CNS is more than an asset management tool.

It's a business tool.

conscia

19 June 2019

As the number of network assets is increasing, asset management is growing more complex – and more important at the same time. CNS is created to make asset management simpler, offering IT professionals an automated tool that provides a complete, updated overview of all the assets in your IT infrastructure, while helping you ensure security, stability and compliance. This way, you can be proactive and stay ahead of the business. Every day.

Keeping overview

Keeping an overview of all the assets in your IT infrastructure while ensuring security, stability and compliance, can be a big challenge. And the more assets, the bigger the challenge.

Conscia's largest customers have thousands of assets in different contract, lifecycle and criticality states. All of these are relevant in terms of the lifecycle, and control is important to create the right service strategy to mitigate potential security risks. On top of that, you have software assets and other related service contracts to keep track of.
However, the challenge of keeping the overview does not limit itself to only the largest networks. Because the number of assets is increasing for all of us - as we speak. Both for large and small IT infrastructures.

The more complex, the more important

Hardware and software are being separated to great benefit for you as a customer. You can now move licenses between products, and software is, in many cases, regarded as a "pool" of resources that your products consume from, lending greater agility to the implementation and better exploitation of the investment.

Because of this, the number of licenses will grow in line with migration to new hardware, and in return, the total number of assets will increase. Central controllers will play an important part in the implementation and operation of the network, but the total overview of assets, both hardware and software, will still lie in CNS with information on lifespan, vulnerabilities, and threats.

This means that asset management is becoming more complex than ever – and at the same time more important than ever!

Low priority in IT departments

Still, asset management often gets low priority in the busy everyday lives of IT departments. Occasionally an employee may get control of it for a short period of time, but after a while, the task goes silent again.
It often requires technical insight to figure out if assets are:

- Still in use.
- Part of migration in progress.
- A device in operation that causes a potential risk if it cannot be supported anymore.
- Registered on a wrong location, to cause extended SLA time in case of device replacement.

Consequently, asset management most often gets resolved when resigning the annual service where particularly the financial aspect motivates the review of the asset list. And while this is definitely better than nothing, it soon won't be enough as asset management grows more complex. This is where automated asset management comes into the picture.

The application

In Conscia it quickly became clear to us that handling a long list of assets manually was a major task – while ensuring stable and reliable operations at the right price and with no surprises. This incidentally led to the launch of our digitalization project, Conscia Network Services (CNS).

Since then, we've spent more than 35 man-years on developing our award-winning CNS asset management portal. A portal that will not only help you get a complete, real-time overview of all the devices, service contracts and software licenses within your IT infrastructure. It will help you ensure ongoing security, stability and compliance so that you can be proactive and ensure better risk management, procurement and compliance strategy planning. Every single day.

Cisco Partner Summit 2017 announcement
No other Partner in EMEAR has demonstrated a portal with a feature set comparable with the one Conscia has developed

Our customers see what we see

The CNS solution has been developed with data straight from Cisco's Contact Center, ensuring customers full transparency. All basic data is registered and corrected directly with Cisco, which basically means we all share the same single pane of glass. This transparency suits our access to the entire service operation perfectly.

At the same time, our many years of intensive work with assets and Cisco's service programs have created a high level of service competence in the Conscia organisation. We consider ourselves "subject-matter-experts" when it comes to Cisco's rules and processes.

Naturally, this is a benefit for our customers when we advise on secure handling of all assets. The customers' service strategy is reflected directly through the range of services available in the portal – no more no less.

New features

CNS is under constant development.

One addition is Insights, which visualize the large amount of data into logical views. When views are aggregated into charts, maps and accumulated numbers, the overview gets much better. This enables a good overview of your overall inventory to align with your service strategy. You also get a 5-year outlook of your product lifecycle to be able to foresee operational- and budget impact. The number of software versions in use in your network also drives security and automation dialogue. The Insights are like a data warehouse of assets, visualized through business intelligence.

Another addition to CNS is access to data via API. The API uses the newest standards for data communication and makes it possible to integrate data directly in the business application. This could be your CMDB, Service Management Tool or even the ERP system, where assets make up a critical data source.
You can search the status of a given serial number and keep CMDB updated by searching a range of dates. This way, information on new devices registered in Cisco is secured with the relevant information on, for example, SLA and installation address.
In that sense, we are as close as you come to automated asset management!

Compliance is key

To secure optimal flow in fault finding hardware assets must be correctly registered at the customer, partner, and supplier. Optimal troubleshooting for software or hardware requires access to patches, software, bug databases and potential escalation to the supplier. This requires that the registration is correct according to the manufacturer's rules for hardware and software.

The rules from the manufacturer drive another important motive when IT audit comes knocking: For example, compliance, licensing rules, software upgrade agreements, and

property rights must obviously be upheld, and it is important to be aware that the rules differ from one manufacturer to the next.

On this point, Cisco is no different. At http://cisco.com/go/terms you can view a comprehensive document compendium which addresses rights and policies for both cloud and on-site installed software. Conscia is subject matter experts when it comes to compliance rules and is with you all the way – documented in CNS.

We'll do the heavy lifting

Asset management will always be based on a certain amount of human input. You are the only one who knows if an asset is planned to be taken out of operation – next weekend, for example. But, fundamentally, the heavy lifting is now automated.

And if you are a Conscia customer, we know that you are already well on your way.

Get more CNS Insights https://conscia.com/service/cns/