

Manage Licensed Software, Optimize License Consumption, and Move Closer to Interoperable Solutions



Efficient end-to-end processes covering everything from license procurement to software distribution are essential for license management. Only one solution can do this and meet demands for more transparency, proactive control, and interoperability.

The concept of software asset management as a process that provides transparency and enables proactive control and optimization of license consumption is a must-have for any well run organization. Furthermore, a solution that supports interoperable IT management is something the market has been demanding for years.

While developing technology to fulfill this two pronged need, the approach was to build the technology around the license, anchor it in automated processes, and architect it for interoperation. The result is called license-centric software asset management as featured in CA IT Asset Manager.

By creating a logical, automated, reproducible process that links license management into the overall IT service oriented architecture, the initial investment is greatly reduced and the effort to integrate the technology in the enterprise IT environment is simplified. It also provides the added benefit of enabling the many different tools to work more cohesively in one uninterrupted system.

Functions such as identifying compliance risks, measuring usage of licenses with complex metrics (e.g. CPU, Socket, and PVU), streamlining handling of software requests, and much more can now be automated and integrated into the IT architecture without any aspect of the process being fragmented or split up. This fulfills market demand for more transparency, pro-active control, and interoperability.

Interoperability

Because software asset management covers a complex cross section of business and IT, it poses an integration challenge between IT, purchasing, and finance. This means data from various, disparate systems needs to be collected and combined.

For this reason, license-centric technology includes various options for implementation and allows for integration with any number of up and downstream systems, from asset management, service management, and software requests, to procurement and ERP, and cost charging tools.

Because the technology relies on the continuous flow of data from numerous systems, the interfaces are of critical importance. The interfaces must be easy to handle, well documented, and above all flexible.

Whether an organization is using data collection solutions from CA Technologies or third party capabilities (such as HP AssetCenter and DDMI, a combination of Microsoft SCCM and LANDesk, Altiris, in-house developed tools, or any other system or database), the interfaces are standard, clear-cut, and simple..

License-centric technology does not delineate the data sources a customer has to use. In fact, companies should utilize all relevant data sources available to them to ensure all required information is collected. This provides the best of both worlds: a standardized software asset management technology that (1) simplifies integration and promotes interoperation and (2) broad flexibility for the customer to get more out of its existing IT systems.

