**ATLASSIAN**

# The State of Incident Management Report
# 2020

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# This is Atlassian's first-ever state of incident management study.

In a world where always-on services are expected, it's more critical than ever to have a fast, straightforward incident management process. That's why last year we shared our strategy and internal practices for responding to, resolving, and learning from major incidents in the **Atlassian Incident Management Handbook**. Although, we also believe it's important to have a collective view on how organizations around the world, and their software and IT teams are managing incidents.

This year we're excited to help you leverage the findings from our first-ever State of Incident Management report. The results help us keep up with the trends, best practices, and allow you to benchmark against your own processes. Here's what you can expect:

- The general state of incident management processes and practices
- Automation of incident response processes
- Future plans and investments

What's unique about this year's report being our first ever is that it's landed in the middle of a global pandemic. We also provide a short section and peek into the impact this has had on teams. Now even the most elite incident management practioners will need to think about what the future may look like. We're excited to share the results with you, because we feel that incident management is an evolving practice, and now more important than ever given the new normals we may be living in ahead.

# Who took the survey?

Atlassian's State of Incident Management research study surveyed over 500 software developer and IT decision makers across the US about incident management. The survey was fielded by CITE Research, on behalf of Atlassian and required the following respondent criteria:

- A full-time employee
- Role in either software development or IT
- Currently working in an organization that practices DevOps
- They are at a manager level or above
- Company size is greater than 101+ employees



**16%**

**84%**

■ **MALE**　　■ **FEMALE**
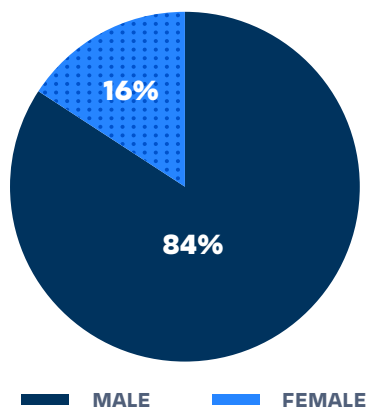
## GENDER

Only 16% of respondents this year were women compared to a majority representation of 84% men who took the survey. A clear indication of gender disparity across the industry.

## TITLE AND DEPARTMENT

Participants in the survey were working in organizations that are practicing some form of DevOps.



IT　**78%**

**40%** — **IT MANAGER**

**21%** — **DIRECTOR OF IT**

**39%** — **OTHER**

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT　**22%**
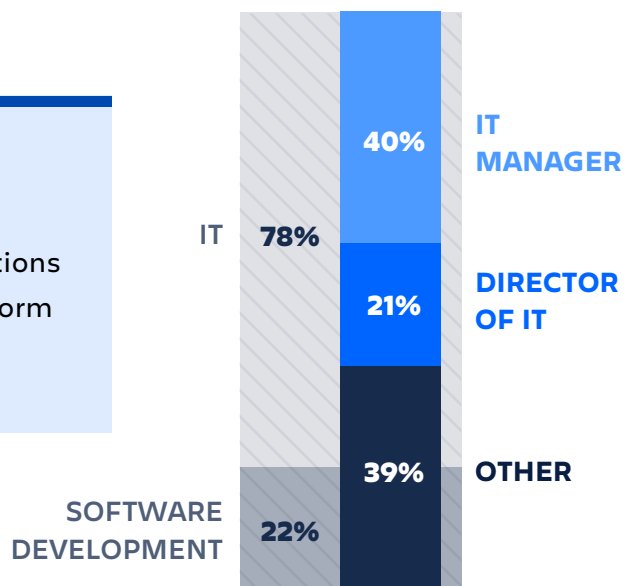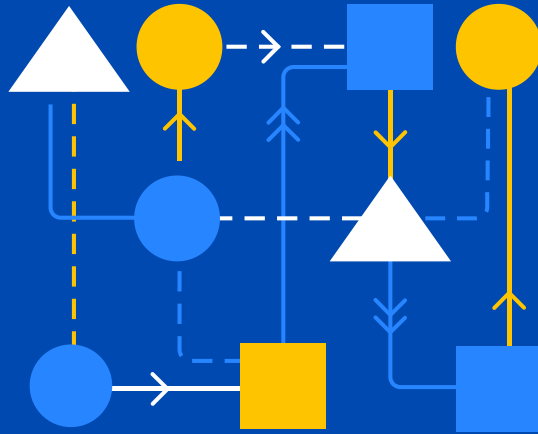
# 01

**Perception vs. reality**

# 31% of organizations are designated as proactive

Despite only 31% of organizations being designated as proactive by Atlassian's standards, 82% of respondents believe that their incident management process is "excellent" or "best-in-class."

