IT-Pedia®

A Comprehensive IT Product Data Library for Populating, Updating and Enriching Systems

Overview

IT-Pedia® is a continuously curated and updated library that provides a single, easy-to-use source of detailed information about current and legacy IT products of all types. The library includes attributes – many that are typically not discoverable - about enterprise hardware and software, IoT and mobile devices, open source software, and network, telecom, and environmental equipment.

IT-Pedia helps streamline and automate the process of creating, populating and updating CMDBs and service catalogs, procurement systems, asset repositories and SAM tools, and other systems. It can also be used to support product refresh cycles and IT security initiatives. A very valuable bonus is that IT-Pedia's normalization functionality gets all of these systems speaking the same language with a common naming convention.

IT-Pedia contains information about millions of enterprise products and the myriad of versions, packages, and variations in which they are offered. Each unique product record is comprised of detailed attributes that are essential during the IT planning, budgeting, purchasing and maintenance phases.

These attributes include (but are not limited to):

- Hardware makes and models
- Software versions, license types and programs, and use rights
- Vendor-provided naming conventions and product descriptions
- Manufacturer and reseller product codes, SKUs and UNSPC classification data
- Physical dimensions, weight, power utilization, and other characteristics
- Product End-of-Life and End-of-Support dates (requires additional subscription)
- Product vulnerability details (requires additional subscription)
- Vendor details, and much more

Why is IT-Pedia Essential?

- The "enrichment" data that it provides is typically not available via discovery tools
- The information in procurement records is often incomplete and inconsistent
- Gathering product attributes and end-of-life data requires a huge amount of manual effort and searching of many sources
- Product data is dynamic and continuously changing, making it a challenge to stay current

IT-Pedia Benefits and Sample Use Cases

A Single, Consolidated, Curated Data Source

How many products are in your organization's portfolio? Hundreds? Thousands?

Your high-value employees need to research the details for each of them when implementing effective and usable:

- Asset and Service catalogs
- Procurement systems
- IT Asset Management (ITAM) and Software Asset Management (SAM) tools
- CMDBs and IT Service Management (ITSM) systems
- Cybersecurity tools

This data may be spread across multiple sources, and constant information changes and product updates add to the workload.

- **The IT-Pedia team does this work for you!**
- You will no longer miss changes or updates that may have negative consequences, and you can use your employees' skills to complete more impactful work.
- IT-Pedia eliminates time consuming manual searches for product attributes and end-of-life data, and removes the guesswork on where to find data, which can vary greatly by product and vendor.

Data Normalization

- IT-Pedia provides a foundation for normalizing data from multiple non-discovery sources into a common naming convention.
- Utilizing this normalized data across related systems improves process efficiencies and minimizes redundancies.
- These systems (and their end users) will be speaking a common language.
- In conjunction with the SCANMAN™ application recognition knowledgebase, IT-Pedia® provides a powerful and complete data normalization solution.

Catalog Creation and Enhancement

- IT-Pedia significantly reduces the time it takes to create comprehensive and detailed asset and service catalogs, or to expand the product details in an existing catalog.
- It enhances the value provided by any CMDB, ITAM, SAM or ITSM tool, Procurement system or other application that utilizes product and vendor data.
- Using IT-Pedia also eliminates information gaps and inconsistencies that can be caused by incomplete purchase data or manual, iterative approaches to catalog creation.

Software License Position Reporting

- IT-Pedia provides complete information about your licensed and subscription software applications
- This includes typically non-discoverable details about software products, license programs and types, use rights, and other attributes that are often omitted or incomplete in procurement data sources.
- Higher quality - and more complete - data enables more robust reporting and analysis from any SAM tool that utilizes it. This can result in smarter licensing decisions and significant cost savings.

Security and Compatibility

Products that are no longer supported can cause ongoing system compatibility issues and put networks and endpoints at risk, since patch support will not be available.

- End-of-Life (EOL) and End-of-Support (EOS) data can identify products whose support will end in the near term, allowing organizations to plan accordingly.
- You can remain aware and be continuously informed of product approaching end-of-life
- Update and patching activity can be proactive, not reactive
- You can avoid compatibility problems and security threats

- Obsolete and undermanaged open source code can also invite hacking activity. IT-Pedia's open source library includes essential information about versioning, release dates, and vulnerability data from NIST and other authoritative sources for open source libraries and components.
- The open source library supports the analysis and reporting in Eracent's SBOM Manager™.

Up to Date and Easy to Use

- IT-Pedia is updated daily, using multiple authoritative sources of data. This helps you avoid making decisions based on outdated data.
- IT-Pedia is provided as a service, securely hosted by Eracent.
- The service is offered as an annual subscription with optional access levels.
- A published API and user interface make it simple to select the data you need and share it with complementary systems and applications.

Additional IT-Pedia® Details

Simplified Catalog and CMDB Creation and Enhancement

Detailed product records are the foundation of asset repositories, service catalogs, CMDBs, procurement systems and other operational management systems. Despite how essential this data is to any organization, product and asset details are often compiled haphazardly from multiple sources. If there is data that is necessary for reporting but it is not in the system, people waste time searching online or through vendor documents to find and add it, if they can even locate it. The data ends up being inconsistent and incomplete, so it's not as effective as it could be and it lacks credibility since users can't depend on the information that is presented.