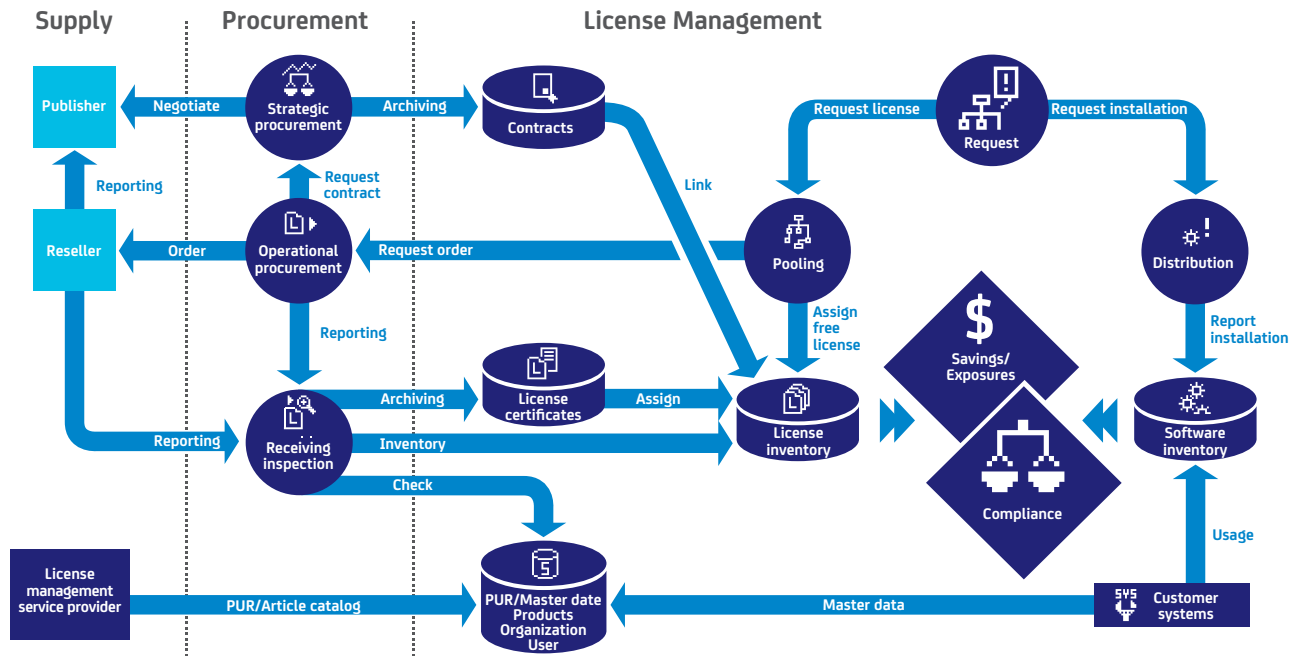
License-centric Methodology

The license-centric methodology has not changed since its development in 2000, so the original technology implemented then will interoperate and perform the same process in today’s IT infrastructure. This is possible because the technology is process oriented and, although the process has been improved over the last decade, it is fundamentally the same.

Another name for license-centric is catalog based. The basic scheme is built around a catalog of stock keeping unit (SKU) records. The SKU is a unique identifier assigned to each license, usually by the publisher or vendor that indicates the software product, manufacturer, license metric, and product use rights, among other key information. The foundation of the entire license-centric methodology rests on gathering the SKUs of the purchased licenses and verifying them against the catalog.

In order to automate the time consuming and error prone task of manually entering license parameters into the system, the SAM tool integrates into the company’s chosen procurement system/method. When licenses are purchased, the tool pulls out the unique manufacturer SKUs and validates them against its embedded catalog. The license terms and conditions and any overlying contract terms are then automatically recorded, ensuring accurate data, understanding, and utilization of the licenses.

License-centric process map



Process-Oriented Architecture

Several other solutions on the market have adapted the license-centric methodology and retroactively integrated a catalog into their products. However, this is not enough. It is one thing to identify the license and a completely new process step to categorize the license metric and recognize what data is required to “count” or measure it. Most technology stops with identifying the license, and measuring consumption is left up to the customer. The software asset management capabilities from CA Technologies goes further and not only automates all processes related to license data generation but also for measuring software license consumption.

The technology is able to do this because the catalog is supplemented with additional data allowing it to automatically trigger the next step in the license management process. For example: The tool has confirmed that license “Lotus® Domino®” from publisher “IBM®” has been purchased under SKU 12345. The enriched data in the catalog specifies that Lotus® Domino® from IBM® with SKU 12345 has the metric “processor value unit (PVU).” Furthermore, the catalog knows the algorithm that IBM has fixed to the license to measure consumption and that processor brand (including name, server model, and maximum number of sockets per server), and processor type (cores per socket) of the physical device are required. Given that the necessary data is at hand, the tool will automatically perform the calculations.

This is the key to successful license management: knowing what data needs to be gathered to measure license consumption. There is no manual input required to measure any license metric, even the notorious server software are managed by the technology’s automated catalog logic and metric engines. And this is exactly where other, non-license-centric approaches to software asset management fall short.

