# Snow Software License Manager V6 (& Preview Of V7)

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## At a glance

Snow Software is a strong player in the Software Asset Management (SAM) market. This review takes a look at the core capabilities of Snow Software, the route to market for the company, competitive strengths and weaknesses, product development roadmap and market reach.

Over recent years Snow has developed a good reputation in the market for SAM in desktop environments and has been developing features to address datacenter requirements. Snow has broad technical coverage to enable customers to manage key areas of licensing complexity; virtual environments, cloud and heterogenous environments. The company has also grown considerably in terms of international presence with offices or business partnerships in most major territories.

## Summary of key findings

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| ✔ Software Recognition Service | ✖ No auto-discovery – automated discovery of new or non-inventoried devices |
| ✔ Broad operating system and virtualization coverage | ✖ Reporting needs more focus on cost savings and risk |
| ✔ Management of complex licensing | ✖ Management of upcoming renewals and key contract dates could be stronger |
| ✔ Focussed SAM Vendor – strong reputation for desktop SAM with growing capabilities in the datacenter | ✖ No software request portal |

# Analysis

Snow Software's first product was a software distribution tool in 1997, followed by inventory and license management capabilities. The core competence of the company is Software Asset Management, a focus that has served them well as Snow has developed a strong reputation in SAM for the desktop.

The company has headquarters in Solna, near Stockholm, in Sweden and operates out of a growing number of worldwide regional offices (nine at the time of writing).

The key competitive differentiator for Snow License Manager is the Software Recognition Service. The recognition capabilities include:

- Identifying whether software discovered needs a license
- The software publisher Stock Keeping Unit (SKU)
- Product Use Rights such as Upgrade and Downgrade Rights
- Product family and product suite recognition

Other SAM tools in the market offer software recognition, but Snow offers it against a service level policy, aiming to identify commercial products discovered in customer environments within 30 days. This is in stark contract to the industry norm, which places the onus on the customer to manually administer any unidentified applications or wait for the next update from the SAM tool manufacturer that is usually provided on a 'best endeavor' basis.

A key route to market for Snow Software is to compliment investments in systems management and software deployment tools that make use of Active Directory such as Microsoft SCCM. Snow's software recognition capabilities are inventory tool agnostic and can work with other inventory sources and can interact with software deployment tools via Active Directory. For example the company offers a bi-directional integration with SCCM for both filtering data relevant to licensing and also passing actions back to SCCM e.g. for software removal. An in-depth review of Snow's SCCM integration is available here:

http://www.itassetmanagement.net/microsoft-configmgr-plugins/snow-software/

Building on their reputation for desktop SAM, Snow Software has developed significant features to manage complex license types and high value software publishers such as Oracle and IBM.

Recognizing the complexity of datacenter environments and routes to procurement, organizations can manage their software in the datacenter at a level to suit their needs – by virtual instance, hypervisor, cluster, datacenter or other custom variable specified by the customer.
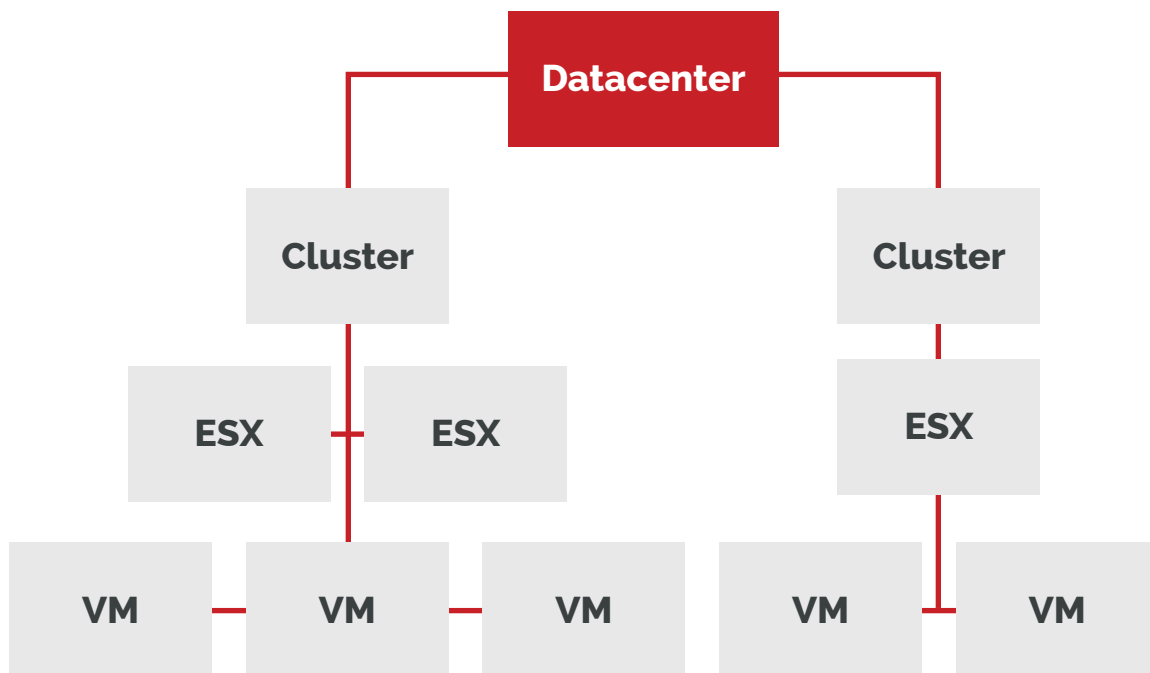
**Figure 1 .** *Snow Software has developed significant features to manage complex license types. Building on their strong reputation for Desktop SAM, the company plans to build a similar reputation for management of SAM in the datacenter. Organizations can manage their software in the datacenter at a level to suit their needs – by virtual instance, hypervisor, cluster, datacenter or other custom variable as per diagram above.*

