Espressive Barista Outage Capabilities

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Overview

The service desk invests a lot of time and resources every time an outage occurs. The Espressive Barista outage capabilities are designed to automate the process of creating tickets on behalf of impacted employees and automatically assign them as child tickets to the parent ticket (the main task or problem).

This document outlines the new capabilities that are now available for ServiceNow customers to maximize the use of Barista during outages.

Tenant Preparation

There are two independent variables that can be set to "True" in the Barista Control Center (a.k.a. Doppio) in order to set up the outage capabilities:

Variable Name	Values	Description
ELC_Outage_Prompt_Employees	True/False	This variable enables the "Prompt Employee About Outage" capability. It is set to "False" by default.
ELC_Outage_Feature	True/False	This variable enables the "Automated Barista Outage" capability. It is set to "False" by default.

Some of the capabilities in this new outage feature require a new mapping in the ServiceNow Incident Business Object.

Follow these steps to do the mapping:

1. Go to Doppio.

2. Click on **Integrations** > **Integrations** from the menu.

3. Click on **ServiceNow**.

4. Click on Incident under "Business Objects."

5. Scroll down to the "Mappings area."

6. If **sys_custom_fields.parent_incident** is not present, create it.

   Click on the **+** sign and add it using the information on the image.

Prompt Employee About Outage

In a conversation with Barista, when an employee uses terms such as "down," "outage," or "multiple people impacted," a new capability inserted in the "Loop – SetOS" intent will prompt the employee to state whether they believe they are reporting a system-wide issue or one impacting multiple people. If they respond with "Yes," the flow shown below will be triggered:
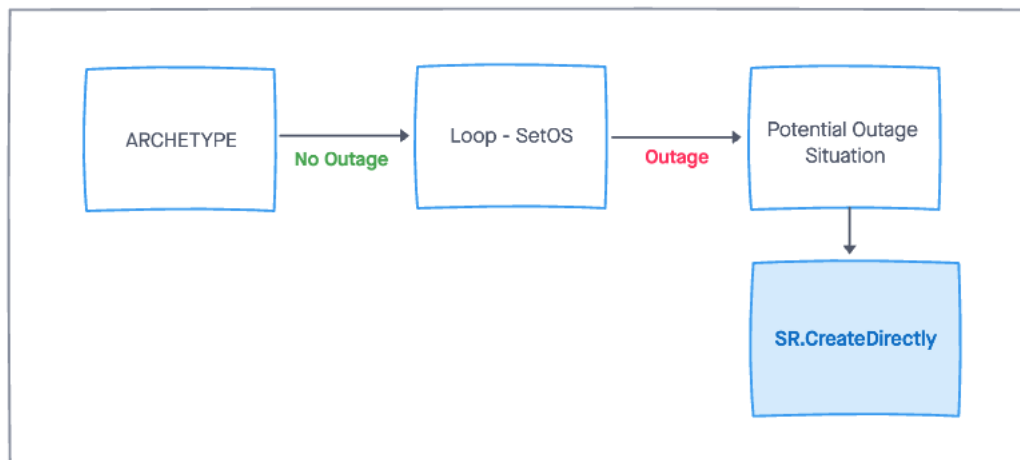
When this situation occurs, tickets created in the ITSM will be prefixed with "Potential outage being reported on {$Apps.label}:" followed by the original interaction (e.g., "I think Outlook is down").

Here is an example of such an interaction that has this capability enabled:

There is nothing about this feature that is dependent on the ITSM tool, and therefore it will work with any ITSM platform. Here is an example of the ticket created from the above interaction:

Automated Barista Outage

The Automated Barista Outage capability is more involved than the one described above. This section will provide details on this new feature and some best practices recommended by Espressive on how to maximize the use of Barista during an outage.

The basic premise of the Automated Barista Outage capability is that, once an outage has been declared, Barista will automatically create tickets on behalf of impacted employees and automatically associate them as a child to a parent ticket (or problem).

Note: Barista currently cannot look at previously submitted tickets and determine whether those were part of the outage. We expect to address this in the near future.

