

Data#3



Fiji National Provident Fund Gains Visibility of Devices and Software Licenses

A Data#3 Customer Story

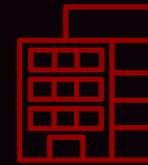


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ABOUT FNPf

The Fiji National Provident Fund (“FNPf”) is a defined contribution Fund, mandated by law to collect compulsory contributions from employees and employers towards the retirement savings of all workers in Fiji. As well as retirement products, FNPf provides benefits such as housing, medical, unemployment and education assistance to more than 400,000 members.



OBJECTIVE

To better manage its Microsoft licenses, the Fiji National Provident Fund (“FNPf”) needed clearer visibility of its end-user machines and its physical and virtual server environment.



FUN FACT

Through 2022 in any given month, over **30%** of the growing expenditure on software and cloud services will be unused.



COMMENTS

The expertise of the Data#3 team was important. The SAM analysts had high expertise, and took time to understand us, and make recommendations on how to optimise our solution – this was highly valuable to us.

Uraia Goneyali, Manager of Technology and Innovation, Fiji National Provident Fund.



APPROACH

Complying with licensing requirements is important to the FNPf as it recognises the harm that non-compliance could do to its reputation. Meeting requirements were problematic and despite the concerted efforts to track assets, there was a mismatch between those physically counted and the IT team’s records. FNPf approached Data#3, as a trusted partner, for help.



BENEFITS

- Visibility of all physical end user devices
- Greater visibility of physical and virtual server environment
- A full picture of software in use
- Reduced licensing costs
- Removed risk of reputation and financial loss from non-compliance
- Improved asset management processes



TECHNOLOGY

- Software Asset Management
- Microsoft Licensing



The Background

The Fiji National Provident Fund (“FNPF”) is mandated by law to collect compulsory contributions from employees and employers towards the retirement savings of all workers in Fiji. As well as retirement savings, FNPF provides benefits such as housing, medical and education assistance to more than 400,000 members.

With a prominent role in the lives of the Fijian community, FNPF values its reputation highly. Balancing the number of known Microsoft licenses with the number of counted assets was problematic. FNPF sought assistance from Data#3 to ensure all compliance requirements were met.

The Challenge

The FNPF needed to get a new Microsoft licensing agreement, but in spite of the best efforts of the IT team, it was unclear how many user devices were active. The number of physical and virtual servers was also unclear. For Manager of Technology and Innovation, Uraia Goneyali, the situation was frustrating.

“There was a big mismatch between the numbers on the ground captured, the record of computer assets maintained by Finance, and the number of desktop installations seen by Active Directory. When we compared the three, we couldn’t know what we had or where we were. It was important that we had a clear understanding of how many SQL and Windows servers we had, so we needed to undertake a regular audit to try and get the numbers.”

Aside from the frustration this caused the IT team, the situation was also time-consuming, with lengthy daily checks and twice-yearly audits to try to manage the situation. Management of the IT environment was difficult, and Goneyali said that when you can’t see assets, it is difficult to secure and manage them, or to realise their value.

“The physical assets didn’t match what we could see on the network. We knew we needed to have better visibility of our SQL and Windows servers, either physical or virtual, that were in use in our environment. Prior to SNOW, we couldn’t be sure exactly how many we had, how many were in test environment, and how many were in production,” continued Goneyali.

The IT team at FNPF is intensely aware of the importance of ensuring that software updates and patches are timely, and this plays a key role in risk management. Increasing visibility was seen as a way of ensuring that every machine would meet the required standards. It would also allow for any unnecessary software to be identified and uninstalled, avoiding overspend and reducing risk.

IT Outcome

The FNPF team followed Data#3’s recommendation of a software asset management (SAM) solution that harnessed Snow; a powerful tool that gives a unified view of software across the physical and cloud environment. The first priority was to establish a Microsoft baseline.

