Five things to consider before choosing open source help desk software

2018-04-12 - Benedict Sycamore - Comments (0) - Blog

Do you need an open source help desk or an alternative option?

There are a number of pros and cons to most things, and open source help desk software is no different. This article has been written to guide you through the benefits and pitfalls of relying on a help desk built with open source code, and what the alternatives are.

What exactly is open source help desk software?

As a company experiences growth, managing customer support from a shared email inbox becomes simply untenable. As a result, many organizations look for a ticketing system or help desk in order to effectively support their customers.

Without a sizeable budget, lots of organizations look for open source help desk software - built on completely free and openly available source code. Whilst this might sound appealing, the open source approach has certain drawbacks that you ought to keep in mind before investing in a free help desk.

1. Dirt-cheap to download, costly to configure

One of the biggest pitfalls when investing in open source help desk software is the hidden costs it can incur as time goes on. Many open source options available are completely free to download and use, but quickly become expensive when you calculate the cost of complex install processes, tricky configurations and constant maintenance needed from developers.

2. Too much of a good thing

A great thing about open source help desk software is that it gives you complete freedom to customize it to match your specific organizational needs. However, it's not uncommon for free help desk providers to publish 300+ page long manuals that are nothing short of daunting for non-developers. When it comes to the freedom open source solutions have to offer, it only really pays off for those with the necessary in-house technical skills, time and resources.

3. A lack of support

Because of the commercial reality behind open source help desk software, it can be very difficult for a provider to offer any meaningful level of support when things go wrong. With more popular solutions, there are terrific user communities that offer hands-on support to one another. The unfortunate reality is that without dedicated support, any bigger issues you might experience will take a lot longer to resolve than they would with a paid help desk provider.

4. A little light on the features front

Another typical grumble you're likely to hear from users of open source help desk software is the absence of those super-useful features. These could include anything from time-saving automation, to the ability to readily adapt the help desk to suit already-existing internal workflows and processes. Help desk providers with paid-for products enable them to invest profits back into improving their software.

5. Frustrating for staff, even worse for customers

A lack of features isn't just an impairment to the value you get from open source help desk software; it can also negatively impact both the employee and customer experience. Without a full-featured help desk that's backed up by a dedicated team of bug hunters and support staff, you might find the product can become tricky for your team to navigate. Not only does this frustrate staff, but the trickle-down effect it has on the customer experience is simply non-negligible.

What are the alternatives to open source help desk software?

If you're looking for a low-cost, flexible and robust help desk, Deskpro includes an open platform and API - so you can make changes and adapt freely. Developers and frontline support staff love using Deskpro for the reason that it's easy to customize, integrate and use.

What's more is that investing in Deskpro doesn't mean breaking the bank. Unlike other leading help desk providers, we offer a simple rate of just $30 per agent per month for access to a fully-integrated help desk that's packed with hundreds of features.

Don't settle for a 'free' help desk that's going to cost you more in the long run. Take a look at our developer page for more information.