The recommended process for taking advantage of this feature is:

1. Create a parent ticket in the ITSM tool. (Currently, only ServiceNow is supported.)

2. Declare an outage for the application in question via Barista.

3. Create an Outage Handler Intent (optional).

4. Send out an outage notification to your employees via Barista (optional).

5. Add a notification to the Barista Welcome intent (optional).

6. Clear the outage via Barista when it is appropriate.

7. Close the parent ticket in your ITSM tool.

It is important to note that, when reporting on tickets created using this new outage feature, they will be reported as "Deflected." This is because, while a ticket was created, no human intervention was required in processing (or associating) the child ticket to the parent. Further, it is expected that the effort related to the incident is associated with the parent ticket and not the children.

This diagram shows the actual flow of an outage ticket:
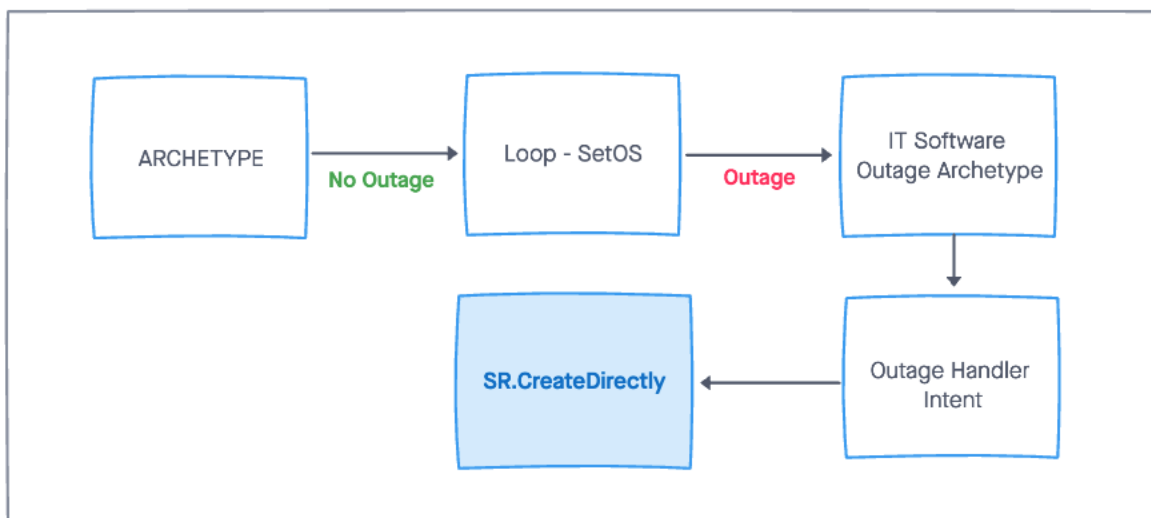
Create a Parent Ticket in Your ITSM Tool

This process occurs outside of the Barista or Doppio application and is only supported on platforms that support the concept of a child/parent ticket. The advantage of this feature is that most ITSM tools, following ITIL best practices, will automatically close child tickets that are associated with a parent when the parent is closed. This simplifies the effort required on behalf of the help desk in managing tickets related to an outage.

This new feature intends to automate associating child tickets to the parent.

Declare an Outage

To declare an outage for the application, access Barista (ideally via Doppio) and run the "system_outage" command. See the following example:
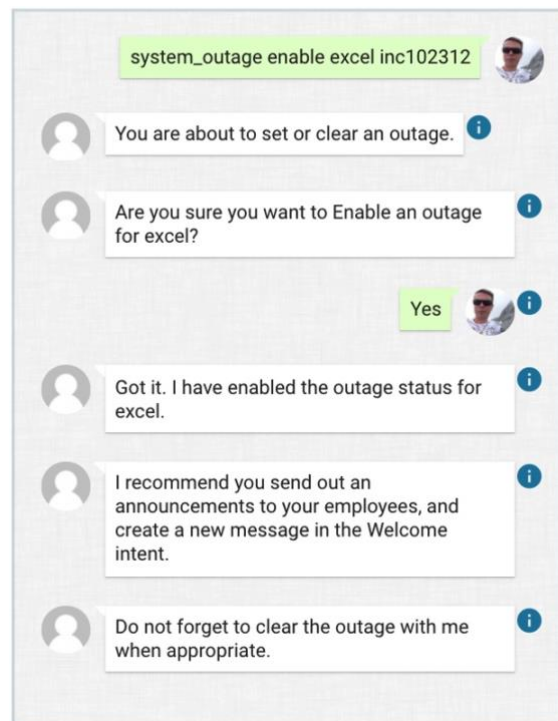
To execute the "system_outage" command, you need to provide the following parameters:

