

Ep. 49 How to Discover, Manage, and Secure a Federal Network

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Welcome to the federal tech podcast. My name is John Gilroy and I will be your moderator. Today we're sitting down with Malcolm Davis, systems engineering manager at worldwide technology. And we're going to look at IT Service Management from the perspective of federal technology professional. But first, I would be remiss if I didn't say we are recording this live from the floor of elastic on public sector down here in Washington, DC. So did you get a chance to meet anyone elastic concert? Malcolm, tell me what you learned

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today. I did. So I met a number of our partners here today. And and there's all sorts of excitement going on next door in the in the big room

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in the bigger we're in the little room, I guess I don't know where we're up in the little room here. So I want to focus today on IT Service Management and the aspect of it, I want to focus in on visibility. And I'm trying to come up with a good story about visibility, I think have a good way. So my application is racing, I race in the oceans Pacific Atlantic Ocean, due to four mile races. One time I was in a race, I jumped in the water and someone kicked me knocked my goggles off. I had no visibility, I had to go back to shore, beg someone for a pair of goggles and come back in the race and have a good time for that race. But I tell you what, I couldn't have gone two miles in the ocean without goggles because I couldn't see I had no visibility, that's a toss to you. So what about visibility? And what about it? Asset Management? Where does WT fit in?

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Sure. So there's a lot there. Right. So Devon deputy actually has a IT Service Management Practice, and will go in and help customers identify what type of software hardware they have in their environment, and help them get situated with a a tool that that enables them to do discovery also gives them a single pane of glass of all of their assets. So if I can focus on the ASP net asset management portion of this, that's usually the first step once you once you start managing your your IT lifecycle. So there's many frameworks to include ITIL, to manage your it. But on the asset management side of the house, there we've got a number of partners that we can bring in to assist us doing some assessments, but a common problem and I'll I'll use a story from a previous customer. We've got customers that have such a large environment that's that's expanded a little bit



out of out of their control. So they they start losing visibility of some of the assets and hardware that they that they've got in their in their enterprise environment. And what that does is it starts to create a little bit of technical debt. As time goes on. It creates cyber vulnerabilities. Because now there's there's equipment, and software that's out in their enterprise environment that they sometimes don't know about today. This is usually managed by folks that are using spreadsheets, there's a little bit of human error that can occur there. There's some discrepancies, and it's not fed to management in a live kind of manner. So that's where we start to look at automation, the automation of asset management, which is where we bring in tools from one of our partners be Flexera that provides you that single pane of glass that enables customers to get a grasp of what they have in their environment, how they're consuming it and try to understand what's being used, what's not being used. So they're their entitlements that reflects they're also there, there's some cost considerations where they start to run into Hey, I've got a large program where we've made a large procurement to deploy to a global network and we've got some stuff sitting in a warehouse and we have some stuff sitting in the field. Well, what happens there when people are manually trying to manage stuff that's not directly in their in their purview, if it's in somebody's closet, out in another state, or sometimes in another country. They don't have visibility over it. They have to they are sending people on airplanes to go to go do do some some property management there. We do have the have the ability to you to automatically discover some of the tools that are out there. And that and that it allows people to focus on on what's actually out there in the field and what's being consumed. One at one of the items that that we've dealt with in the past is a customer had a large program supporting a DOD level network. And they had an enterprise agreement, which is basically the equipment warranty for all of the assets that they have out in the ground. Well, what was going on here was they were being managed by spreadsheets, and there was equipment out in the field that was covered by warranty, but there was also equipment that was sitting in a warehouse, and they were still paying for the warranty on this equipment, brand new in a box sitting in the warehouse, and getting charged for it, stuff hasn't even been out of the box is brand new. So when we when we get these assets, asset management tools in place, now the customer has a good understanding of their license consumption, their service agreements, what's covered what's actually in production, what is sitting in a warehouse in a box, because you can also tie these systems into existing, let's say warehouse, warehouse ordering system. So you can you can tie them into that so that you can have greater visibility. And again, the ultimate goal there is to get rid of your technical debt, to have that single pane of glass view so you can accurately manage the assets that you have out there. And also see it in real time. That's, that is very important.

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No, Malcolm, when you said the word warehouse, I wrote down data warehouse. So I keep thinking about data, you know, and different things. And so you may have a set of wrenches that are not accounted for. But I think in my world of software, you may have a license, which is just as expensive that's unaccounted for, maybe duplicate it. And so if you can get visibility into your system, a federal agency can efficiently use the money that they have, um, in order to be terrific, you got to be specific, but but this is specifically how Asset Management can save my Garvey's money, isn't it?

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Exactly. Yeah, that is exactly the sense that we get here, utilizing the tools that are provided to us that are out there. Where worldwide can help there is we can help customers that are that are making that making the



move to automating how they manage their assets and their and also their services, we can help them do that integration work and provide them the tools that best meet their needs.