“Our initial challenge, because of many different configurations on different devices, was to get the Snow agent onto all machines. Once that was done, it was a walk in the park,” said Goneyali.

The advantages of increased visibility were quickly felt. Having invested many resource hours in their efforts to track assets, suddenly Goneyali’s team could get a complete picture.

“Before, our six-monthly audit would take a whole week, followed by a month to compile reports. We would conduct a daily check in, taking one to two hours. The new SAM solution has changed our workday. For the first time, there is visibility across our entire network, of all servers and clients. We weren’t sure when users were in the office without manually looking, but now we have increased visibility to know what is there as well as whether they’re in the office or not,” explained Goneyali.

“Over three years, we could never confirm the count before the Software Asset Management solution. Now we can.”

The newfound visibility went beyond administration of software licenses to have a direct impact on efficiency. In particular, FNPF has been able to optimise the use of its servers.

“On the server end, we were able to identify servers with a low ratio of virtual machines to the physical host, and optimise the ratio. We were able to turn off servers that were not utilised a lot, and even removed some servers,” outlined Goneyali.

“The IT team was always adding resources to servers and not understanding what was on them, which was a big issue. We are now able to segregate grouping of production and development machines in one host, and to consolidate production machines on production hosts so we could manage the hosts separately.”

Enhanced visibility is affecting decisions throughout the team going forward, and enabling greater efficiency. When FNPF’s development team is creating a new application that needs a SQL database, Goneyali said that the team can see SQL servers already available.

“The development team can use a pre-existing SQL server, rather than spin up a new one.”

Business Outcome

With clarity around the number of devices in place, Goneyali worked with Data#3's SAM specialists to identify the best licensing options available. As Microsoft's largest partner in the Pacific region, Data#3 was ideally positioned to structure a new Microsoft agreement. Even before the initial baseline, FNPF had achieved substantial savings, and these increased as the SAM solution progressed.

"When we took up the SAM package, we saved about \$240k after the initial baseline – and that figure would be even higher from our original starting point," said Goneyali.

"Almost all of the virtual machines had datacentre licenses, which are more expensive."

Cost though, was far from the only priority. In gaining visibility and ensuring all updates and patches are applied, FNPF has enhanced security. An equally important risk identified by Goneyali was that of non-compliance. He said a potential loss of reputation could be costly.

The reporting features of Snow didn't only reduce the time spent by the IT team, but also allowed for faster, more accurate reporting back to the business. The Data#3 SAM team was able to support Goneyali in turning this into a business case for the Microsoft licensing agreement.

"The reporting features of Snow allows us to report on assets we didn't know we had. It has the information all in one place, which is very helpful for management of our infrastructure. We really like the reporting capabilities," said Goneyali.

"We get reports monthly from Data#3's SAM team, and we are able to tell what is underused, by drilling into the reports. Finding these details is easy; before, it was all manual, but now we can see it all at a glance."

Conclusion

With clear information readily available, FNPF is better positioned to make business and IT decisions about its existing assets. The clarity allows it to confidently progress with more favourable software licence agreements and, as an additional benefit, to maximise use of physical and virtual servers. The implementation of the Snow tool, as well as the ongoing SAM agreement, has saved FNPF considerable costs and prevented potential issues associated with non-compliance. To achieve this, the right partnership was crucial.

"We have worked with Data#3 on licensing since 2010, so they had an understanding of what we had, and they put in a lot of time to try and optimise the SAM report so it would make sense to us. They helped us find what licenses we had in excess, helped with compliance, and told us how many we had over our needs," stated Goneyali.

"The expertise of the Data#3 team was important. The SAM analysts had high expertise, and took time to understand us, and make recommendations on how to optimise our solution – this was highly valuable to us."

With efficiencies saving hours every day in the IT department, though, Goneyali has no hesitation in pinpointing the greatest outcome of the engagement.

"The biggest highlight is that now we don't have to run audits to find out what is there. We just look at the dashboard," he concluded.

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