- Enable/Disable

   This indicates the status of the outage.

- Application Name

   Any form of the application name that Barista recognizes.

- Parent Ticket Number

   This can be in the form of INCxxxxx (or some other recognized ticket pattern). This parameter will only be accepted when enabling an outage.

Behind the scenes, this will set up the "sys_custom_fields" in the applications entity value in order to indicate that an outage has been established. To validate that it has worked, you can look at the application entity value for the application in question. See example below:

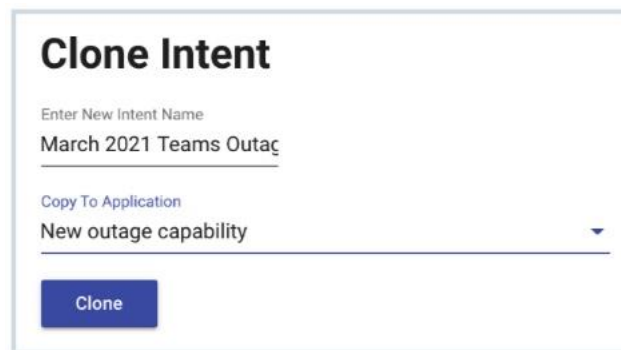You will notice there are two fields that represent the incident number. One is the ticket number that was provided. However, for ServiceNow customers, we also need the "sys_id" of the parent incident in order to associate a child ticket with the correct parent ticket. Therefore, in ServiceNow environments, at the time the outage is declared, we will retrieve the "sys_id" of the parent ticket and store it for future use.

Create an Outage Handler Intent

This step is highly recommended as it will ensure that all Barista reporting and dashboards will accurately reflect when a ticket was created for an employee related to the outage. This is particularly important when you have more than one active outage, ensuring that you can differentiate which outage an interaction was associated with.

If you opt not to create an application outage-specific intent, the Barista reports and dashboards will show an intent of "Generic Outage Intent (child ticket created)." This is certainly helpful to know how many users were impacted by a given outage. However, you will have no way to know "which" outage impacted which user.
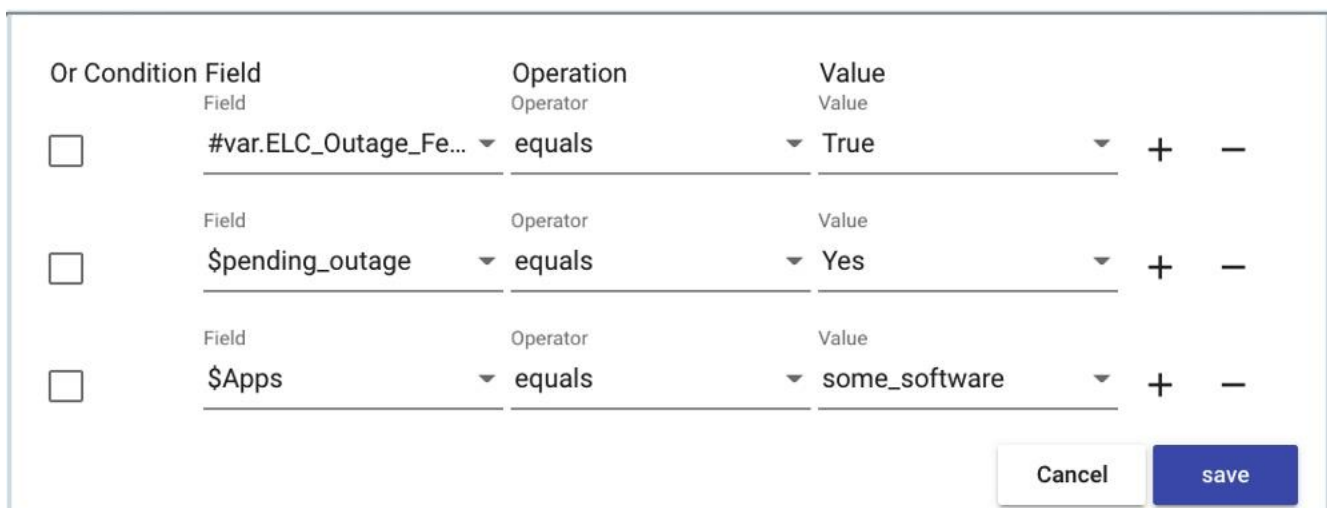
To create an outage intent, it is highly recommended to simply clone the "Generic Outage Intent (child ticket created)" and make sure you select the "New outage capability" application. See the example below:

