



Hardware and Asset Management Program

Program Overview & Acceptable Use Policy

An Asset Management Tool (AMT) is a tool for managing user computers such as desktops and laptops. Its main use is for installing and updating software and inventorying licensed software. Technology tools such as these allow processes to be automated for efficiency, enabling IT personnel to provide better services with equal or diminished resources. Additionally, MSU Denver Business Services needs accurate information about licensed software usage to verify license compliance, to mitigate risk of legal liability and to effectively negotiate with software vendors.

MSU Denver's Hardware & Asset Management Program represents an effort to better account for the computing devices and applications owned by MSU Denver. This Program offers improved data for financial and technical decision-makers while streamlining select systems administration tasks, yielding an enhanced end user experience and reduced IT workload.

MSU Denver ITS has selected two well-known commercial applications for use within the MSU Denver technical environment: Microsoft Systems Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) and JAMF Casper. The SCCM platform will serve Windows-based devices, while Casper is designed to support the Mac platform. Each tool represents a best-in-breed solution that is used by thousands of organizations worldwide – including thousands of educational institutions.

Enrollment

Student Computing

All Student Computing environments, including general labs, departmental labs and classroom/presentation computers will be automatically enrolled in the Hardware & Asset Management Program.

Staff Computing

All administrative and academic staff computers will be automatically enrolled in the Hardware & Asset Management Program. This includes any staff member whose primary role with the university is in a staff capacity, but may also teach a limited course load on an ad hoc basis.

Faculty Computing

As of the Fall 2015 semester, Faculty computing devices are eligible for self-enrollment in the Hardware & Asset Management Program. Faculty workstations are not presently scheduled for automatic enrollment in the program. Faculty members who wish to opt-in to the program may do so by completing a simple web form at

<http://msudenver.edu/msudenverhelpdesk/helpdeskknowledgebase/assetmanagementprogram/>

Systems Overview

Due to the breadth of features available and frequent changes in modern technology platforms, an overview of systems capabilities for both SCCM and Casper will be provided in a separate document. This document will be consistently available for download from The MSU Denver Information Technology Services website, available at <http://msudenver.edu/msudenverhelpdesk/helpdeskknowledgebase/assetmanagementprogram/>.

Acceptable Use

To enable their functionality, an Asset Management Tool (AMT) modifies existing administrator access to a computer for IT personnel. More information on AMTs and their capabilities can be found in the attached "Frequently Asked Questions about AMTs at MSU Denver". Access to a computer and its data by someone other than the user raises issues of privacy and academic freedom (while making no assumption of ill intent by those administering an AMT).

The following items describe the acceptable use of AMTs at MSU Denver.

Policies for acceptable use of AMTs

The use of AMT is mandatory for all non-faculty staff members. The use of an AMT is voluntary for individual faculty on an opt-in basis. A faculty member who opts to not use a AMT may receive less efficient IT support, but should not be treated differently in ways unrelated to the AMT.

All users are responsible for ensuring that all software is compliant with licenses and for providing verification if necessary.

All uses of AMTs will comply with university policies and will respect privacy and faculty academic freedom. MSU Denver IT Services personnel are prohibited from accessing individual user files or data unless necessary for maintenance or repair.

All AMT activity is logged at MSU Denver, and the logs can be accessed only by MSU Denver personnel (the system vendor of AMTs will not have access to the MSU Denver AMT). Users may see the activity logs for his or her machine upon request. If any concerns are identified, the user shall notify the MSU Denver Information Security Officer within 30 days of the activity in question. In the event a dispute arises, MSU Denver ITS or the user may choose to engage the Office of Equal Opportunity as an impartial party.

Actions taken using AMTs (such as installing or updating software) for individual machines must be documented in Helpdesk tickets, and the end user should be notified via email of the Helpdesk ticket information. AMTs can and will be used centrally for generalized reporting on hardware inventory, software usage (particularly for license negotiation) and for software license compliance.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an AMT?

An AMT is a tool MSU Denver has licensed to help manage users' computers such as desktops and laptops. Its primary uses are to automate the process of maintaining hardware inventory, installing and updating software, and to inventory software for compliance of licenses. At MSU Denver, the selected tools are known as Microsoft Systems Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) and JAMF Casper.

2. Who controls what SCCM/Casper is doing on my computer?

An AMT on your computer is controlled by MSU Denver ITS. For general reports on inventory, or for campus-wide updates for security patches, AMT activities are initiated by the systems administration team. For individual support requests, User Support team members may initiate support sessions.

3. Why does the university need an inventory of licensed software?

MSU Denver licenses many software applications for use by faculty, staff, and students. For software licensed for a limited number of installations, the contracts include a standard clause stating that MSU Denver must verify to the software vendor that all copies of the software on University-owned computers are licensed. If unsatisfied with the University's accounting of the usage of the software, the software vendor may initiate an audit of all University-owned computers to perform this verification (usually performed by a third party). As AMTs report the software installed on user computers, MSU Denver can ensure it is compliant with software licenses and can provide this evidence to vendors.

Additionally, understanding the usage of licensed software may help ITS Business Services to negotiate better prices with software vendors for commonly used software.

4. How are software updates scheduled?

AMTs have the ability to show messages to users informing them of what is occurring. Updates can be scheduled so that users can defer them to more convenient times, or can be scheduled to occur immediately, or at certain times (such as at night). Computers can be put in different groups that affect how and which actions are taken on the machine. For instance, a "Do not update" group could be applied to lab machine that is doing data acquisition continuously for 3 months.

5. What information does SCCM/Casper gather about my computer?

AMTs gather basic hardware information (such as type of CPU, type of video card, size of hard drive, etc); which OS and system patches are installed; and a list of all installed software (as would appear in the list of installed software displayed in the Microsoft Windows Control Panel). An AMT may also be configured to perform "metering" of software to determine how frequently a given application is used within the MSU Denver community.

6. On what platforms do MSU Denver's AMT solutions run?

AMTs run on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X.

7. How do I tell if an AMT is installed on my computer?

Please refer to the provided Hardware & Asset Management Tool Overview Guide.

8. How do I have an AMT uninstalled if one is installed on my computer and I choose to not opt-in to its use on my computer?

Faculty members may choose to opt out of the Hardware and Asset Management Program at any time by contacting the MSU Denver ITS Helpdesk. We recommend that, in addition to scheduling uninstallation of the AMT agent, the requestor also discuss alternate means of providing IT support for your computer. As noted previously, full-time staff and student users are not eligible to opt out of this program.

9. Can an AMT be used to access my files, email, web browser history, or other data on my computer?

While it is possible for a technician to access other data on a computer through an AMT, the use of an AMT actually provides more granular control of system access than what is offered by administration tools natively included in Microsoft Windows and Mac OS. Administrative access through an AMT is tightly controlled and documented, and MSU Denver AMTs have been configured to require interactive, explicit affirmative permission from the computer user before an AMT is used to remotely control a computer or remotely view a user's computer display.

All employees and students of MSU Denver are expected to respect privacy, but IT staff carry a particular responsibility to respect users' privacy because of their access to computer systems. Information systems technological personnel performing repair or maintenance of computing equipment are prohibited from exceeding their authority of access for repair and maintenance purposes or from making any use of individual user files or data for any purpose other than repair or maintenance services performed by them.

10. Does an AMT reduce our computer security because it is a single point of vulnerability?

MSU Denver computer systems are being constantly probed from both inside and outside our networks for vulnerabilities, and it is important that all computers maintain a current, strong security posture. One of the primary uses of an AMT is to ensure security updates are applied to user computers in a timely fashion. Such security updates include not only operating system updates from Microsoft and Apple, but also security updates to common software such as Java or Adobe.

11. Will an AMT slow down my computer?

An AMT is designed to consume very little resources, and most users should not notice it running on their machines.

12. Are AMTs currently being used on campus?

AMTs are currently being used on approximately 1,000 campus computers at MSU Denver, including lab & staff computers, and will be used on faculty computers as requested.

13. Why would a faculty member choose to have an AMT on his/her computer?

An AMT can be used to make the process of installing and updating software, installing security updates and providing remote support more efficient. This allows MSU Denver ITS personnel to provide better on-demand support while freeing resources to improve other aspects of campus technology. An AMT may also be less invasive for monitoring of software license compliance than an audit performed for a software vendor by a third party, and information on software usage may help ITS Business Services to negotiate better prices with software vendors for commonly used software.

Users with additional questions or concerns are encouraged to contact the ITS Helpdesk at 303-352-7548, or to submit a ticket online via <http://www.msudenver.edu/gethelp>.