

U2 Podcast #4 - Getting the Most Out of U2 Support

LOGUE: Welcome to another episode of Getting the Most Out of IBM U2. This is Michael Logue, and I'll be your host for today's episode which takes a look at getting the most out of U2 Technical Support.

First of all, let's learn a little bit about how the U2 Support Organization works. With me today is [Simon Caddick], Senior Manager of U2 Client Support. Simon has been a part of the U2 team for over 10 years now, and heads up the entire U2 Support Organization worldwide. Simon, thanks for being here with us today. Can you give our listeners an overview of how the U2 Support Organization works?

[CADDICK]: Hi Michael. Yes, certainly. I think one of the points, just to pick up, you said that it's worldwide. And we truly are. We've got about 30 people throughout the world very experienced with the products, often come from having used them directly as well as being trained in them in support.

Wherever they are, they have the same mission, though, and that's to assist our customers when they've got installation snags, if they've got straightforward questions, but especially when they have system downs and they need rapid assistance.

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LOGUE: So how many cases does the U2 Support Organization manage?

[CADDICK]: Good question. About 600 a month. And as I say, they vary in complexity from the straightforward to the fiendishly difficult.

LOGUE: Excellent, thanks Simon.

Now let's dive a little deeper into how our users can get the most out of the U2 Support Organization. Another guest with me is [Tim Shea]. Tim is one of the managers in the Support Organization reporting to Simon, and also manages the U2 data servers product support. Tim, perhaps a good place for us to start would be to give us a review of how our users can open up new cases for support.

[SHEA]: Okay, Michael. Yes, there's three ways to get a hold of support: basically by e-mail, by phone and via the Web. Probably the best way and the way that I recommend you get most out of U2 support is to go to our Web site at www.ibm.com/software/data/U2/support/U2techconnect.

Once you're registered at that tech connect site, you can open and update your cases. You can also view some additional information on there under click, get contact details. You'll find contact information for our offices in the UK and Australia, both e-mail addresses and telephone

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numbers.

In the US you can e-mail U2supp@us.ibm.com, or you can call 800-729-3553, option number eight. We always recommend you call us if you have a critical system down, priority one. We don't monitor the e-mail or the Web pages on weekends and after hours and holidays. So you need to give us a call if it's during that time or any time you have critical system down.

LOGUE: All right. Thanks Tim. So I know that U2 has a unique support model. Simon, who has access to opening support cases?

[CADDICK]: Well, yes, Michael, to get support you have to be entitled to it: it's a bit like claiming on your insurance, you have to have bought a policy beforehand.

So what this means practically is that you'll either be one of our business partners or an IBM direct end user. At any rate, you're going to need to have a serial number that you can quote to us and that shows as being on covered maintenance.

LOGUE: Okay. So that makes sense if I'm a partner or a direct end user. What happens if I'm the direct end user or the end user of one of our partners?

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[CADDICK]: So if you're the end user of one of our partners, say you've bought their application and therefore you've got the U2 product with the application. Typically you will get support from your partner, from the person who sold you that application -- not always but that's usually the case. So you should contact your partner first.

If you're not sure who you get your U2 support from, just call into us anyway and we'll be able to tell you and redirect you if necessary.

LOGUE: Excellent. Thanks, Simon. I think it might be useful for everybody to know how they should go about opening a support case, what information is really required. Tim, maybe you can expand on that for us.

[SHEA]: Sure, Michael. You know, whether you open a case no matter whether it's the Web or phone or via e-mail, there's several things which we do require and several things which you really need to think about and provide us as well.

So first of all, we need the product serial number, eight-digit number with the suffix of UDTUV. If it's one of our products, our tools products like System Builder, you'll need to also supply not only the serial number but we need

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the information on the versions of the tools, the versions of the database, the versions of the operating system. We need all that pertinent information so we can evaluate that.

We also need a full description of the problem including any error messages. We need to know the business impact of the problem, how it's affecting your company.