Whilst no SAM engagement is a point and click exercise, especially in the datacenter, Snow Software has the potential to make serious inroads to enterprise and datacenter SAM market share through elegant execution and competitive price. Most current competitors offer configurable toolkits accompanied by extended consulting engagements. However, Snow must educate the market of their new datacenter capabilities. It should also be noted that at the time of writing Snow is not yet verified by Oracle and does not currently offer any capabilities around SAP.

Snow Software was one of the first SAM solution vendors to enable management of web-based software assets. So far the features in this area are quite limited and would be greatly enhanced if Snow could extend their Software Recognition Service to cloud based applications. It is a great first step and demonstrates leadership in the SAM market place.

Snow is a good all round SAM tool and has no serious limitations. However there are two areas where competitors have stronger presence: reporting and auto-discovery.

Reporting tends to be configuration led and would benefit from a business layer for highlighting and prioritizing key business metrics such as risks, costs and opportunities for taking action

In particular, Snow Software has a proven model for building a business case and return on investment study for prospective clients using real data – it would be great to see Snow extend this financial focus to the tool itself allowing customers to continually measure and justify their SAM practice.

Finally, Snow Software would benefit from stronger features to validate customer inventory data. Traditionally, competitors to Snow Software have achieved this by:

- Auto-discovery – sweeping the network to identify any new devices or those without a working agent.
- Data-Integration – comparing and contrasting inventory data to other sources such as Active Directory or other inventory sources to validate inventory accuracy and identify discrepancies.

An important aspect of SAM is verification of data and it would be great for Snow Software to offer some further features in this area. Both of these key weaknesses are explored in Snow's development plans (See Product Roadmap section below).

Over recent years Snow has developed a good reputation in the market for SAM in desktop environments and has been developing features to address datacenter requirements. Snow has broad technical coverage to enable customers to manage key areas of licensing complexity; virtual systems, cloud and heterogenous environments.

Snow face the challenge of educating the market of their new capabilities in the datacenter and keeping up with the increasing demands of SAM professionals as the market matures. However, they face these challenges from a position of strength and should be considered a key player in this market.

# Key capabilities

The table below provides a high level view of the key capabilities of Snow License Manager grouped by business impact.

