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Review of Gartner and IAITAM Conferences

By Steffani Lomax

The Gartner Group and IAITAM (International Association of IT Asset Managers) held their annual conferences in September and October. While both of these conferences focus on IT Asset Management, they differ in content and offer their own uniqueness and value. In this article, we will review the two events as well as compare them in the conclusion.

This review will help companies determine if they should attend these events in the future and will also provide a summary for those organizations that participated this year.

Gartner IT and Software Asset Management Summit

Gartner's annual summit took place on September 18-20, 2006 at the Hilton Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL. The following highlights the participation, format, themes, sponsors and fees.

Who Attended

This year 700 end-users, many from large corporations, attended the Gartner summit. Participation had declined 22% from 2005. The end-users were primarily IT Asset Managers of companies, stakeholders or managers who had been tasked with IT Asset Management in addition to their other responsibilities for their organizations. The content of this conference was designed for executive and line management.

Format

The format of the conference consisted of keynote speakers at the beginning of each day, followed by track sessions, analyst roundtables and solution provider presentations.

The keynotes provided both valuable information and entertainment. One of Gartner's premier speakers, Andy Kyte, Vice President and Gartner Fellow, gave a memorable keynote address entitled "Vendor Management is a Critical Business Discipline." Kirk Sievert, of Prosci Research, presented on



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"The People Side of Change – Separating Myth from Reality." This keynote addressed the need for effective management of the people side of change to ensure for the success of major project implementations within an organization. The speaker used audience participation and examples to demonstrate the key points of his topic.

The four tracks that attendees could follow were in the categories of IT Asset Management Fundamentals, Hardware and Software Procurement Best Practices, Future Trends and IT Management.

Gartner also offered analyst/user roundtables where participants needed to sign up in advance. The roundtables provided end-users the ability to interface with leading Gartner research analysts, in small groups, and benefit from their knowledge and experience.

There were also vendor presentations by the sponsors and the content of these sessions tended towards marketing of their products and services. Vendors also promoted their wares during the Solution Showcase Receptions during lunch of the first two days of the conference and the Sponsor Hospitality Suites.

Themes

The following were some themes that were presented by Gartner analysts and outside speakers during the conference.

- The discipline of ITAM has been rising in importance over the past two years.
- Some of the key business drivers for ITAM are compliance, ITIL and service-based organizations.
- ITAM is more than just asset tracking. The new challenges in ITAM are:
 - Technology migration

- Contract management
- TCO analysis
- Vendor Management
- Portfolio Management
- Emerging trends that are impacting ITAM are the Configuration Management Database (CMDB) and a huge emphasis on process improvement.
- The increasing virtual workplace will test ITAM's ability to manage assets.
- A new role of ITAM is to transform into business competitive advantage measures.
- ITAM has evolved from data provider to decision-support. It is important to ensure that processes reflect this evolution.
- ITAM needs to increase its visibility within IT senior management.
- ITAM can help raise the value and awareness of IT.
- ITAM is moving away from an operational IT activity to more strategic financial management discipline.
- Vendor Management needs to be proportionate to the level of spend. If an organization is spending a large percentage of their IT budget on suppliers, they need to focus more on Vendor Management as a business discipline and place the appropriate Vendor Manager in place who is as powerful and knowledgeable as the Vendor Account Manager.
- There will be an increase in the number of software audits in the future. Many software vendors are performing their own audits of customer environments.

- The trend towards multi-core chip technology will increase software costs for many companies in the future.

Sponsors

There were 26 sponsors/vendors, down from 32 last year, that exhibited in the Solution Provider Showcase, and several that sponsored Hospitality Suites. Many of the sponsors were leaders in providing IT Asset Management solutions while a few were up and coming companies in the industry. The vendor products covered all aspects of IT Asset Management from asset discovery, software license metering, inventory, asset repository to disposal and destruction of assets. Here is the list of sponsors.

ABC Enterprise Systems, Altiris, ASAP Software, Axios Systems, BDNA, Belarc, Cascade Asset Management, Centennial Software, Computer Associates, Evident Software, Express Metrix, Hewlett Packard, IBM & IBM Global Financing, Intechra, Iron Mountain Digital, KACE, ManageSoft, Microsoft, MRO Software, Newmarket IT, Novell, Protiviti, PS'SOFT, Redemtech, Software Spectrum, Universal Management Solutions

Fees

The conference registration fee was \$1,695 per person for early bird registration (up to 2 months before the start of the conference) and \$1,895 for late registration.