After cloning the intent, edit its archetype condition to update the application entity so that it includes the application in question. You can do this by using the drop-down menu in the last option and replacing "some_software" with the application that is experiencing the outage. See the example below:

Optionally, you may also want to include any messages in the response block that you feel may be useful to your users. See example below:

1 Default Response		
Type:		
Condition:		
Active	Order	Phrase
🔴	1	There is a known Teams outage at the moment. We are currently working with Microsoft on this issue. Barista will be notifying you once the issue has been resolved.
Total: 1		

Once an intent has been created, it will not need to be deleted once the outage has been cleared. However, if you want to have the ability to identify the impact of an application across multiple outages, then creating a new intent with a unique name makes that possible. The most effective way to handle this is to disable the original intent and create a new intent. This will ensure that any reports created in the future still reference the original outage intent.

In short, disable but do NOT delete. It is a good practice to name the intent to be associated with the actual outage event (e.g. "March 2023 Microsoft Teams outage").

Send an Outage Notification to Your Employees via Barista

Barista provides an announcement capability that enables you to send direct messages to a targeted set of employees. These targeted employees will receive the notification using their preferred form of communication with Barista. Those that are using Slack or Teams to interact with Barista will receive the notification directly within the collaboration app. Those that have installed the Barista native app on their mobile or desktop will receive an in-app notification message. For others, they will receive the notification based on your pre-configured preferred notification policy (e.g., SMS email).

You can access the announcements capability from the Barista application menu, just click on "More" and then select "Announcements." To learn more about using Barista announcements, see our video.

Add a Notification to the Barista Welcome Intent

Another way to let your employees know of a potential outage is by adding a message to the Barista Welcome intent. The Barista Welcome intent is shown to all employees when they engage with Barista:
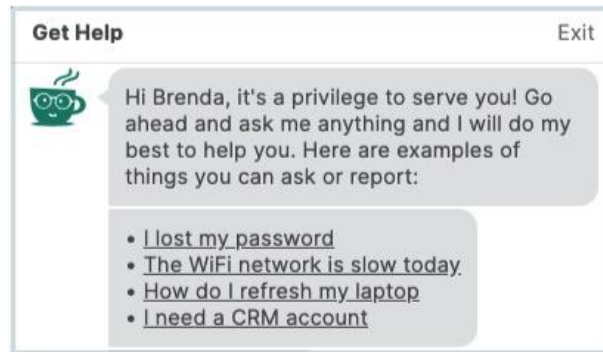
When you go to the Barista Welcome intent form within Doppio, you will see there is a response block at the bottom of the intent that looks like this:

You will notice that the message is disabled, which is intentional. The purpose of this is to provide an example that you can use to create your own message. This will create a clickable link when users access Barista, which will automatically invoke the command included in the URL.

Note: This recommended interaction includes the characters "%20" which Barista uses to identify a space between each word. In this case, you can simply copy the sample but replace the word "teams" in the interaction with the application experiencing the outage.

