

PRODUCT FAQ

Typical questions

1. [What software do I need to run AssetGen SysMap?](#)

AssetGen SysMap is a 'thick client' application installed onto a PC. It utilises the Microsoft .Net framework v2.0 and Business Objects Crystal Reports XI R2, included on the installation media. The application uses a Microsoft SQL Server database which should be hosted on a central server. There is also an intranet (web) application which provides read only access to the main data screens and data analysis reporting.

2. [Are the CI types and relationships fixed, or can I choose my own?](#)

There is complete flexibility for the user to set up CI groups, CI types and relationship types. These are held in 'lookup' tables which are maintained by a user with administrator rights.

3. [Can I use AssetGen SysMap to document physical relationships between CIs such as locations, cards, cabinets etc.](#)

In theory, yes. AssetGen SysMap provides the framework to connect anything to anything. In practice however, our sister product, AssetGen Connect, provides a much better basis for holding physical infrastructure components and their connectivity. The database is common to both products and a CI in SysMap can be easily linked to a piece of equipment in Connect.

4. [Do I need to have a completely documented infrastructure before setting up AssetGen SysMap?](#)

No. AssetGen SysMap is designed to enable the addition of new information as CIs and dependencies are understood. You may start with the 5 most critical systems, then add to them over time. If a major incident highlights a dependency that wasn't understood then you can add it in. A key issue is that the knowledge within SysMap will grow and change with business priorities.

5. [Can any of my service team undertake an impact analysis without having AssetGen SysMap on their desktop?](#)

Yes. The product ships with a web server application which can be installed on a server running Microsoft IIS and the .Net framework v2.0. This provides read only access to CI data, and reports, including impact & dependency analysis from a standard web browser (e.g. Microsoft Explorer).

6. [How do I link SysMap configuration items \(CIs\) to the AssetGen Connect database?](#)

If your physical infrastructure and assets are already in AssetGen Connect, you can link CIs in AssetGen SysMap to them. There is a link field on the CI data record which holds the equipment record number. A simple search screen in SysMap allows the user to select the equipment to be associated with a CI.

7. [Why do I have to group CI types together?](#)

You don't necessarily have to. You have just have one group which holds all CI types. However, if your database is to contain a large number of different types of CIs (users, departments, business functions, applications, middleware, DBMSs, databases, servers, storage, etc) it make sense to group types together to aid reporting, setup and maintenance.

8. Do I have to create direct relationships between all CIs in order to undertake an impact or dependency analysis?

No. For example, you do not have to link a business function directly to a server. There could be individual relationships defined via applications, middleware, and databases. The impact analysis algorithm navigates through these relationships to find instances of the target CI type.

9. Can you have a different parent/child relationships between two CIs?

Yes. When defining a relationship between two CIs, you can have a different relationships from parent to child and child to parent. For instance in a remote access diagram, in one direction you can have "requests access", in the other "supplies users authentication".

10. Can I associate build, configuration, release and other documentation with CIs?

Yes. Any CI record can have many documents linked to it. Only the path to the file is stored in the database, rather than the document itself to ensure that, if the source file is updated (and retains the same name) the user can still view the new document without changing anything on the CI record.

11. How could I quickly identify the CIs/components that a critical service or process relies on?

We provide a number of ways to ensure you get an appropriate level of detail. You can specify a start point and retrieve all CIs of a specific group or type (dependency analysis). Or you can use the visualisation feature which will show all the CIs with the level of detail under your control. (In complex environments, controlling the level of detail prevents being swamped by unnecessary information)

12. If a low level CI such as a server or network switch had to be powered down, how could I quickly understand the impact on services for my emergency change process?

This is impact analysis. The user specifies a starting CI (the server or switch) and a target CI group or type (business services) then clicks a run button. The application interprets the relationships and, within seconds, populates a list with affected CIs. The user can then drill down into a CI record from the list for more detail.

13. How would I perform a root cause analysis using the data held within AssetGen SysMap?

When an incident is resolved, a best practice problem management process should look to uncover the underlying causes so appropriate action could be taken. In practice, this means understanding not just CI dependencies, but also other issues such as ownership, responsibilities, policies, CI changes, plus gaps in data. AssetGen SysMap enables fast identification of all these issues to aid problem management by the use of dependency mapping and attributes against CIs. If a dependency is uncovered which was not known, it can be entered into AssetGen SysMap so the knowledge is available to all immediately.

14. Why are there different levels of dependency visualisation?

AssetGen SysMap is able to create 'on-the-fly' diagrams using Visio or netViz visualisation software. A starting CI is specified and a 'granularity' parameter controls how many relationship hops the program will navigate. When run the application loads all the CIs and relationships into a netViz project which is displayed. The user therefore has great control over the complexity (or simplicity) of the diagrams created. Either Visio or netViz can then be used to tidy, amend, store and collate the diagrams, or even publish them to a web server to act as a corporate resource.

15. How can I validate the data held within the SysMap?

A common problem with many SysMaps is checking if the data is still up to date or correct, in particular the number and type of relationships. The visualisation capability has a dual role in helping users to understand CI relationships, but also to help the system administrator validate the data and relationships.

16. How many CIs can be put into AssetGen SysMap?

This depends on the licence version purchased. The Standard product supports 300 CIs, Professional 3000 and an unlimited number in Enterprise (subject only to database restrictions). Product versions can be simply upgraded with a replacement licence key.