

The logo for Utah State University (USU) in blue text on a white background.

USU

The logo for 'The ITAM Review' in black and red text on a white background.

THE
ITAM
REVIEW

A teal rectangular label with the word 'Report' in white text.

Report

The main title of the report, 'Enterprise SaaS Management Certification', in a large, bold font. 'Enterprise SaaS Management' is in blue and 'Certification' is in pink.

Enterprise SaaS Management Certification

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Executive Summary

The ITAM Review certifies USU Software Asset Management as having met the requirements for Enterprise SaaS Management certification in accordance with our community-sourced open standard.



Background

USU is a German-founded and headquartered global organization with over 750 employees worldwide. USU provides a full suite of IT Management solutions including ITSM, ITAM, Hybrid Cloud, and ITOM. USU's ITAM products were previously branded as Aspera USU, until they were brought under the single USU banner in 2021. Founded in 1977, USU have been active in the ITAM tools and services market since 2010. USU is a public company and reported revenues of €112m in 2021.

USU's primary strength is in providing an integrated approach to IT Asset Management in the context of wider IT governance requirements. They recognise that enterprise customer estates are large, complex, distributed, and increasingly hybrid. The SaaS Management capabilities of USU Software Asset Management reflect this, in being able to manage all software, whether it be on-premises, true clientless SaaS, or a hybrid solution such as Adobe Creative Cloud and Microsoft 365. Furthermore, USU also provides a range of managed service offerings for organizations looking to at least partly outsource software license optimization.

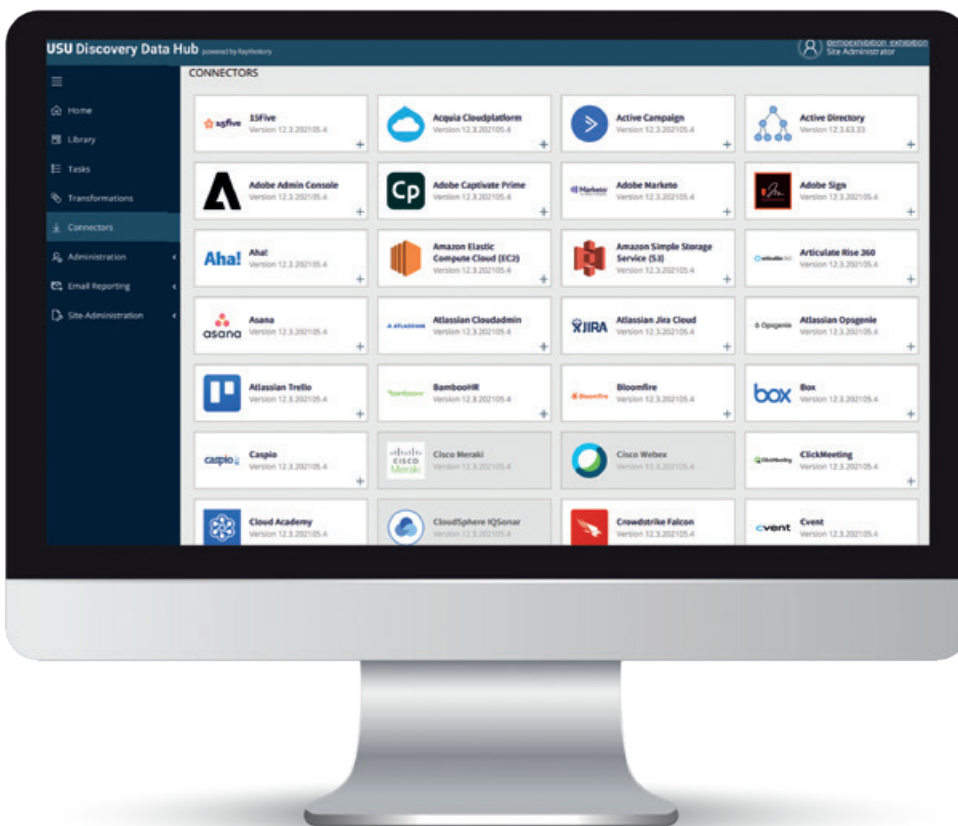
Analyst Review

This analyst review is based on the detailed responses provided by USU to the certification survey, customer references, and an in-depth demo provided to the author. The review assesses and provides commentary on USU's adherence to the standard in five areas.

