



Discovery Case Study

GLASS'S INFORMATION SERVICES
DISCOVERS THE VALUE OF SOFTWARE
LICENSES WITH CENTENNIAL SOFTWARE

- **Business Driver:**
Software license management,
FAST accreditation
- **Industry Sector:**
Commercial, research
& publishing
- **Network type:**
400 seats, 2 sites
- **Why Centennial Discovery:**
Easy deployment, high recognition
accuracy, value for money
- **Business benefits:**
Reduced software spend, greater
visibility of assets, dramatically
reduced risk of subsequent
compliance audit

Overview

Whilst achieving FAST Gold Accreditation inevitably carries a cost in terms of time and technology; using Centennial Discovery to help implement best practice IT management enabled Glass's Information Services to realize a substantial return on investment in terms of improved corporate governance and reduced software spend.

The licensing challenge

Understanding the way software vendors license their applications is a minefield, even for the most experienced IT professionals. But with software now a major part of many organizations' operational spend, it's an area that's getting more attention from budget-conscious managers like Mike Lawson, IT Operations Manager at motor trade business intelligence provider, Glass's Information Services.

"Unsurprisingly, each of the major software vendors has different policies regarding the use of their products," said Lawson, "But if you take the trouble to understand them correctly, you can minimize the number of licenses you pay for whilst staying on the right side of the law."

"For example, Microsoft will allow you to run a copy of its Office suite on both a desktop and a laptop under a single license, for the same named user, while

Borland allows a user to run Delphi on more than one machine, again under a single license for a named user. The trick to managing software licenses effectively is to combine this knowledge with an accurate understanding of what programs are actually in use across the organization."

Going for Gold

It was an invite to a software licensing workshop run by Asset Management Solutions (AMS) that provided the catalyst for Glass's to begin the process of gaining FAST compliance and forming a better understanding of the licensing implications of the software on its network.

Glass's, best known for "Glass's Guide", the motor industry's bible to car values, had been running Centennial Discovery for several years, but only sporadically. The opportunity to learn how to put it to better use and gain FAST accreditation convinced Lawson to 'go for Gold'.

But before Lawson and his team could think about managing licenses more effectively, they needed to discover exactly how much software was in use across Glass's UK offices in Weybridge and Crowborough.

With over 400 devices of differing types and configuration, and a variety of software, a manual audit could have taken a month or more to complete, and would have caused considerable disruption to the business.

Thankfully, with Centennial Discovery, a complete audit of Glass's network takes no more than a couple of hours, making it easy to find out just how much software was on the network, how much of it was actually being used and where it was.

Gaining confidence

With the full FAST Gold Accreditation achieved in less than a year, Lawson and his team now rely on regular audits from Centennial Discovery to maintain a watch over the corporate network.

Group workstations are audited weekly, with a full network inventory (including servers and other devices) being performed once a month. Thanks to Centennial Discovery's bandwidth-friendly communications technology, there is no noticeable effect on network performance during an audit and users can continue to use their machines as normal.

"There is no shortage of PC and software auditing solutions on the market," Lawson continued, "but I have found Centennial Discovery to be the easiest to use and, even more importantly, I have full confidence in the results."

IT audits are conducted automatically, according to the inventory schedule set up by Lawson. Centennial Discovery collects information on device identification, location and configuration. For PCs, this includes a full list of all software programs resident on the hard disk.

For subsequent re-audits, new information is compared against the previous operation, and any changes to the device are reported back to the Control Center. Thanks to its unique LANProbe technology, Centennial Discovery helps managers pinpoint changes on the network by highlighting both the nature of the modification and the physical location of the affected device. Similarly, if a device is moved from one room to another, the software will automatically update the status of the device so that the inventory is always accurate.

Centennial Discovery maintains an ongoing audit history of all changes that occur to the PCs and network devices - such as memory being removed from a PC, a new printer added to the network or new software installed - automatically alerting the network manager if something is added or removed.

Discovery is power

With software licensing well under control, Lawson is using Centennial Discovery's inventory and reporting capabilities to help him plan for major IT projects such as refreshing older hardware and upgrading software applications to a common version level.

The web edition of Centennial Discovery offers a number of planning and budgeting wizards, which enable managers to quickly

assess the cost and feasibility of planned activities. For example, the software can easily assess how many machines would need upgrading or replacing to accommodate a move to a new Operating System, together with the associated cost and timescale of the necessary refresh.

"With Centennial Discovery, I can see exactly which machines in the organization are running older processors and even which machines are struggling to run power-hungry applications without enough memory," commented Lawson. "Using this information, I can make the decision whether to replace the entire machine, or simply upgrade the desired components.

"What's more, because I know exactly where each machine is in the organisation - and what components are installed on it - I can ensure that an engineer can perform an upgrade or replacement in a single visit."

All of which is good news for Glass's Information Services. With less money being spent on software licenses, Lawson is able to make its budget stretch that little bit further, which means that Glass's IT performs better and the business is more productive.

network discovery & management

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