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Okay, let's take a step back here. We are recording this downtown Washington DC, within a mile, here's bunch of federal agencies within 10 miles, I think most federal agencies are having an asset here. So how are they doing it? Now? You talked about spreadsheets. But you know, there's got to be other ways to do it. Now with all kinds of problems. Maybe they're in systems that that don't communicate with each other. Maybe they're in systems that are outdated. So how are the typical agency doing now their IT Asset Management,

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some customers that we've dealt with are kind of operating, we we'd like to use the term silos, silos of excellence. And what's going on is you get multiple projects going on, that have their own funding sources, and they're not communicating with each other. Well, what these what these asset management and service management tools enables them to do is start to get a full visibility of the of the system that they're that they're running.

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My son has a car with 180,000 miles on it. And every time it goes over 50 miles an hour, it rattles, and no one can hear what's going on, you know. And when I told Celeste, Kevin, you have a lifecycle to the car and certain time you have to maybe look at another Toyota or something. And that applies to software development. Well, doesn't it there's this software development lifecycle, I think part and parcel of the lifecycle is, is when a system is no longer being used, there has to be an automated way to end the licenses for that because you can wind up paying a lot for licenses, and maybe even pay for maintenance on a license you're not using. And so much like an older car, you can wind up paying for men for the car. It's sitting in the garage,

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John Exactly. So we've actually seen a few customers that are going through what they like to call tools, recipe rationalization. So back to my earlier comment with the multiple projects operating in silos. There's a number of projects that that organizations will stand up that are bringing on their own tools, which which are introducing new software into the program will what you start to get is software sprawl or licensing sprawl. And everybody's getting built differently across the environment. You've got two or three technology projects that are using the same tools that are that are operating independently of each other. What that Does is is the cost starts to spiral out of control. And when those projects are terminated or shut down, those tools are sometimes still left on the network. So that's what, that's what causes a bit of cost creep. And it also introduces some cyber vulnerabilities. Because if people don't know that, that they've got software, and hardware sitting out on in their enterprise networks, they don't get patched. We know that there is an increasing cybersecurity threat going on globally. So it's important for our customers to understand what they have control over and what they deploy out into their systems

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know, when you said that I thought about my son and his old car. Now, if his old car breaks down, he'll put in the garage, and I don't know, buy another or whatever. And it's not going to do any harm. However, if you have a software asset that is not being used, it is a potential, it's almost like having something in the garage gasoline potential a lot of trouble there. I mean, it's a whole lot of so you've taken outdated asset, you may think it's outdated, not updated to some malicious actor, is it?

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Exactly, yep. And that's, that's exactly what what we're seeing with some of our customers. So we've been able to bring in some, some tools like Flexera, for the assets and ServiceNow, we were also partnered with to help with the service management, which helps him kind of tamper down these fires that they got going on.

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And they're there, but you don't realize are there. So when it comes to budgeting, you know, I mean, I heard a presentation this morning, at last week, they talked about, you know, percentages of revenue that got from different sources, how much are your federal customers investing in their assets and asset management.

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So they're kind of slow to, since I cover the federal space, they're kind of slow to adopt, just because there, there are some constraints there. And they they do have pretty unique cybersecurity requirements that are a little more stringent than some other some other sectors. So they are adopting, we're helping them get there and to accelerate how they manage some of some of their services and assets. So I don't want to say they're moving very quickly, but they are moving.

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Okay, we see this big tsunami coming at us. And it's called a hybrid cloud and cloud, and it's clouds everywhere. And people are all interested in making the transition. So if you have a Toyota sitting in a garage in Fairfax, well, that's one thing. But what if you have, you know, all of a sudden you have 50 garages, and they're all simultaneously moving to Kansas. And you have to manage those at the same time, it the degree of difficulty, it gets a little bit difficult, doesn't it?

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Exactly. So so the cloud migration is is we're now cloud hosting your services in the cloud is, is a big deal right now, it helps these organizations offset some of the workloads that that they have on prem, and also enables them to diversify some of the some of the services and enables them to be more resilient. But we have we have a service group practice doing cloud migration for some of our customers utilizing the tools for asset asset and service management allows them to understand to understand the licenses that they deploy out into these cloud environments and obviously on prem as well. It helps them we come in and help them identify what software should be migrated to the cloud and which assets and software's should be continued to be managed on prem? Well, this

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is the part of the show, I get to use fancy words. So the fancy words I'm gonna use are ingress and egress. When it comes to a cloud service provider, I'm going to name names here, okay. I mean, name names, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, we all know the CSPs in here. And when it comes to the ingress part, you walk in the door, pretty easy. It's pretty simple. You walk in with a credit card, and you ramp everything up. And then all of a sudden, you're kind of hooked in there. And when it comes to leave, it's a Hotel California situation where you can check out but you can never leave. And so it's very, very difficult to leave. So from a company of managing a license, this other federal agencies that have hundreds of license all over the place, and the hybrid cloud, the private cloud, the private cloud, and they have different terms and conditions. And by the way, the cloud service riders aren't gonna make it easy to get out of there. They're not and so someone like us to come, look, I've done this before, you know, I've got the t shirt. This is how you get out of the quagmire stuck out at CSP. This is what happens, doesn't it?

