SNOW CASE STUDY

BUCKS COUNCIL SEES 1000% ROI FROM MANAGED SAM

COMPANY BACKGROUND

As a local authority, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) delivers community services across the region.

SNOW'S CONTRIBUTION

Using Snow License Manager as a hosted SAM solution, BCC gained an accurate understanding of its Microsoft estate, right-sizing their Enterprise Agreement in line with results reports created in Snow.

BENEFITS AND ROI

Snow proved itself an easy to use solution providing accurate, granular data to support BCC's migration to Windows 7 and future SAM objectives.

ROI

Significant cost avoidance has been achieved using Snow's metering data, which identified unused Visio & Project licenses worth over £34,000. Introducing software re-harvesting has delivered a 1000% ROI on BCC's investment in Snow to date.

We were not getting the detail we needed in terms of applications installed from SCCM and overall, reporting and visibility were tricky to achieve.

Richard Randall

ICT Technical Officer for Service Transformation at Buckinghamshire County Council.

Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) delivers essential services to every community in the Buckinghamshire region around the clock, from over 500 locations. Software compliance has always been a priority for the council, which runs a mature IT estate comprising 4000 client devices and 350 servers.

BCC had been using Microsoft SCCM to manage the deployment of devices and applications since 2007. Although it was effective to a degree for discovering IT assets and Microsoft software installed, SCCM was unintuitive and the level of visibility and accuracy provided was poor. Consequently, BCC suspected they lacked a firm understanding of the organization's true licensing position and in particular, their Microsoft estate. The council approached Snow Software partner Civica to identify a more effective solution for software asset management (SAM) in the future.

As a SAM specialist and a key Microsoft Licensing Solutions Provider, Civica conducted a SAM & License Review, which enabled BCC to quickly gain an independent picture of their Microsoft estate. BCC has an Enterprise Software Agreement (ESA) with Microsoft, which includes Office 365 as well as an Azure subscription with StorSimple devices. Snow License Manager highlighted both compliance risks and opportunities for BCC to make substantial savings. At the same time, BCC were able to improve SAM governance and adopt more efficient technologies and processes.

The SAM review highlighted how much simpler it was to get the information we need from Snow License Manager, which is easy to use and provides very granular data. Because we were moving to Windows 7 from XP at the time, it was a great opportunity to implement Snow as a gateway for having a more powerful SAM solution and improve our future SAM capabilities.

Richard Randall

ICT Technical Officer for Service Transformation at Buckinghamshire County Council.

BCC originally began using Snow License Manager as a fully hosted SAM Managed Service provided by Civica in 2012. After initial results were reviewed the following year, the substantial cost savings achieved convinced BCC to commit to a 3 year Managed SAM contract. This also included an annual Microsoft ELP (Effective Licensing Position) audit, which ensures the council is compliant with its ESA, that Microsoft EA (Enterprise Agreement) figures are accurate upon payment and no software overspend occurs.

Although BCC use software from other vendors, Microsoft was prioritized for the SAM program because it constitutes the largest proportion of the council's overall software spend. It was therefore sensible to conduct regular Microsoft compliance checks proactively using Snow License Manager and right size their Enterprise Agreement annually in line with results from the ongoing Effective Licensing Position reports created in Snow.

Included within the SAM Managed Service contract, the ELP reports provided to BCC summarize any software risk and re-harvesting opportunities across the council's ESA. They highlight if there are anomalies in the Microsoft estate in terms of areas where a potential risk of license shortfall exists, or where there are opportunities for BCC to make savings through implementing a software re-harvesting program. Using this data, BCC can then conduct its own internal investigations to verify the results, take action where appropriate and enable BCC to take advantage of potential cost savings.

Significant cost avoidance has been achieved using Snow's metering data, which identified unused Microsoft Visio and Project licenses worth over £34,000. Apart from zero usage, the data was able to identify any installs which had either not been used within the last 90 days, or had been run for a minimal length of time. As a result, BCC were able to remove these installs from devices and hold them 'in stock', ready for redeployment to new devices as required in the future. In total, re-harvesting unused Microsoft applications across the estate has achieved a return on BCC's investment in Snow of over 1000%.

Snow has also enabled BCC to gain a better understanding of its virtualized assets. Licensing server software in a virtualized environment requires a clear view of the infrastructure and policies in place (such as load balancing or high availability) and hardware information e.g. cores and processors. Using this data, Civica were able to advise BCC on its licensing requirements for SQL taking into account Microsoft's licensing models based on cores and processors and at the same time, advising on compliance issues around their license mobility rules within high availability environments. "As analysis of this was also included in the annual ELP reviews, we have been able to maintain and plan future deployments whilst ensuring we comply with the complex rules around virtualization and license mobility," says Richard Randall.

Looking ahead, BCC plan to maintain annual ELPs and are currently deploying Snow in the datacenter to replicate the work completed client side and obtain a real time picture of server side licensing.