



Leverage BigFix visibility, control and elegance to eliminate uncertainty from software asset management

In contrast to many common software asset management (SAM) approaches—either those based on “cobbled together” spreadsheets or those based on complex, expensive asset management systems—BigFix Decision Support System Software Asset Management (DSS SAM) immediately helps companies save money and reduce risk. By leveraging the real-time visibility afforded by patented BigFix technology, DSS SAM provides a straightforward and comprehensive view into software assets. Because the tool is simple to use and has extensive and precise information about IT assets, enterprises can use it for continuous asset assessment and reporting rather than inaccurate, expensive, episodic, and time-consuming software audits.

The SAM State of the Art

- Percent of medium-to-large enterprises that have undergone a software audit conducted by at least one of their vendors: 48%
- Average software and maintenance misspend: 30% of software budget is misspent
- Average percent of total IT budget allocated to software: 38%
- Number of medium-to-large enterprises with an IT asset management program: 50%
- Percent of medium-to-large enterprises not confident that they are compliant with their software license contracts: 89%
- Non-compliance penalties: greater than \$100,000 per incident, bad publicity and brand damage, jail
- Dollars spent on software purchases by American companies in 2008: \$175,000,000,000
- Dollars spent on software maintenance by American companies in 2008: \$110,000,000,000

Not only does BigFix DSS SAM help discover and manage the applications installed in a company's IT infrastructure—down to the version level—but it also helps measure utilization of software investments, including cost analysis of license usage. This translates into significant cost savings for organizations that are overspending on software licensing fees as well as wasting time with manual true-up procedures.

With BigFix DSS SAM, enterprises can rapidly and easily turn BigFix extensibility into actionable insight. DSS SAM also allows the enterprise to provide relevant analysis and reporting tools across users and organizations.

BigFix DSS SAM is part of an integrated lifecycle process in the enterprise that includes resource planning, procurement, provisioning, ongoing endpoint and server management, and retirement/transition. The DSS SAM solution provides comprehensive, accurate visibility; ongoing analysis and reporting; and integration with other IT and enterprise management tools. For comprehensive systems management, BigFix offers a suite of products that provide asset management throughout the various lifecycle stages.

BigFix Recognizes and Responds to the Need for SAM

Enterprises of all sizes, in every market, pay millions of dollars each year in settlements and litigation expenses because they don't have effective tools and processes for IT asset management. Complicating the picture, many IT organizations waste time using ineffective asset management tools. Further, the tools used by many organizations do not provide the information needed to budget effectively—or, at the least, not to overspend.

The need for an effective software asset management (SAM) solution impacts the enterprise and the IT organization in the areas of cost, risk, and asset health:

- Lack of visibility can result in overspending.
- IT doesn't know whether endpoints are running legally licensed software, creating increased risk and exposure.
- IT doesn't know whether computers are meeting corporate standards compliance, forcing conservative configurations.

BigFix promotes an IT organization's SAM success by addressing these needs as follows.

Need: You don't know what you have, and you're not able to combine information about what you've purchased with what you have installed.

What software is being used? What software have I purchased? Overspending on software licenses is commonly caused by poor visibility and inadequate inventory information, lack of knowledge about actual software usage, and an inability to leverage inventory information during purchasing and procurement activities.

“Until we gained the visibility into software usage that BigFix gives us, we were spending more than 20% of our IT budget on useless software licenses.”

–IT Director,
Health Care Organization

BigFix Solution: Save time and save money. BigFix DSS SAM helps the enterprise understand and manage software utilization, which provides the knowledge needed to remove or reallocate software licenses based on need. With just a few clicks, the enterprise can see what assets exist, where these assets are located, and how they are being used. This information allows the enterprise to update license agreements and maintenance contracts only when necessary, with favorable terms based on real data about usage. SAM systems can help reduce redundancies in procurement and consolidate applications or migrate to different products when this will provide cost savings to the enterprise.

BigFix solutions require minimal infrastructure. A single server is capable of managing infrastructures of up to 250,000 managed endpoints. BigFix solutions can scale to address almost any size infrastructure, from hundreds to hundreds of thousands of managed endpoints. Time to implementation can be measured in days for most customers, enabling rapid time to value.

Need: You don't know whether your products are legally licensed for all the software on users' machines. An inability to ensure that endpoint software is legally licensed leads to breached contracts, software piracy, fines, and lawsuits. Enterprises face high risk when there is no visibility or control of software installed on endpoints. Lack of accurate usage or purchasing information, which can result in license under-purchasing; and chaotic software procurement methods. Likewise, risky applications or vulnerable versions installed on endpoints can lead to security, stability, and productivity risks.