IAITAM Annual Conference

This year's IAITAM conference took place on October 18-20, 2006 at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland, OH. The following highlights the participation, format, topics, sponsors and fees.

Who Attended

This year 400 end-users, from both large and medium-sized companies, attended the IAITAM conference. Participation had increased 60% from 2005. The end-users were primarily IT Asset Managers and practitioners who had been tasked with IT Asset Management responsibilities within their organizations. The content of the conference focused on process and how to address specific IT Asset Management challenges and was designed for IT practitioners rather than executive-level management.

Format

The format of the conference consisted of keynote speakers at the start of each day, workshops, track sessions provided by end-users and vendors, as well as receptions at the sponsor Exhibit Hall.

A highlight of the conference was workshops that were offered during the first two morning sessions. "Building ITAM Processes" was a full-morning session where attendees broke out into groups and built an actual ITAM process from start to finish. Another workshop, "Defining the Roles for IT Asset Management Best Practices," helped participants with techniques to define ITAM roles, write job descriptions and hire the appropriate personnel. The morning workshops and sessions were repeated on days 1 and 2, which enabled attendees to participate in more than just one workshop or session offered during this timeframe.

The Exhibit Hall was open on two consecutive evenings of the conference and during one

luncheon, which gave the vendors and attendees ample time to interact. This was an improvement over last year where the Exhibit Hall was open for two consecutive days which resulted in sporadic attendance and less focused time for vendors to spend with end-users.

Topics

During the conference, there were three tracks to choose from – General ITAM, Experienced ITAM and Executive Management. The content of the sessions provided real-world, practical information for the audience. The following were some of the topics of interest that were presented by IAITAM representatives, vendors and end-users.

- Software Licensing: How We Got Here and What's on the Horizon
- Top 10 Tips for Successful IT Asset Management
- Vendor Performance Management
- Using ITAM to Drive Operational Efficiency
- Building the Business Case for IT Asset Management
- Software Lifecycle Management Case Study
- SOX and OMB Circular A-123 Compliance
- Mitigating the Risks of Software as a Service
- Modern Metrics of ITAM Requires Moving Functions Under Control of CFO
- Selling ITAM – The People Side
- ITAM Vendor Security Standards for the 21st Century
- Welcome to My Fiefdom: ITAM in the Distributed Environment

- IT Asset Disposal – Current and Pending Government Regulations Impacting Proper Disposal
- The Importance of CMDB
- Data Security – From Desktop to Disposition
- Relationship Management – the Foundation for Maximizing ROI from Outsourcing
- How to Transform Asset Data into Useful Business Information

Sponsors

There were 27 sponsors/vendors that participated in the Exhibit Hall. Many of the sponsors were leaders in providing IT Asset Management solutions while others were up and coming companies in the industry. The vendor products covered all aspects of IT Asset Management from asset discovery, inventory, software license metering, asset repository, disposal and destruction of assets as well as professional services. Here is the list of sponsors.

Altiris, Animus, ASAP Software, Axcress, Basel Action Network, Belarc, BlueBridge Networks, Centennial Software, Computer Associates, Engagent Software License Manager, EPC, Eracent, Express Metrix, IAITAM, Intellidyne, ManageSoft, Miro Consulting, Pervasive Spaces, PlanITROI, Reclamere, Redemtech, Regency Technologies, Sassafras Software, TechDisposal, TekMethods, United Recycling Industries, Verifichi

Fees

The conference registration fee ranged from \$1,345 to \$1,645 per person, depending on whether the attendee was an IAITAM member or non-member.

Comparison of Gartner and IAITAM Conferences

How should organizations select which conference to attend? If budget is limited, the organization should choose the conference that will provide the level of content they are searching for. The Gartner conference provides an executive and management level focus. At this conference, attendees learn about industry trends and the strategic direction of ITAM. There is a great view of the big picture and an opportunity to network with heavy hitters, both analysts and vendors, in the industry. At the IAITAM conference, attendees receive a more tactical view of how to get the work done and leave with approaches and techniques for solving aspects of their ITAM challenges. There is more information-sharing at the IAITAM conference as a result of the format and more intimate size of the event. IAITAM also offers pre-conference certification courses in Software, Hardware and IT Asset Management for an additional fee.

If budget is not limited, it is very valuable to attend both events to gain an overall perspective of the ITAM discipline. There were many participants who attended both events for this very reason and were pleased with the content each conference provided.

2007 Conferences – Save the Dates!

Next year the Gartner IT and Software Asset Management Summit will take place earlier in the year, on June 4-6, in Nashville, TN.

The IAITAM conference will take place on November 7-9 in Palm Springs, CA.



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