

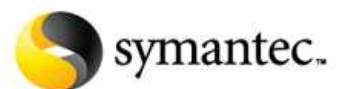
ALTIRIS.
SMART DECISIONS.



The Altiris CMDB

BECAUSE YOU HAVE A BUSINESS TO RUN, NOT JUST AN OPERATING SYSTEM

ALTIRIS: NOW PART OF SYMANTEC



About Altiris, Now Part of Symantec

Altiris, Inc., now part of Symantec, is a pioneer of IT lifecycle management software that allows IT organizations to easily manage desktops, notebooks, thin clients, handhelds, industry-standard servers, and heterogeneous software including Windows, Linux, and UNIX. Altiris automates and simplifies IT projects throughout the life of an asset to reduce the cost and complexity of management. Altiris client and mobile, server, and asset management solutions natively integrate via a common Web-based console and repository. For more information, visit www.altiris.com.

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Introduction

Leveraging Information Technology to increase profits usually offers only a temporary competitive advantage. Eventually the competition catches up, and what was once a unique competitive advantage becomes just another overhead cost of doing business. Consequently, the vast majority of IT dollars are spent on ongoing, recurrent costs that don't provide a sustainable competitive business advantage but simply maintain the industry status quo. Companies work to minimize these overhead costs in many ways, including outsourcing the areas of IT viewed as costly and non-strategic, or investing in new software and initiatives to trim costs and improve efficiency.

As the global economy improves and new market opportunities emerge, businesses must carefully choose which IT initiatives will provide the greatest competitive advantage, fund them appropriately, and reduce other operational costs where they can. For business and IT alignment to finally be achieved a fundamental paradigm shift is required. Businesses must switch from a reactionary approach to a strategic approach rooted in a pragmatic understanding of how IT activities contribute to business needs. It requires standards in the way IT is managed and measured, and the focus must change from day-to-day fire fighting to a deliberate and pragmatic approach. This guarantees that next month the IT organization will be more efficient and effective than it was last month, and so on.

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) has become the *de facto* standard in the industry for how IT organizations should operate for best efficiency. It has helped many organizations shift their thinking to meeting strategic business needs while cutting ongoing operational costs rather than simply reacting to problems. ITIL prescribes a cycle of continuous improvement across multiple disciplines based on forward planning, root cause analysis, change management, and constant measurement. ITIL is recognized for its process oriented quality improvement methods in the new ISO 25000 standards, and is accepted as a valid operational model by the Six Sigma Total Quality Management framework. The adoption rate of ITIL among companies around the world has skyrocketed in the past few years as companies struggle to get a handle on the cost of IT operations and maintain the agility they need to capitalize on new business opportunities.

Defining the CMDB

The Configuration Management Database (CMDB) is at the center of the ITIL process model. It is designed specifically to drive IT efficiency and cost savings throughout the enterprise while improving service levels, security, and providing useful decision support. According to ITIL, the CMDB must perform the following four critical functions:

- Account for all of the IT assets and configurations within the organization and its services
- Provide accurate information on configurations and their documentation to support all of the other Service Management Processes
- Provide a sound basis for incident management, problem management, change management, and release management processes
- Verify the configuration records against the infrastructure and correct any exceptions

Obviously, there are many ways to achieve these goals with software and process, but the most important question is how to do so without incurring more cost and overhead than the results might be worth. Altiris believes that there is a real opportunity in the market for new ideas, and that we offer a better way to create a CMDB. Our solutions provide more potent benefits faster, and at lower initial and ongoing cost than alternative methods. Once the CMDB is built, it's important to continually monitor for unauthorized changes, and when a change is required, it's guided by a formal change process. Changes are one of the top reasons that problems occur in today's IT environment according to the most recent HDI survey.

