

Conference Attendees Speak Out

Trends and Issues - Still Unappreciated and On the Forefront of Technology Innovation

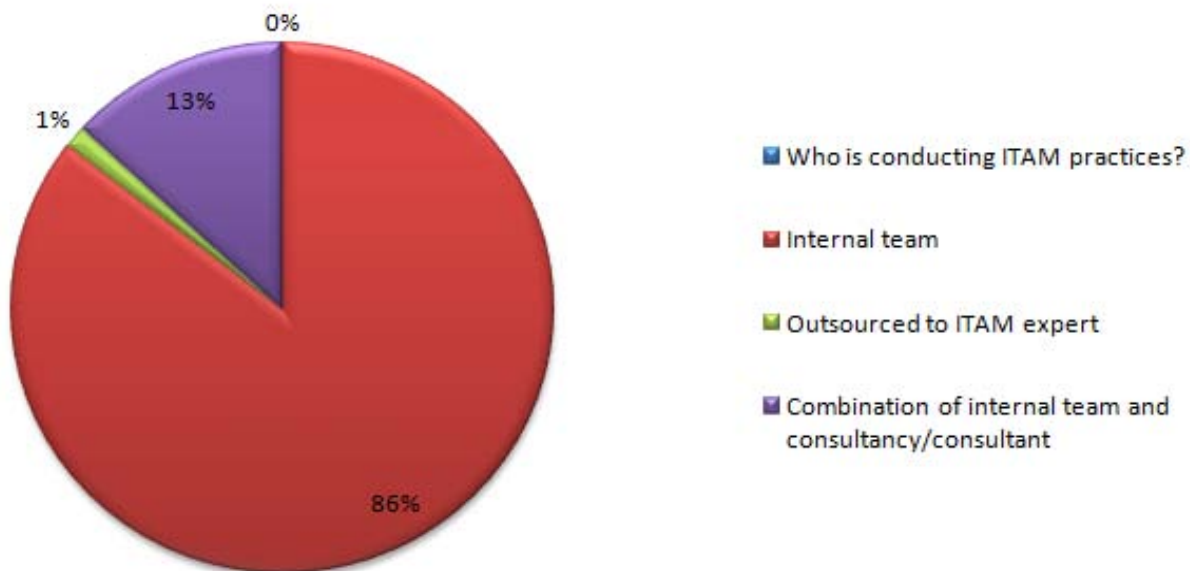
At the IAITAM Annual Conference this autumn, attendees were asked to answer a practitioner survey that gives a “state of the union” for the professionals conducting the day to day business practices of software and hardware asset management. Seventy-nine practitioners completed the survey during the conference and the results give an interesting view into the current state and the issues anticipated for 2010. Intended as a general overview of IT asset management issues and the awareness that these issues include every organization, practitioners were not asked to describe their organizations.

The Scope and Health of IT Asset Management Programs

Most IT Asset Management programs are conducted by employees of the organization, with 86% defining the team as internal. While outsourcing is common within IT departments of any size company, only 1% described the IT Asset Management program as outsourced, although 13% use external resources as part of the team.

When asked about the software used to manage

Who is conducting ITAM practices?



IT assets, practitioners were asked to “check all that apply” so it is no surprise that Excel spreadsheets are a prominent tool, with 44 of the 79 including spreadsheets as one of their tools. With a broad number of commercial products available to help automate IT asset management processes and to create and manage a repository of information about assets, 54 or 68% responded that a commercial product is included in their ITAM program. This number may actually be higher because a few of the “other” answers added names of software packages that are used in their programs.

As anticipated, the majority of IT asset management programs include software, laptops and desktops. Assuming all 79 respondents answered this “check all that apply” question, their asset management programs have the following asset types:

Asset Type	Total Included In Program	Percent of Total Respondents (rounded)
Software	71	90%
Desktops	69	87%
Laptops	67	85%
Servers	57	72%
Other mobile devices	25	32%
VoIP phones	7	9%
Other	22	28%

Since IT asset management typically begins with a limited scope of assets and expands as processes and automation is put into place, the range of responses is expected. The most common responses to “other” assets were printers, monitors and scanners. Printer management has increased as the number of networked, shared printers rises. Monitors were not managed in the past, but variations in the technology purchased have introduced pricing and disposal concerns sufficient to warrant management consideration.

It is noteworthy that software assets are not included in every program although 90% is actually higher than anticipated and most likely due to the economic pressure for savings in 2009 driving attention and audit towards software. Although the number of organizations experiencing software audits was not measured, there is anecdotal evidence from the conference and other sources point to a rise in the number of audits during 2009.

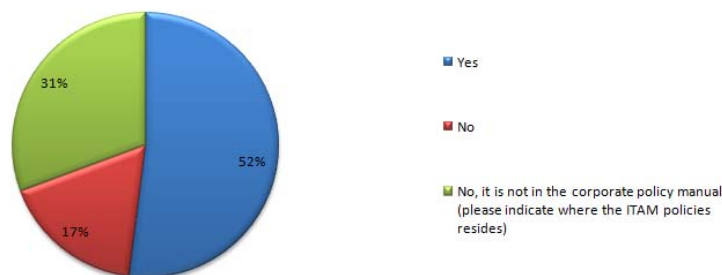
IAITAM best practice clearly states that reactive audit responses are insufficient to maintain compliance over time. In the next set of questions, respondents identified the percent of software that they felt was in compliance within their

organizations. Compliance is considered one measurement of the health of the software asset management program. The majority of respondents placed software compliance at 40% or higher for servers, desktops and mobile devices. Using 70% or higher compliance as a milestone separating working programs from those struggling, 61% of the respondents ranked desktop software at or beyond this milestone. Server software was slightly higher with 62% of respondents reporting server software as meeting or exceeding the milestone. 53% of respondents ranked mobile device software at or exceeding the milestone.

