

Server Inventory Using Free, Open Source, and Proprietary Tools

Presentation by Jordan Schwartz
UNIX Users Association
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Overview

- Description of Server Inventories
- Personal History of Server Inventory Tools
- Known Server Inventory Tools in Use
- Server Inventory Wish List
- Challenges in Server Inventory Development
- References

Description of Server Inventories

- Server Inventory Definition: Online List of an organization's servers, and possibly network attached devices, including high level configuration information, and contacts.
- Common Usage
 - Asset tracking and reporting
 - Incident management
- Possibly a component of a Asset Tracking system and integrated with a Configuration Management system

Personal History of Server Inventory Tools

- Internally Developed
 - Text file and spreadsheets
 - Structured comments in centralized hosts file
 - Client/Server Implementation
 - C based code using RPC calls
 - Berkley (Hash) DB Storage
 - Command Line Interface
 - Integrated with rdist for software updates
 - [S,W]AMP
 - Custom Web Interfaces with persitent database backends.

F/OSS Server Inventory Tools

- Asset Tracker
 - Extension to Request Tracker (RT) Ticketing System
 - Perl based with MySQL and Apache
- Winventory
 - Windows based inventory
 - Vbscript agent, Mysql, PHP
 - Sourceforge project

Proprietary Server Inventory Tools

- Remedy
 - Client Application
 - Web interface
 - Remedy Programmers Needed
- Aperture
 - Win32 Based / IE required
 - Detailed Tracking of all datacenter devices
- Altiris
 - Win32 Based
 - integrates with CM System

Our Survey Says....

- Three Responses from 2 lists
 - 2 respondents were using LAMP based solutions
 - one was integrated with a knowledge based system, and a project to integrate with Nagios is in progress.
 - one was tracking roughly 10,000 items
 - 1 was using Altiris and spreadsheets
 - 2 were from large Aerospace firms
 - 1 from a smaller shop

Server Inventory Wish List

- Open Standards and Architecture
 - *AMP Based
 - Agents for automated collection
 - Standard Schema
 - Common Information Model CIM
 - Data Center Markup Language (RIP?)
 - Open Document Support for Reporting

Challenges in Server Inventory Development

- Interoperability
 - Standards not clear
- Scope
 - Tracking all network attached devices, datacenter objects
 - What attributes constitute Configuration Management
- Data Update and Integrity
 - Garbage in | Garbage out
- Layer 8 (Financial)
- Layer 9 (Political)

References

- Asset Tracker <http://atwiki.chaka.net>
- Request Tracker <http://bestpractical.com>
- LAMP SIG www.lampsig.org
- Winventory <http://winventory.sf.net>
- Data Center Markup Language www.dcml.org
- LISA CM Workshop Notes
 - <http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/group/lssconf/>
- Altiris www.altiris.com
- Aperture www.aperture.com