**MATURITY OF INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

**19%**
Best-in-class

**63%**
Excellent

**16%**
Average

**2%**
Insufficient

To define an organization as proactive, we concluded that the use of monitoring, alerting, and communication tools were required, as well as incident response training and automation in at least one aspect of their incident management process.

# 02

Tools and processes

# Use of tools during incidents

Organizations use a variety of tools to communicate internally, externally and to collaborate with their team during the incident. On average, they use **5.2** tools to communicate internally, **4.2** to communicate externally, and **4.3** to collaborate with their team during an incident.
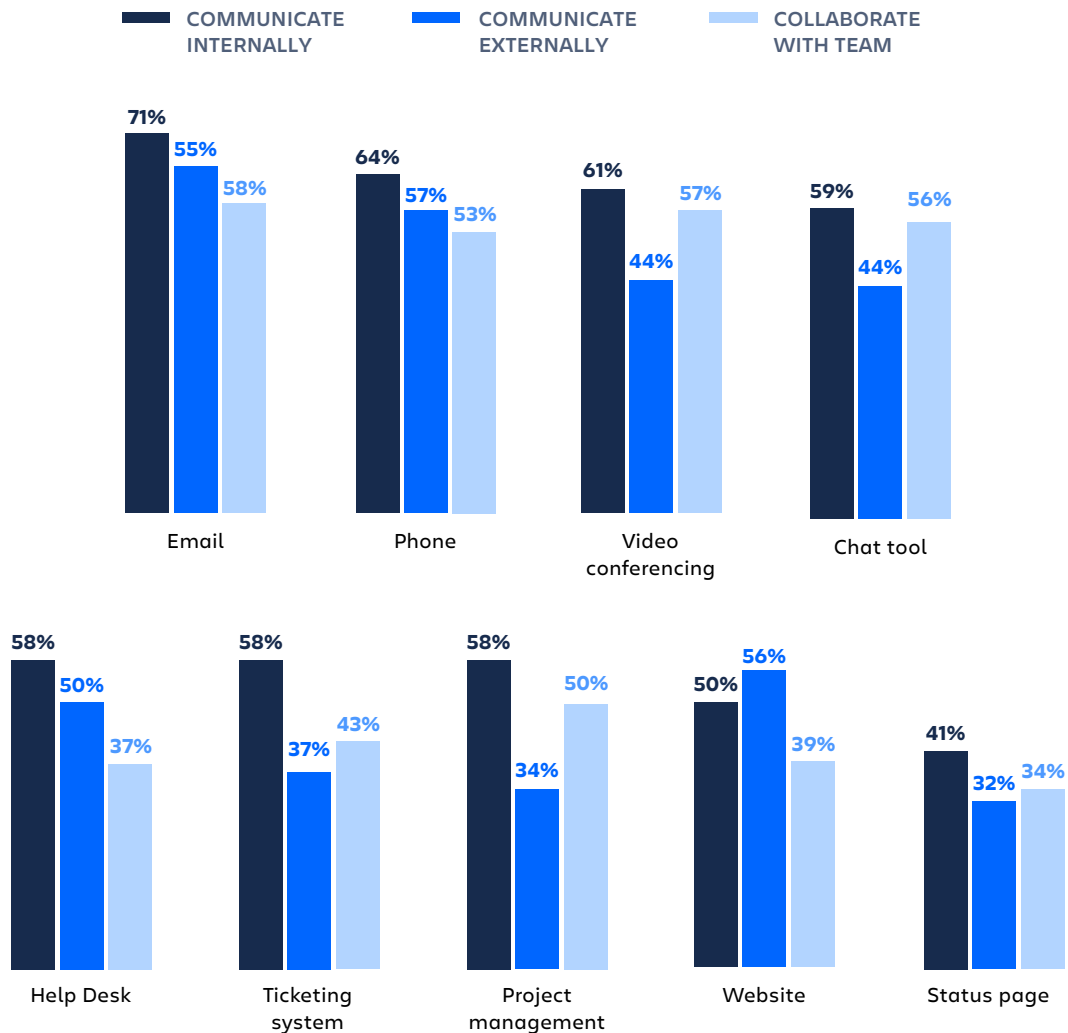