What really helps us, of course, where we start, is when did the problem begin and what changed, you know, has this ever worked correctly? What steps have you taken to resolve the problem?

Have you reviewed the documentation? What parts of the documentation have you reviewed? Are you able to replicate the problem outside of your application in one of our U2 sample databases?

That pretty much covers it. Those are the essentials that we need when we look at a case and you'll find if you reviewed that information, often times you'll be able to zero in on it yourself and provide us the help to help you.

LOGUE: Excellent, Tim, that makes a lot of sense. I know that U2 has users all over the globe. How do we offer support 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

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[CADDICK]: Well, let me answer that one, Michael. First of all, we offer support 24 hours, seven days a week for down systems. If it's a regular question, you call in during normal business hours in your locality.

But for the down systems we do offer 24 by 7. And the way we're able to do that is we use a model called Follow The Sun or FTS. And that's utilizing what I mentioned right at the start of this podcast about us having people in a number of geographies.

So we've got people here in the US in Denver, Colorado, where we're recording this podcast. We've got a team out in the UK just outside of London. And we've got a team down in Sydney, Australia.

Now having these teams in different geographies means we're able to leverage the different time zones. And that way we can ensure that whenever a customer calls in, there's always going to be one office active that can deal with the call.

So perhaps let me give you an example. Typically, the Denver support center is open from seven a.m. to six p.m. mountain time. So if one of our customers called in with a system down at 10 past six on a Monday evening, their call would get routed automatically through to the Sydney office because Sydney will have started their day just a few hours

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earlier.

And by the time that Sydney comes to finish their day and close the office, the London office will be open. And so calls will get routed from them on to London. And similarly, London and the US overlap.

So basically whatever time of day, wherever you are in the world you can put a call through on a system down and they'll be an office open that can help you.

LOGUE: Okay, great. That makes a lot of sense for weekdays, but what about weekends and holidays? How does that work?

[CADDICK]: Well, yes, that is a little different and we have a system in place that pages analysts on duty and they'll be able to either help you directly or be able to bring in extra resources as necessary.

LOGUE: Okay, great. So how does one go about making the most out of U2 support?

[SHEA]: Well, Michael, as I mentioned earlier, probably the best resource for information for that is to go to our Web site at www.ibm.com/software/data/U2/support/U2techconnect. Whew,

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that's a mouthful so that'll be available in the transcript for you too, you don't need to try and write that down right now.

But at that site you'll be able to find links on how to access the IBM U2 Knowledge Base. You'll need to register for the Knowledge Base, but you can find resolutions to many problems out there just by searching that yourself.

Also at that site, you can view the product availability matrix and compatibility matrix and you can authorize your U2 products, you can download trial versions and you can access and download U2 documentation. There's lots of great stuff out there. So point your browsers there and I think that's probably the place to start.

LOGUE: Very good. Simon, are there any other final points you'd like to make to our audience today?

[CADDICK]: I guess just this, Michael. I hope people have found this podcast valuable with the information it contains. But we've put our information in a lot of other different ways -- one of the main ones being our Knowledge Base. And we try very hard within support to put out useful information into the Knowledge Base.

That means that people can often solve their own questions

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without even having to talk to an analyst. They can go to that Knowledge Base and search on it and find helpful articles.

So if you haven't already done so, please register for access to the IBM Knowledge Base. If you don't know how to do that, just call into us and one of our analysts will be happy to send you the document that gives you the instructions. But I think people will find that very helpful before they even got to talk to support.

LOGUE: Very good. Thank you, Simon. Transcripts of today's podcast which includes all of the relevant links are available on the Web site by following the U2 podcast link from the main podcast page.

As always, audience are encouraged to e-mail us with feedback, any comments and certainly any suggestions for future podcast episodes.

Please also join us for the next episode and learn how to get the most out of the Eclipse Software Development Kit which is being used currently by the U2 Development Organization for a number of tools that are coming online including the upcoming Extensible Uni Admin tool, as well as the Basic Integrated Development Environment. This is Michael Logue. This has been another episode of Getting the

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