

The logo for filewave inventory. The word "filewave" is in a dark blue, bold, italicized sans-serif font. To its right is a red graphic element consisting of three curved, overlapping shapes that resemble a stylized wave or a checkmark. To the right of this graphic is the word "inventory" in a gray, bold, italicized sans-serif font.

filewave  ***inventory***

protecting and leveraging
IT assets
the advantages of a centralized,
automated asset management
and inventory solution

The Roman emperors knew how to keep tabs on things. When they wanted an up-to-date idea of how many people they ruled over in their widely dispersed empire, they ordered a census, forcing their subjects to report to their place of birth and register themselves. While today's IT administrators do not wield such absolute power, they can command a 21st Century computerized equivalent of it, by using current asset management software to direct all the resources in the networks they preside over to identify and report the relevant facts about themselves, thereby obtaining an accurate profile of their organization's assets.

In fact, a centralized, automated asset management and inventory system represents a far superior version of the ancient Romans' data gathering methods because the speed and automation at the heart of it all-but eliminate human error and delay. In today's business, government and academic IT environments, with their distributed networks spanning buildings, cities and not infrequently the entire globe, staying on top of and managing computing resources manually, a losing battle even in the best of times, is no longer a viable option.

In order to maximize the return on their IT investments, businesses and other enterprises must maintain a precise, up-to-date inventory of their hardware and software assets, one that can keep pace with constant change, enable detailed technical and financial analysis and ensure legal compliance. Whether they want to save money on licensing, accurately budget for software purchases, prepare for a software audit or prevent one, an automated software inventory management system is the perfect tool for the task.



The must-haves of an effective system

If gathering, tracking and reporting data about an enterprise's inventory of computer hardware and software are crucial to increasing organizational efficiency and improving its planning capabilities, how should this process be executed and what elements would it consist of? An optimum asset management solution would include:

- A scanning mechanism that targets all the IT resources on a network and identifies any IP-enabled device;
- A central repository / database application where the information gathered by the scans is sent and stored;
- A streamlined, straightforward user interface that allows convenient access to the data.



Such a system would contain features that, among other things, give it the ability to:

- Determine what hardware and software assets are in the network, where they are and how they are being used;
- Monitor and maintain all hardware and software inventories by means of a convenient and flexible management feature;
- Enable detailed understanding and analysis of installed software through user-friendly database query tools;
- Demonstrate asset and license compliance and permit response to audits;
- Report inventory results that can be easily printed or emailed to the user on a definable time schedule; help manage vendor contracts and making purchasing decisions;
- Expand as the organization itself does.

Acquiring a clear picture of a network's assets

The first thing asset and inventory management software needs to establish is what physically makes up the LAN or WAN in question. It therefore scans the network and, using an active device discovery mechanism, identifies all of its hardware assets, not just its computers and workstations but even little-used or forgotten printers, routers and switches.

An agent, which is installed on every machine, enables the automatically scanning process. The agents, operate non-intrusively and transparently in the background, without any end user awareness or disruption. It collects in-depth data about the hardware in which they reside, data such as OS, CPU, hard disk and RAM slot details, and send it on to a central repository / inventory database.

They also, of course, scan the software installed on the machines. Here, the information they gather and forward to the database – for instance, the exact number of software installations on the network, the current version of Word being used on various laptops – is most useful and practical when organized by a powerful inventory management feature accessible on the product's user interface. Such a feature ideally will allow for the grouping of assets according to attributes and thereby make subsequent reporting and analysis easier and more effective. Also, the ability to perform such tasks as monitoring assets throughout the asset lifecycle, or compiling a detailed asset ownership history that tracks all previous owners and records the changes in the asset, is invaluable.

If mobile and/or remote computers are part of the network, being able to scan them in a reliable and repeatable manner is also an imperative feature.



So: it's clear that certain applications are present on a client's hard disk. What should also be clear is whether they're actually being used or only wasting space there. A software asset management solution should assist in understanding not just what software is currently installed in a system, and on which groups of computers, but how it is being employed, and by whom. Usage reports can answer such questions as how often an application has been launched and how many minutes, on average, that it's been used per launch.

Additionally, easy-to-use database query tools, which can be pre-built, reusable reports or customized SQL queries created with open-source technologies, should be included to permit a more fine-tuned examination and analysis of inventory data, which can lead, for instance, to the recovery of unused licenses or the elimination of unnecessary software expenditures. Such tools enable hard facts to replace guesswork and informed decisions to take the place of gut feelings.

Not just what's there but how it's being used



One of the main advantages presented by an asset management solution is the assurance that installed software in a system does not exceed purchased software. By enabling audits of how many installations of an application have been purchased and how many actually installed, it can keep companies in compliance with piracy laws.

Since employees can surreptitiously install software in their machines, the compliance that an IT staff has ensured is in place on Tuesday can easily be violated on Wednesday. Through recurring, scheduled scans, administrators can regularly monitor compliance and be alerted via email when someone violates it, ensuring that compliance is maintained on a long-term, on-going basis. There can be no excuse for being hit with a huge fine from regulators because of failure to spot illegal software downloaded by employees.

Additional benefits can be realized by public companies and government agencies that must comply with specific regulations like Sarbanes-Oxley, as well as by any IT enterprise seeking to implement best practices such as IT Infrastructure Library.

Software compliance is neither an optional nor a part-time obligation



An asset management solution should offer capabilities that provide immediate access to inventory overview reports. Only in this way can needs and deficiencies be quickly identified. A built-in report creator may come in handy for producing custom reports that address specific business and planning requirements.

It can also assist in effectively managing contracts with different vendors. It can store and check on expiry dates and offer alerts for renewal.

A scalable distributed architecture provides valuable flexibility. It is a major advantage if your asset management solution adapts to the growth of your business by allowing for upgrades and additions without the need for complicated procedures.

Getting the facts out



Growing with the enterprise

An automated asset management and inventory system provides real benefits that can help organizations deal with significant IT challenges and solve fundamental problems. At FileWave, we believe our cross-platform solution, FileWave Inventory, offers superior asset and inventory management for all systems running Microsoft Windows and Apple Macintosh operating systems. By providing precise, up-to-date data on, and detailed analysis of, all available computing resources, it makes decisions regarding planning upgrades, side-grades, phase-outs and other IT tasks quick and accurate, and also makes software license compliance easily manageable over the long term. When combined with our automated software distribution tool FileWave, it greatly empowers your enterprise and is suitable, thanks to its highly distributed architecture, for nearly any size business, from small companies of 10 users up to the most widely dispersed global enterprise of tens of thousands of users.

FileWave (USA) Inc.

10714 Squaw Prairie Drive
Suite 200
Fishers, IN 46038-7815
Phone: 1 888 FILEWAVE
317 863 6282
Fax: 317 755 0944
sales@filewave.com

FileWave (Europe) GmbH

St. Gallerstrasse 1
CH - 9500 Wil
Phone: +41 71 914 30 80
Fax: +41 71 914 30 81
sales@filewave.com

www.filewave.com

