Recast

EBOOK

Hardware Management in a Remote World

How to see clearly beyond your walls

Introduction

In the dynamically shifting landscape of IT, managing assets has become an increasingly complex task. The evolution of ISO 19770-1 demonstrates this reality. First released in 2006, ISO 19770-1 stood as a benchmark in IT asset management, originally aimed at helping organizations master their software assets. However, the standard's 2017 update signified a paradigm shift by broadening its scope to include hardware management. The addition of hardware reflects the need to recognize and control all IT assets holistically.

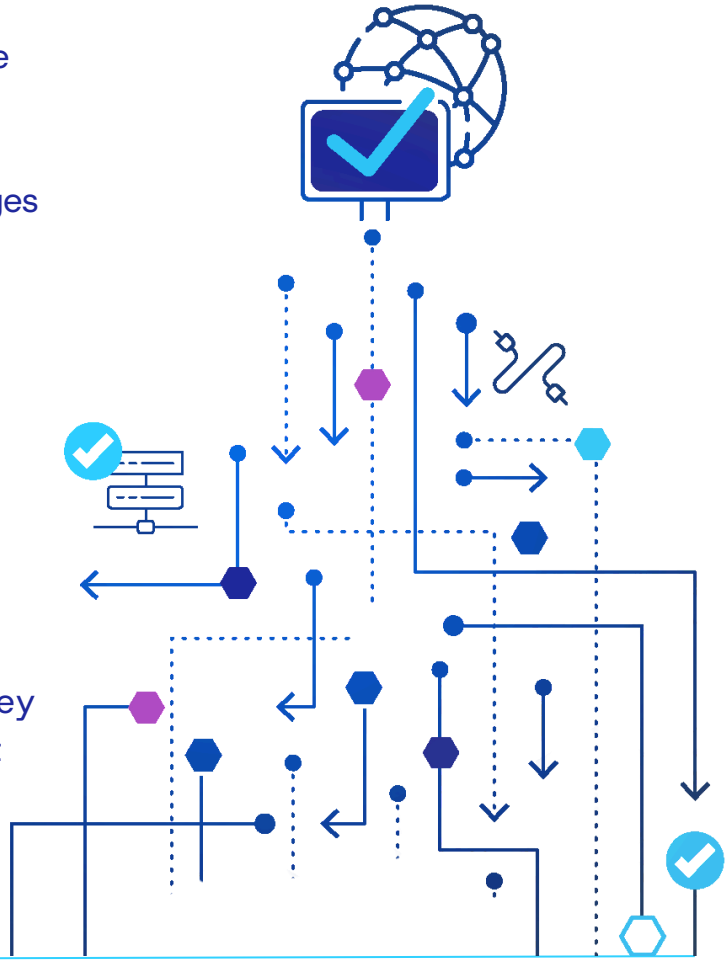
Let's take a look at some of the common hardware visibility challenges for IT admins:



Efficiency and time management: Tracking and updating the hardware inventory system can be taxing. Without appropriate strategies or resources, hardware management transforms into an unrelenting, complex task.

