ITSM mentor and business manager. He has worked on approximately 400 ITSM projects over the last 25 years, as well as starting life on the operations side of IT, setting up and running Help/Service Desks.

Barclay has worked for a number of ITSM organisations, as well as running consultancy company e2e for 10 years. He delivers strategic ITSM consultancy, mentoring and business development, as well as media analyst services to the ITSM industry.

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## OBSERVATIONS

'Knowledge Management' (in the ITSM context) doesn't really have a specific product sector. This tends to be an application of one or more product areas to support the process of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. E.g. a useful 'Knowledge Management' solution could easily be SharePoint, or an intranet portal.

ITSM value in this area comes from integration with regular ITIL processes like Incident, Problem, Change, SLM and Configuration, plus automation and self-help delivered via customer-friendly portals.

Of the 3 products reviewed, EasyVista and Cherwell were seen to be good example of knowledge functionality applied to an existing ITSM toolset – both showed good integration and provide good standard functionality. ITinvolve was clearly built more as a knowledge and social platform and is seen as an innovative product with some new concepts.

All 3 products displayed capabilities well in keeping with the stated

requirements and would offer good opportunities for development of Knowledge Management (with the caveats as described above).

Differentiators were therefore relatively minor in terms of functionality (particularly between EasyVista and Cherwell). The main difference was in the overall (and quite radical) approach from ITinvolve – this was seen as positive and interesting, although involving a more challenging procurement and implementation approach.

As with many tools in this area, much of the success is down to the interface and usability, plus how this can remove resistance to use. Tools that are seamless and integrated, plus those which can leverage slick and familiar ways of working and user interface will help to build loyalty and effective usage.

Knowledge Centred Support (KCS) was not seen as a differentiator for any of the vendors reviewed – none saw value in investing in accreditation and this had not been an issue in procurement to date.

## MARKET POSITIONING & APPROACH

Vendor	Mid-Market	Enterprise	Approach
Cherwell	✓	?	Standard ITSM
EasyVista	✓	?	Standard ITSM
ITinvolve	✓	?	Innovative Social

✓ - Definitely  
 ? - Possibly

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## COMPETITIVE OVERVIEW

Vendor	Overview	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendor emerging across ITSM market space</li> <li>• Knowledge approach seamless with other ITSM areas in product</li> <li>• Provides all functionality required for review</li> <li>• Good vendor approach</li> <li>• Knowledge article key element of system</li> <li>• Overall looks a good option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets all functionality required for review</li> <li>• Knowledge shipped OOTB and is key element</li> <li>• Configuration can be done by non-tech users</li> <li>• User portal simple and user-friendly</li> <li>• Access to KAs can specified to (field) level security</li> <li>• KAs can be associated to services</li> <li>• Approval process sets % approvers</li> <li>• Approval steps can be defined at multiple levels</li> <li>• 'One Step' feature to simplify approval process</li> <li>• Nice 'Community Discussion' board</li> <li>• KAs can be raised and applied to any (process) area of the tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can look overly complex in places</li> <li>• IT User interface could be clearer and less complex</li> <li>• Can't map approval workflow process</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good functionality meets all stated requirements</li> <li>• Seamless integration across the ITSM product set</li> <li>• Vendor established global position in mid-market –limited presence in some markets – e.g. UK</li> <li>• User Interface user-friendly</li> <li>• Some good features around discussion boards, crowdsourcing options and multi-level KAs</li> <li>• Overall looks a good option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets all functionality required for review</li> <li>• Pink Verified for Knowledge Management</li> <li>• Multi- level deployment in different languages</li> <li>• Able to control who uses 'user rating' – for KA relevance</li> <li>• Can reference 3rd party search engines and rate solution</li> <li>• Search engine automatically searches</li> <li>• Can create technical and simplified version of same KA, then apply to relevant profile</li> <li>• Nice statistics Dashboard</li> <li>• Discussion groups within product – nice like Facebook wall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendor geared to mid-market implementation</li> <li>• Limited positioning or presence in some key markets – e.g. UK</li> <li>• Could provide more focussed, results-based information on customer success stories using KM</li> </ul>
 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New vendor with innovative product and approach</li> <li>• Viral/organic knowledge approach</li> <li>• Lots of good features well thought-out functionality</li> <li>• Product requires a big shift in approach from client</li> <li>• Vendor still developing pitch and positioning</li> <li>• Good option for some organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets all functionality required for review</li> <li>• Uses 'Social' crowdsourcing</li> <li>• Users 'follow' objects, creating knowledge and understanding of real experts and stakeholders facilitates 'crowdsourcing'</li> <li>• Can be used in conjunction with other ITSM products –</li> <li>• Approach based on actual usage and practice rather than theoretical processes</li> <li>• Support staff see all followers and knowledge for an object.</li> <li>• Graphical representation of relationships – showing users + stakeholders.</li> <li>• Stakeholders crowdsource knowledge and change – based on 'objects' they are following</li> <li>• Can also use more 'traditional' approach of approval and review as needed</li> <li>• Vendor offers Proof of Concept and trial. Implementation approach aims to support client self-sufficiency where possible</li> <li>• Good customer success examples given</li> <li>• Implementation approach based around successful client adoption of KM processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires a major client shift in approach</li> <li>• Requires use of new terminology</li> <li>• Looks complex in places and requires clients with open or new approach to implementation</li> <li>• Sales pitch needs to be developed to grab attention more quickly</li> <li>• New and small vendor with limited market track record</li> </ul>

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## Deep Dive

Further details for each vendor can be found by using the links below:

- [Cherwell Software – Cherwell Service Management](#)
- [EasyVista – EasyVista 2013](#)
- [ITinvolve – ITinvolve Knowledge Collaborator](#)

## Further Reading

- [Quick Guide to Knowledge Management Tool Selection](#)
- [Knowledge Management is more than just buying a tool](#)
- [IT Knowledge Management – spreading the word!](#)
- [Aprill Allen, Knowledge Bird](#)

## DISCLAIMER, SCOPE & LIMITATIONS

The information contained in this review is based on sources and information believed to be accurate as of the time it was created. Therefore, the completeness and current accuracy of the information provided cannot be guaranteed. Readers should therefore use the contents of this review as a general guideline and not as the ultimate source of truth.

Similarly, this review is not based on rigorous and exhaustive technical study. The ITSM Review recommends that readers complete a thorough live evaluation before investing in technology.

This is a paid review. That is, the vendors included in this review paid to participate in exchange for all results and analysis being published free of charge without registration. For further information please read the 'Group Tests' section on our [Disclosure page](#).

## FULL REVIEW ONLINE AT

<http://www.theitsmreview.com/2013/09/knowledge-management-2013-group-test-results/>

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