

Inventory & Discovery Certification Report

USU

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Executive Summary



The ITAM Review certifies USU as having met the requirements for Inventory & Discovery certification in accordance with our community-sourced [open standard](#).

Background

USU are 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 €126m in 2022.

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 Inventory & Discovery capabilities of USU's ITAM solution reflect this by being able to provide visibility of hardware, software, cloud services, SaaS, and containers in a highly modular and extensible approach. These capabilities are backed up with a comprehensive managed service and consultancy offering.

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. USU's discovery and inventory capabilities are split into two distinct and complementary services. **USU Discovery Data Hub** focuses on cloud services – PaaS, IaaS, and SaaS – whilst **USU Discovery Scan Engine** focuses on on-premise deployments, although there is also overlap between the two.

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USU Discovery & Scan Engine

USU Discovery Scan Engine provides both agentless and agent-based inventory and discovery of software and hardware, including virtual machines and containers (Kubernetes & Docker). This product is based upon Raynet's RayVentory product.

Flexible discovery options include zero-touch "agentless", agent-based, zero-touch remote, and portable scanning (e.g. via a USB drive). These scans provide full hardware, software and service scans of target devices and networks, leveraging common techniques such as WMI. However, this isn't limited to Windows devices – USU Discovery Scan Engine will provide insight into Mac, Linux, Unix, and virtualized environments.

The resulting data is presented in a modern and intuitive tile-based UI, similar to that used in Windows 10. This UI does an excellent job of summarising complex data and making it more human-readable whilst also providing access to full raw data. This raw data is valuable for more technical stakeholders and also provides an additional layer of certainty and data trustworthiness.

USU Discovery Scan Engine provides extensive support for containerized deployments via its Kubernetes and Docker capabilities. Full inventories of Kubernetes [Images](#), [Nodes](#), and [Pods](#) are possible, as is monitoring of Package Managers commonly used in *nix environments.

