

## PRODUCT FAQ

### 1. What do I need to install AssetGen Planner on my workstation?

Standard Microsoft operating system such as XP or Vista. With Internet Explorer 6 or above, .Net Framework 2, Crystal Reports XI Rel 2 (included with other AssetGen products). Microsoft Visio 2007 Professional (for cabinet layouts only).

## Change Impact Analysis

### 2. How does the Change Impact Analysis work?

We provide a two stage process, with output results at both stages. Firstly, we identify equipment using a combination of inventory and connectivity queries. Secondly, we submit a list of devices to service management analysis, where each device is separately checked for impact on software, services or systems – with the end results being collected into a report.

### 3. How does the inventory part of Change Impact Analysis differ from a typical data centre inventory?

AssetGen Planner allows a combination of filters covering environment, passive and active components (including child devices). This gives us the flexibility to cover the impact of taking down power to a building, room or cabinet – or, at a more granular level, upgrades to specific device types such as switches or PDUs. As it is so easy to pull out multiple device types in a single pass, the inventory function is also a very convenient way to create specific lists for platform or outsource teams.

### 4. What is the difference between connectivity tracing in AssetGen Planner, compared to AssetGen Connect?

AssetGen Connect is designed to trace individual devices for single or multi-port connectivity (including daughter cards in chassis devices) to their end points. AssetGen Planner can trace **multiple** devices of **different** types in a single pass and produce a consolidated list.

Example 1. Trace SAN switch connectivity for connected Wintel and Unix hosts

Example 2. Identify devices connected to power strips served by a particular PDU

Example 3. Identify all components affected by a core switch upgrade

### 5. What if the devices I'm interested in are not directly connected to the hardware I'm changing, such as a core infrastructure component with no user devices directly attached?

AssetGen Planner provides the ability to trace connectivity several times in a single operation specifically for network and power components.

Example 1 a. Trace the power strips connected to a circuit breaker

b. Trace servers and switches connected to those power strips

c. Trace servers connected to those switches affected

d. Finish with a list of servers impacted by a circuit breaker

Example 2 a. Trace all servers and edge switches connected to a core network switch

b. Trace all servers and switches connected to the edge switches

c. Trace all servers connected to those switches

d. Finish with a list of servers up to two hops from the core switch

6. [How does the Change Impact Analysis identify service impact?](#)

It uses the same process as AssetGen SysMap to navigate the relationships between configuration items (CI) representing servers, software, processes and services. If an equipment item on the input list is mapped to a CI, then the impact analysis is performed against target groups and types. For example, if you select a target group of “services”, then all equipment listed will be analysed to the services they support. The results are consolidated into a single list on the screen which can be printed or exported.

7. [How does the service impact analysis differ from AssetGen SysMap?](#)

AssetGen SysMap will allow you to undertake service impact or dependency analysis choosing a single start point such as server, software module or service. AssetGen Planner enables **multiple** start points to be analysed in a single process. Checking for the service impact of an OS patch to 50 servers takes only a few seconds. In the examples of changes to SAN or LAN switches (above), identifying risks and service owners is very quick.

8. [Do I have to use all of the affected devices for service impact analysis? Some devices I don't care about, or know we have in-built resilience.](#)

The list of devices from the first stage of analysis are presented with tick boxes, so that you can manually deselect those that are of no interest.

9. [I have a spreadsheet of devices given to me by a server consolidation team, can I use the service impact analysis function with this list?](#)

Yes. AssetGen Planner allows you to go straight to the service impact stage and import a list from a csv (comma separated variable) file from Notepad or Excel. This was designed to support major projects such as data centre moves, refresh, consolidation or virtualisation programmes.

10. [How do I know if a device change potentially impacts more than one service?](#)

The service impact report provides all devices that have corresponding service impacts. If there is more than one service impact, it is listed separately so that you can sort by device or by service. This list can also be saved and input to a spreadsheet for further manipulation or inclusion into change requests, project plans, etc.