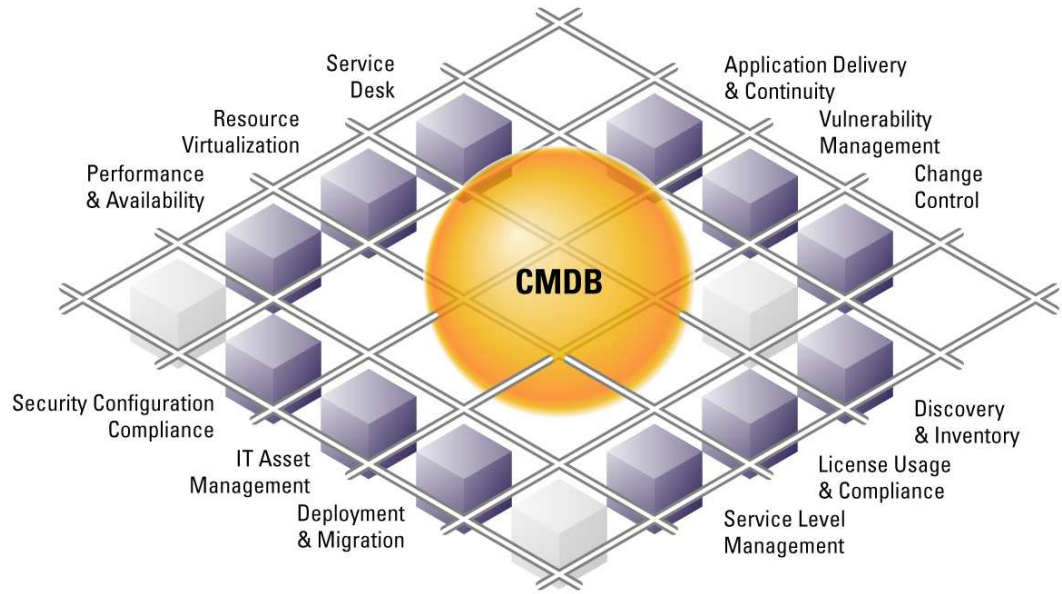


Figure 1: Altiris service oriented management solutions are modular by design, allowing you to implement solutions to meet your current IT needs while helping you to build a roadmap to achieve future IT initiatives and business goals.

A Fresh Idea

The key to the Altiris approach lies in putting excellent management tools in the hands of the people performing time consuming, often repetitive work. This saves them time and effort, while automatically rolling the data and results of their activities into the CMDB. In this way, IT teams have a source of information, the automation and execution tools to act on their findings and the ability to comply with regulatory requirements for keeping a reliable audit trail of activities.

CMDBs that are not an active part of the management process are little more than a reporting database—an aggregate of data from multiple sources that may or may not be accurate. Inaccuracy in the CMDB will cause IT staff to not trust the data, which will require them to spend extra time figuring out the cause of the problem. It may even require a visit to a remote location to troubleshoot. If the CMDB is correct and trusted, the need to run around and ‘double-check’ is effectively eliminated.

There are also numerous integration points between the various sources of data that make up the CMDB. Some examples include:

- Active Directory
- HR data
- Helpdesk
- Discovery and inventory tools
- Asset management repository
- Packaging tools (Definitive Software Library)
- Change management
- Systems management
- Security management

