ALCOR
ENABLING CLOUD

A Practical Guide on Implementing an Automated IT Asset Management Solution

Overview

With the convergence of social, mobile, and Cloud, today's world is driven by technology. Customers are digitally empowered and therefore, every business, IT as well as non-IT, is a digital business. This also means that businesses need to heavily leverage technology, mobile, and other tech gadgets to smoothly run their operations. The greater the number and variety of devices, the harder it becomes to maintain, manage, and monitor these end points and that's where Automated IT Asset Management Solutions come into picture.

At the Gartner ITAM summit in London in the year 2014, Gartner Analysts made a statement that by 2017, 20% of organizations will have implemented a Software License Optimization tool. In three years, Gartner predicts a four-fold increase in the adoption of Software License Optimization solutions worldwide.

Today, there are several license optimization tools available that help organizations automate the Software Asset Management process and maximize their software utilization, reduce the risks of non-compliance, and also optimize the overall IT costs. This guide gives you a brief overview of the need and benefits of Automated IT Asset Management and also provides practical tips to help ensure a smooth implementation of the solution within your organization.

The Need for an Automated Asset Management Solution

Logging: Maintaining the log of hardware, software, mobile devices in simple excel sheets might work for an organization with limited staff, but as the number of employees and devices increase, discovering and managing IT assets becomes a huge task for the IT management team. Maintaining separate files can be time consuming and can also introduce errors. An Automated Asset Management Software helps in making the asset discovery, tracking, and reporting easy, effective, and error-free.

This guide gives you a brief overview of the need and benefits of Automated IT Asset Management and also provides practical tips to help ensure a smooth implementation of the solution within your organization.

Compliance and Security : While the configuration management databases can effectively maintain a record of software licenses and hardware, you need an automated asset management software to ensure that those assets are well authenticated. The solution also helps you adhere to corporate compliance and security policies.

Accountability : Having a complete transparent accountability for all the devices in the organization – deployed, not deployed, or retired – is a huge value to the businesses. With complete understanding of what is already connected to the network as well as what is lying in the inventory helps in enhancing overall security as well as establishing tighter financial controls over IT assets. Only an asset management solution can help in asset discovery and management.

Key Benefits of Automated Asset Management Solutions

ALCOR
ENABLING CLOUD

Key Benefits of Automated Asset Management Solutions

Software Security

Compliance

Reduced Costs

Reduced IT Support

Powerful and feature-rich IT Asset Management Solutions help organizations gain better control over the various components within their IT architectures and derive greater value from their IT investments. Some of the key benefits of Automated Asset Management Solutions are :

Software Security : Asset Management Software offer tracking of software installation in the organization network. This helps in prevention of download and installation of unauthorized software on the company's computers. It also saves the machines from the accidental downloads of viruses. As Dr. Barbara Rembiesa, CEO of the International Association of Information Technology Asset Managers, has very rightly said, "If companies are to stop these attacks in 2015, they must first recognize that the true source of nearly all major breaches are more foundational and stem from nonexistent or inadequate IT asset management procedures."

Compliance : The Asset Management Software help in ensuring that the organizations don't acquire any illegal licenses which can later on cause fines or penalties. Compliance issues like software upgrades, renewals, and equipment warranties are automatically taken care of without causing any additional burden on the IT staff. The software can also easily generate reports on IT inventory which are required for compliance auditing, thereby saving a lot of time for the IT staff who would have otherwise spent time in creating the reports manually.

Reduced Costs : Automated Asset Management Software can help in substantially reducing the overall costs and offering tighter financial control. With clear understanding of the requirements, organizations don't need to purchase licenses which are not needed. It offers a better visibility on the software and support requirement which can help the organizations in coming up with a more accurate budget. The clearly defined needs can help in procuring the software at a more competitive price. Through proper streamlining of the processes for downtime or compliance, the costs can be reduced because the problems are anticipated and taken care of even before they arise.

Reduced IT Support : Because of a tighter control on what gets installed on each machine, there are fewer support issues which typically arise because of unauthorized software installations. This can help the organizations in reducing the IT support team and save costs.

The Cheat Sheet –Hidden but Important Benefits of an Asset Management Solution

Apart from maintaining a list of hardware and software assets and helping you manage those better, a good Asset Management Solution helps you achieve much more.