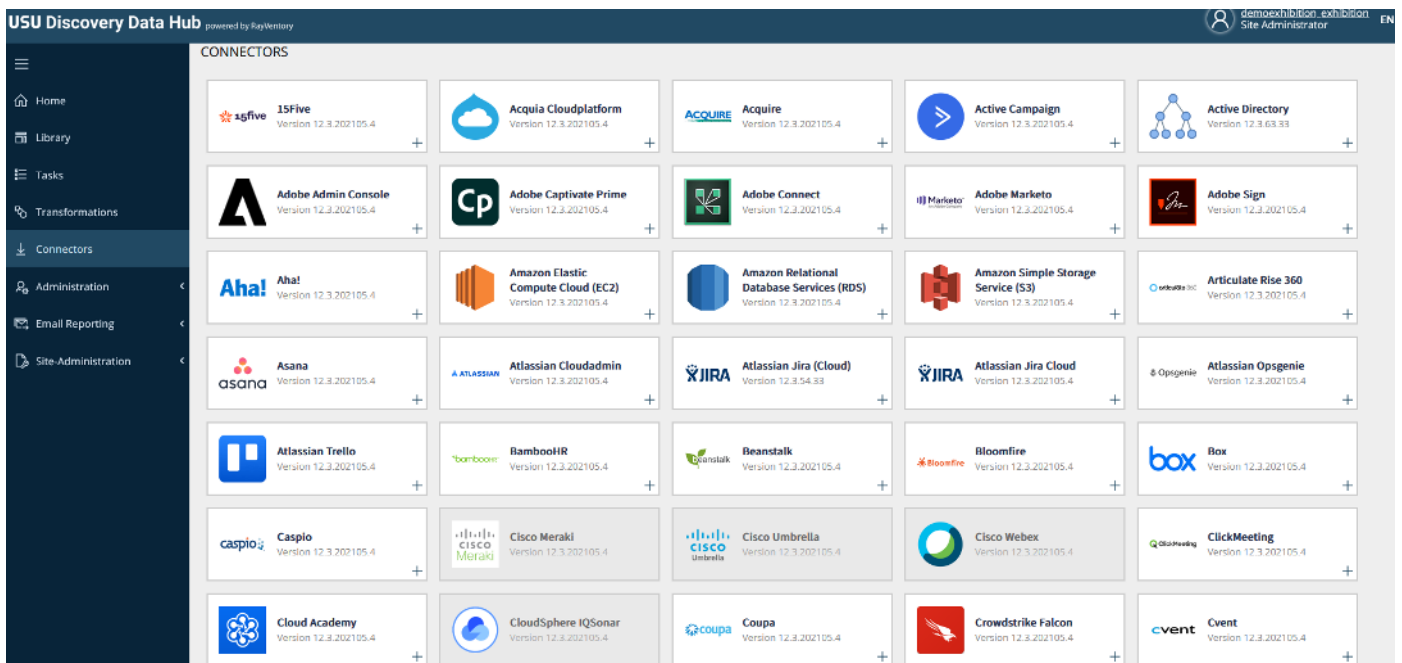
USU Discovery Data Hub

USU Discovery Data Hub (DDH) provides a means for organizations to efficiently discover and inventory their cloud deployments including PaaS, IaaS, and SaaS. DDH primarily works on a connector-based approach, leveraging API connections to data sources. In addition to cloud DDH can also connect to on-premises virtual environments via connectors for VMware vSphere, Microsoft Active Directory, and so on. As the name suggests, it serves as a hub for the perhaps dozens of data sources modern organizations need to interrogate to get a full picture of their hybrid IT estates.

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DDH is highly configurable with extensive documentation provided by USU on a per connector basis. Each connector typically has different requirements regarding scan credentials and data source interrogation. As such, expertise is required in setting up connectors, and USU can provide this as a service. For customers configuring connectors in-house it's likely that they will need assistance from technical and operational stakeholders to obtain the necessary credentials and parameters. Once a connector is set up for the first time typically no further configuration is required so it makes sense for this service to be performed by the experts at USU and their partners. DDH currently has over 160 connectors and there is a roadmap in place to expand this based on customer demand. The product is engineered so that connectors can be created and updated centrally by USU staff and then made available to all customers.

DDH provides a modern UI with pre-defined dashboards. Customers can also build their own, either in house or with a solution provider. USU state that in most cases DDH is managed on the customer's behalf by USU.

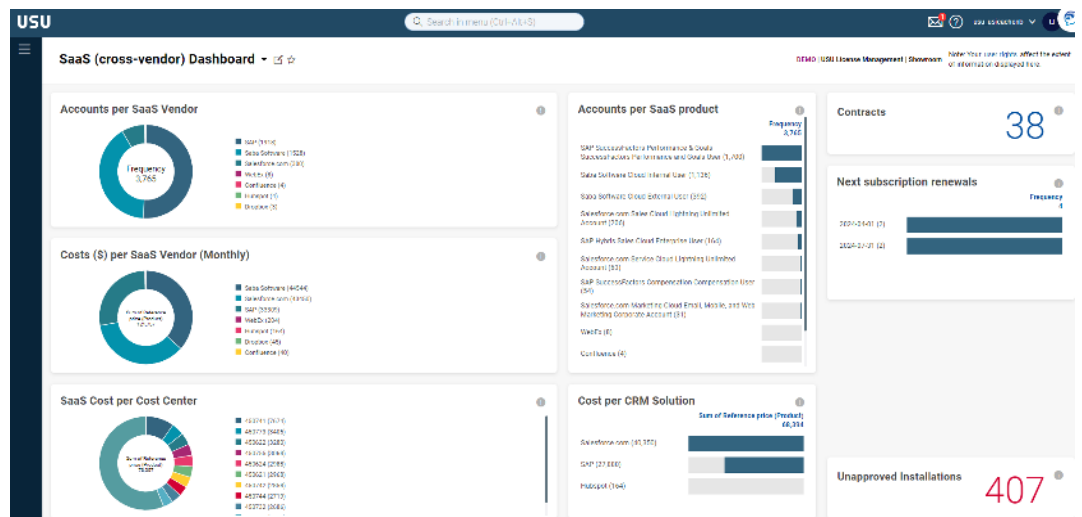


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DDH feeds data into USU's proprietary normalisation engine which is driven by rulesets designed to maximise data quality. For example, data sources can be ranked in terms of trustworthiness based on parameters such as age of discovered record. These rulesets are maintained centrally by USU – DDH is primarily a cloud solution although on-premises deployment is possible – thereby ensuring they are updated to take account of changes in metrics and so on. The output from normalisation is then available for consumption by other tools, including USU's License Management, SaaS, SAP, & Oracle products. The consistent trustworthy data produced by DDH greatly improves the efficiency of these downstream products. Furthermore, the data can be made available to non-USU toolsets if required.