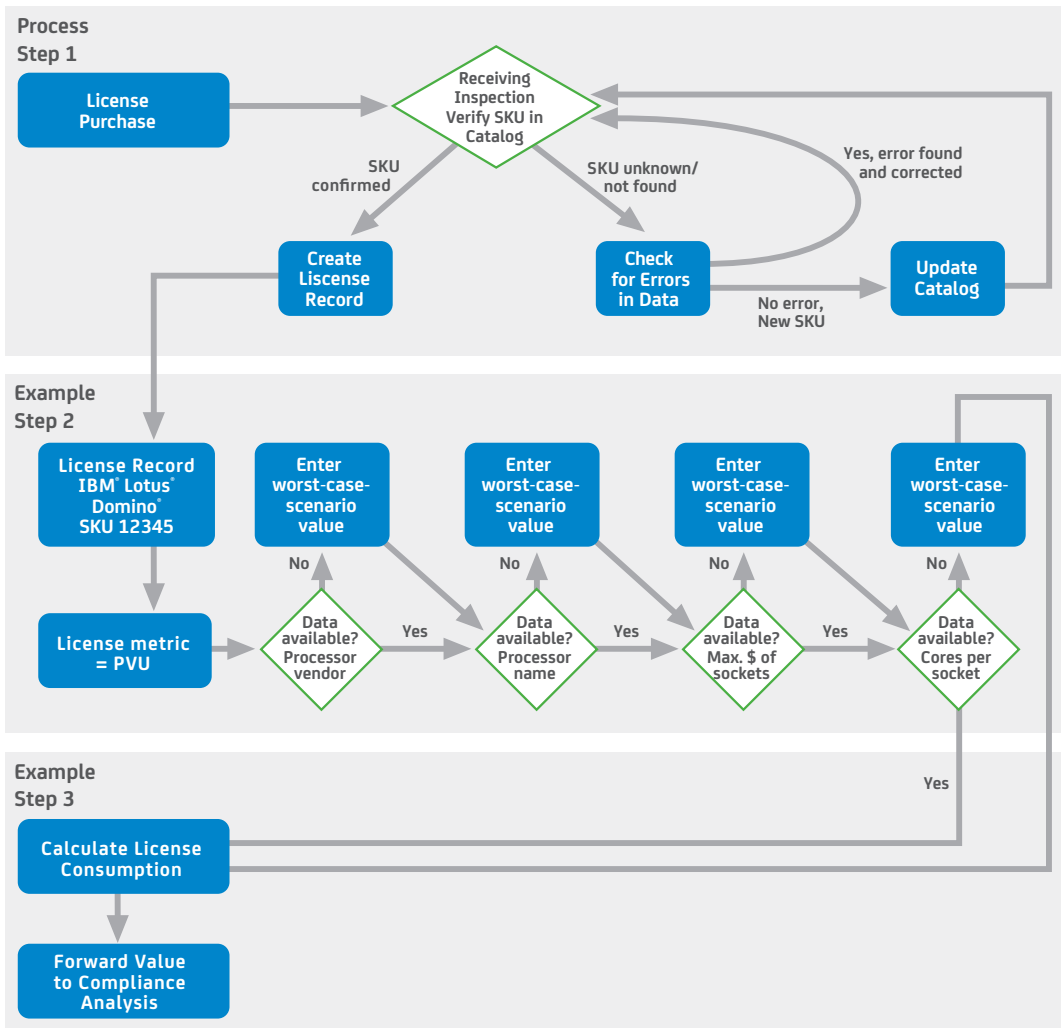
The point is to free the customer from painstaking data gathering and handling and to enable them to focus on the important aspects of software asset management: strategic purchasing to permanently drive down software costs, eliminating non-compliance risks, using a comprehensive, powerful combination of features and reports to pro-actively manage licenses.

The use of a process oriented solution increases transparency by establishing one process chain from data gathering to reporting. For example, without a firm definition of processes, a common mistake most organizations make is to first purchase the software licenses, install the software, and then try to gather the necessary data for license management. This is not transparent and often IT departments realize they are not equipped to scan the network for the information required to measure the license metric chosen by the procurement department.

This process needs to be turned up-side-down: Once a need for software is established but before the licenses are purchased IT needs to determine how it can manage the software. If an organization does not have a reliable system to track devices, then it should definitely not purchase licenses with a device or installation-based license metric. The same software should be licensed through a different metric e.g. users, or the organization should discuss different price options with the vendor based on the data the company can gather with its IT tools.

Will publishers one day make their software price models less complicated? Maybe. But even if publishers simplify licensing, the need for software asset management will not go away. Smart organizations will always want to make informed, cost effective decisions, so even though licenses are easier to understand, someone will still need to do demand planning and decide which software and license types are the best for the company. In other words, it will pay off to invest in license-centric technology and to have internal professionals trained in software asset management.

Process-oriented architecture



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