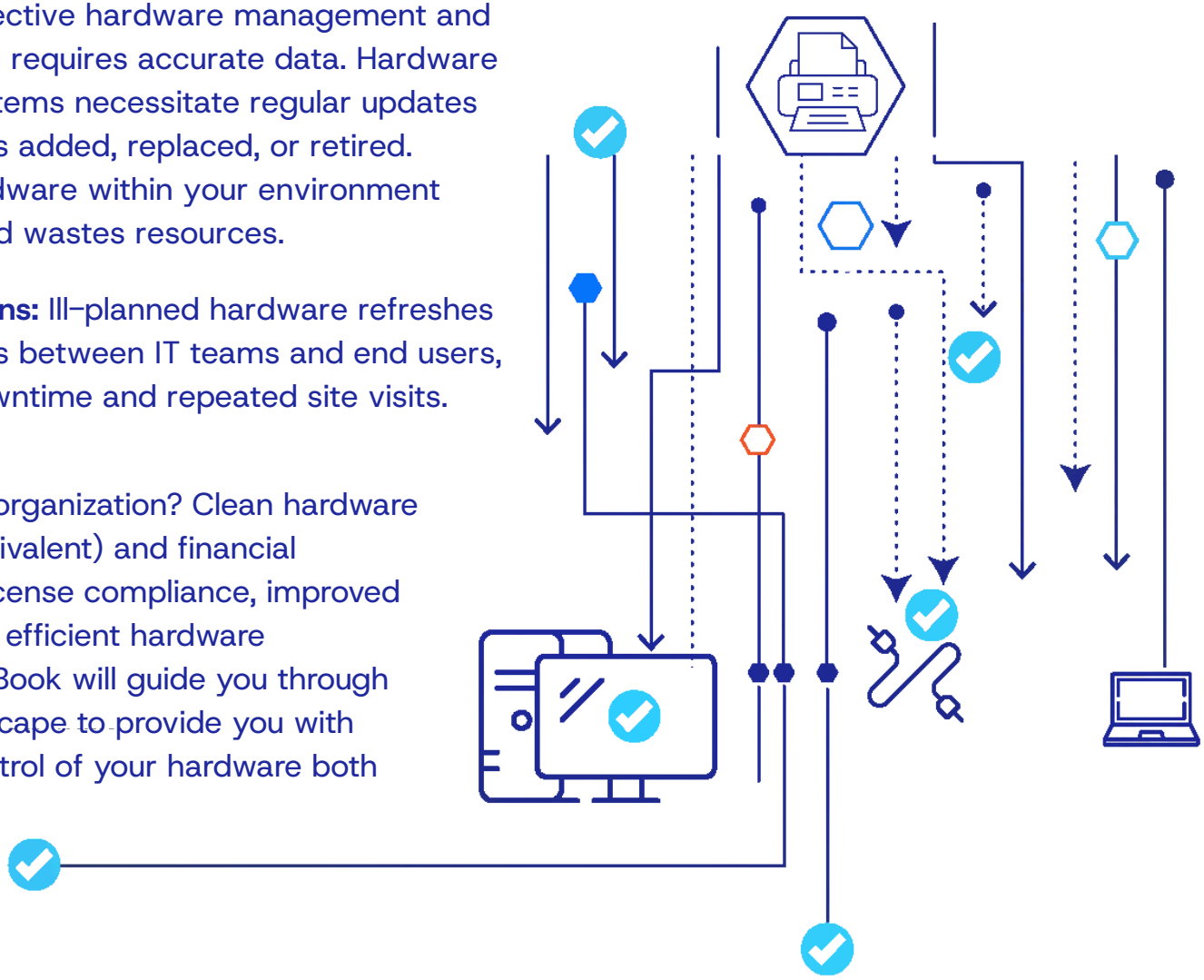


Scalability: Smaller organizations find that their informal systems quickly become unwieldy as they grow. Implementing hardware management best practices is essential as the volume of devices multiplies across separate locations.



Accuracy: Effective hardware management and asset tracking requires accurate data. Hardware inventory systems necessitate regular updates as hardware is added, replaced, or retired. Unknown hardware within your environment invites risk and wastes resources.

User Disruptions: Ill-planned hardware refreshes strain relations between IT teams and end users, leading to downtime and repeated site visits.



Why does this all matter to your organization? Clean hardware data allows for FTE (Full Time Equivalent) and financial resource optimization, software license compliance, improved security and data protection, and efficient hardware maintenance and support. This eBook will guide you through the hardware management landscape to provide you with insights and solutions to take control of your hardware both inside and beyond your walls.

*https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso-iec:19770:-1:ed-3:v1:en

Configuring for Visibility

Endpoint management solutions, like Microsoft Configuration Manager and Intune, capture most of the pertinent hardware data about endpoints. This data includes the make, model, and some baseline data on currently connected peripherals. However, solutions typically leave holes in hardware asset data, including information about the attached docking stations, monitor connections, and device warranties.

Many IT teams and SysAdmins fill gaps through custom scripting. However, building scripts demands considerable time and expertise. Once scripted, SysAdmins must also maintain them, adapting them to software updates and environmental changes.

The good news is that there are tools that bolster missing hardware datapoints and require minimal effort for IT teams to setup. These tools help provide a more complete understanding of your hardware infrastructure.



Good News:
There are tools that bolster missing hardware datapoints and require minimal effort for IT



Tracking Inside and Beyond your Walls

Organizations must identify and discover as much of the hardware within their environment as possible. This includes assets ranging from computers and servers to peripherals like docking stations, monitors, cables, webcams, printers, and headsets. The details of individual items should also be tracked, including the make, model, specifications, features, etc. Without this data, teams use up valuable organizational resources like a sieve attempting to hold water—time and financial resources slip away unconstrained.

Tracking inside and beyond your walls

Core Compute and Storage

PCs and servers require significant resources to purchase, maintain, and manage. Therefore, most organizations have a system in place to tag, attribute ownership to a user or group, and note the location. Complete and effective tracking, however, moves beyond spreadsheets or in-house solutions that struggle to scale.