Email is the most common tool for both types of communication, as well as collaboration. Video conferencing and chat come into play closely behind.

Software developers are more likely than IT employees to use chat for internal communication and collaboration.

# Channels used to discover incidents

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Monitoring tools** | **86%** |
| 2 | **Internal discovery** | **71%** |
| 3 | **Help desk** | **69%** |
| 4 | **Customer email** | **61%** |
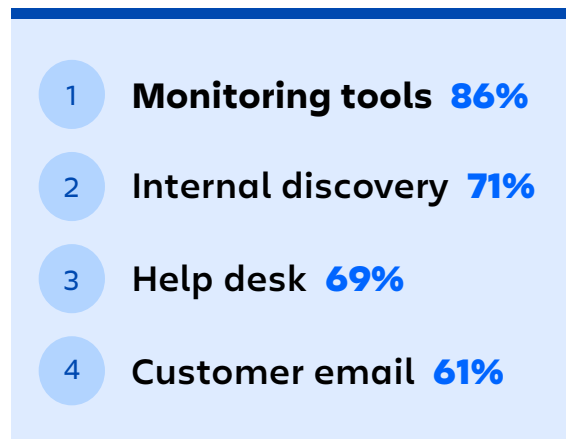
The best-performing teams use a collection of the right tools, practices, and people to proactively learn about incidents.

The majority of organizations said they're using monitoring tools to discover them. Internal discovery came a close second.

# Tools and processes

Nearly all organizations say they have pre-defined severity levels, SLA's, runbooks, and adhere to on-call schedules. The majority have some level of incident management training, although only a little over half conduct war games. Having these procedures and processes in place are crucial for minimizing any business impact during an incident.

| TOOLS/PROCESS | % OF USE |
|---|---|
| **Official procedures/runbooks** | **95%** |
| **Service-level agreements** | **95%** |
| **Pre-defined severity levels** | **94%** |
| **Adhere to on-call schedules** | **93%** |
| **Incident management training** | **88%** |
| **Conduct war games** | **55%** |

# Incident metrics usage continues to vary

Organizations are using a combination of metrics to measure productivity during an incident. The top two were mean time to resolve and mean time to respond. Surprisingly, only a little over half of respondents track mean time to acknowledge a new incident.