IT-Pedia significantly reduces the time and effort required to create detailed product records in asset and service catalogs, or to expand the product details in an existing catalog. It eliminates the information gaps and inconsistencies that can be caused by incomplete purchase data or manual, iterative approaches to catalog creation.

IT-Pedia puts a wealth of complete vendor-supplied data at your fingertips, all in one place.

Product End of Life Data

It's no fun to get caught off guard and suddenly find out that your organization is running a software product or version that is no longer supported by the publisher. You have to scramble to identify every device where that product is installed and then quickly patch or upgrade those machines since they now pose an operational and security risk. This is not an uncommon scenario since it's often difficult to get End-of-Life (EOL) and End-of-Support (EOS) data for hardware products and software applications.

The upcoming dates when a software or hardware product will no longer be sold or supported can be published (or not) in any manner that the vendor chooses. It may be in tech support emails, a PDF or support page on a website, or anywhere else. It's up to you as the customer to notice these dates and act upon them.

The ideal scenario is to avoid last minute panic and have a proactive process for identifying upcoming EOL and EOS dates, planning your upgrades, and phasing out old products and versions in a controlled manner. IT-Pedia helps support this process by gathering and publishing EOL and EOS dates for thousands of products from an ever-growing number of vendors in a single database that is constantly updated. These dates are shared with asset repositories, SAM tools and CMDBs where they can be used as inputs for reports, alerts and process automation tasks.

Data Normalization

Any database application that is populated and updated via manual input as well as integrations with other systems can get messy very quickly. People enter vendor and product names any number of ways, critical details get omitted, and different discovery tools may report on the same products but use very different naming conventions. It's a recipe for chaos.

Asset repositories, CMDBs, SAM tools, product and support catalogs, and procurement systems can all suffer from poor data quality, redundant entries, and other issues that can drastically impact their usefulness and the effectiveness of reporting results. IT-Pedia provides a normalized "master" data set that leverages common naming conventions that are provided by publishers and manufacturers. Product names and attributes are associated with manufacturer part numbers and SKUs, so you'll know that systems and users are referencing the same products. When all of the systems in your ITAM and SAM ecosystem are speaking the same language, improvements in usability, productivity and efficiency are inevitable.

In conjunction with Eracent's SCANMAN™ application recognition knowledgebase, IT-Pedia provides a complete, powerful data normalization solution.

Hardware Infrastructure Planning

Even in the age of cloud architecture and hosted environments, most large enterprises still maintain a significant data center footprint.

In these dynamic environments, it's important to look ahead at the organization's computing requirements, its current and planned environments, and options to ensure that its needs are met, now and in the foreseeable future. This planning often includes projects around data center consolidations and moves, facility acquisition and improvements, and migrations to cloud infrastructure.

There are many attributes about hardware devices that are essential to know for these projects, but they are rarely included in procurement information and never captured by discovery tools. These include:

- Power utilization and "green" certifications
- Energy and cooling requirements
- Physical dimensions and weight, which can have a huge impact on floor space planning
- End-of-life details, which can impact decisions and timing around upgrades, refreshes, and replacement with other physical, virtual or cloud-based processors. Hardware that will soon be rendered obsolete can also pose an operational risk for incompatibility with applications and other interconnected devices.

IT-Pedia consolidates these critical attributes and other details about hardware devices of all classes – from servers to laptops to network equipment – into a single reliable source.

IT-Pedia® API and Integration

Eracent makes it easy for IT-Pedia users to share comprehensive product and vendor information with their IT management systems including:

- Procurement and Sourcing systems
- IT Service Management and Helpdesk tools
- IT Asset Management (ITAM) repositories
- Software Asset Management (SAM) tools
- Cybersecurity Management systems
- Patch Management tools

IT-Pedia is a hosted subscription service, so no local installation is required. IT-Pedia subscribers access the IT-Pedia product database either via an online, browser-based interface or via a published API.

The primary method of retrieving and sharing data is via the IT-Pedia Application Programming Interface (API). This approach utilizes specific API calls to receive the targeted data that is requested and maps data attributes to the appropriate tables and fields in destination systems.

With the browser-based interface, users can search for specific products or manufacturers using intuitive and user-friendly filtering options.

Either approach has advantages over competing data platforms, which require a complete and huge database download with each data transfer. IT-Pedia users can select which products and attributes to download at any given time, greatly reducing the time and system resources required for each data download. These settings can be saved to make the process repeatable.

IT-Pedia also offers a data export option. The interface allows users to select multiple products and add them to the export list. When the list of products to be exported is ready, a user can view the list, manage it and then export the product details into a comma-separated or tab-delimited file.

These flexible options enable users to get the most out of their IT-Pedia data by making it simple to apply it to multiple IT management systems and processes.

To learn more about how IT-Pedia® can benefit your organization, contact Eracent today!

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