How Scalable's Asset Vision Empowers New Levels of Accuracy and Efficiency in a Global Enterprise

Introduction

Many industry solutions in the IT asset management (ITAM) arena offer simple answers to simple problems, but are often too siloed to solve the diverse inventory, asset and infrastructure optimization challenges of mid-tier and larger enterprises. Conversely, some portfolios offer rich ITAM functionality, but are so complex to deploy and administer that too often the costs outweigh the benefits.

The case study contained in this report highlights Scalable Software's Asset Vision® successful balance in delivering what the vendor calls "integrated ITAM" in a mid-tier, global enterprise.

Interview with a Client Services Manager in a Global Provider of Products that Support Improved Energy Efficiency

This interviewee, based in North America, provides unique insight into Asset Vision's versatility, as well as its value as a foundation for critical, future outreach and initiatives.

Could you share with us some background on your IT organization's mission and scope?

There are about 75 in our IT organization globally, supporting about 2,500 systems. Our three largest data centers are in North America, but we also support offices worldwide, such as in Brazil, Mexico, Europe, Australia and China. We support about 3,000 employees globally.

What is the role of your organization—client services?

There are eight of us in client services, and we report up directly to a vice president of technology. Generally our mission is to provide second-tier support after people call into the service desk. Our job is triage—to triage the incident and if need be send it to another group in operations for resolution. Our group's core expertise is in handling problems associated with hardware and software installations, and software maintenance.

What are some of the key use cases associated with Scalable's Asset Vision?

Right now the Registry section is the most heavily used for software inventory and tracking.

But we have a growing number of use cases for Asset Vision.

One is to understand software usage better to optimize our license utilization. We do this in a balanced way—not to try to be Big Brother. Nevertheless, I can get insights into a wide range of usage patterns that could be valuable in planning. For instance our employees use LogMeIn for flexible desktop access, so it's important that we have versatile insights into individual software license usage across various devices. Also we need to know who the last user was to log onto a system and when he or she logged in. Our endpoints have legs and walk away some times, and so it's critical to be able to discover what department they're serving and who's using them. Right now there's no consistent process to alert us when someone leaves a department or moves to a different organization. We refresh our Dell leases every three years, and a single computer might have changed hands ten times in that period.

Our endpoints have legs and walk away some times, and so it's critical to be able to discover what department they're serving and who's using them.

EMA™

What other initiatives has Asset Vision been associated with?

Well the first thing that comes to mind is indirect—but very key to me. Asset Vision is delivering critical value in freeing me up for more time in our current project management initiative. We have been seeking to standardize and enhance how we manage completing projects within IT. Just this past year we upgraded to SharePoint 2013. Before that, everything was tracked mostly on spreadsheets. IT management would hand a long list of project objectives down the ladder and we were generally only able to get about a third of them done. Moreover, we had no consistent way of measuring our progress. I'm helping to lead the charge for better project management—including getting our management to build consensus around a more achievable list of objectives. And Asset Vision gives me the efficiencies I need for optimizing our HW and SW investments so that I can invest more time in driving our project management initiative forward.

How long have you been using Scalable's Asset Vision?

Our organization has been using Scalable for more than five years. But back then the other locations were still mostly on spreadsheets. When I came on board we wanted to make Scalable a global resource. In the process we also assessed some other solutions from other vendors—mostly things that were already in house. But Scalable got the nod in part because of its versatility.

It took a little time, and I had to run a lot of reports, but now I think the whole team is really beginning to appreciate Asset Vision. At this point there are about 20 IT professionals using Scalable on a regular basis.

People are changing their methods—not just about licensing, but also hardware discovery, maintenance renewal dates, managing where and when a system or device can be installed—for instance if you purchase some software in the U.S. it can only be installed in the U.S.

Scalable has helped us to significantly improve our accuracy of record just within the last year.

Scalable has helped us to significantly improve our accuracy of record just within the last year.

What were some of the other things that helped to sell your company on Scalable?

One thing that really stood out was Scalable's flexibility. We would come to them with a list of requirements—many of which were already in plan. But they always delivered what we needed. The company's extremely high level of responsiveness continues to this day.

I also like the control that Scalable gives you to create the reports and screens you need. With Scalable it's easy to feel empowered. And you can manage that empowerment with role-based access so it's only given to the right, designated professionals.

What are you looking to do in the future with Asset Vision?

In general, when it comes to Asset Vision's functionality, I would say that we've barely begun to scratch the surface. For instance, we haven't yet applied it to our VMware virtual infrastructure, so that's also a priority for the future. We're also looking to support printers with Scalable.

I have also proposed a couple of other projects. One of them is an annual software review. Right now we still don't have best practices regarding licensing. We get dozens of software installation calls a day. When there are ten people at once trying to get a hold of you for software, it's hard to say "no."

Largely as a result of this, we are supporting about 500 different pieces of software and that number might be low. In the past we were pushing 800. There are a lot of redundancies. Up until now IT just paid the bills and didn't ask questions about usage, and then got blamed when our budget was put under the microscope. But more visibility and standardized lists will help that. There was no visibility into cost—but now Scalable is helping us to assess who's using what.

EMA™

My goal is to assess what software each department is using and try and consolidate and create a standard list of software for each department. This includes SaaS applications downloaded from the web that Scalable can also account for. Right now it's Adobe Creative Cloud, but we're also looking to support Salesforce and Oracle SaaS.

EMA Perspective

This interview clearly underscores the versatility, empowerment, and very real efficiencies that Asset Vision can deliver. The interview also highlights a diversity of use cases in both present and planned future. These include capturing a wide range of software assets including web-delivered SaaS, managing and optimizing endpoints that frequently change hands, supporting more efficient approaches to software utilization, and seriously improving OpEx efficiencies in handling requests for new software. Future directions in the interview point to Asset Vision's established ITAM strengths in virtualized infrastructure and printer usage. Scalable's substantial willingness to stand by customers with unique needs and requests is also brought out in this Q&A as something that meaningfully separates it from other competitors.

This interview clearly underscores the versatility, empowerment, and very real efficiencies that Asset Vision can deliver.

Some of Scalable's other strengths include support for mobile and VDI endpoints, ease of third-party assimilation (e.g. Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager), its unique time-sequenced discovery for normalizing many different data points, and its ease of deployment and administration as a cloud-delivered offering.

Scalable has continued to evolve in focus since EMA's last evaluation of the company, with new strengths in capturing software interdependencies across the infrastructure and expanded support for SaaS-delivered applications, among other features. Our view of the vendor remains, if anything, even more positive, as a "short list choice" in "making IT asset management an effective strategic investment—without the pain."

EMA™