Asset inventory software is worth the investment once companies scale beyond the limitations of their in-house, ad-hoc processes. To make an informed decision about the return on investment (ROI) of new asset inventory software, organizations need to calculate the cost of losses from untracked hardware, as well as the cost of end user disruptions due to both poor device performance and inefficient IT service resulting from poor visibility. Then, the calculation must also include weights for security risk exposure from incomplete hardware tracking. This math will help IT leadership justify moving past more fallible in-house tracking programs and assess the ROI of asset management software options.



Complete and effective tracking, however, moves beyond spreadsheets or in-house solutions that struggle to scale

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)



Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies require additional tracking capabilities. Organizations need to delineate between company-owned and user-owned devices within the environment, and this includes BYOD peripherals. Successful tracing may require multiple tools for the diverse types of devices and operating systems.

Organizations should also provide transparent BYOD policies to alleviate privacy concerns.

While significant IT and financial resources are necessary to successfully set up your BYOD program, tracking, and reporting, the effort rewards organizations through increased security and compliance.

Peripheral Hardware

Additionally, organizations should track organization-owned peripheral hardware like docking stations, monitors, cables, webcams, etc. Management solutions range from in-house spreadsheets to endpoint management software add-ons that pull novel data into the broader inventory. Single purpose hardware inventory software also exists and typically utilizes tagging and scanning methodologies.

If current endpoint management software enables more complete hardware tracking through add-ons or API-linked data streams, most organizations will prefer to consolidate data into a core endpoint management solution. However, hardware inventory software can serve organizations well, with the important note that these solutions often require physical tagging and scanning rather than automated data capture through the software itself. Some single purpose hardware management solutions may, however, integrate with endpoint management systems to lessen the burden of manual input.

Once organizations effectively capture their hardware data, the information must then be stored in a centralized location with capabilities to take action architected into the solution.



Hardware inventory software can serve organizations well



Clear reporting enables ongoing monitoring and troubleshooting

Essential Reporting

Once effective tracking is in place, clear reporting enables ongoing monitoring and troubleshooting. Ideally, the monitoring setup should include automated notifications for warranty or lease expirations.

Clear reporting also helps reduce hardware loss. Maintaining precise inventory reports provides a signal when hardware goes absent.

The practice of tagging, attributing ownership, and monitoring asset locations also equips companies with the necessary data to counteract some of the threats posed by a lack of visibility. For instance, teams can avoid forgotten endpoints remaining in use within their environment. Endpoints can be deleted from Active Directory or endpoint management systems like ConfigMgr, but then left on location up and running, connected to the network. This scenario creates the potential for an unpatched and unmanaged device to operate silently, ripe for compromise. An effective inventory management system will quickly bring this device to light during a hardware audit.

With functional reporting, organizations can also better discern which assets are not in use or underutilized. This helps ensure hardware resources are not wasted, while also improving forecast needs for future hardware purchases.

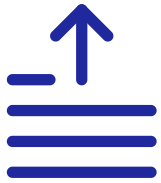
Managing the Hardware Lifecycle

Active hardware lifecycle management allows organizations to better understand their hardware's function within the environment. It also enables accurate forecasting and budgeting for asset replacements, additions, or retirements.



Purchasing

Align procurement to the needs and budget of your organization. This may include building, purchasing, or leasing hardware. Ideally, utilize data from your current hardware reports to better justify the asset needs and budget.



Deployment and Discovery

The asset is tagged, ownership attributed to a user or group, and the location noted or tracked. Next, ensure your systems discover and identify the newly deployed hardware to effectively assess and monitor your hardware inventories, as well as the embedded software.



