

Maintenance and support

- Maintenance and support start from moment product goes live
- Support involves providing assistance to users encountering issues working with the product
- Maintenance involves changes to the product, data, documentation etc to ensure product continues to meet client's changing needs
- Maintenance and support considerations should be high priority from early in the requirements/design stages

Support

- Live support: provide user with means of talking to “experts”, via chat, email, forums, phone etc
- Interactive support: popups, tooltips, wizards, etc that help guide users through common tasks or problems
- Static support: help pages, manuals, guides that the user can browse through
- Note that live support personnel often closely involved with bug reporting systems and with maintenance personnel

Maintenance

- The environment a product works in is constantly changing: customer wants/needs, system hardware and software, industry regulations, etc
- Systems need to adapt to stay useful
- Corrective changes: bug fixes
- Adaptive changes: new/altered functionality
- Perfective changes: improving performance

Maintenance/support observations

- Organizations should track their maintenance and support trends, much like bug tracking/reporting
- Aging systems tend to require more, and more costly, maintenance and support (as more and more alterations made to original design in adjusting to changing needs)
- Monitoring time/resources spent on support and maintenance allows prediction of future needs/costs
- Increasing number of maintenance/support requests, or increased costs in meeting them, might be good indicators of the need to replace or refactor parts of system