BigFix Solution: Reduce risk. Effectively implementing BigFix DSS SAM facilitates the management of risks for an organization, limiting the risks of disruption to IT-related services and reducing legal and regulatory exposure.

Need: You don't know whether computers are meeting corporate standards compliance. Can I confirm that computers are running the correct versions of required software—for example, a certain version of Microsoft Office? Can I confirm that computers are not running prohibited software, and/or software that presents a security concern?

BigFix Solution: Keep your assets healthy. BigFix DSS SAM enables an organization to make sure that each asset has the software it is supposed to have, and is not running unauthorized software. Furthermore, with SAM an organization can ensure system health by reducing unnecessary functionality and implementing conservative configurations.

The Software Identification Catalog

A key component of the BigFix DSS SAM solution, the comprehensive BigFix Software Identification Catalog contains 5,000 publishers; 15,000 software products; and over 105,000 signatures out of the box, with periodic catalog updates delivered automatically. The catalog offers intuitive search and browse features, and IT organizations can easily customize the catalog to include tracking of homegrown and proprietary applications.

As the BigFix platform aggregates inventory data from endpoints, this data is correlated with the Software Identification Catalog to create the inventory data warehouse. The IT organization can also use the Catalog Content Management Tool to edit Software Identification Catalog content. With so much variability in how software gets installed on a managed asset—from central IT installation to departments to end users—the Software Identification Catalog provides an invaluable tool for enabling IT to track and identify all of the software on any given asset and across the enterprise.

The Power of BigFix Addresses the Challenges to a Successful SAM Solution

While BigFix addresses the basic needs surrounding a SAM solution, for many organizations, implementation of such a solution is hindered by additional challenges such as the following:

- Multiple, heterogeneous, infrastructures
- Increased end user control
- Distributed purchasing systems and procedures
- A lack of visibility and control
- An inability to monitor and report on assets in real time on an ongoing basis
- The need for IT staff to suspend regular activities to assess assets for an upcoming audit

Faced with these challenges, enterprises can look to the BigFix DSS SAM solution to provide features and tools that ensure a successful SAM implementation.

Challenge: Multiple, heterogeneous infrastructures. Such infrastructures present challenges in managing remote assets running a variety of operating systems.

BigFix Solution: Infrastructure consolidation. BigFix can replace a number of point tools, reducing licensing costs, administrative complexity, and clutter. BigFix's multiplatform support also simplifies administration of heterogeneous environments. The BigFix suite has the ability to service environments running multiple generations of Windows as well as Unix, Linux, Mac, mobile, and virtualized computers through integration with the management infrastructure and through report exports.

Challenge: Increased end user control and distributed purchasing systems.

In many environments, users commonly add software to managed assets that cannot easily be tracked. This problem is compounded by the increasing occurrence of users working remotely, off the network. Likewise, in many environments, organizational control of software requisition is decentralized, leading to multiple contracts, software vendors, and software sources.

BigFix Solution: Streamlined remote computing management. Through the simplicity of its UI and the intelligence of its software recognition methodology, BigFix DSS SAM offers centralized, simplified, rationalized views into the chaotic software purchase and install activity across the network. This streamlined management includes the ability to delegate software license management, so even if an organization has distributed purchasing and installation, the people doing that work can have both global visibility and local visibility to manage the activity.

Challenge: A lack of visibility and control. This lack makes it nearly impossible for IT administrators to get a clear picture into what they do have and what they are supposed to have.

BigFix Solution: Comprehensive, pervasive, accurate, historical visibility. DSS SAM offers persistent discovery and visibility, ensuring that software records are up-to-date, accurate, and complete. The solution can gain visibility into any asset regardless of connection state—whether on the corporate network or an unfirewalled TCP/IP network—and across a number of topologies in a heterogeneous environment. Software metering provides drill-down information about the software publishers, titles, and applications found on IT assets, with aggregated statistics and usage information.

BigFix DSS SAM employs multiple strategies for identifying software assets. It leverages—and allows editing and augmentation of—a continually updated Software Identification Catalog of commercial applications and publishers. The solution also collects and maintains historical usage data in a data warehouse. DSS SAM Web applications allow users to browse the data warehouse and generate reports.

Challenge: The inability to accurately monitor and report on assets in real time on an everyday, ongoing basis. IT staff continually struggle with end users downloading unapproved software and making configuration changes on their own. This highlights the need for better visibility into end point software installation, configuration, and usage.