Clear the Outage

When the outage has finally cleared, remember to notify Barista. This will ensure that Barista no longer creates child tickets to the parent ticket and resumes its normal processing. *Not clearing an outage will cause a situation where Barista is attempting to open a child ticket to a parent that has potentially already been resolved and closed.*

This can be performed again with the "system_outage" command:
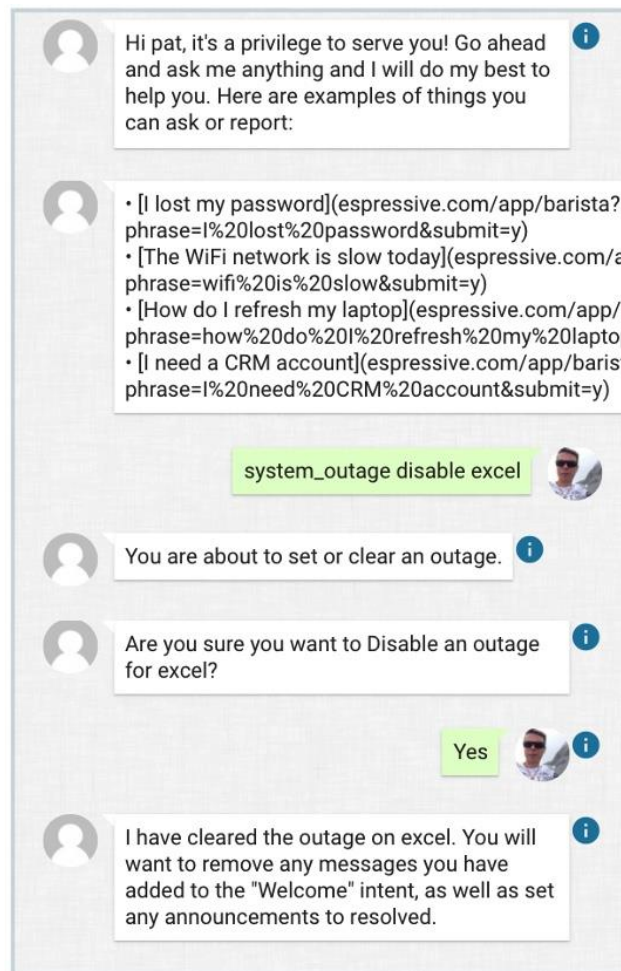
Make sure you indicate the outage is being disabled and provide the name of the application that has the existing outage. Within Doppio, you can always verify this was successfully processed by looking at the entity value:

If you added any custom responses in the Barista Welcome intent, make sure to either delete or disable them. Further, if you sent out any announcements to your employees, remember to mark those as resolved.

Creating Child Tickets

Once the automated Barista outage capability is enabled, if an employee interacts with Barista on a topic related to the application for which you have declared an outage for, Barista will immediately ask if the issue is related to the outage. This ensures that if employees ask for an account to be provisioned during the outage, these are not captured as part of the outage.
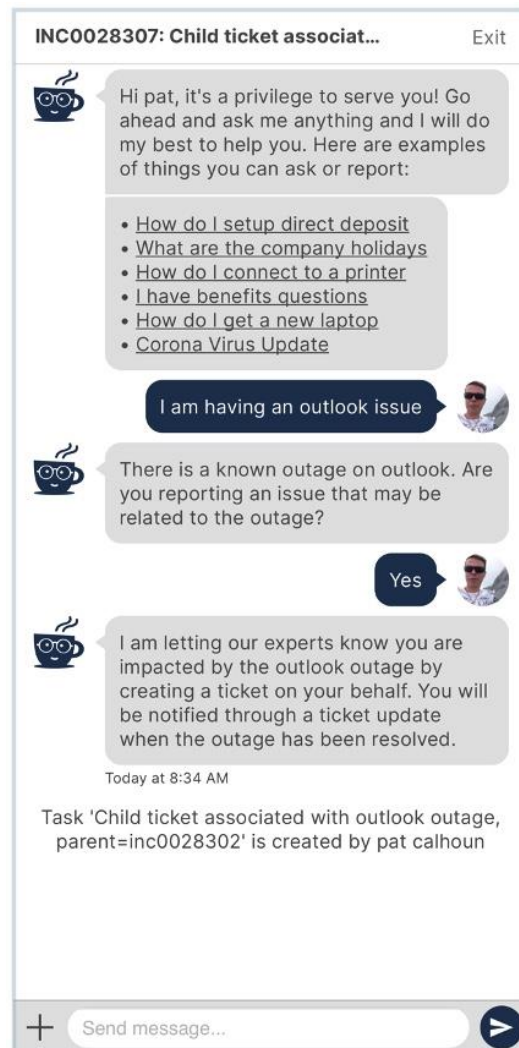
Since the ticket being created above is related to the outage, Barista will not ask the employee for additional information. Further, if you have enabled live chat in your environment, Barista will not cause the employee's request to be added to the live chat queue. Instead, Barista will simply create a ticket on their behalf to minimize the amount of time an employee spends reporting the issue.

