

Vector

Asset Management v5.0

Including -
Network Device Discovery
and Mapping



Version 5 of Vector's Asset Management and Service Management solutions introduce multi-vendor network device discovery, interrogation and mapping. This functionality is normally found only in expensive and complex network operation management consoles, but Vector are providing it as an integral part of their easily deployed, easily maintained and inexpensive architecture.

Version 5 has to be seen in action for the full capability to be appreciated, but we can summarise four key new areas of functionality that provide a comprehensive picture of the network environment in which your PCs operate.

Network Devices: Discovery and Interrogation

The network device discovery process interrogates intelligent devices using SNMP to determine key asset characteristics. This will include network resources such as printers and scanners, as well as network connectivity devices such as routers and switches. The administrator can provide one or several SNMP Community Strings for the SNMP Scan to use during discovery, together with seed IP addresses.

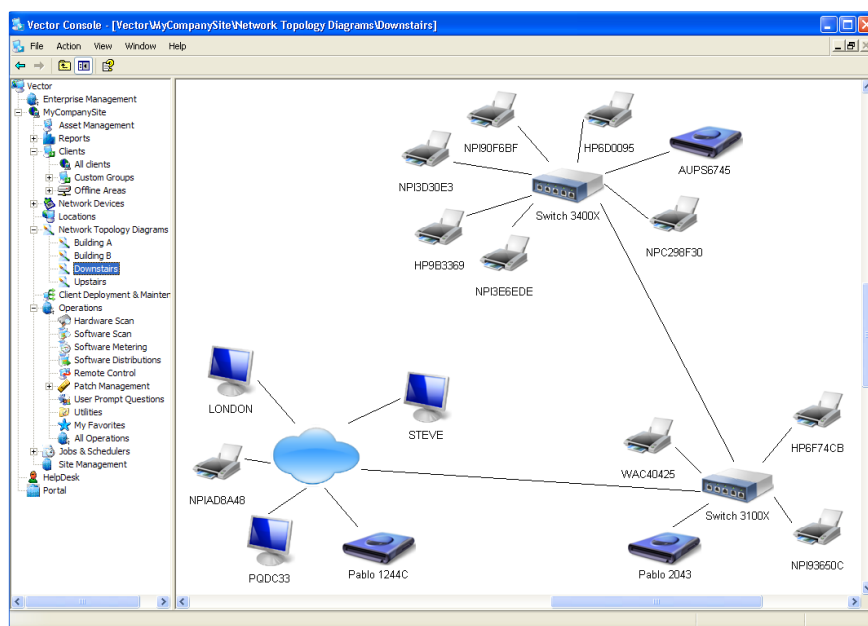
Network Devices always stay updated through scheduled running of the scan process. This process can be configured to best fit the organisation's needs, and for the larger organisation with more complex networks it is able to process multiple Community String groups and consolidate the device information into a single view of the network.

Network Devices: Tree and Grid View

The Network Devices tree and grid view presents the user with structured summary and detailed information on the devices discovered on their network. The tree and grid view also provide access to interfaces for editing SNMP device properties such as Model and Vendor, enabling inconsistencies in vendor terminology to be eradicated.

Network Topology: Tree and Diagrams

A new "Network Topology diagrams" section is defined in the main AM Console MMC tree, in which the user can generate and view topology diagrams based on a given IP range or router / port configuration. A topology diagram is drawn each time a diagram tree node is selected, and can be navigated with features such as zoom, scroll, scale to fit and scale to best fit. Right click on any node in a diagram will be supported with options to view properties.



Locations: Tree and View

AM v5 introduces Locations as a means of displaying a friendly name for given IP ranges or router / port assignments. All network devices and AM clients found within the specified network values will be associated with that Location. Location will increase further in significance in future Asset Management and Service Management solution releases. Assets, network devices, helpdesk issues, system configurations etc could all be associated with a Location in the future.

Typical asset management benefits generated by these four areas include –

- No more manually updating network designs in Visio! Your network topology information is updated every time Vector AM5 runs its network device scan. However, export in Visio format means you can incorporate the mapped topologies into your organisation's Visio-based documentation. (And you can use the free Visio viewer that Microsoft offer via their Web site.)
- Click on the assets displayed in the topology diagrams for instant access to asset details and installed software.
- Asset audits incorporate verification of presence and location.
- Change History in SNMP Device Properties alerts asset managers to unauthorised changes to network equipment.

Typical service management benefits include –

- Service Management operations benefit from the ability to see instantly what port a desktop is plugged into. PC location is confirmed before a technician is despatched for any hands-on tasks.
- Desktops that have been moved are revealed through Location Change History.

Client View: Major Enhancement

The main Client View has been replaced from the ground up with a new fully customisable grid view, which enables users to specify columns, assign fonts, font and background colours, specify multi-level sort priorities, etc.

Customisations are defined and updated through a wizard, and each Client Dynamic Group has its own individual 'view schema' which is specified as part of a new wizard driven process of defining the group. A default schema (itself customisable) can be adopted initially for rapid group definition, with details being refined later on the basis of usage.

Client Configuration via AD Template

The settings for an AM 5 Client can now be controlled through AD Group Policies, providing a Windows-centric alternative to using the Client Configuration operation in the AM 5 Console.

Increased Performance in Inventory Scans

Refinements in the Inventory analysis software has provided improved performance for both hardware and software inventory, which will typically be of greatest benefit to customers with Site Databases of 4,000 PCs and above. Processing times are typically reduced by 20% but the improvement in a specific installation will depend on the detail of the systems being inventoried.

Vista Alignment

AM 5 supports Vista Clients for Hardware and Software Inventory and Software Metering. AM 5 Vista Console and Software Distribution to Vista Clients are planned for a v5.x maintenance release.

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