



Exciting by nature.

Aquarium of Genoa opens to Software Asset Management to plan its future IT investments.

The workload for the IT system

Opened upon the celebrations for the quincentenary of Columbus' discovery, the Aquarium of Genoa is now ten years old. Since the beginning it has been contributing to the steady development of the city, also through a significant return for related cultural and business activities in Genoa.

The information system of the Aquarium has strongly supported the evolution of services through a number of closely integrated technological subsystems, greatly enhancing the efficiency in the management of ecosystems, communication activities and financial data. Today, the Aquarium of Genoa uses the latest Microsoft platforms both for its Intranet architecture and for management and interface systems, also introducing major innovations, such as a wireless network supporting the handheld devices available for visitors and webcams used by biologists to constantly monitor the environments. Software Asset Management is an issue that has been recently tackled by Filippo Costa, Information Systems Manager at Costa Edutainment. The Microsoft SAM (Software Asset Management) service has been used to swiftly perform all software inventory tasks, drawing up a detailed picture of the existing resources and providing an effective solution to plan future investments.

Systems complexity and resource optimization

"Our business has to date been constantly growing, but to win the profitability challenge we chose to limit some of the resources available", states Filippo Costa. "This is why we decided to define stringent policies for the optimization of our technological tools, internal processes and relationships with users and suppliers. At first we focused on the service to visitors, but today, due to a decision of the new business management, we have consolidated all the management aspects of our organization. This led to the introduction of new mechanisms for managing budgets and cost centers, such as Software Asset Management, which has greatly helped us in better understanding how our software systems are being used and in planning the purchase of software licenses".

Despite the increasing complexity of mission-critical processes and software solutions, with many interconnected systems and a high workload for the servers and the networks, the IT department of the Aquarium is today made up of only two technicians and one consultant.

Software Asset Management

General information

Profile

Costa Edutainment group manages the activities of the Aquarium of Genoa and of the Bigo. The complete managerial and financial autonomy has led to an increase in revenues, with a new division which provides consultancy on projects for aquariums and theme parks, and with services offered to public and private organizations. Every year, over six million people visit the centers of cultural interest managed by Costa Edutainment group.

Situation

The complexity of the technological systems and the required integration among highly differing activities highlighted the need for an in-depth and reliable understanding of the software resources and of their usage. The focus on profitability of the exhibition structure required new management and control tools.

Solution

The Microsoft® SAM service has been used to swiftly perform all software inventory tasks, drawing up a detailed picture of the existing resources and providing an effective solution to plan future investments.

Partner

SoftJam S.p.A., Microsoft Certified Partner and Microsoft SAM Qualified Partner

Products

Microsoft SAM service

Benefits

Microsoft SAM helps customers in rationalizing users' needs, choosing the most suitable licensing programs, optimizing the agreements management and accurately planning software purchase and update requirements, while minimizing the risks associated to the use of unlicensed products.





"I believe that accurately identifying the installed software is important both to check the validity of our policies for regulating installations, and to understand the actual usage of software by users, but the results of the SAM analysis are also useful for a more precise definition of our annual IT investments. From now on, we can outline the technological evolution of the software platform with the support of more reliable expenditure data and being confident that we are using the existing software resources in the best way possible".

Filippo Costa

Information Systems Manager,
Costa Edutainment

As Costa underlines, the special attention paid to the use of competencies and to the management of hardware and software resources has resulted in an extremely low Total Cost of Ownership.

The evolution of IT systems and SAM services

The need for tools to plan IT investments and to check existing software installations was matched by the new Microsoft SAM offering, a service provided exclusively by IT companies that are Microsoft SAM Qualified Partners. The objective of SAM is to help customers in understanding and controlling the Microsoft IT resources in use, rationalizing users' needs, choosing the most suitable licensing programs, optimizing the agreements management and accurately planning software purchase and update requirements, while minimizing the risks associated to the use of unlicensed products. Costa Edutainment group engaged SoftJam S.p.A. to perform all the SAM service procedures.

"We chose Microsoft SAM service mainly because we wanted a planning tool that could help us anticipate our software requirements and consequently support the IT department in a consistent and effective use of the available budget – says Filippo Costa – while optimizing support and training activities for internal users and eliminating the risk of exceeding the estimated costs for software components". The competencies of the SAM Qualified Partners are also measured in their ability to operate completely autonomously, so that the company requesting the service can avoid using internal resources. In this way, the Software Asset Management operations proved to be extremely cost-effective for the Aquarium of Genoa when compared to the benefits achieved. According to Filippo Costa, the operative autonomy of the SAM consultants is also a key factor to reach independent results, avoiding any "pressure" by the systems managers on the person in charge of the software resources analysis.

IT evolution and control over investments

The analysis procedures did not record any non-compliance between the installed components and the purchased licenses, and so the customer could be issued with the certificate of correct Microsoft software management. The efficiency of the application architecture configuration was also confirmed, thus certifying the value of the technological strategies defined in the past few years and the correct implementation of all the technological systems.

"I believe that accurately identifying the installed software is important both to check the validity of our policies for regulating installations, and to understand the actual usage of software by users – Costa concludes – but the results of the SAM analysis are also useful for a more precise definition of our annual IT investments. From now on, we can outline the technological evolution of the software platform with the support of more reliable expenditure data and being confident that we are using the existing resources in the best way possible". Observing how the information system of the Aquarium of Genoa evolved in the past few years – from access to Intranet and Internet services to the integration of different processes, such as biological standards compliance and marketing activities – one important piece of data emerges: the current administration of this complex technological, biological and economic system is showing how the correct choices about the platform and its management have been able to increase the profitability and excellence of the service offered to users, with small investments with respect to overhead costs.

For more Information

For more information about Microsoft products or services, please call Microsoft Customer Service (02.70.398.398). To access information using the World Wide Web, visit:
www.microsoft.com/italy/business/

For more information about Aquarium of Genoa, visit: www.acquario.ge.it

For more information about SoftJam, visit:
www.softjam.it

Microsoft®

© 2005 Microsoft. All rights reserved.
This document is provided for informational purposes only.
MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED,
IN THIS DOCUMENT.
Microsoft is a registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.
All other trademarks herein mentioned are the property of their
respective owners.

Microsoft - Centro Direzionale S. Felice - Pal. A
Via Rivoltana, 13 - 20090 Segrate (MI)
Visit us on the Web, at www.microsoft.com/italy/
Customer Service: 02.70.398.398
E-mail: infoita@microsoft.com

SoftJam S.p.A. provides a wide range of consulting and solutions development services for Information & Communication Technology. Consulting includes system support, development of cluster solutions, networking and security. The company also offers outsourced assistance and helpdesk services, assessment of hardware/software and licensing, as well as development of Web solutions such as corporate Intranets and Extranet architectures. SoftJam S.p.A. is a Microsoft Certified Partner and Microsoft SAM Qualified Partner.