| Key business concerns | Key issues | Snow license manager - Key capabilities |
|---|---|---|
| **AUDIT RISK**<br><br>Of all the issues in management of software – organizations are most likely to be tripped up by software in virtual environments and complex licensing schemes. | 1. Virtualization is a major point of confusion during software audits and reconciliations. | Good coverage of virtual enviroments and software delivery mechanisms. |
| | 2. Licensing programs are increasingly complex with increasing numbers of schemes and license types. | Ability to manage various different license types and complex licensing programs. |
| | 3. Some license types require configuration detail beyond the scope of normal inventory tools. | Ability to go beyond ordinary inventory sources and inventory additional configuration detail necessary to satisfy audit requirements. Process multiple data sources and build custom license types. |
| **TOO MUCH DATA, NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION**<br><br>Organizations need to sort the mountains of configuration detail to focus on the information relevant for license management. | 1. Identifying key areas of risk in the software estate – what needs a license? What should I manage? | Software Recognition Service – supports over 200,000 products and 24,000 publishers. |
| | 2. Too much noise from Systems Management Tools. | The ability to clean and filter raw Microsoft SCCM data and highlight key information pertinent to SAM. |
| | 3. Identifying highest risk software vendors that are highest value and most likely to audit. | Track high value datacenter focused software publishers such as Oracle, IBM, and Microsoft. |
| **TRUSTWORTHY DATA**<br><br>For organizations to save money and make smart decisions – they need data they can trust. | 1. Software can turn up in all corners of the network on all devices – organizations needs good coverage of all areas of risk. | Monitoring and managing a comprehensive list of different operating systems and platforms. |
| | 2. Effective SAM requires a company wide view to ensure maximum efficiency and cost savings. | To provide SAM capabilities across multiple territories, with different types of users and multiple levels of authority. |
| | 3. A growing proportion of enterprise applications are delivered via a browser. | Tracking applications delivered via a browser. |

# Go-to-market strategy

*SAM focused growth*

Snow Software state their growth is the result of focusing purely on Software Asset Management and by building a team with local staff on the ground in worldwide territories. Snow have built a strong partner led market presence in major worldwide territories. Partner led sales represent 70-80% of revenue depending on the territory.

Customers can choose from a traditional perpetual license model, a subscription licensing model or cloud based offering for partner-hosted solutions. Snow has also built some specific solutions to serve software publishers to facilitate software audits and self-audit activity.

*Market Penetration*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Number of customers on maintenance** | ■ 2,400 |
| **Typical customer** | ■ Typically 250 to over 100,000 devices<br>■ Customers are typically multi-platform with some investement in virtualization and cloud technologies |

# Implementation

*Typical Installation*

A qualified consultant or Snow Software business partner typically installs Snow Software. For Customers choosing Snow Inventory as well as Snow License Manager: customers are provided with an MSI package (a set of files to automatically install Snow's client agent on target machines) ready to deploy to their environment.

Snow customers typically use their own in-house software distribution and systems management tools to push out this preconfigured MSI package to their desktop and server estate.

Snow License Manager benefits from 3rd party integrations into CMDB, ERP, HR and Directories such as Active Directory to import organizational structures and cost center hierarchies.

*Time to Value*

The Software Recognition Service integral to Snow Software's offering is maturing all the time as new data is sourced from their customer install base, so once agents have been deployed or inventory sources have been connected with Snow License Manager, customers can expect fairly rapid recognition of their software estate. If any files are left unrecognized after the initial installation, exceptions are sent to the SRS team for analysis.

However, discovery and recognition of software installed is only one half of the business value of Snow Software and other SAM tools. Customers should also factor in, and not underestimate, the time to source the appropriate procurement history and license statements to demonstrate their entitlement.

*Resources Required*

Implementation of Snow License Manager is defined by two phases:

**1.** Initial technical implementation of the software including installation of software, configuration and integration with inventory systems or deployment of agents

**2.** Ongoing maintenance, data verification, house keeping and record keeping

Snow business partners can assist with both aspects of these implementation phases or customers can do it themselves, either way customers should expect to allocate some dedicated resource to maximize their investment in Snow Software (those unable to do this inhouse can explore the growing number of managed service providers offering SAM as a service based on Snow technology) No IT environment is static, so Snow License Manager requires resource to maintain the integrity of data and ensure it continues to deliver valuable business intelligence.

# Devices and operating systems

*Operating Systems Coverage*

Snow Software has comprehensive coverage for the vast majority of common operating systems found in worldwide IT environments.

Snow Software does not offer mobile device management (MDM) but offers informal integrations with MDM providers such as Airwatch and SOTI.

| | |
|---|---|
| Windows | ✔ |
| Mac OS | ✔ |
| Linux | ✔ |
| UNIX | ✔ |
| Thin Client | ✔ |
| VDI | ✔ |
| Mobile Devices | ✘ |

*Visiblity of Virtual Environments*

Snow Software also has comprehensive visibility of virtual environments, software utilized in virtual environments and the relationship between physical infrastructure and virtual instances. This includes virtual machines, streamed, terminal service or locally installed applications.

# Product Roadmap for Snow License Manager 7 & beyond

*More Enterprise Features to Manage Key Publishers*

Snow intends to build upon their existing competencies for managing large enterprises by further developing their features around key software publishers such as Microsoft, Adobe, IBM, and Oracle. Snow Software also plan to develop new features to assist their customers manage SAP licensing.