**79%**

### MTTR
(mean time to resolve)

**66%**

### MTTR
(mean time to respond)

**53%**

### MTTA
(mean time to acknowledge)

**24%**

### MTTF
(mean time to failure)
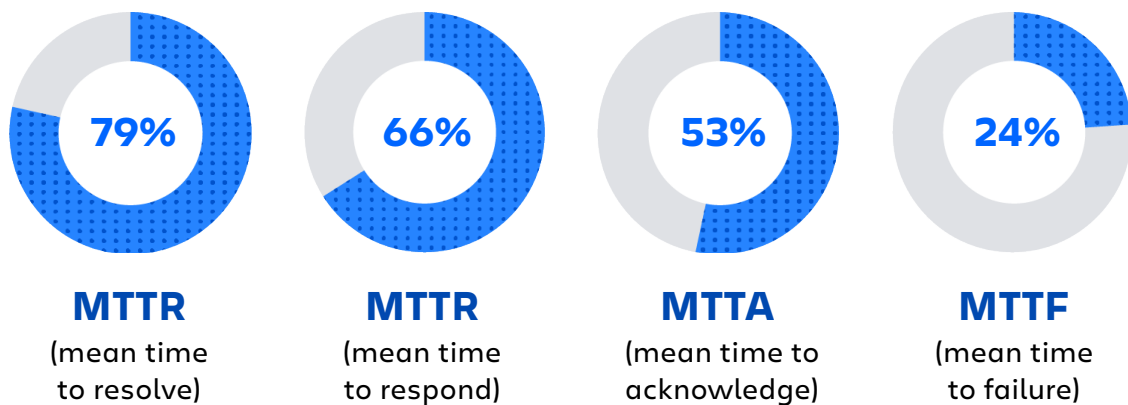
# Source of truth during incidents

A large majority consider tools like Jira Software and Jira Service Desk as the source of truth for tracking incidents. Respondents tend to combine resolution-related information from chat tools with the baseline information held in tickets to craft a cohesive story about the incident.

**88% use a ticket or issue tracking tool**

(e.g. Jira, Jira Service Desk, etc.)

**65% use a collaboration chat tool**

(e.g. Slack, Microsoft Teams, etc.)

# 03

## Areas for improvement

# 97%

**say it is important to improve their organization's incident response process in the next year**

## 70%
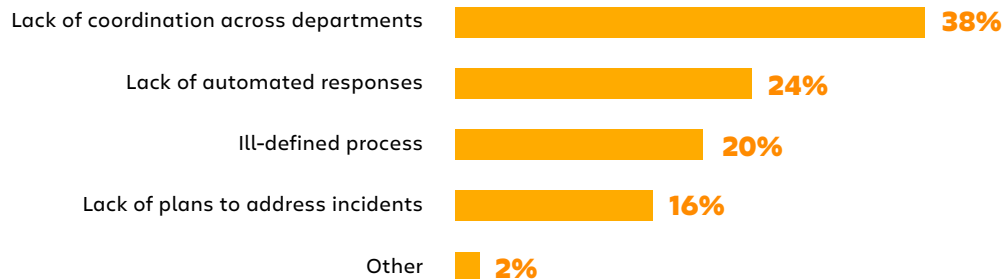**VERY IMPORTANT**

## 27%
**SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT**

## 3%
UNIMPORTANT

# Incident management pain points

Overall, the lack of coordination across departments is the biggest pain point for organizations when it comes to managing incidents.

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Lack of coordination across departments | 38% |
| Lack of automated responses | 24% |
| Ill-defined process | 20% |
| Lack of plans to address incidents | 16% |
| Other | 2% |

# Areas of immediate improvement

Interestingly, more than half of respondents believed internal collaboration and resolving incidents were areas to prioritize improvement. This closely mirrored the top two pain points in incident management.

**1** **Internal collaboration 54%**

**2** **Resolving incidents 52%**

**3** **Understanding root cause of incidents 49%**

**4** **Discovering incidents 47%**

**5** **External customer communication 44%**
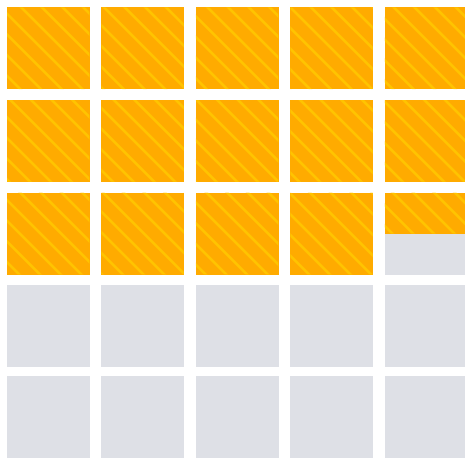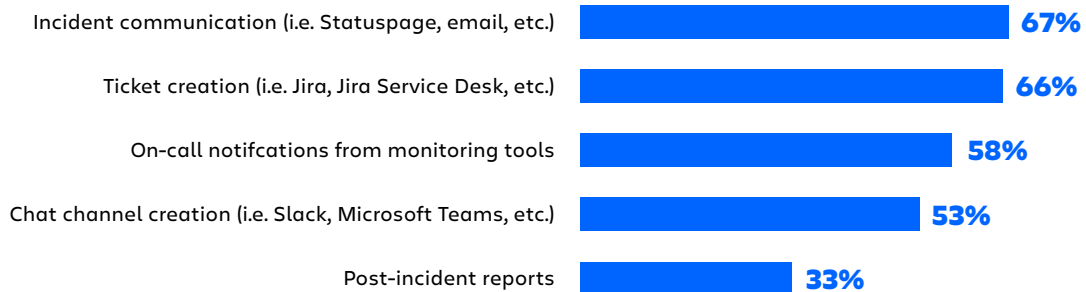**Internal stakeholder communication 44%**