BigFix Solution: Ongoing analysis and reporting. Because asset monitoring takes place everyday, on an ongoing basis, with DSS SAM an organization can generate the reports it wants when it needs them. The reports enable users to drill into analyses—sort, filter, pivot—based on utilization, software package, vendor, computer attributes, and so on. The solution provides reporting access to various roles and individuals in the enterprise, not just to IT operations managers, helping support line of business requirements. Leveraging the power of the BigFix platform, the solution also offers remediation; ongoing proactive policy enforcement; and tools for provisioning, patching, and software distribution. This ensures that computers are as up-to-date and as healthy as possible.

The real-time visibility of DSS SAM cuts administrative costs associated with compliance. Instead of running a report whenever compliance managers request one, any BigFix user, such as a compliance manager, can access the product with a browser, explore the data, and generate report views that answer the user's questions about software usage and license compliance. BigFix DSS SAM enables the enterprise to create and manage information about the software contracts and product licenses that the organization owns. IT can add custom fields to contracts as needed and use this analysis to determine compliance status.

The BigFix Platform: A Look Inside

The power of the overall BigFix platform derives from key features that reduce cost, maximize ROI, and improve efficiency for organizations that implement the DSS SAM solution. Components of the platform include the following:

The BigFix Agent—the “brains” of the platform. Continuously assessing the endpoint and enforcing policy—regardless of connectivity—this single, multi-purpose agent represents a radical departure from legacy client-server architectures and powers a resilient distributed intelligent infrastructure.

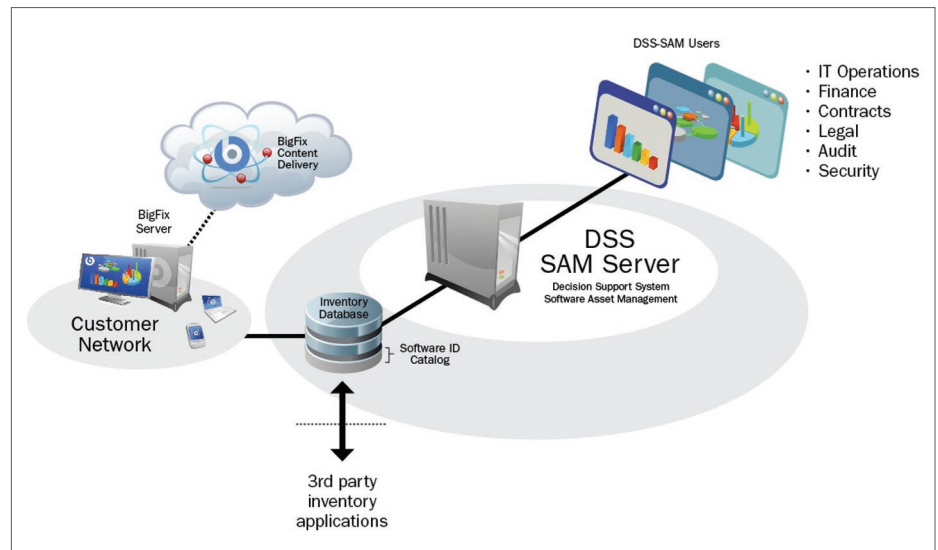
The BigFix Server, which hosts the BigFix console, reporting/analysis dashboards, and policies.

BigFix Policy Messages, also known as “Fixlet” messages, which communicate policy information between BigFix Agents and BigFix Server environments. Customers can use BigFix-provided policies, or customize their own.

BigFix Relays, which act as communication and aggregation points and staging areas for BigFix Policy Messages and patch/remediation content. BigFix Relays can be installed within minutes on existing hardware, including desktops and multi-purpose systems such as file or print servers.

Challenge: Intense management when the enterprise is faced with an upcoming audit or a license true-up. Asset management is time consuming and intense, especially if the IT organization does not have the right tools or processes. This potentially leads to a lot of dedicated staff doing a lot of complicated work all the time—and/or disruptions for “special projects” when an audit is due, pulling staff away from their normal jobs.

BigFix Solution: “Always on” management. With BigFix DSS SAM, asset data is always at your fingertips. Using the tool on a regular basis for good, clean SAM work avoids staff and resource disruptions. Because BigFix users can reach out and touch distributed networks without physically dispatching service personnel or requiring action from end users, organizations can both save money and decrease the potential for errors.



The BigFix DSS SAM Server leverages comprehensive software database information to offer on-demand, customizable inventory and usage data

BigFix Overcomes the Limitations of Current Solutions to Maximize ROI

The most common current SAM solutions are spreadsheets and ERP-like asset management systems. However, each method presents significant disadvantages that lead to uncertain ROI.