Maintenance and Support

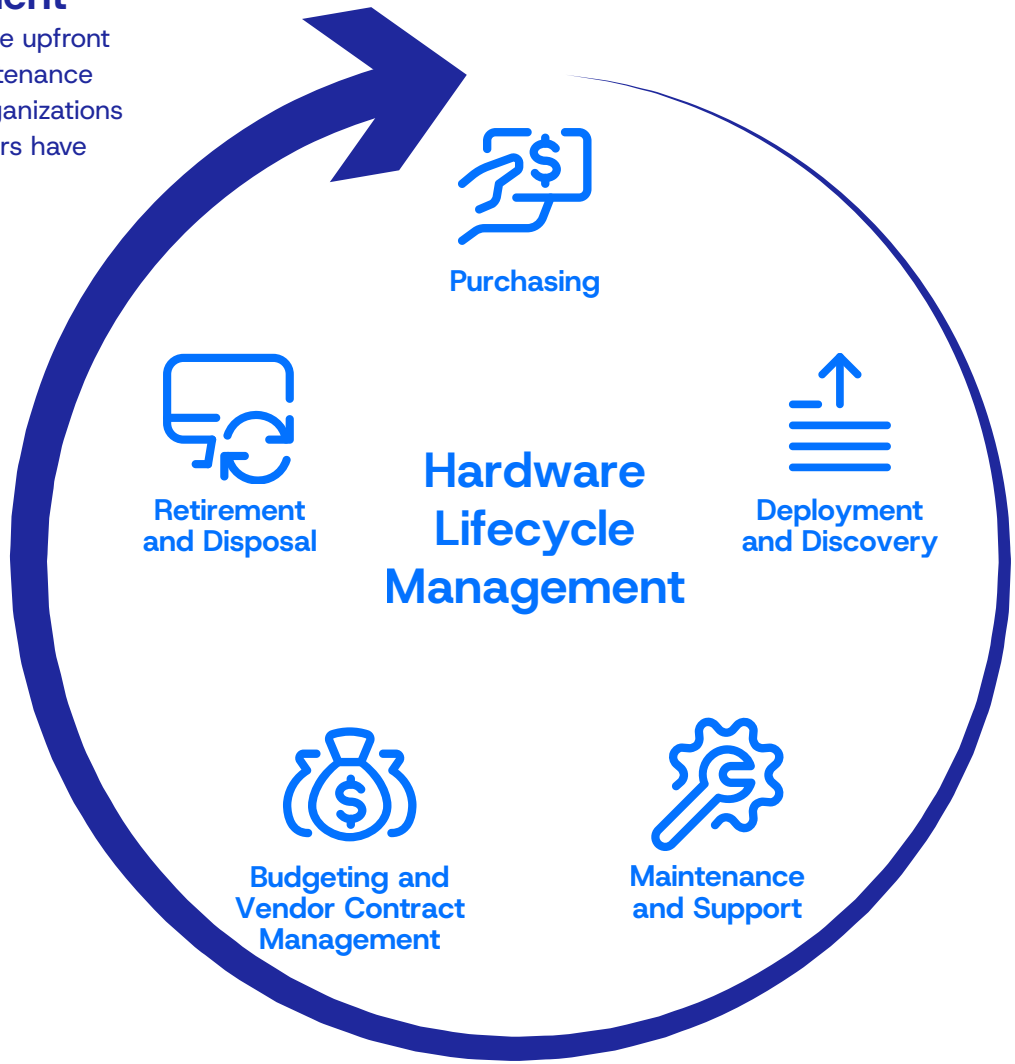
Clear hardware insights improve the level of support that IT teams can provide to end users. Having all the necessary information in one place enables teams to make informed troubleshooting decisions. Help Desk and hardware maintenance SLAs are better met, and end user satisfaction also increases thanks to faster response times.

Budgeting and Vendor Contract Management

Cost-effective computer lifecycle and replacement plans balance the upfront costs of purchasing new computers with the ongoing costs of maintenance and support. With a well-refined weighting of factors calculated, organizations can minimize the overall costs of ownership while ensuring their users have the technology they need.

Retirement and Disposal

Prepare to transition users to new hardware, executing your hardware replacement plan to purchase or build new hardware. Ensure a 100% data disposal rate. Then avoid landfills through repurposing or upcycling through third-party partners or internal reuse through other departments and teams.





The future of hardware management begins with seeing clearly beyond your walls

Hardware Visibility for Tomorrow

In a time when your organization's hardware spans across geographical and network boundaries, visibility and control can no longer require physical walls. This eBook has provided an overview of strategies, tools, and best practices to navigate the current terrain of hardware management. Empower your organization to embrace these strategies to drive efficiency, enhance security, and foster a responsive and resilient IT infrastructure. The future of hardware management begins with seeing clearly beyond your walls.

Who We Are

We're obsessed with information technology and how to better manage it.

We are a dedicated group of Systems Administrators and tech-savvy product experts that love what we do and the IT community we do it with.

We empower organizations to better manage and support users and devices, including Right Click Tools Insights, to improve your ability to track hardware.

We are a rapidly growing software company with our solutions being used by thousands of enterprise organizations in more than 125 countries, impacting millions of devices and (more importantly) the people who use them. With our growing portfolio of tools, we empower IT departments at every single endpoint to do their best work.

Learn more about Recast Software

www.recastsoftware.com