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Actually what happens? So back back to the cloud migration strategy there, we've got customers that are some are kind of in the initial phases, some are pretty mature, just depends on on where they're at in their their lifecycle. There's a number of times where people will go in and deploy some of their their business assets into the cloud, and they will spin up some resources and they will get moved to another project while that person is away, not managing the resources that they recently spun up those resources continue to spin, and the cloud environment, and the customer is being charged for it every month.

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Better believe it. Yeah. So Malcolm, it's February 1, how to do my business taxes. I submitted them yesterday on time, then you go into these categories and everything else. And I saw all of these software as a service solution. I have this service for email, I have this service, I have zoom every month. I have a lot of this is just me, this is a little John Gilroy with my little business, I run to these podcasts. So how does that apply to a large federal agency? I mean, you know, there's 20,000, SAS service providers out there that just fired up, you know, fired up with a credit card, and off you go. And it just seems like this is like strep throat, I want to get off she talked to you before they start signing these things up. I'm sure they can have a policy. But sometimes policies aren't enforced carefully. Are they correct? I'm hitting on something here,

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you are hit you are hitting it right, right square there. So yes, their software as a service, or hardware as a service. It is, for some organizations, it's the easy button, those can easily turn into environments that are a little more difficult to manage, which is, which is

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very carefully phrasing this by the way,

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yes. But the easy button sometimes can can turn into something that's a bit of a bear to control. So now, that's where we start introducing the asset management and the service management lifecycle.



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Let me talk about the 500 pound elephant the room, it's called the human being. It's called the human being, it's like, I'm sick of waiting for a John Gilroy to do his job, I'm gonna get my credit card, and I'm a sign up for this service. And he can just figure it out later. And it's called Shadow IT. And guess what, there's a lot of John Gilroy is out there that, you know, the typical IT professional 10, juggling 10,000 things, they have no time for some little guy down the street wants something rather. And so all of a sudden, we have all these creative uses of credit cards, and then again, okay, Malcolm, come on in here. And, uh, you figure it out, I don't know how to figure it out,

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that shines light on why the service management lifecycle is so important that you get a lot of gray wear that people have installed where there hasn't been due controls for some of the people that are managing the their environments, and you also get some gray wire that's maybe part becomes part of the part of the lifecycle management there that has kind of gotten introduced into the environment, under the radar, exactly what leads leads back to our service management lifecycle there. So ideally, you're introducing a tool so so you've got a grasp of what assets you have out there, what services you're performing, what configuration management databases, that are that are being hosted in your environment, how those are communicating with each other, which ones are not being leveraged, but just soaking up the resources that you have hosted in your environments.

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Well, Malcolm, before the show, you said you lived in Annapolis, which is great. And I cut things, water analogies, a swimming one came off. And now I'm thinking about a boat. And so you can have a boat out there. You're in the Chesapeake Bay, you're having a real good time. And you get to the Liikanen. No big deal at the end of the league. And that's a little deal another Lincoln at about 256 Lake you're sinking. And so if you have federal agency that will have death by 1000 cuts, and maybe there's 50 Little software's the service signups that you didn't care about when there's 150 When there's 500 of a sudden, well, Malcolm, you don't understand it says \$15 a month oh, wait a minute. \$15 one can sink the boat. And and I think this is a big fancy word. Maybe IT Service Management The real world is we have to efficiently use the assets we have and find out what's there because these these little small strokes can really can consent and agency can it

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exactly. So when when we're talking about sinking the boat, that's that's where technical debt comes into play. Some some of the resources that are being deployed out there are so cost prohibitive and have been unmanaged for so long. Now the agency starts to suffer, the agency suffers in performance, they suffer in delivery to the customer service, and they're suffering for how much it costs to manage all of these services that are being that are being hosted, whether it be they're being utilized or not.

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Malcolm Gladwell famously wrote a book about the tipping point. So when's the tipping point? At what point in time? Does an agency call you? Okay, Malcolm, come okay. We were in trouble come on in and help us figure



this out is at a certain point in time is that they realize that there's 10,000 licenses a month are not accounted for. What is the tipping point to bring someone like you guys in

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Sure. So I'd tell you, maybe there's three tipping points. One is where they start to understand that the cost prohibitive of managing all Have all of the assets and services that they have deployed in their environment to is when things start to fail, the equipment gets age ages out, becomes unusable, but it's still being hosted in their environments. And it's starting to impact customer service. And I forgot that third one.

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Well, the next interview, we can figure that out. One more question before we end this podcast. So where does elastic fit in? We're sitting here at the last conference room or lunch room with about 500 people. So where do they fit in this discussion?

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So elastic actually helps us in a few areas, but they effectively help us give us true data and clean data. I recently read a Gartner report that mentioned 40% of all projects fail without clean data. And that certainly holds true when we start talking about service management. Wow.

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Right. And that one done that's important to know. Unfortunately, we're running out of time here, Malcolm, you've been listening to fiddle tech podcast with John Gilroy like thank my guest Malcolm Davis, systems engineering manager at worldwide technology.

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