Discovery & Inventory

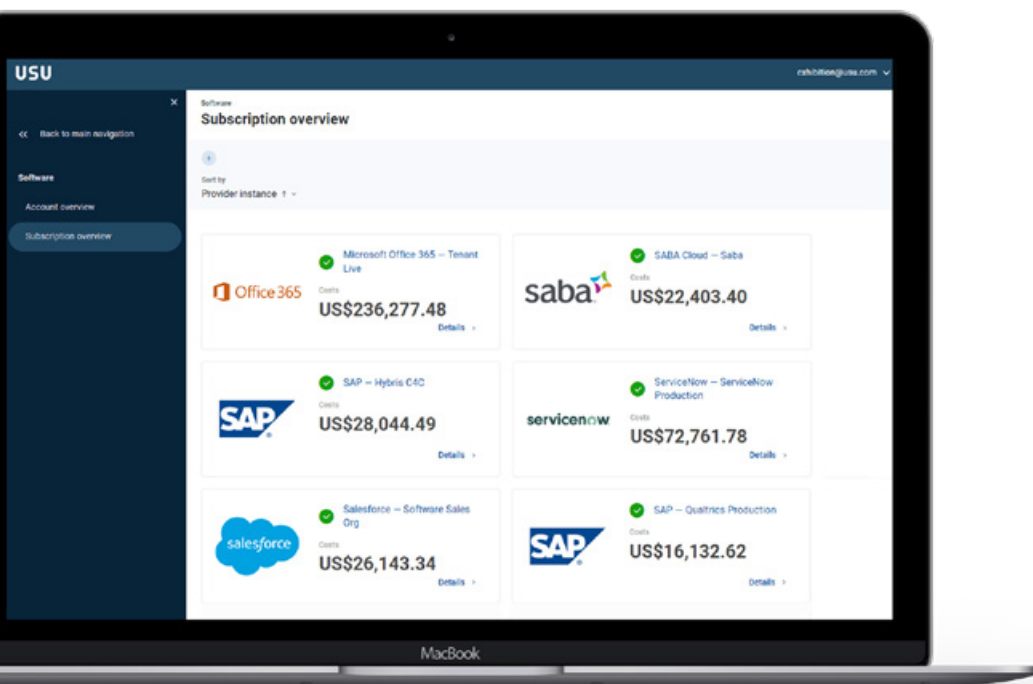
USU's SaaS Management product is available solely as a cloud-based tool. In keeping with other solutions in this market it uses flexible discovery and inventory methodologies, focused particularly on enterprise-level applications such as Salesforce, ServiceNow, and Microsoft 365.

Primary discovery and inventory is performed via API connection to SaaS publisher portals, with over 130 connections available. A web browser plugin is available and the tool can also ingest usage metering data from on-premises devices. Data is also gathered from single sign on solutions such as Okta and an integration with Concur for expense information is provided.



Customer references reported that this flexibility extends to ingesting data from existing discovery and inventory sources, important in secure and tightly controlled environments where agreement to deploy additional discovery tooling might be difficult.

USU continue to develop the product's capability in this area through the addition of new connectors based on customer demand. Furthermore, if customers need, for example, an industry-specific or niche connector created they may engage USU's Managed Services to have it developed. Over time customers should see USU's library of connectors expand to provide comprehensive coverage.



Cost Management

Cost Management goes hand-in-hand with optimization and so this section should be read in conjunction with the section below in order to get a full picture of USU’s capabilities in this area.

Cost Management opportunities for SaaS are presented regularly, due to the volume of applications and typically annual agreements. As such, a renewals calendar is a vital function of any SaaS Management tool. Knowing the usage of an application enables each renewal to be right-sized in order to cut down waste. USU’s solution provides a renewals calendar across all software.

Importantly, for larger enterprises, it is possible to allocate applications to owners, which supports departmental and division-level IT governance. Furthermore, expenditure can be assigned to corporate entities for cross-charging and accounting purposes. This is a long-standing feature of USU’s other ITAM products and is a differentiator for their SaaS Management solution.

Optimization

USU's Software Asset Management products are based around highly configurable rulesets designed to capture both the nuance of standard software agreements and any customer-specific terms and conditions. A large number of standard rulesets are available out of the box and customers can develop their own. USU's Managed Services can also be engaged to configure rulesets to aid optimization.