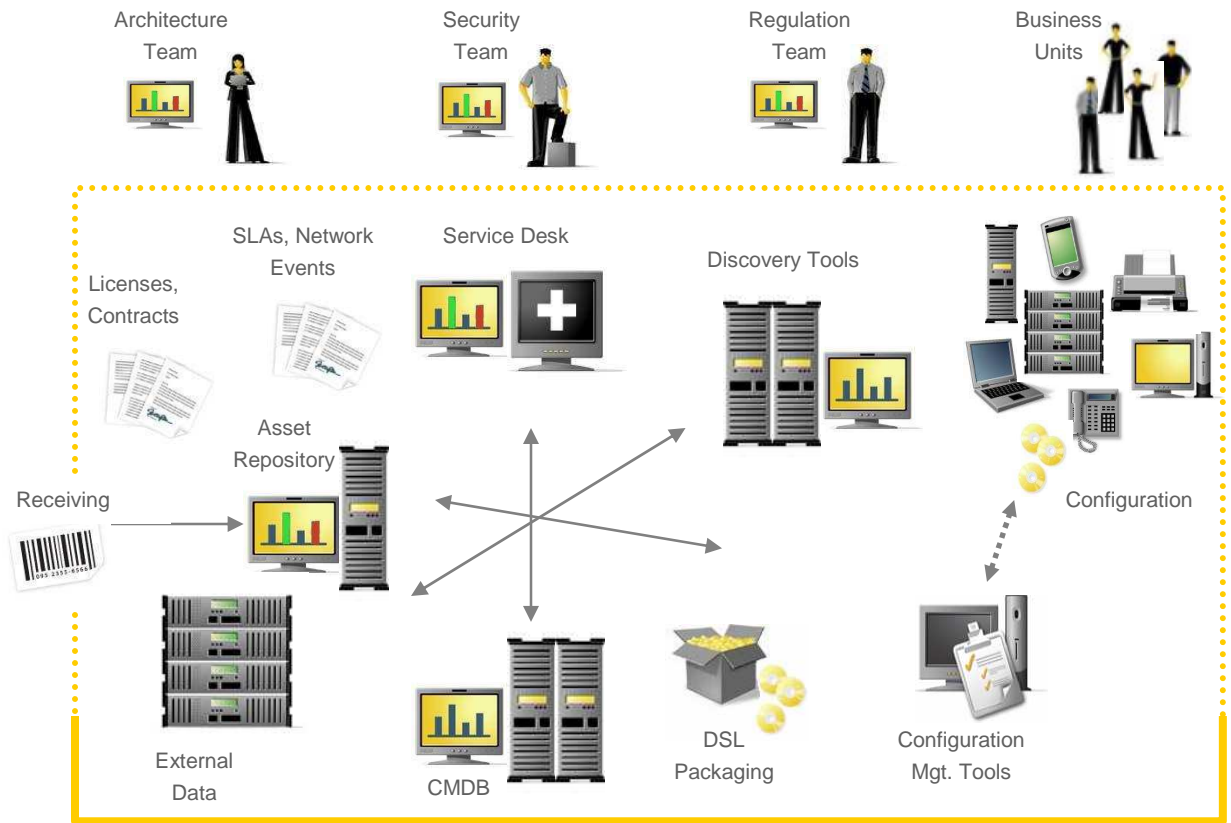


Figure 2: Numerous elements in the IT environment feed into the CMDB.

In Figure 2, we note that there are many possible integration points required to create a functional, useful CMDB. Many companies have been adapting old, expensive software tools to meet the goal of creating a CMDB they hope will deliver on the promised objectives. The common examples are characterized by beginning with a Helpdesk application and extending its data model to include configuration items and their properties. On the surface, this seems like a reasonable approach, but when we dig deeper, we find that there are some significant drawbacks:

- The configuration details must be imported from another source, introducing errors and potentially significant lag times in the data, creating duplicates or missing other assets entirely
- Stale data is far less useful for decision making and troubleshooting, and will be less likely to be used in the process
- Workers will still turn to their management tools to provide more useful data, which results in multiple sources of data, none of which are completely correct
- Every integration point is a significant ongoing maintenance and cost item
- Upgrades to one component or another are not controlled with the entire integrated system in mind, making upgrades risky
- Reporting may not be congruent across all components, and visibility may be spotty
- Companies must work with multiple vendors and technology platforms

The Altiris approach addresses these fundamental problems effectively. Altiris starts with the management tools that IT people are already using to manage the systems they have in their environment—from handhelds, to remote laptops, to servers. We use that highly accurate data as a core CMDB, around which we've built our ITIL service support applications. The advantages are:

- Much greater accuracy of configuration data
- The service desk stems directly from the CMDB, meaning far fewer interfaces for our customers to manage

- The data is immediately actionable through the management tools that are also built on the same platform
- Incident, problem, and change managers have information they can count on
- Less costly to maintain through the application lifecycle
- Based on modern application and database technology, which means fewer technical barriers

The Altiris CMDB keeps the information fresh and relevant, and eliminates several potential integration points because the components were designed to work together from the start. Obviously, not all integration points can be eliminated and some data federation will sometimes be necessary, such as with Active Directory, but the Altiris CMDB offers a considerable head start in a successful CMDB implementation, and will cost less to maintain through its lifecycle.

Standardize and Automate

As mentioned previously, ITIL is a process of continuous improvement. It is based on the Deming Cycle of Plan → Do → Check → Act, which is well known in the manufacturing world as the key to high quality, low-cost production. It is characterized by the constant elimination of waste, both of resources and time. Automation and standardization are the cornerstones of these concepts.

What makes Altiris so unique among CMDB vendors is that we are widely recognized as industry leaders in automating systems management, from deployment and migration, to software delivery and patch management, through security and asset management. We eliminate vast amounts of wasted time and effort in managing IT systems for our customers, and we combine the tools that IT people need with the ITIL processes and the CMDB. The goal is for our customers to have a powerful family of tactical automated management tools in their arsenal, with an IT operations strategy driven by the ITIL model and a cycle of continuous improvement.

The CMDB is key to this strategy because it provides our customers a reliable core of data on which to build processes, and eliminates the costs normally incurred by less capable or less integrated systems. It also provides Altiris with a Service Oriented Management platform for building additional solutions, which makes Altiris applications highly modular, with superior interoperability.

Process Example

Figure 3 below demonstrates a real-life example of one of many processes which can be quickly and easily automated with the Altiris CMDB. In most organizations, the software request process is manual, time consuming, and inconsistent. With Altiris software, the entire process is automated, from request through approval and delivery, to license compliance verification. The person needing the software is offered a list of available software packages when visiting the Altiris Software Portal. These are not just packages pulled from a CD, but fully tested and pre-configured application packages created with Wise Package Studio, or virtualized software, configured and tested specifically for the environment, and stored in the Definitive Software Library.

Once a work order is initiated through the service desk, an automated chain of events is set into action within the Altiris system that includes delivering the package to their computer from the closest Altiris package server, even over WAN and VPN links. Once installed, the Altiris Inventory Solution agent will confirm the software's successful installation with the CMDB, and all license contracts will be updated to reflect the new count of installed software titles against the number owned. If an overage occurs, the appropriate people will be notified so that additional licenses can be purchased or unused copies removed from other systems, as appropriate.

