



SYMPHION RESOURCE LIBERATOR

HOW SYMPHION'S SNIF™ WORKS TO LOWER COSTS AND FREE UP RESOURCES

I. Executive Summary

It's a sign of the times: top executives pushing their IT departments for higher performance, while pressuring CIOs and IT managers to reduce operational costs and limit, if not reduce, hiring full-time employees.

Right now, IT leaders are feeling the pinch of shrinking budgets, as they're forced to maximize available resources. The IT infrastructure is under more stress than ever, with demand outpacing capacity – making it an environment of continual volatility and disruption. Managing such a delicate and complex system using fewer staff and resources than what's required can create a dire situation with potentially disastrous consequences.

This white paper highlights the means by which IT leaders can maximize resources and optimize their organization's goals by using the Symphion Network Instrumentation "Intelligence" Framework (SNIF™) solution. SNIF™ is a faster, more accurate IT asset management tool that provides essential IT intelligence about the type, locations and configuration of individual or groups of IT assets. In this way, SNIF™ functions as a "resource liberator," freeing up personnel to focus on more mission-critical tasks while helping IT professionals make better decisions that lower costs.

In addition, SNIF™ works to optimize and align the long-term goals of organizations, by helping them to achieve:

- Wiser fiscal and enterprise IT decision-making
- Immediate reduction in costs: right-sizing hardware, software and personnel
- More effective IT planning and management

As a managed service provider, Symphion's offers SNIF™ as a completely managed solution. Through a secure virtual private network (VPN)



Symphion's virtual management solutions team will direct all aspects of the SNIF™ solution, from installation and deployment to ongoing management and report generation – all for one fixed low cost and no hidden fees. Symphion relieves IT leaders from the headache and stress associated with new software installations and deployments and gives them all the benefits of faster, more accurate IT intel and a state-of-the-art Configuration Management Database (CMDB) Solution.

IT leaders are, thereby, enabled to better accomplish their tactical and increasingly strategic responsibilities by using technology to foster better decision-making while saving operational expenses.

II. The Challenge

Facing budget concerns, IT leaders have the unenviable task of scaling back on resources and staff. At the same times, they're tasked with improving their existing systems to meet customer demands and maintain their organization's competitive advantage. Even the "spend-money-to-save-money" adage loses appeal in the face of budget-conscious executives.

In spite of limited staff and resources, IT leaders strive to find new ways to best serve their organizations. One strategy in addressing this challenge is through more precise methods of gathering, querying and reporting on current IT assets that inhabit the network infrastructure and run applications and services. Often the solution is manual: valuable IT personnel assigned to collect and spreadsheet the results by hand.

On the other hand, a confusing array of CMDB software vendor tools – some of which are very expensive or woefully incomplete – can hinder the search for an effective tool. Alternatively, partial freeware or open-sourced solutions can quickly turn implementations into nightmares. Ironically, the mixture of product options and pricing structures offered by other solutions vendors are nearly as complex as the array of assets that IT leaders are seeking to manage.

The quest is not for more complexity, nor is it in finding a software solution that promises to deliver everything to everyone. SNIF™ targets a very specific need – comprehensive enterprise IT asset management and configuration reporting – and performs a very specific function: that of the discovery, interrogation, gathering and inventorying of IP-enabled asset intelligence and the generation valuable reporting based this intel.

From this comprehensive reporting, any IT professional – from the top CIO to helpdesk tech support – can glean information helpful in making effective decisions about how to best manage and use many enterprise assets.



III. The Solution

The strength of one's decisions is based on the availability, accessibility and accuracy of information: the wider the scope of information quantitatively and the greater the depth qualitatively, the better the decisions IT leaders can make for their organizations, both strategically and tactically.

SNIF™ provides a direct benefit by providing extensive and essential IT intel that's faster, more accurate and easier to use than the competition. As a managed service provider, Symphonion offers the added benefit of a cutting-edge CMDB solution that's installed, deployed, configured and managed by Symphonion's virtual management solution team. Symphonion offers the world's only managed CMDB solution, which it manages for one fixed low cost.

By using better IT intel, all members of an organization, from its top executives to regular staff, will notice a positive overall change, through better decision-making, reduced operational costs, and an IT environment that is more stable.

Better decision-making

SNIF™ reports can be used immediately to troubleshoot problems and establish evergreen asset management for efficiency and planning.

Immediate problem-solving. Running inefficient processes for troubleshooting and problem diagnosis is one cause of wasteful spending. IT administrators may only have partial knowledge as to the location and state of specific assets and only a partial knowledge of the entire IT ecosystem.

SNIF™ takes the guesswork out through the immediate establishment of a platform that offers comprehensive IT intel. For example, IT technical support personnel might use SNIF™ to access key diagnostic information. In three clicks, the IT professional can use SNIF™ to access valuable, current and historical data about the problem asset. SNIF™ generated information can be used to analyze a host of problems, such as:

- Rogue software installations
- A disk that's failing
- Software consuming more memory than expected
- A network card that's no longer functioning
- Unauthorized wireless network(s)

Evergreen platform. IT leaders risk major setbacks by basing their decisions on old or outdated IT intel. As the IT environment is ever changing, it requires a high-performing system that's capable of keeping



pace with change and recording it. Good decisions for the organization are derived from asset intelligence that's persistently refreshed and produced on a regular basis.

