Wheel of Misfortune: [SCENARIO]

Summary
Want to run a WoM?
Use this doc to prepare and run it.

Author: *yourname@example.com*
Contributors: name@

Status: WIP
Created: 20YY-MM-DD

Self Link: http://link.to/my-wom-link
Updated: 20YY-MM-DD

How to use this doc

- *Make a copy, stash it somewhere inaccessible to others.*
- *Update the doc title and [SCENARIO] to reflect the scenario you're planning.*
- *Check sharing settings to ensure it's only viewable by yourself and anyone who's collaborating in the game.*
- *Finally, remove this italicized section*

Overview

To keep oncalls familiar with internal state and services, periodic Wheel of Misfortune exercises simulate failure scenarios and let team members practice incident management, coordination and diagnosis. This scenarios shall be played with an audience of those in the same oncall rotation (and perhaps others from adjacent teams) for the purpose of learning together.

Read this chapter from the SRE book for general background on the purpose of a WoM and effective strategies for running a WoM.

For each role below you should assign a person to play it (or mark "N/A" if not relevant to the scenario). One person can play multiple roles. Everyone who is a player should read through this WoM document beforehand and confirm that a) they're happy playing the role, and b) they can attend the scheduled WoM session.

A resource which can be used to randomly select the roles and the actual scenario can be found here.

Role	Person	Notes
Dungeonmaster (or Gamemaster)		Who's the fall-back in case the designated dungeonmaster is unavailable on the day?
Support Gamemaster		Optional: if the exercise requires a fall-back dungeonmaster, or the complexity may require some extra support.

Secondary support		*Optional*: if player is floundering a bit, you may want to enable "Phone a Friend" where the secondary support person pops up on chat and offers (limited) help on where to look / what to do next.
TSE (Google Technical Support Engineer)		Should always be a role in any Cloud Support case, representing the TSE handling the case. *Recommended*: have someone who is not the dungeonmaster playing the TSE. *Optional:* have the original TSE reach the end of the shift and rotate to a second TSE who needs to be briefed.
External SRE oncall		If there are other services that are outside the support responsibilities of the people in the rotation. Determined by the services likely to be relevant to the outage.
Oncall Player		*[Fill in when the scenario starts]*
Scribe		*[Fill in when the scenario starts]* Keep note of major actions / decision points and times, for later review.

Scenario

Triggering failure: *[pick one, or suggest alternative]*

- Service change (e.g. binary or config rollout)
- Traffic change (sudden spike / organic rise over capacity limit / traffic loss)
- GCP failure (e.g. zonal or regional service outage)
- Other...

Details :

[fill in here]

[Be as explicit as possible, indicating the systems that are going down/producing errors, how they are affected, what is the root cause that created the situation, what are the metrics and alerts that are triggered by it, how the oncall personnel is notified…]

What text to open with:

You are [SERVICE] oncall. It is [TIME OF DAY].

Please open a new browser window and project into [HANGOUT], and use that for doc/console views. I'm going to page you shortly.

If you want to reach out to anyone outside this room, please advise me who; I will tell you who will be playing their role and how to reach them.

If you want to create an incident and declare an outage, please use https://[URL]/new_outage

If you want to use an IRC channel, please use #[IRC_CHANNEL]

Text of pager mail:

Hoi, ONCALL!

[PRODUCT] has a situation that requires your attention!

[SERVICE] appears to be down. Requests have not been successfully received for the last 30 mins. Please, investigate.

Playbook for this alert can be found here: [http://[URL/path/to/doc](http://[URL/path/to/doc)]

Dashboard with the current state for this alert can be found here: [http://[URL/to/dashboard](http://[URL/to/dashboard)]

Preparation

(Optional) Create a fake dashboard (possibly using a screenshot of a previous outage) to link from the pager mail.

Symptoms

- What can be seen in monitoring and logs
- Are there (or will there be) any relevant incidents open which depend on this outage

Expected development

For each chat with a character, dungeonmaster will create a named group, and add both player and scribe.

Customer: what actions are they planning? What will persuade them to do something like a failover?

TSE: what's their level of knowledge? what can they troubleshoot alone / with extra information? What do they know about the service?

Google support personnel: what can they see? What do they recommend?

Resources

What documentation/monitoring/logs do you expect the oncall to explore for the answers?

- *[links to any resources that have been prepared to be shown to the player]*

Preparation checklist

- *Email to player ready in draft*
- *Initial page*
- *Response from Google support team*
- *...*

Wrap-up and final notes

A final summary of the exercise, possibly with an explanation of what went wrong in the original incident (it the exercise is based on a real one) and how things were resolved.

Example Action items:

Action	Owner	Bug / ticket / link	Fix ETA / Priority	Re-test ?
Define process for escalation to company-wide war room	*manager@example.com*	*https://URL*		*Yes*
Document process for escalating to google cloud support	*TL@example.com*	*https://URL*		*Yes*
Create tech leads rotation for escalation so all tech leads don't have to be oncall all the time	*TL@example.com*	*https://URL*		*Yes*