Optimization capabilities are largely dependent on the information available from application APIs, and this is in keeping with other solutions in this market. Where USU goes further is in integrating data from on-premises, SaaS only, and hybrid solutions to provide a single view of an application or publisher. Optimization rulesets are available to detect overlapping software, unused and underutilized software, and to enable consolidation of contracts and agreements.

Automation & Management

Automation capabilities which meet the standard are included in the tool, including connectivity between systems for data-sharing and a self-service employee application store. Optimizations and other tasks can be triggered from within the tool or can be passed to external toolsets such as a ticketing system for further action. USU have always excelled in making ITAM data available to other toolsets and this excellence applies to the SaaS Management capabilities too.



Risk Management

In keeping with USU's status as a provider of enterprise-ready solutions the tool is well-equipped to deliver wide-ranging risk management capabilities. Application Deny/Allow lists can be maintained and relevant compliance data for applications (e.g. SOC2 status) is available. Other features include vulnerability scanning and the ability to examine and report upon potentially harmful application permissions.

Review Summary

USU take an innovative approach to managing SaaS, ensuring that it is always placed in the context of wider IT Governance in general, and SAM specifically. The solution fully complies with the certification standard. However, to get the best from the solution, either an in-house expert team or assistance from USU's managed services is required. The tool is complex, and the UI is less modern than newer entrants in this market, although USU are working on unifying and updating the user experience across all their products.



Customer References

USU provided two customer references for this certification who were interviewed independently by an ITAM Review analyst. The ITAM Review welcomes further references and reviews for USU. If you wish to contribute, please submit your review on The ITAM Review Marketplace

Media & Publishing Company, Europe

This reference is a large media and publishing company based in Europe and operating worldwide.

The reference selected USU following a formal broad market RFI and POC process and selected USU for license management and SaaS optimization. USU's SaaS Management solutions supports them in the day-to-day optimization of SaaS applications. This was necessary due to dynamic nature of demand for software applications in their business and a requirement to plan, manage, and control costs over the entire software lifecycle.

Implementation was rapid with excellent support from USU. The scope was approximately 8,000 users and over 10,000 devices. The implementation delivered ROI from just focusing on and optimizing a single publisher. As such, continuous ROI from the tool is expected as more publishers are optimized.

The reference noted that USU's flexibility of inventory and discovery methods was key, as they were required

to use existing sources of data wherever possible. This flexible approach is notable in all USU ITAM solutions and is particularly suited to large enterprises which have pre-existing tooling in this area. This flexibility extends to other areas with the USU data being surfaced by the reference in reporting dashboards and shared with other IT Service Management solutions.

Areas for improvement noted included the need for better training and a reduction in reliance on USU's consultants for product knowledge and onboarding new software vendors. This is in keeping with the ITAM Review's view of USU's approach to ITAM – the tools are very powerful but do require either an expert in-house team or managed services to extract the best from them.

Overall, the reference is satisfied with the implementation of the solution and the ROI received. They have plans to implement USU's built-in dashboarding capability and make use of new product features as they become available.

Conclusion

USU have had solutions for SaaS Management for as long as this solution category has existed. For example, they developed one of the first comprehensive solutions for optimizing Salesforce. They are naturally focused on providing bespoke optimization solutions for the largest enterprise software vendors and this makes their products particularly suited to enterprise customers.

The SaaS capabilities of the latest iteration of USU Software Asset Management are highly flexible and powerful although in keeping with other USU solutions do need an expert in-house team or continuing engagement with USU's excellent SAM Managed Services to deliver optimal results. USU's customer service is reported as excellent and our research indicates that the solutions are priced very competitively compared to other enterprise ITAM toolsets.

USU's approach to meeting SaaS Management use cases differs from other players in this market and it should be noted that they're particularly suited to large enterprise customers. This is particularly the case if those customers are highly distributed and needing to govern on-premises, pure SaaS, and hybrid software deployments.

About ITAM Review Certifications

The ITAM Review develops and maintains community-sourced certifications for ITAM-related tools and services. Each certification consists of a survey, product review and two independent customer references. We welcome additional reviews of the product or service via The ITAM Review Marketplace.

About The ITAM Review

Founded in 2008, The ITAM Review provides independent news, reviews, and analysis for the global IT Asset Management community. The ITAM Review also runs in-person, online, and hybrid conferences for the global community. ITAM Review Learning & ITAM Review Careers provide online and in-person training and recruitment services respectively.