# 04

Automation is becoming mandatory

# Automated incident management processes

Post-incident reports were the least automated aspect of the incident management process at 33%. The automation of incident communication and ticket creation were both around two-thirds. We anticipate the greatest increase to be in chat channel creation as an aid for the shift to remote work.

| | |
|---|---|
| Incident communication (i.e. Statuspage, email, etc.) | 67% |
| Ticket creation (i.e. Jira, Jira Service Desk, etc.) | 66% |
| On-call notifcations from monitoring tools | 58% |
| Chat channel creation (i.e. Slack, Microsoft Teams, etc.) | 53% |
| Post-incident reports | 33% |

**Only 58% automate external comms and on-call notifications from alerting**

The current state of automation applied towards incident management is fairly juvenile. We see this as a big opportunity for improvement for all organizations. The next wave of automated operations will likely focus on the long-tail of automatable actions, such as consolidating incident communication for post-incident reports and replacing manual, repeatable work.
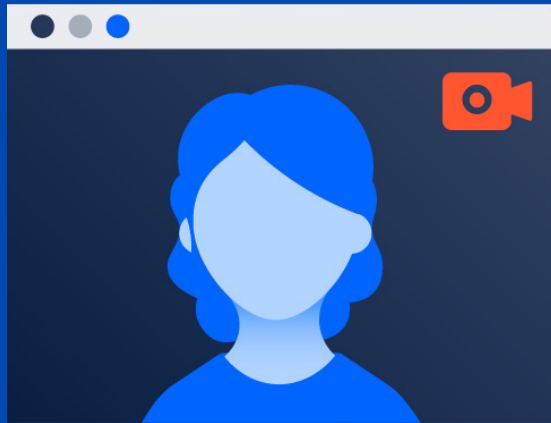
# 05

The impacts from the global pandemic

**96%** stated that some or all of their employees have transitioned to working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic

## Demand and usage of services have increased

Our survey found that 73% of respondents saw increased demand for the services they work on. Almost overnight, offices shifted into homes. This had a profound impact on work schedules and productivity, making the continuous availability of tools like Zoom and Slack absolutely critical.

**INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR SERVICES**      **NO INCREASE**

**73%**                                   **27%**

## Delivery and response times have slowed

**51%** reported that their incident response time has been slower since beginning to work remotely.

**66%** reported that their teams have slowed their frequency of software delivery.

# 06

What's in the future?
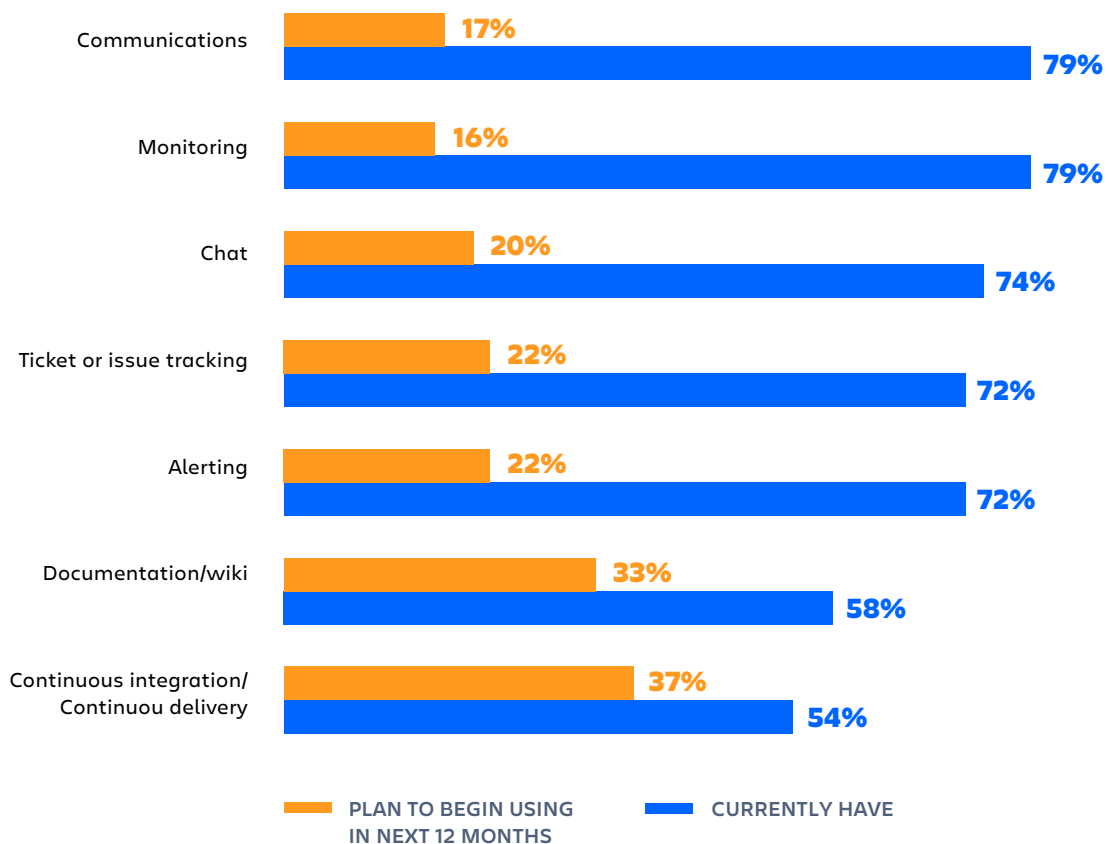
# So, what's next for incident management?

**93%** of organizations plan to make improvements to their incident management operations over the next 12 months.

Ultimately, these organizations will focus on investing in better processes, new tools, additional budget, and extra training.

## Tools used vs. tools planned for adoption

Teams are looking to invest in documentation, alerting, and CI/CD. Continuous Integration/Continuous Delivery (CI/CD) and documentation/wiki tools are the most likely to be adopted within the next 12 months. Unsurprisingly, these categories are also the least commonly owned today.

| Category | Plan to begin using | Currently have |
|---|---|---|
| Communications | 17% | 79% |
| Monitoring | 16% | 79% |
| Chat | 20% | 74% |
| Ticket or issue tracking | 22% | 72% |
| Alerting | 22% | 72% |
| Documentation/wiki | 33% | 58% |
| Continuous integration/ Continuou delivery | 37% | 54% |

**PLAN TO BEGIN USING IN NEXT 12 MONTHS**    **CURRENTLY HAVE**

# Tools planned for further investment

Teams will continue to invest in the same tools that they already have. Adding new tools is not the only way to become a better incident response team, though. Organizations also intend to invest in the same categories of tools they already own. Monitoring and alerting tools are used by almost every organization, yet 65% and 57% of respondents, respectively, expect further investment in that tooling. Calibration and interation of existing tools hints towards sophisticated improvements in the next calendar year.

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Monitoring | 65% |
| Communications | 58% |
| Continuous integration/ Continuou delivery | 57% |
| Alerting | 57% |
| Documentation/wiki | 47% |
| Chat | 46% |

# In conclusion

Incident management processes saw an increased adoption of automation throughout 2019 and brought the beginning of a worldwide transition to remote work. The effects of this are just now starting to be felt, but we expect to see a major trend towards a distributed workforce in 2020 that will further increase the importance of collaboration and communication. Within incident management, the monitoring space has remained consistently popular and alerting tools have emerged as a necessity alongside them. Key trends to look out for in 2020 are the adoption of automation within most teams, a transition to permanent remote work for IT and Engineering teams, and an increased reliance on chat and other communication tools.

### Want to dig deeper ?

https://www.atlassian.com/incident-management

### Have questions?

Contact us at sales@atlassian.com

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