Reporting a Barista Outage

The Barista reporting capabilities can be very helpful in ensuring you have visibility into events. That said, Barista will ensure that tickets created in your ITSM tool have the right information to help your agents also determine whether an outage is occurring.

The following image shows a progression of events where the initial employee reports a potential issue related to an outage. In the second interaction, the employee is stating there may be an outage associated with Microsoft Outlook. Because they stated there is a potential outage, the ticket created in the ITSM tool will include a short description of "Potential outage being reported on Outlook: Outlook is down."

Created	Phrase	Requester	Matched Intent	Location State	Location Country	Ticket No.	ESP S Depa
4/4/2021	outlook is not working for me	pat calhoun	Outlook is stuck loading a profile		USA	EDIT ···	
4/4/2021	outlook is down	pat calhoun	Potential outage situation		USA	EDIT ···	
4/4/2021	outlook is not working for me	pat calhoun	Generic Outage Intent (child ticket created)		USA	EDIT ···	

In this example, someone clearly went into Barista and activated an outage scenario for Outlook. From that point forward, tickets created against the outage are going to the intent "Generic Outage Intent (child ticket created)." Of course, if the administrator created a custom outage handler intent for this event, that name would have shown up here instead.

Managing Outage Incidents in Your ITSM Tool

The following image provides an example of how these incidents would appear in your ITSM tool. See that the incident at the bottom is the parent incident. The follow-on incidents are marked as child tickets associated with the parent.

		Number ▼	Opened	Short description	Caller	Priority	State	Category	Subcategory
☐	ⓘ	INC0028304	2021-04-03 12:41:10	Child ticket associated with outlook outage, parent=inc0028302	Pat Calhoun	5 - Planning	New	Software	Email
☐	ⓘ	INC0028303	2021-04-03 12:17:35	Child ticket associated with outlook outage, parent=inc0028302	Pat Calhoun	5 - Planning	New	Software	Email
☐	ⓘ	INC0028302	2021-04-03 12:03:07	Potential outage being reported on outlook: I think outlook is down	Pat Calhoun	5 - Planning	New	Software	Email

Following the standard ITIL model, when the parent incident is resolved, this will also resolve all child tickets associated with the parent. This will ensure that all of the employees that reported being impacted by the outage will be notified automatically.

Depending on how your employees are interacting with Barista, they will receive an update notification. For those using the application, it will appear as a card in their home feed, like in the image below:
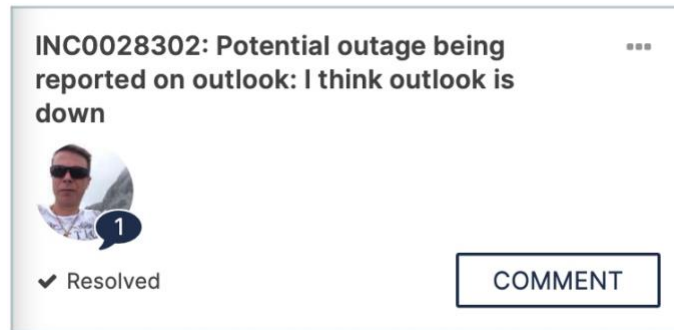
For Slack or Teams users, it will appear in their announcements, like the image below: