



Discovery Case Study

DISCOVERY PROVIDES CLEAN SWEEP OF IT ASSETS AT ECOLAB

- **Business Driver:**
IT consolidation and project management
- **Industry Sector:**
Commercial, cleaning supplies and services
- **Network type:**
Decentralized, 5,000 seats
- **Why Centennial Discovery:**
Automatic discovery of all assets, ability to view assets by geography, multiple deployment options
- **Business benefits:**
Faster identification of assets, reduced software compliance risk, eliminated unnecessary IT spend

Ecolab is a multinational company providing products and services in the cleaning and hygiene sector. Due to its large number of sites and de-centralized operations, keeping tabs on all Ecolab's IT assets is no easy task. But with Centennial Discovery® running across 5,000 PC clients in Europe, the company believes it not only has a better understanding of its network, but will also save considerable sums in terms of auditing, compliance and project planning.

With over 20,000 staff and operations in 70 countries, American-based multinational Ecolab is the world's largest supplier of commercial cleaning and hygiene solutions. In Europe, the company is split into five geographical regions which were historically run as individual concerns. However, the demands for greater productivity across Europe, together with a need to collaborate on key IT projects has led to a much closer working relationship between the various regions, not least in terms of managing the company's network assets.

Peter Timmermans, who is working with Ecolab to implement their asset management strategy said: "There is now a real need to standardize the

systems and hardware in use across Ecolab in Europe, which has led the company to form a number of task forces to investigate and implement new structures. What has become very apparent is that each of these task forces – whether it is concerned with Windows migration, email upgrades, document management or authentication – needs to have access to up-to-date and accurate information about what hardware and software is already on our network."

This realization led Ecolab to embark on a search for a suitable asset discovery solution that would provide them with the quality of information required without creating yet more work for the already stretched regional IT teams.



Creating a discovery wish list

Ecolab kicked-off its search by casting its net wide in order to uncover all the options open to it. Timmermans and his colleagues created a comprehensive wish list of functionality that they used to score possible solutions against.

"Amongst other things, the software had to make a full inventory of all hardware and software, be able to give an overview of changes in the configuration, peripheral equipment had to be easily entered manually and the information had to be centrally stored and accessed," he said. But more than this, Ecolab also wanted all discovered hardware and software to be linked with purchase information, compared against the licenses held and for reports to be customized to their exact requirements.

Having created a shortlist of contenders, Ecolab then put a selection of solutions through their paces in a rigorous series of tests, from which one clear winner emerged. "From an initial list of 120 potential solutions, the only solution that met all our requirements was Centennial Discovery," Timmermans stated.

Discovery in action

"One of the best features of Centennial Discovery is the ability to display the organizational units and associated IT assets by region, country and site – which

was really easy to set up. The Web Control Center gives senior managers a direct overview of the organization and it is very quick to 'drill-down' to the specific site or individual asset you want to look at," commented Timmermans.

Information that used to take staff hours of manual labor to uncover can now be searched out and printed in report form in less than five minutes, dramatically reducing the time spent on managing IT assets.

"Having all the necessary information to hand without the need to physically visit the assets allows us to make better decisions when it comes to negotiating with suppliers or drawing up plans for upcoming projects," said Timmermans. "In terms of software license compliance, Discovery on one hand helps ensure that we are using the software licenses correctly, while on the other puts us in a stronger position towards suppliers by enabling us to purchase new licenses prudently and centrally."

With a large number of offices spread the length and breadth of Europe, another key advantage of Discovery was the ability to deploy client agents across the network not only by log-in script, but also via push-technology from the Control Center, by e-mail to the user, or even (for PCs not connected to the network) using a floppy disk or USB stick.

Total insight

With the investment of just a few man hours, Ecolab has already created a full audit of around 1,500 PCs in its European offices. This information is now available to the various regional IT teams.

According to Timmermans: "We have given local IT employees authority to use the software. They communicate directly with the Discovery database in Düsseldorf via a 'terminal' server. Before the end of the year, we expect to have inventories of somewhere in the order of 5,000 clients. We have hence taken a major step towards having total insight into all our IT assets and I am sure this will have a positive effect on the many IT projects we are currently undertaking."

"It is surprising to think how blind we were before Discovery," concluded Timmermans. "I certainly wouldn't want to have to live without it now!"

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network discovery & management

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