

Sponsored by:



“MEASURING THE TRUE
BUSINESS BENEFITS
OF WEB COLLABORATION”

DOWNLOAD
FREE WHITE
PAPER NOW >

NETWORKWORLD

This story appeared on Network World at
<http://www.networkworld.com/newsletters/nsm/2006/0206nsm1.html>



Is your telecom infrastructure included in your asset mgmt. strategy?

The forgotten need for telecom resource management

[Network/Systems Management Newsletter](#) By Dennis Drogseth, Network World, 02/06/06

You don't have to be a big company to spend lots of dollars on telecom infrastructure in an age when businesses are partnering and growing markets across an increasingly wider geographical net. Rivermine, for instance, estimates that its customers - which range in size from mid-tier to large enterprises - spend from \$7 million to \$750 million in telecom expenses per year. And industry estimates indicate that Fortune 500 companies spend over \$100 million per year on telecom.

And yet up until now, IT Asset Management (ITAM) has been cozily focused on a data centric mind set that often takes the network as an afterthought. The reason for this - to use a word that I use a lot - is "cultural" and historical, since it isn't logical. (If there is logic here, I do invite your e-mails to show me wrong.) Much like the help desk and the operations center, telecommunications resource management - when it's done at all - has been done by different individuals with different tools in different organizations to classical ITAM. But, if anything, telecom resource management is even more isolated - lost like King Kong on an uncharted island in the Pacific, whereas at least the help desk and operations routinely know they step on each other's toes.

One sign that communication is creeping through is CA's partnership with Asentinel, announced last November (introduced, in the true spirit of the season - with the silence of a mouse - see a [PDF file of the news release](#)). It is nonetheless a first step - the first instance of a major provider of asset management products formally integrating with a telecom resource management vendor.

This will change - and integration will become more numerous and more profound in nature as asset management evolves towards what the IT Infrastructure Library calls "Financial Management of IT Services" to embrace everything from traditional good ol' desktop TCO to telecom inventory and dispute resolution, to service accounting and demand profiling - once lumped under the unfortunate term "chargeback." Asset management will become an architected extension of the ITIL's configuration management database (CMDB) with roots in effective inventory and clear handshakes with change management, configuration management, capacity management and service management and planning.

While all these trends are starting to get underway, telecom resource management remains the still

largely hidden gorilla. This is a shame since products in this area are demonstrating ROI numbers in the 20% category and in some instances, 31% in inventory reconciliation alone. And while telecom resource management has grown up as services with some software, the architected foundations are beginning to evolve. Some of the vendors to mention include (alphabetically): Asentinel, Avotus, Rivermine and Tango. I am most familiar with Rivermine's product here, which is designed to integrate with mainstream service desk products, and has been tested for integration with Remedy and OpenView and used by customers to integrate with Infovista, NetQoS, Oracle Financials, SAP and PeopleSoft.

In order to stimulate what has been for many vendors a choppy market, telecom resource management products are targeting trends such as wireless - with its huge roaming inventory of devices and equipment - and converging areas such as VoIP, which would seemingly bring IT and telecommunications teams together (logically but once again "culture" still gets in the way).

Today, telecom resource management should offer software-centric capabilities to capture and model the telecom inventory (circuits, etc.) and be able to integrate and manage data through workflow, and eventually through CMDB-like data integration. Telecom resource management also offers invoice loading, contract negotiation, dispute resolution, call detail reporting, and will start to provide sophisticated analytics for evaluating trade offs so that telecom inventory can be integrated and mapped to supported services, similar to the functions of traditional IT infrastructure inventory products.

Currently the market is targeted at larger enterprise environments with huge telecom spend, but as the software becomes more mature and modular, the opportunities will move more down market to support those many business with more limited resources and still significant telecommunications dependencies.

I welcome your comments and opinions. What are your experiences with telecommunications resource management, and when do you see the merge with ITAM happening, if at all? Write to me at <mailto:drogseth@emausa.com>.

All contents copyright 1995-2006 Network World, Inc. <http://www.networkworld.com>