



Gloucestershire County Council – Asset and Inventory Management

For organisations of any size, keeping track of ICT assets and on top of software and licensing issues is an important task. When the organisation is a County Council with 6,000 users, some mobile and dispersed, with approximately 6,000 PCs, printers, monitors and mobile phones costing millions of pounds, then the task becomes vital.

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) was using a manual database to record its assets, an inefficient system due to the considerable effort required to keep the database current as assets were installed and disposed of on a daily basis. This inefficiency might have had serious financial and security issues, whether through a risk of fines due to software non-compliance, wasted spend on duplicated purchases or even the threat of rogue devices on the network. Understanding what was on the network was key to bringing the risk under control.



The challenge

GCC wanted to implement best practice 'IT Infrastructure Library Standards' (ITIL) to their ICT estate, a feature of which was to introduce a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) which could record and monitor assets, manage inventories and interrogate systems to give 'real time' information.

The existing system for recording 'what should be out there' in terms of assets was proving inaccurate and labour-intensive, as well as failing to identify the other key question of what 'actually is out there' and what is its status.

The growing number of mobile workers in dispersed locations, the introduction of mobile assets such as PDAs, phones, Blackberrys and remote network tags and the introduction of 'hotdesking' within the organisation demanded a system that was capable of assigning equipment to 'custodians', identifying the usage, version and licence status of software, providing audit and inventory management, and the data and versatility to answer any questions about the ICT estate, that were asked.

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SunGard Public Sector, GCC's ICT managed services provider, was invited to tender for this new contract to design and implement an Asset and Inventory Management System with a configuration management database at its core.





Efficiency

The solution

SunGard Public Sector was successful in its tender to define, design and implement the new solution and recommended Centennial Discovery, one of the best network inventory and software audit products available. In addition, xAssets was introduced to replace the incumbent database register.

Working with GCC's ICT team, SunGard facilitated joint design workshops to develop the optimum solution and network configuration. Working to best practice, the system was agreed, built, and installed in October 2007. The data from the existing asset database was then uploaded to xAssets to provide a starting point for the asset records.

A wall-to-wall audit was conducted by SunGard to record all the existing desktop computers and printers and place barcodes on the hardware. This information was uploaded to xAssets and then reconciled against the existing assets data and the audit information that Centennial provided.

The introduction of definitive 'drop-down' lists to identify assets, their locations and their 'custodians' removed the problems caused by misnaming items and improved the inventory management. All new assets also began to be barcoded on delivery and immediately registered on the system directory.

The result

The Council is now able to automatically track and audit all of its network-attached assets. Newly attached assets are identified and managed from the main Centennial Discovery console, as are deletions. Using the organisational structure created within Active Directory and linked as part of the configuration management database to xAssets, all assets are now easily identifiable and have additional information including the last Centennial audit date and the last user logon information.

"The system is able to answer any questions we ask of it," says Greg Parsons, SunGard's Change Manager who works closely with Gloucestershire County Council. "The central concept of the Configuration Management Database means that all the audit and inventory tools feed information into each other so we can capture information on which assets are being used, where and when, and monitor when upgrades, licenses or other changes are required."

The Council's Head of ICT, Dave Badham, said, "Gloucestershire County Council is pleased with the overall approach to the system and xAssets has proved to be a useful tool that has enabled ICT to streamline their asset management and configuration processes."



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About SunGard Public Sector

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About SunGard

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SunGard provides software and processing solutions for financial services, higher education and the public sector. SunGard also provides disaster recovery services, managed IT services, information availability consulting services and business continuity management software.

With annual revenue exceeding \$5 billion, SunGard is ranked 472 on the Fortune 500 and is the largest privately held business software and services company on the Forbes list of private businesses. Based on information compiled by Datamonitor*, SunGard is the third largest provider of business applications software after Oracle and SAP. Continuity, Insurance & Risk has recognised SunGard as service provider of the year an unprecedented five times.

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*January 2009 Technology Vendors Financial Database Tracker <http://www.datamonitor.com>

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