Snow License Manager 7 will see the introduction of IBM PVU licensing support, enhanced Oracle reporting and broader support for datacenter licensing models.

*Software ID Tags and Adobe Creative Cloud*

Adobe's new Creative Cloud offering, a hybrid blend of cloud subscription and traditional perpetual installs brings new complexity to managing and risk to managing Adobe licensing.

Snow License Manager 7 and the associated inventory release will include identification and management of ISO/IEC 19770-2 software identification tags and other features to help clients to manage Adobe Creative Cloud.

*Auto-Discovery and Verified Inventory Data Features*

The License Manager and Inventory roadmaps include auto-discovery features to identify devices on the network that have been missed by the inventory collector and synchronization with Active Directory (due in Snow License Manager 7) to identify devices within the directory service which are also missing. Both features will strengthen the value of customer inventory data and improve accuracy.

*Managing Microsoft Virtual Desktop Licensing*

New features will be introduced in Snow License Manager 7 to assist customers minimize the licensing required for Microsoft virtual desktops by helping clients manage Windows VDA CALs, a device based subscription for those devices that do not qualify for Windows Client SA, such as thin clients and contractor-owned PCs.

*User Interface and Reporting*

Finally, the Snow Software team are working on enhancements to the Snow License Manager user interface and reporting capabilities, entitled 'Snowboard' to allow customers to maximize the value of their SAM data and prolong it's impact throughout the enterprise.

# Key reference customers

- Kingfisher plc [European Retail Group, United Kingdom]
http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/resources/case-studies/kingfisher-plc

- Guardian News & Media [Media, United Kingdom]
http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/resources/case-studies/guardian

- Harper Macleod [Lawyers & Solicitors, United Kingdom]
http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/resources/case-studies/harper-macleod

- Glaston Corporation [Manufacturing Multinational, Finland]
http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/resources/case-studies/glaston

# Product portfolio

- **Snow License Manager** – Inventory agnostic license management platform

- **Snow Inventory** – network inventory tool

- **Snow Oracle Management Option** – additional module for management of Oracle Database licensing

- **Snow External Data Provider** – connect and consolidate multiple data sources

# Geographical coverage

| Head Office | Sweden |
|---|---|
| Regional Offices | Brazil, China, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, UK & USA |
| Partner Representation | Australia & New Zealand, Canada, France, India & Singapore |

# Futher resources

- SAM in an imperfect world white paper -
http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/campaign/white-paper-sam-imperfect-world-0

- Why SCCM & Snow = Successful SAM white paper -
http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/campaign/white-paper-why-sccm-and-snow-creates-successful-sam-english

# Vendor profile

In their own words:

" Snow Software (www.SnowSoftware.com) is a global leader in the delivery of on-premise and cloud-based Software Asset Management solutions, including multi-platform inventory and advanced software license management technologies. Every day, organizations ranging from small businesses to multinational corporations and governments use Snow solutions to analyze and manage more than 1.7 billion software records.

Since 1997, Snow Software has sold over 9 million licenses to thousands of end user organizations and service providers worldwide who rely on Snow's SAM expertise to manage compliance, optimize software availability and drive cost savings.

Privately-funded, Snow Software is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, with international offices located in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, China, The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Brazil. "

# Contact details

Snow Software contact details:

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|---|---|
| **Head Office** | Sweden – Solna<br>Anderstorpsvägen 12, 171 21 Solna<br><br>Telephone +46 (0) 8 545 475 30<br>**www.snowsoftware.com** |
| **Regional Offices** | USA – Austin TX<br>UK – Bracknell<br>Germany – Stuttgart<br>Netherlands – Haarlem<br>China – Hong Kong<br>Norway - Hvalstad<br>Denmark – Copenhagen<br>Brazil – Sao Paulo<br><br>Regional contact details:<br>**http://www.snowsoftware.com/int/contact** |

# Summary

Snow Software is a strong contender for any worldwide organization looking for an all-round SAM tool platform; it has a good market reputation for desktop SAM and is focusing resources on developing good capabilities for datacenter and cloud environments.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| ✔ Software Recognition Service | ✖ No auto-discovery – automated discovery of new or non-inventoried devices |
| ✔ Broad operating system and virtualization coverage | ✖ Reporting needs more focus on cost savings and risk |
| ✔ Management of complex licensing | ✖ Management of upcoming renewals and key contract dates could be stronger |
| ✔ Focussed SAM Vendor – strong reputation for desktop SAM with growing capabilities in the datacenter | ✖ No software request portal |

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