



# UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

## Future-proof solution saw off major vendor audit

### COMPANY BACKGROUND

An established university with a progressive and dynamic outlook, the University of Dundee (UoD) is one of the UK's leading universities. It is internationally recognized for its expertise across a range of disciplines including science, medicine, engineering and art. In 2016/17 the university's IT spend was just over £8m.

### CHALLENGE

The University of Dundee has an IT infrastructure of 9,000 devices, mainly based in its Dundee campus, but spread among nine academic schools and a clutch of professional services departments. While the bulk of its software assets is made up of the usual suspects, a sprawl of specific, subject-related applications makes the estate tricky to manage. Another complicating factor is that 40% of software spend is not made by IT. To close this so-called 'Disruption Gap', the university realized it needed a third-party solution to help it gain 360° insight into its licensed software. Snow hit the sweet spot between being a solution that was both future-proof and one that can yield immediate benefits.

### SNOW'S CONTRIBUTION

An immediate benefit was the application normalization by Snow's Software Recognition Service which shrank a list of hundreds of executables to single pieces of software, such as Adobe Photoshop. This makes reporting considerably easier. A recent audit from a large enterprise vendor was another win for Snow, with them accepting data from Snow in lieu of using the vendor's specific script. Snow is also being used for a number of university-wide 'strategic' functions: to beef up the software request process, fine-tune software demand to further increase staff and student satisfaction and is used in estate planning – gauging which devices are used most frequently at what times.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Insight and compliance across a diverse estate, including esoteric research software
- Audit assistance
- Rationalization of software estate
- Future-proof technology

### SAM HERO

Charles Pearson, the University of Dundee's Commercial Manager says: "What we liked about Snow was the fact that we could see that it was a solution that would give us immediate benefit, but also would also allow us to mature within the solution, and within our own systems, rather than having to make a lift and shift two years in."

## THE CHALLENGE

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Dr. Jonathan Monk, Director of IT, says: "When you inherit a heterogeneous estate you need to measure what you've got ... without generating a vast amount of noise of the things that you don't care about." Beyond that immediate need of visibility and compliance, UoD looked at a five- to 10-year horizon. He explains: "Either you pick a complex solution, and you struggle because the organization is not mature enough. Or you pick one that's really basic, and covers your immediate needs, but doesn't give you anywhere to go long-term."

Snow hit the sweet spot between a being solution that was both future-proof and one that can yield immediate benefits. Ease of deployment was another factor in favor of Snow and in 2015, UoD implemented Snow License Manager, Snow Inventory, Software Recognition Service and Oracle Management Option.

UoD had previously used open-source technology to help with Software Asset Management, but these "solutions" proved no match for the powerful software recognition functionalities of Snow which, as an example, quickly, simplified a list of hundreds of executables to just one piece of software – Adobe Photoshop. It gave UoD the visibility it wanted, and saved the SAM team a lot of time. "The intelligence in Snow to recognize that all those executables boils down to just Photoshop, actually means reporting is much simpler now," Monk says.

When you invest in a best-of-breed SAM solution, you are not just benefiting from the time and cost savings that you yourself generate, there is also what you might call a reputational advantage. You are not working in a vacuum, but effectively getting a piggyback ride from the work done by the software asset managers who have used Snow before you. This is what happened to UoD when a major enterprise vendor came knocking with an audit.

Charles Pearson, the university's Commercial Manager, narrates what happened. "We went to the vendor and said: 'We cannot run the scripts you require due to testing policies in case they adversely affect our systems, but we can access the information via Snow which is already installed. Would you accept Snow data?' They said 'yes'.

Academic freedom also means freedom to make your own software purchasing decisions, so it is not surprising that 40% of UoD's software spend is costed to its different academic schools, outside the control of the IT department.

## CLOSING THE DISRUPTION GAP

Snow is helping bridge this gap by corralling all the university's software – some of it very subject-specific and esoteric – into Snow License Manager. "The most important thing is to have visibility. Once you have that, you can start asking questions," says Dr. Monk. These questions center around compliance, asset tracking and license optimization.

The team expects to have all the license data for student desktops in Snow within the next few months. Charles explains: "The agreements will be there and populated so we can then go back and say, 'You've only got 60 people on this course, so why do we have 200 licenses deployed?' That's when you can start looking at what's the optimal level licensing and cut costs."

As you would expect, Snow is being used to make data-driven decisions about software licensing and budgeting – but the SAM Platform also feeds information to the university's estates and buildings department. Mark Thomson, Interim Head of Infrastructure, says. "The Estates department is very interested in the reporting from Snow. We can tell them: 'There's only five applications used here by a group of six people, and the PC is only getting used for six hours a week.' When we combine that together, they can make a powerful case for deciding to change the use of that office."



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**Dr. Jonathan Monk,  
University of Dundee's Director of IT**

Thomson ultimately sees Snow influencing decisions about whether or not to construct a whole new student building – a prime example of how a SAM solution can provide ROI beyond "mere" compliance.

Two years in, Snow has become an integral part of how IT operates within UoD. Pearson sums it up succinctly: "Snow has been excellent at engaging with us to ensure we can maximize the benefit from the solution. We have been assisted by Snow in preparing internal audit information on licenses and its Professional Services team has also helped us upload Microsoft license data. Snow has been invaluable, the team has helped us in ensuring we have a clear vision for our use of the product as our own organization goes through a business transformation.

Pearson's advice for other SAM managers is: "When you pick software providers or platforms like this, it's important that not only can you get immediate value out of it, but also that you will be able to grow with the product. Aligning how your vision of the solution and processes should work, with a solution and company that has that same mindset, is really important."