Policy questions are the final topic in the survey that gives some measure of the health of the IT asset management program. Policies are the backbone for any IT asset management program, providing the rules as to what is permissible and not permissible for employees. It is encouraging that over 52% of the respondents reported that there is ITAM language in the organization’s policy manual. Of the 31% that identified alternate locations for policy language, the most common response was in IT policies. Frequently, the respondent stated that the IT policies were either on the intranet site or available at a SharePoint for easy access.

Of course, policies are not effective if they are not enforced.

Does your corporate policy manual reflect IT asset management?



Unfortunately, 25% of the respondents stated that there is no enforcement for not following policies and procedures. Best practices encourage practitioners to lobby for enforceable language about IT topics in the organization’s policy manual. Enforcement of that language reduces the risk of failed processes leading to the failure to achieve goals such as securing the environment, uncovering savings, maintaining software compliance and standardization the asset catalog.

Current Trends

While the greening of IT began as an environmental initiative, 2009 has seen the rapid adoption of green initiatives that yield savings such as reduced power consumption, reduced printing, etc. The majority of respondents answered that green initiatives are either underway (52%) or are in the planning phases (22%). Roughly half of the green initiatives involve the

ITAM manager, operations or CIO/CTO, which points to a continuing influence of green projects on IT and ITAM specifically.

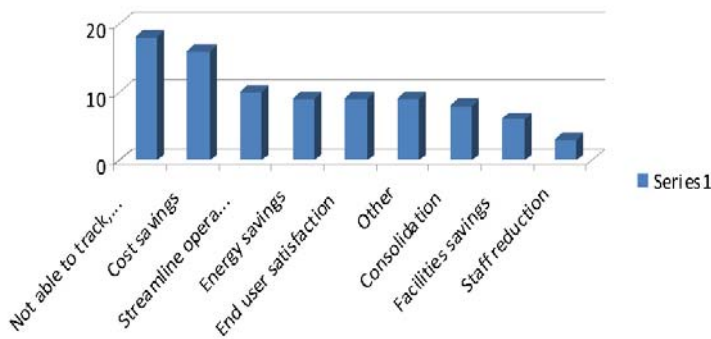
Virtualization technologies have had a major role in changing the IT structure for consolidation and savings. Respondents were asked about observed results from server virtualization and desktop or presentation virtualization. Server virtualization as the more widely implemented virtualization technology has some reasonable successes to report while the virtual desktop/presentation are lagging behind, just as the adoption of the technology is.

operations management were the top categories.

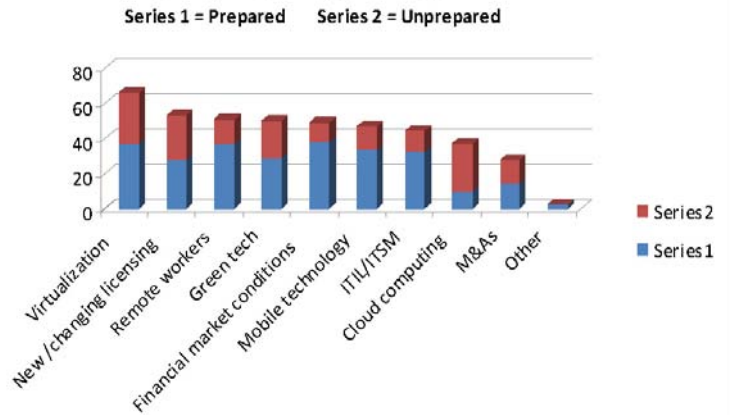
Moving forward for 2010

Practitioners were asked to identify which of the industry and market trends they thought would be influencing their work in 2010 and whether they felt prepared to handle the business issues. The ranking of the trends is interesting and perhaps a good source of information for those making decisions on what trends to research for their own careers. The variability in how prepared the practitioners are identifies problems that IAITAM can help address through educational offerings.

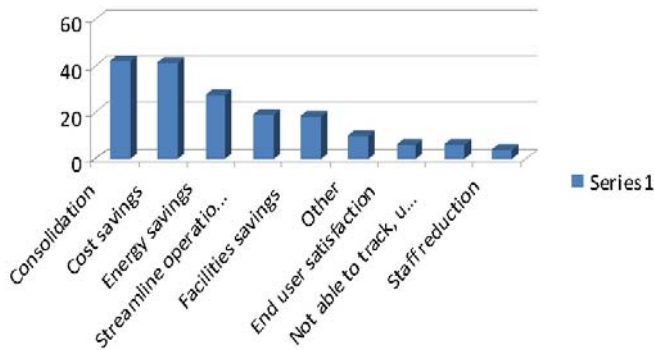
Efficiencies from Desktop/Presentation Virtualization



2010 Trends Impacting ITAM



Efficiencies from Virtualized Servers



The pressure seems to be on, continuing from 2009 and extending into the expected work load for 2010. It is unfortunate that 77% of the respondents felt that their work is underappreciated. Let us hope that as the challenges of 2010 increase, the awareness of ITAM and leads to increasing appreciation.

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Consolidation and the resultant cost savings and energy savings are the principle rewards expected from virtualized servers. According to the practitioners who answered this survey, those are the dominant results seen. The desktop/presentation virtualization question had significantly less respondents and most could not yet measure benefits. Of those that identified benefits, cost savings and streamlining

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