



ARUP GROUP

Optimization engineered £4 million in cost avoidance

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Arup is an engineering firm that first made its name with the structural designs of the Sydney Opera House. Based in London, but with a worldwide presence across 92 offices, it now provides engineering, design, planning and project management services for all aspects of the built environment. With a headcount of around 14,000, Arup had revenues of £1.51 billion in 2017.

CHALLENGE

Arup has a large and geographically dispersed IT estate and uses some costly design and engineering software. Effective Software Asset Management was impacted by the group's operational split across five regions, and so IT consultants Softcat were contracted to provide a planned engagement to optimize the estate globally, and make the software estate more efficiently deployed.

SNOW'S CONTRIBUTION

The Snow Platform gave Arup insight into its software holdings across the entire group – and this resulted in some impressive cost avoidance. An initial “clean-up” of removing or re-harvesting inactive licenses saved Arup £4 million in unnecessary spend. The business is confident of making further significant savings by gradually moving its vendor EAs from local to global agreements. Another strategic use of Snow is the compilation of a Top 50 list of vendors, with weekly automated reports on progress going to the Head of IT.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Cost avoidance of £4 million
- Negotiation of global rather than local EAs
- Effective blacklisting and whitelisting of applications

SAM HERO

Mark Bonham, working as a Softcat contractor at Arup in the role of Software Asset Manager, won a Snow Hero of the Year award for his work with Arup Group. He singles out Snow's software recognition functionalities for praise. “I've probably worked on about 18 different tools over the years and, as part of my previous job, we had to trial out a whole slew of tools,” says Bonham. “None of them did software recognition properly. But with Snow, recognition is my favorite thing!”

AUDIT SUCCESS & COST-AVOIDANCE SAVINGS

Arup has a large and complex IT estate of 12,000 laptops, 6,000 desktop workstations and 600 servers, scattered across 42 countries. Operationally, the group is split into five regions and this adversely impacted effective Software Asset Management (SAM).

Enterprise Agreements with software vendors were concluded on a regional or even site level, making it impossible to re-harvest inactive licenses across the group. Arup realized it had to act to bring costs under control, and hired IT consultants Softcat.

In 2015, Arup enlisted former career soldier Mark Bonham as global Software Asset Manager to leverage the combined functionalities of Snow License Manager, Snow Inventory and Software Recognition Service. A global SAM team has been established, which meets quarterly as a group but with weekly meetings between Bonham and the regional leads.

An early win for Bonham and Snow was an audit from Autodesk. The “power of SRS” enabled Bonham to submit to Autodesk, in the format requested by the vendor, a report from Snow that listed 67,000 different installations, with an error rate of just 3 percent. Autodesk accepted the Snow reporting without a quibble.

“They were more than happy,” Bonham recalls, “and we’re just tidying up that 3 percent now.” Most of the error rate was due to the software not being correctly removed, so it had been left behind in the registry entries. “And a couple of the errors were caused by local installations using the wrong license key.”

The smooth audit means that Arup now has the latest version of Autodesk installed and crucially on a global enterprise agreement, making it possible for Bonham to fully leverage his newly gained insight into usage to optimize licenses.

Prior to the roll-out of Snow, Arup had lacked a complete view not only of its software but also the different versions accreted over the years. A clean-up of legacy versions yielded significant cost avoidance savings of £4 million. Bonham comments: “We were able to see it, remove it, and also because we could see it, we could see whether it was being used or not used. And in a lot of cases, we just removed it.”

Apart from the cost avoidance, the clean-up had systemic advantages. “We don’t have to patch it if it’s an old version. We’re not liable for anything. And also, it cleans up the system.”

Insight into licensed and installed software versions allows Bonham to upgrade rather than purchase a new license. “Suddenly instead of paying £3,000, we pay a few hundred,” he says. “And it makes a big difference to the software budget.”

Another win was its agreement with Integrated Environmental Systems, armed with data from Snow, Bonham consolidated the scatter of agreements to cover 15 sites with a negotiated saving of more than 60% and a single authentication server.



“With Snow you can quickly and effectively understand what your liabilities are.”

Mark Bonham
Software Asset Manager at Arup

USING SNOW STRATEGICALLY

Bonham’s years in the Army taught him to think strategically. He used Snow to regiment Arup’s software sprawl into a list of Top 50 vendors based on granular data about cost and number of installations, as well as the software’s long-term importance to the company and the vendor’s appetite for audits.

“It’s a clarification,” he explains. “It narrows it down, and gives us focus.” Every week, a report generated in Snow goes to Arup’s UK Director of IT assessing progress in license optimization, retiring unused or outdated versions, and negotiating global EAs with these Top 50 vendors.

Another one of the EA success stories is Trimble, the vendor of the 3D design modelling software Tekla. Snow gave Bonham insight into the company’s Trimble licensing, this showed a four-seat legacy domestic license in Australia, restricted to in country use, plus another three-seat domestic license under maintenance, restricted to Singapore.

This concentrated Bonham’s mind. He consolidated the licences into full Enterprise Licences, and now has 12 licences which can be used company wide, using follow the sun and allows for greater flexibility & optimization of license use

Arup has black and whitelists to police what gets installed, but Bonham admits Virtual Reality and the Cloud are likely to present his next challenge. The group are using an increasing number of cloud based licences, which is a tricky balance because the visibility of cloud software licences is poor.

There is a need to ensure better visibility on usage, allocating licenses and more automated workflow to address this and create a better user experience. Come what may, Bonham will be using Snow to push that project forward.

Bonham has some great advice for his peers, “You need to be clear what you want to get out of Snow. If you’re just looking to manage hardware, Snow may not be for you. But if you want to establish your hardware records and be able to see what software is installed in those systems, Snow is probably the solution for you.

“The software recognition makes it easier to understand what’s on there. With Snow you can quickly and effectively understand what your liabilities are,” he says.