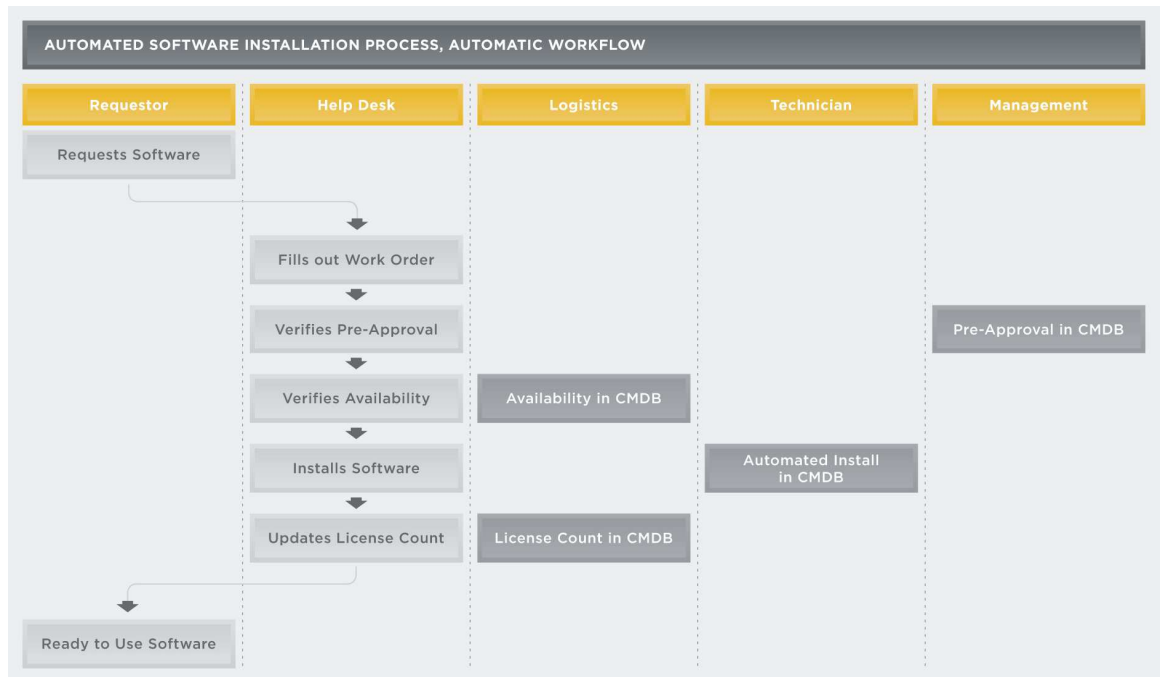


Figure 3: Typically manual processes are easily automated with the Altiris CMDB.

The results of the Altiris process are better service, standardized software deployments, reliable license compliance, and a fast return on investment. The ROI is based on hard-cost savings of less manual effort and time needed to respond to software requests, elimination of virtually all software request calls to the service desk, and elimination of desk-side visits. At the same time, employees gain immediate access to a full range of software, enabling them to be more productive while removing the temptation to buy unneeded software licenses and install untested software in the environment.

Fast Results

The proof that the Altiris CMDB produces measurable results is in the words of our customers. When General Motors needed a more accurate, reliable way of managing their IT assets, they selected Altiris.

Luiz Alvarez, GM Brazil technology system infrastructure manager says: “Our previous management system was not accurate. We saw discrepancies of between 20 and 30 percent in addition to not having the ability to generate reports.”

In search of a new solution, Alvarez and his team tested diverse products from many vendors at GM's lab, a controlled environment designed to simulate conditions found in the GM Brazil IT environment. “We selected Altiris for its inventory management capabilities in late 2002,” said Alvarez. “The combination of robust functionality and price was a decisive factor in our choice.”

“The results of the software usage analysis were impressive. By harvesting software licenses, we were able to reduce our annual software license expenses by 44 percent between 2002 and 2003.” This cost reduction yielded for GM a return on investment of 1,000 percent in about 45 days.

Reap the Benefits

When IT people are happy with the tools they have to do their jobs, they are more efficient and effective. When the IT management strategy and process model are in harmony with the needs of the business and people have tangible, measurable goals to work toward; when they are recognized when they achieve results, and there is a guarantee that tomorrow will be better than today, the entire business benefits.

Altiris is committed to helping your organization align IT operations with the needs of the business. It all starts with a CMDB that works and a plan to implement an operations strategy based on the ITIL model and management tools designed to save time and money.