11. [As part of a data centre move I have to re-check my original assumptions to cope with in-life changes - Can I save a Change Impact Analysis query for re-use in the future?](#)

AssetGen Planner provides a template capability specifically for this as major projects take place over many months or years. You can save a complete, or partial analysis and re-load it at a later date. This makes it easy for colleagues to replicate a common project task.

## Cabinet Search

12. [How does the Cabinet Search work?](#)

Cabinet Search provides a powerful single pass query that combines physical location (buildings, rooms, cabinets), cabinet space, cabinet attributes (function, owner, network), connectivity (copper, fibre, power) and power rating. The output is a list of suitable cabinets with each layout visible with a single click.

13. [Do I have to be very specific in my search for cabinet space?](#)

No, you can search just for space, or reduce the results list using more complex filtering. It's simple to re-run queries with slightly different criteria to see the difference in cabinets with more power, less connections etc.

14. [How do I limit my search to just my needs? – I need to put a network router in a cabinet allocated to network devices for instance.](#)

By suitable use of cabinet attributes in AssetGen Connect, cabinet function can be a criteria to filter on. Examples of cabinet functions we see in use are typically Network, Server-Production, Server-Other, Storage, Cabling, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Supplier, etc. Searching for a network cabinet to install a new router is then simple.

15. [How do I know if a cabinet has the number of network connections I need for a server?](#)

The search criteria allows multiple connectivity types to be specified by device and by port. For instance, patch panels with RJ45, fibre patch connections, KVMs, power strips with monitoring could all be selection criteria. AssetGen Planner will check the status of all the ports on those component types to ensure they are not connected or reserved.

16. [My new blade server requires two 16A power sockets - How do I use AssetGen Planner to find cabinets with these high powered sockets?](#)

As with the answer in 15. Set a query to look for cabinets with power strips that have ports you have classified as 16A, rather than normal 10A supplies.

17. [We use blanking plates to ensure good air flow, how does AssetGen Planner include or exclude these when identifying available space for equipment.](#)

As part of searching for space AssetGen Planner gives you the ability to either include or exclude blanking plates. You have flexibility in how you name blanking plates (or spacing plates).

18. [How does AssetGen Planner calculate cabinet power, because there are so many different ways in use.](#)

Equipment power can be summarised using different parameters as part of AssetGen Connect. Typical approaches include manufacturer plate value, design power, actual power (from intelligent power strips). In the same way, cabinet power limits can be represented using design, actual and rated values. When you perform a cabinet search you can select the appropriate value.

19. [How do I reserve space once I've decided where to place equipment?](#)

Three Options – Login to AssetGen Connect and:

a) Manually create a device called cabinet space with attributes containing project references.

b) Create a server and place it in the cabinet with a status of reserved, entering reference notes.

c) Our preferred method - create a work order for the new device so that you have more tracking capability, plus cabinet space is then colour coded as a work order in rack layouts.

## **Cabinet Diagrams**

20. [How do the Cabinet Diagrams features work?](#)

Cabinet diagrams can be generated in two ways, top down floor plan views or cabinet layouts. Filtering by location, room, function, row, etc. is available so that selected cabinets are then automatically created in a Visio diagram. Cabinet/device attribute data are added to the Visio shapes (as shape data) and hyperlinks created to link back to AssetGen Connect or SysMap.

21. [How do I make my Visio diagram look like the actual data centre floor layout?](#)

Once a Visio diagram is created, you can add backgrounds such as grid numbering, floor mounted equipment, cable runs and physical features such as doors, walls, etc. AssetGen Planner can update existing top down floor plans to preserve manually entered criteria.

22. [I need to generate a specific set of cabinet diagrams, what is the easiest way to repeat this on a regular basis?](#)

Create cabinet attributes that reflect your needs such as owners, functions, suppliers, etc. so you can filter and repeat when needed.

### 23. Why doesn't AssetGen Planner create cabinet diagrams in Visio with equipment graphics that look like the front panels?

Within AssetGen Planner, we create a complete set of Visio diagrams without having to maintain templates of the front/back view of each equipment type. The Visio file is kept small using simple graphics, so we can embed device data and hyperlinks. If we used equipment graphics the files would be excessive, especially if we have more than ten cabinets.