SNIF™'s speed and accuracy enables the end user to make multiple scans of all the organization's IT assets several times a day, if necessary. SNIF™ captures the refreshed information about each IT asset – including the assets' model, location, serial number, license expiration date, disk capacity, installed software – then stores it and makes it accessible through a web-based GUI system that's available to all authorized users on the organization's Intranet or in Microsoft Excel or Word printable reports.

Lowers all costs

SNIF™ works to lower all costs by minimizing employee time preciously spent on manually reporting and inventorying of IT assets. (Non IP-enabled assets, such as desktop monitors, must be entered into SNIF™ manually). Consequently, IT administrators can reallocate human assets as needed. SNIF™ also works as a “right-size” solution, matching up IT requirements precisely with their available resources.

Lowers employee time. The largest expenditure for many organizations is payroll. Since SNIF™ saves the time associated with gathering and communicating IT intel, IT leaders can make significant cost savings when redistributing personnel to other areas where needed. Redistributing personnel from low-skill tasks to areas requiring high-value, high-level skill helps increase productivity, effectiveness and efficiencies.

Right-sized solution. From SNIF™, IT managers will easily uncover areas where asset redundancies are occurring. The reports might indicate a network running 40 printers, which turn out to be the optimal amount for the organization's needs, even though 60 printers were originally purchased, leaving 20 still in boxes and awaiting disposition. Without an automated system for IT asset discovery and inventory, managers are left to “guess-timate” the number of assets they think are the right fit for the organization. SNIF™ works by showing where these inefficiencies have occurred. For example, right sizing allows the end user to move applications from an overburdened server to one that's under capacity, thereby meeting capacity and improving efficiency.

The right-sizing of IT assets usually yields a cost-savings for the organization, either in the form of a rebate (unused equipment that's in good enough condition to be resold or returned), or in the form of better-planning should the organization need new equipment at a later time. The same is true of right-sizing software licenses, seat licenses, and matching



investments to the true needs of the organization derived from accurate comprehensive IT intel reports generated by SNIF™.

Immediate impact

Once installed, SNIF™ begins working to save time and money. SNIF™ is so comprehensive, even professional IT outsourcers (the “pros”) use it as a proven solution to lower their operating costs. There is no wait time for SNIF™. It begins working as soon as it’s fully installed and up and running.

Adapts Well. When organizations take on new software applications or solutions, it often creates initial growing pains. Once installed, software solutions prove to be inflexible, forcing the organization and its staff to adapt. In many instances, the new solution ends up as “the tail wagging the dog,” as the organization bends and hamstring its existing processes to meet the needs of the software solution. This effort, in turn, deprives the organization of the valuable resources it needs to meet core objectives.

SNIF™ works in the opposite fashion, by adapting to the needs of the organization. By using SNIF™, IT managers can identify and manage various enterprise-wide assets, including those not directly associated with each other or those assets spread over a wide geography. SNIF™ does this by allowing the user to create Custom Profiles, which establishes individual groupings, or clusters, of specific IP-enabled assets within a selected discovery field.

With other software vendor products, the user is bound by one profile, which can’t be altered or amended. But with SNIF™, the end user has the freedom to create an unlimited number of profiles and add as many IP addresses as desired.

Minimal learning curve. While some software solutions require weeks of training to learn, IT staff can be trained on SNIF™ in one hour or less. The web-based application opens as a web browser and runs quietly on the organization’s Intranet. With a few clicks of the mouse, SNIF™ gives the user quick, comprehensive and current information about each asset that’s both accurate and up-to-date.

SNIF’s GUI system is designed to be extremely intuitive and is organized in logical groupings that make sense even to the casual, first-time user. In three clicks, the user can log in and access all-important information for managing IT assets.



IV. Conclusion

IT leaders are under enormous pressure these days: meeting customer demands, aligning technology with the goals of their organizations, and doing it all with limited time and money. They need more staff and time to meet the everyday challenges presented by IT asset management. But short of a budget windfall, there are hardly the financial resources to fulfill their requests.

Ultimately, an IT department's success is based on good leadership and effective decision-making, accomplished – at least in part – through the quality and quantity of intelligence about one's assets. Good decision-making starts with a good first step through the purchase of a cost-effective, efficient solution for IT asset intelligence gathering and reporting that keeps the end user continually up to date..

As a cutting- edge CMDB solution, SNIF™ relieves some of the pressure by supplying the organization with fresh and consistently accurate IT intel that, upon each use, detects those assets that have been replaced, changed or modified. As a managed service provider, Symphonion offers beleaguered CIOs and IT leaders with even more relief.

Pursuant to a Symphonion Managed Solution Agreement, Symphonion's management solution team will get SNIF™ up and running in 3 days or less and assume responsibility for the ongoing management of the solution. IT leaders receive all the benefits of faster, more accurate IT intel without having to oversee or manage the process of gathering and refreshing it. What's more, the SNIF™ solution is affordably priced with a neutral impact on a department's budget.

Symphonion recognizes the plight of the IT leader seeking to attain better control and management over his or her IT assets. The SNIF™ solution was specifically designed to meet this need in a way that's accessible, affordable and helps IT leaders manage everyday IT challenges while meeting their strategic long-range goals. Through the immediate and reliable benefits of SNIF™, IT leaders have a better opportunity to unburden themselves and their staff, thus allowing them to reach out to other areas where problem assistance or planning help is needed.