Physical Location : The software can maintain and track the physical location of each hardware and software, making it easy to locate the machine – this is especially useful in case of offices in multiple geographical locations and when a majority of the staff is always on the move working from multiple offices.

Warranty : Instead of hunting for the warranty cards in case of any hardware failures, you can use the software to maintain the complete information about the warranty at one place. This can also help in establishing proper maintenance contracts.

Support Requests : The software can help you track hardware configurations for each machine. If the IT staff has complete information about the hardware components, they can better serve the support requests. It can also make it easy for the IT team to reconcile the support calls against the hardware inventory - which can be used in individual billing of various departments.

Order Reconciliation : Verification of purchase orders against orders delivered can also be done easily through the IT Asset Management Software. The reconciliation between the purchase orders and inventory items can also help the finance/ accounts executives and business leaders in taking more accurate decisions about procurements and budgeting.

The "How-to" of Effective Implementation of an Asset Management Solution

While there are no defined figures for this, the thumb rule says that when your IT deployment exceeds 100 end points or 500 users, it is a right time to implement an Automated IT Asset Management Solution. Not only large organizations with distributed office and staff but even small companies with multiple assets can very strongly benefit from an automated solution because it can save them a lot of time and cost for management of a large number of IT assets.

Once you are convinced that you need a powerful IT Asset Management Solution, this is what you need to keep in mind during the implementation -

Research : When you research and study for an Asset Management Software, make sure that you consider the internal network architecture and ensure that the Asset Management Software aligns with your network.

Know This : Network bandwidth requirement is one of the crucial factors which you should evaluate before finalizing the solution and then factor it in your regular network load.

Getting Prepared : Have a clear understanding of the number of nodes the solution needs to manage – you can better evaluate the solutions for pricing and features once you know your requirements.

If you have multiple offices in separate geographical locations, you need to consider any specific requirements of those offices.

In every organization, some computers are static (like desktops) while few are roaming (like laptops or mobile devices). You need to have a clear understanding of such assets.

Flexibility : You need the flexibility to integrate the solution into Microsoft Active Directory – this can help you easily set up roles and responsibilities along with specific access for the IT staff and employees.

Integration : Ensure that you are able to integrate the asset management data with the IT service desk – this will help in the quick resolution of issues. The IT staff can also leverage remote control capabilities, incident tracking, and automated feedback to better their service levels.

Since Asset Management Solutions are tightly integrated with other service management areas such as purchase, vendor, contract and software license management, you need to ensure that the solution which you purchase is compatible across these systems. It should offer an end-to-end life-cycle management – right from procurement to retirement with the right kind of automation built in.

Processes : Have processes in place for reporting, patching, deployment, updates etc. These processes can help you quickly set up rules to enhance the use of the Automated Asset Management Solution.

The hardware and software assets in your organization traverse through various stages like on-lease, purchased, in-repair or in-use. To be able to do a better resource utilization, the central asset repository should be appropriately updated with accurate reason, time stamp, and other such details. Such updated information can help you make quicker and better informed purchase decisions.

Alerts and Notifications : Many Asset management Solutions offer automatic notification and alerts. Ensure that you leverage these to update all the stakeholders about the changes in the infrastructure. With such timely alerts, the stakeholders can take proactive steps to ensure a smooth transition.

Reporting : Make sure that you generate periodic reports on unauthorized use of hardware or software, unauthorized configuration items, service failures with causes and present these reports to the stakeholders to help them take well-informed decisions and corrective measures.

Conclusion

Smooth and effective implementation of the Automated IT Asset Management Solution requires a solid foundation of processes, people, and the right tools and technologies. A disciplined approach is needed to get the most from the solution. This guide should help you make more informed decisions and ensure your IT Asset Management strategy is a success.

Alcor is a technology implementation company focusing on Enterprise and Government technology needs in ITSM, systems integration, web development and mobility space. We provide a strategic ITSM implementation approach to our clients and focus on solving business problems by leveraging an integrated business process design and technology implementation capability.

ALCOR
ENABLING CLOUD

14241 East Firestone Blvd, Suite 400, La Mirada, CA 90638 / Phone(818) 835-3454

11501 Dublin Blvd, Suite 216 Dublin, CA 94568/Phone (925) 452-8231

www.alcortech.com