Spreadsheets. Spreadsheet-based SAM solutions offer the appeal of low up-front implementation costs. However, because these solutions require manual management, as the number of assets increases, the time investment required to manage assets increases proportionately. At the same time, the currency and accuracy of the management system in terms of knowing who is running what on which asset decreases with each additional asset. The net result is that, even with low start-up costs, these solutions fail to deliver concrete value to the enterprise.

BigFix Approach: Unlike spreadsheets, the BigFix solution provides automated, real-time visibility into what’s on the endpoint, who is using it, and more.

Traditional IT asset management. Traditional IT asset management solutions are generally reliable as management tools and may not necessarily require an increased time investment as the number of assets increases. However, these solutions do require an ever-increasing dollar investment over time, as they are extremely expensive to maintain and to scale. Typically, enterprises that implement traditional asset management solutions experience uncertain or delayed ROI compared to the cost outlay for any given year. These solutions also return low-quality data that the IT organization cannot trust to be up-to-date. Because the data is not normalized, a great deal of manual work is required to interpret the findings of the discovery data.

BigFix Approach: Unlike traditional asset management tools, BigFix provides a high degree of accuracy in its assessment and reporting and offers unmatched scalability.

Calculating SAM-based ROI

The combination of features provided by the BigFix solution allows an organization to optimally allocate software and resources based on need and utilization patterns. This optimization of SAM-based ROI can be calculated in several specific areas, using the following formulas:

Reduced system support costs: Number of computers x Average number of annual support tickets per computer x Cost per ticket x % reduction in average call length

Example: A company with 1,000 computers x an average 4 helpdesk tickets per computer per year x \$40 cost per ticket x A 25% reduction in average call length = Annual savings of \$40,000

Minimized internal IT audit expenses: Number of computers x Time required to audit each computer x Hourly cost of IT staff member x Number of audits performed each year

Example: A company with 1,000 computers x 15 minutes to audit each computer x \$35 per hour for IT staff member x 2 audits performed each year = Annual savings of \$17,500

Improved employee productivity: Total number of employees x Estimated hours spent using unauthorized software each year x % of employees who experience downtime x Average hourly salary

Example: A company with 500 employees x 156 hours using unauthorized software each year x 10% of employees experiencing downtime x Average salary of \$18 per hour = Annual savings of \$140,400

Enhanced software compliance: Probability of audit x Number of computers x % of computers with unlicensed apps x Fine per unlicensed app

Example: Assume a 15% probability of an audit x 1,000 computers x 5% of computers running unlicensed software x Average \$30,000 fine per unlicensed app = Annual savings of \$225,000



Summary: Manage Costs with DSS SAM

BigFix DSS SAM facilitates enterprise software inventory and license management activities by giving IT administrators detailed visibility and reporting about IT assets at global scale. DSS SAM provides both inventory and usage information about the software deployed on IT assets, as well as configuration information about the assets. The solution offers fine-grained visibility into software assets usage enterprise-wide to support license cost optimization, contractual compliance, and planning, helping organizations save money by identifying and canceling under-used software licenses and by avoiding over-buying licenses up front.

BigFix DSS SAM offers real-time monitoring and reporting functions, tracks usage patterns even when assets are not connected to the enterprise network, and enables ad hoc queries for robust yet flexible software asset management. DSS SAM has visibility into assets running multiple operating systems in a heterogeneous environment, including Windows, Linux, Unix, and Mac OS.

With BigFix DSS SAM, enterprises can be assured of following the “basic rules” of asset management:

- Don't buy more than you need.
- Don't use more than you own.
- Control your security, vulnerability, and productivity risks.
- Support efficient software asset-related business processes like procurement and license distribution.

By providing instant visibility into enterprise assets, DSS SAM delivers a high level of accuracy, a minimal time investment even as the number of assets increases, and significant ROI both up front and over the long term.

Easily Add Systems and Security Management with BigFix

Through implementation of BigFix DSS SAM, the customer obtains an entry point to the unified BigFix management platform, which provides real-time visibility and control through a common infrastructure. Once the BigFix platform is deployed, additional solutions can be implemented through a simple subscription process, requiring no additional infrastructure. This enables the customer to add and manage power management, patch management, endpoint protection, and other system and security management features with no additional network or endpoint impact.

References

For information on the ISO 19770-1 SAM best practices standard:
<http://www.bsa.org/country/Research%20and%20Statistics.aspx> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_19770

About BigFix

BigFix®, Inc. is a leading provider of high-performance enterprise systems and security management solutions that revolutionizes the way IT organizations manage and secure their computing infrastructures.

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