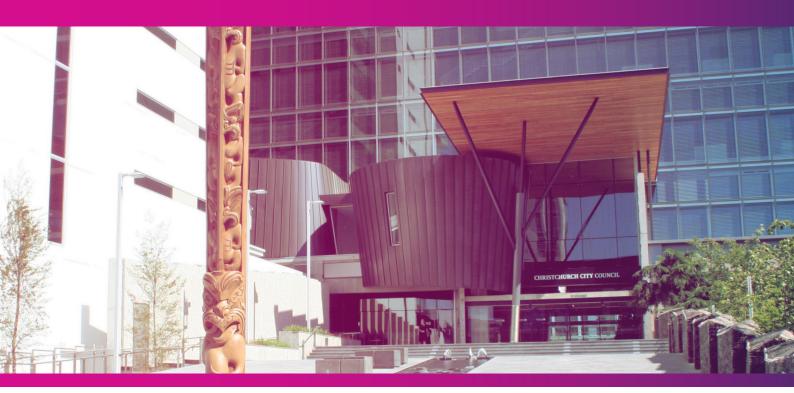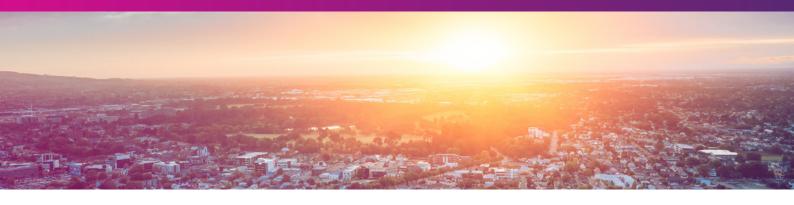# Christchurch City Council finds new insight in SAM

Christchurch City Council finds new insight in SAM

Colin Lawrence is blunt: *"You can't manage what you can't see."*

It's a well-used tenet, but for Colin, Christchurch City Council IT Asset Management Team Lead, an Insight-hosted Snow software asset management (SAM) solution has provided unparalleled visibility and management of the council's software and hardware portfolio. This visibility has provided a range of optimisation and cost avoidance capabilities across their on-premise and cloud assets.

Problem: We've got the tools, but not the visibility

Colin took on his role at the Council, which provides services for the city of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula, in March 2020, charged with bringing structure to the asset management team and providing better visibility and management of IT assets.

What he found was an organisation with tools, including a service management tool with a configuration management database, but which still had only limited visibility.

Using SQL scripts specific to IT asset management allowed Colin to get some information from SCCM, but without a lot of configuration and constant configuration work to keep it up to date, usage data wasn't available.

"If we didn't get the right tools, it would cost more in trying to recruit staff to get what we wanted to do and we still wouldn't get the results council was after."

Council agreed. After research, Colin settled on two potential vendors and went to market to find an integrator – one that didn't already sell to the council.

"Ours is a due diligence role and I don't want people giving me advice about my due diligence who have a vested interest in the outcome," he says.

"Snow came out on top in a weighted average between the two products and Insight were the best proposer out of the group, so we moved with them."

Solution: Intelligent technology and a meaningful partnership

Evette Thorp, Insight New Zealand Practice Lead Infrastructure & Software Solutions Services, says Colin had clear goals.

"He had done his case of why they needed SAM, had investigated the options from a toolset perspective and was very aware that a tool is just a tool and you are still going to need IP in the form of licensing and SAM expertise that they are not necessarily going to have in-house to wrap around that," she says.

Rather than a fully managed solution, Insight suggested a hosted SAM solution using Snow with design and implementation and the addition of a set number of hours available of Insight consultants' time, on an as-needed basis.

"Rather than a fully managed solution we are setting them up for success and then once they are comfortable with the level of expertise internally, they will continue to manage it themselves," says Rachael Lattimore, Insight New Zealand Account Manager. *"But when they need a SAM specialist, they have prepaid for a bucket of consulting funds they can draw down on."*

Working with CCC, Insight's team established the Snow platform within the CCC environment – the effective establishment of the SAM Platform enables complete and accurate data collection for CCC. This transition was led by the Insight transition team utilising project management best practice methodology.

> *"We put the system live and immediately we had transparency. We were able to see what we had, where we had it, and who was using it."*
>
> **Colin Lawrence**
> Team Leader IT
> Asset Management

The results showed a lot of duplication and multiplication of apps.

"We had multiple versions along with duplicate types of software. By the time you took all the versioning in across the board we had something like 2000 instances." The council had thought it had 742 instances, with around 240 pure apps.

Results: Better forecasting, more efficient spend

Being able to see for the first time the true extent of the software assets provided Colin and his team with the ability to mitigate risks from dated or unpatched software.

"That was a biggie for me from day one: We saw usage, we saw how stuff was being consumed and to what quantum, and from that we could start doing some things positively about that".

"We are at the end of our three-year contract so our true-up allowed us to go into contract a little differently and we have done the same with other software as we moved through." Within the first month Christchurch City Council had cost avoided enough to pay for the consumption of Snow.

The Council spends around $12 million per annum on software. *"I think I can cost avoid 5% of that,"* Colin says.

"I don't think we will save money, but I think we will avoid spend, we will improve productivity by re-spending that money on better tools for people to do the things they need to do more effectively and efficiently."

Colin Lawrence
Team Leader IT Asset Management

Rachael says the aim is that the cost of the engagement will be one-tenth of the saving amount achieved for the customer.

Getting information on in-cloud software – including shadow IT, had also been a challenge with the council's hosted environment. Now, it's all at the team's fingertips.

"What we're really looking at is risk assessment."

That extends to hardware, where the Council has been able to quickly decommission unused devices.

Snow, with its capability to define end of support, end of extended support and end of life, has enabled the Council to measure the risk per the lifecycle of the software, rather than measuring N-1.

"The rationalisation, optimisation, standardisation is what we are after," Colin says. He cites the example of text editors. The council had 10 being used by its 2,500 strong workforce. While no one editor can provide everything for all, he says having two to three will be sufficient.

The system is also enabling hardware and mobile device optimisation, providing visibility of who is using which device, how often and what is installed on it. Rolling out new devices is simplified, says Lawrence: *"We just get them out there because Snow will tell us who has them, where they are and how they are using them."*

For the IT Asset Management team, the hosted Snow offering means Christchurch City Council can forecast better, model different scenarios better and look at the physical spend to a greater degree.

"The visibility is absolutely paramount. We can see it now, so you can define whether you have a problem or not. And secondly, we can report and report easily and factually against what we know is out there and being used. So that means we can target what is not being used.

"I'm extremely happy with what it is allowing us to do and I'm extremely happy with what it will allow us to do over the next two to three years. I'm not naive enough to think it will be the panacea to all, we will make some good benefits over the next 18-24 months then it will start to plateau. But by that stage you should have attuned some of your operational characteristics so that your monitoring role becomes easier and you're just steering a finely tuned ship and just making sure that you don't deviate and get back into bad habits again."

As to Insight's role,
"I don't look for a vendor, I look for a partner. I look for someone who is willing to travel the journey with me. And I'm very happy with what we have got – both in terms of the product and the folks I'm dealing with."

Colin Lawrence
Team Leader IT Asset Management

If you are interested in finding out how your business can benefit from similar efficiencies, please reach out to:

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