ITMC Discovery™ and the AppStore Plus™ Portal – Enhanced SCCM Integration

Seamless, secure integration extends SCCM inventory data and supports automated deployments and installation verification

Introduction

Many organizations have established Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) implementations to manage their Windows environments, using it for operations processes ranging from deployment and configuration management to ongoing discovery and inventory. To help customers gain more value from their SCCM investment, Eracent provides native integration capabilities to enhance and normalize data from the tool, and to leverage SCCM's software deployment and update functionality. Organizations that use both Eracent and SCCM can leverage these integration options to enable the ITMC Discovery, ITMC Lifecycle™ and AppStore Plus Portal modules to work together with SCCM to support various business processes.

Software and Hardware Inventory Options Involving SCCM

The Eracent solution provides two different discovery-oriented integration options around SCCM.

Eracent Data Extractor (EDE) for SCCM

The first integration option uses the Eracent Data Extractor (EDE) service to analyze raw inventory data collected by SCCM. This method processes hardware and software inventory information collected by the Microsoft SCCM agent, with no additional agent or end-process deployment required. The raw data is processed using Eracent's extensive SCANMAN™ software and hardware knowledgebase to provide highly accurate, normalized and categorized data. This enriched data is particularly useful in support of Software Asst Management (SAM) programs and license reconciliation and optimization efforts. The end result is a level of comprehensive inventory reporting that supplements what SCCM could provide independently. With this approach, customers can realize additional value from their investment in SCCM to increase transparency and reduce risk around their enterprise network assets.

SCCM Add-On Process

The second integration option involves utilizing a version of the Eracent ITMC Discovery end-point analyzer as an add-on process that is managed by SCCM either in executable form or as a command to a share. This method does not require the installation of an extra agent service or executable on the target machine.

SCCM Deployment Integration Features

Deployment Target Definition

With seamless and secure API-based integration, ITMC Discovery can play a significant role in software deployments that are executed using SCCM. From an administration screen, a user can see a list of SCCM Defined Applications (packages that can be deployed) as well as SCCM Collections (pre-defined groups of machines to which software and updates can be deployed).

Users can also view the details of the selected package/application to be deployed, including: Source Site, Sedo Object Version, Number of Deployments, Number of Devices with Application, Number of Devices with Failure, and Number of Users with Request. This data comes directly from SCCM.

Since users can select the existing SCCM Defined Applications and they can populate their own collections with target machines for deployment, Eracent now provides the ability for an ITMC Discovery user to complete the entire process end-to-end without requiring the involvement of an SCCM administrator outside of the creation of the packages/applications to be deployed.

Deployment Verification

ITMC Discovery can also take full advantage of the SCCM infrastructure to independently verify that Application deployments were successful. ITMC Discovery can perform this function by independently verifying the successful installation of an application.

Automated Request – Approval - Provisioning

In tandem with SCCM, Eracent's ITMC Lifecycle and AppStore Plus Portal can support an automated request-approval-provisioning process. Authorized people throughout an organization may:

- Create a scheduled request for software to be deployed from a managed catalog
- Receive approval(s) to ensure enforcement of current processes
- Initiate purchases via contracts or purchase orders, or based on existing inventory
- View and claim available licenses, and
- Have software automatically deployed via SCCM .

This automation is achieved by enabling SCCM deployment application/package information to be imported into the Eracent system, where it can be assigned to the appropriate software catalog items to be used within the AppStore Plus Portal. Users may also assign multiple SCCM application/packages to a single catalog item to be deployed upon approval and designate which item should be the default.

Automated License Harvesting

Eracent's Application Utilization Monitoring enables customers to set thresholds that reflect their definition of usage parameters for individual products. Installations that do not meet these criteria (considered to be unused or under-utilized) can be shared with SCCM for automated de-installation and license harvesting, enabling re-deployment to another person or machine.

Benefits

When the ITMC modules are integrated with SCCM integration, customers achieve:

- Enhanced data volume and quality, maintaining the use of SCCM for discovery while taking advantage of the SCANMAN software and hardware knowledgebase and normalization engine
- Secure, out of the box integration with SCCM collection and deployment
- Independent verification of SCCM deployments
- Automated, flexible workflow-driven requests and fulfillment via the AppStore Plus Portal.

Summary

Eracent's IT Management Center provides a fully integrated and automated process to not only enhance and expand on an organization's current SCCM infrastructure for more normalized and accurate detection results, but to also provide the ability to deploy and verify SCCM applications within a unified, secure web-based interface. When used in conjunction with Eracent's ITMC Lifecycle and AppStore Plus Portal modules, customers now have a flexible, single interface for a procurement-to-disposition deployment and self-fulfillment process integrated with SCCM.