User can still create Visio cabinet layouts manually with equipment graphics if desired, linking in to AssetGen Connect for refresh of equipment data and hyperlinks. Most device or building information in AssetGen can be linked to Visio shapes with appropriate access rights and configuration.

### 24. If I publish the Visio diagrams as web pages to an intranet server, what happens to the shape data and hyperlinks?

When MS Visio 2007 saves web pages, it embeds the shape data and hyperlinks we store against devices and cabinets. From an intranet page you can hyperlink direct into AssetGen Connect or AssetGen SysMap, as well as search and examine data on devices.

## Capacity Reports

### 25. What is the difference between capacity reports in AssetGen Planner and AssetGen Connect?

Reports covering cabinet space, power usage, port capacity are all available as standard in both packages. AssetGen Planner adds extra functionality by the facility to select **multiple** locations, rooms or cabinets as the basis for a capacity report. For instance, summarise space for all network cabinets, rather than all cabinets.

The same selection criteria applies to port capacity, where multiple types of ports can be selected for reporting. For example, knowing if there are spare high power 16A and 32A sockets already installed can save considerable time. Producing a report covering multiple equipment rooms for power usage and capacity becomes simple task.

## Network Topology Diagrams Using Visio

### 26. What are the steps to create a Visio diagram?

Because topology diagrams can vary in scale and size, the approach we follow is straightforward and simple. Plus all the settings can be saved as templates for creating repeatable diagrams – such as LAN/SAN networks

- a. Select a start point – could be anything from a device up to a site so that we can then cover the most relevant devices.
- b. Select an end point – this limits the diagram to devices contained by a physical location such as rooms, buildings, cabinets etc. It is possible to do a power diagram of every 200 locations on one page, but would not be particularly useful in practice.
- c. Choose the end device types you want on the diagram, the order you select them will order them on a page if using hierarchy views.
- d. Choose diagram properties – new/update, centric/hierarchy, data/power and then press run.
- e. If you choose the equipment preview, it will enable you to uncheck devices you recognise as of no interest.
- f. Press RUN.

Depending on the numbers of devices you have chosen, the page size will be adjusted to cope.

**27. Can I choose the Shape symbols, or do I have to use a pre-determined template?**

As a default, all devices are drawn with a simple box. If you wish to represent equipment types by particular shapes you can add them to a shape template as required. This allows the use of existing standards for presentation styles.

**28. What shape data is embedded automatically when drawing Visio diagrams?**

For equipment, we embed the data that is current within the AssetGen Connect system. There is no need to set up fields or attributes as we create them for you.

For links, we work out the logical end points and embed the port names at either end as well as any IP addressing data such as IP address, VLAN etc.

**29. What types of Visio connectors do you use?**

Links between equipment are created using dynamic “glue” so that shapes can be moved and the links follow. The links can also be made into right-angled connectors for laying out cable runs, parallel paths etc.

**30. What happens when I have child equipment such as cards in a chassis? Do you show the cards in the topology diagram or are they ignored?**

Part of the user control over diagram output is whether to include children equipment. If you were to connect a blade chassis to two network switches – all of which have cards of varying types, then you can choose what you want on the page.

- For instance - just show the Blade linked to the Switches
- Or.. - show the blade chassis and blade servers linked to the switches
- Or.. - show blade chassis, blade servers, switch cards and switch chassis

The level of detail can be adjusted to suit the need

**31. How do the templates work in topology diagrams?**

We provide the ability to store user setting as templates on the AssetGen server, enabling common templates to be re-used by different team members. All of the selection criteria used are saved, making it easy to modify for a new diagram. For instance, one template could show the LAN set up for a building. This could be re-used for all buildings to get a consistent set of Visio diagrams.

**32. Can I link Visio directly to the AssetGen system and not use Planner?**

Yes, the AssetGen system uses SQL server which means standard Microsoft applications such as Visio, Excel and Access can be linked directly. For Visio diagrams it means that you have to manually select the devices and choose shape symbols for each. They can be refreshed as required directly using the database linking features of Visio 2007.