Review Summary

USU have undertaken rapid development of in-house inventory and discovery tooling in a notable change in strategy. Previously, USU encouraged



customers to bring their own data to USU tools in order to generate compliance positions and optimizations. Now, in response to customers requesting a “one stop” solution, they have a comprehensive discovery and inventory toolset which underpins all their other ITAM & SAM products. In keeping with those other products these solutions also require good in-house expertise with the tooling, or for customers to engage USU's Managed Services and consultants. It is also possible for customers to work with external service providers. The tools are powerful and highly configurable and in comparison to previous Aspera/USU products they now benefit from a much improved and modern UI.

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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.

Customer Reference 1: Global Automotive Technology Provider

This reference is based in the USA and operates worldwide with over 6000 employees. They used USU's inventory and discovery capabilities initially to provide the data necessary to manage and optimize their Oracle estate using USU's Oracle License Management model. This gave IT and ITAM accurate insight into an area where existing inventory tools – primarily Microsoft SCCM – did not provide sufficient detail. Due to a successful deployment for Oracle which yielded considerable ROI IT decided to deploy USU Inventory and Discovery estate wide. With over half of their estate on non-Windows operating systems this meant that they had full visibility of the majority of their estate for the first time. Deployment was rapid and straightforward for the experienced IT team and ROI was substantial due to increased visibility uncovering risks and highlighting optimization opportunities.

At time of initial deployment approximately four years ago the reference noted that there were issues with support coverage. In part this was due to timezone differences resulting from the product being supported solely from France. USU addressed this by training local US-based staff, in part as a result of this reference's request. We have noted this issue in prior Aspera/USU certifications and equally have found from references that support has improved significantly in recent years.

Overall the reference was pleased with the relative ease of deployment, cost-effectiveness of the product, and the significant ROI received from its use across their diverse estate.

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Customer Reference 2: Global Retailer

This reference operates multinationally as a retailer and wholesaler. As such, their IT environment is highly distributed across countries, warehouses, and retail establishments. They manage approximately 100,000 users and 130,000 devices.

USU was selected in a competitive bid process to provide a comprehensive estate-wide solution to the reference's Discovery & Inventory requirements in 2020. Prior to this individual regions and operating divisions had managed IT assets locally, using a variety of solutions. The centralized approach was desired in order to gain greater visibility of IT assets, in order to support a new ITAM Operating Model. USU solutions were selected due to better overall functionality at a competitive price, along with a strong focus on customizability and customer service. USU also offered the functionality required for licence allocation to individual operating entities along with strong capabilities for managing merger and acquisition tasks relating to ITAM.

Implementation of the solutions was carried out in-house in conjunction with USU consultants. In keeping with other USU customers ITAM Review has spoken to this reference also is contracted annually for a number of consultancy days which can be called upon to carry out configuration and consultancy work as required. They are happy with the support provided and note that much work has been undertaken to harmonize the user experience across USU's products but that there are still improvements to be made around ease of use and the user interface.

The reference praised the flexibility of Discovery Data Hub in enabling connection to a wide variety of data sources, including SaaS and Cloud. They are already using this to gain insights into Microsoft 365 usage and license consumption and expect to extend their focus in this area due to the visibility provided by USU's solutions.

Overall, they are progressing at pace in the implementation phase, having onboarded many sites and the three largest software vendors. This has already yielded positive results in what is expected to be a long-term partnership with USU.

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Conclusion

USU's approach to addressing ITAM use cases has always been engineering-led. They have focused on making sense of data from a wide variety of sources and then using that foundational trustworthy data to inform decision-making for cost management, risk management, audit response, and so on.

Since we last looked at USU's products they have expanded their approach to make greater use of in-house discovery and inventory sources, in response to customer demand. This two-pronged approach means the products can adapt to ever-changing technology deployment methods, as evidenced by support for containerized environments in USU Discovery Scan Engine and SaaS APIs in Discovery Data Hub.

These products enable USU to meet current customer requirements such as data analytics, visualization, and automation. ISO 19770 states that good ITAM starts with trustworthy data, and that's exactly what USU's discovery and inventory products provide.

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 ITAM Review

Founded in 2008, ITAM Review provides independent news, reviews, and analysis for the global IT Asset Management community. ITAM Review also runs in-person, online, and hybrid conferences for the global community. ITAM Review Learning provides online and in-person training via the [LISA](#) platform.