

# Success Story: Chicago Public Schools

## Improves Productivity and Efficiency of Their Software Portfolio

**Customer Profile:** Chicago Public Schools is the third largest school district in the United States with more than 600 schools providing education to approximately 400,000 children. Their vision is that every student in every neighborhood will be engaged in a rigorous, well-rounded instructional program and will graduate prepared for success in college, career and life.

**Challenge:** Chicago Public Schools employs 40,000 staff in hundreds of buildings across the Chicago area. As part of its commitment to expanding technology in classrooms and driving efficiency, the District needed to understand their application footprint and identify opportunities to consolidate applications and save money across their increasingly diverse computing infrastructure.

**Solution:** The Flexera Software solution was implemented to collect and **normalize the inventory of software titles** and versions across the District, giving Chicago Public Schools visibility into the actual scope of their software estate. Armed with this new knowledge the team can quickly determine what applications are installed and where, giving them the foundation they need to initiate **application rationalization** projects and reduce the number of applications they manage.

### Benefits:

- Reduced the response time to answer management inquiries from 4 hours to 30 seconds, saving over 192 FTE hours a year.
- Identified where end of life (EOL) software was installed and collaborated with the security team to remediate issues and reduce cyber security risk.
- Make informed decisions to reduce new software purchases and negotiate more favorable software vendor contracts.
- Data is easy to consume and does not require staff to have Microsoft SCCM access.



**Paul Valente, Managed Services Support Lead at Chicago Public Schools (CPS),** had considered an application portfolio rationalization project, but the manual process of normalizing inventory collected from over 130,000 Windows devices was overwhelming for a short-staffed IT team. He knew that with the number of devices they managed, the opportunity for savings in labor and spending could add up quickly.

They utilize Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) for discovery, but the sheer amount of data collected required a lot of manual sorting, categorizing, and collating in order to come up with an accurate inventory of software titles and versions. When management asked for the number of installations for a certain application, it often took over four man hours to come up with an accurate figure to satisfy the request. With an average of 50 such requests each year, his team was spending 200 hours per year manipulating System Center data. When he learned about the Flexera solution, he jumped on the opportunity to try it out.



*"The speed and accuracy of transforming system center data into actionable inventory give us the information we need to make informed business decisions" said Paul, "this has helped us drive consolidation and save the school district money."*

**Paul Valente**  
- Managed Services Support Lead  
Chicago Public Schools

Going into the project, the team thought they would identify around 5,000 software titles and versions. CPS fed the raw inventory data collected from Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager into the Flexera solution, including users, machines and site information from Active Directory. A cloud based **Application Recognition Service** automatically recognize, categorize and standardize the naming for more than 190,000 applications from over 16,000 software vendors. The result was a normalized inventory of applications and usage data for their 130,000 Microsoft Windows devices. The solution had identified over 29,000 different applications and versions, many more than they had previously estimated.

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In the first phase of the project, the inventory highlighted the magnitude of application sprawl in the school district, and gave Paul a solid starting point to begin the second phase, meeting with application owners to decide which applications are required and which ones could be consolidated or retired. Armed with this wealth of information about the applications installed throughout the district, Paul also realized that this information was crucial to improving efficiency and accuracy of many other software-related business processes including security and procurement.

The client computing services team was now able to answer management inquiries in a fraction of the time it previously took and now provides an accurate number of application installs in about 30 seconds, allowing them to make faster and more informed decisions for rollouts, migrations, and vendor contract negotiations.

An additional benefit was the discovery of end-of-life software and where it was installed. Older versions of Internet Explorer were discovered on 6,000 machines and this insight enabled them to collaborate with the IT security team to remediate issues and reduce **cyber security risk**. It also allowed them to identify computers that were running specific versions of Java that could pose problems when migrating those machines to Internet Explorer 11.

Publisher	Application Name	Product	Version	Superseded	Category	Classification	Machine Usage in All Data	Users in All Data	Usage	Licensed	Operating System Compatibility	Virtualization Compatibility	Remote Publishing Compatibility	Notes
Oracle	Java 8	Java	8	-1	Software/Development	Freeware	18000	10215	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java 7	Java	7	-2	Software/Development	Freeware	5336	3274	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java Runtime Environment 1	Java Runtime Environment	1	-7	Software/Development	Freeware	3355	1490	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Yahoo!	Yahoo Search Set	Yahoo Search Set	0		Software/Utility and device	Component	1719	1018	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java Web Start	Java Web Start	-4		Software/Utility and device	Freeware	1465	659	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
University of Kent	Greenfoot 2	Greenfoot	2	0	Software/Development/Development environment	Freeware	446	307	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java SE Development Kit 8	Java SE Development Kit	8	-2	Software/Development	Freeware	336	201	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java Platform 7 Standard	Java Platform	7	-3	Software/Development/Development environment	Freeware	269	171	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Microsoft	Visual Studio JavaScript Language Service 14.0	Visual Studio JavaScript Language Service	14.0	-1	Software/Development	Component	246	160	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Microsoft	Visual Studio JavaScript Project System 14.0	Visual Studio JavaScript Project System	14.0	-1	Software/Development	Component	245	159	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	JavaFX 2	JavaFX	2	0	Software/Development	Freeware	191	132	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	GlassFish Server 4 Open Source	GlassFish Server	4	0	Software/Development/Development environment	Freeware	159	86	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java Platform 8 Standard	Java Platform	8	-2	Software/Development/Development environment	Freeware	133	92	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	
Oracle	Java Update Checker 2	Java Update Checker	2	0	Software/Utility and device	Update	120	75	Report	False	⊙	⊙	⊙	

Fig 1: CPS can quickly identify computers running specific versions of Java that could pose problems when migrating to Internet Explorer 11.

With Flexera Software solutions, Chicago Public Schools now manages their software assets more intelligently helping them to meet the increasing technology needs of its students and staff, while also increasing the efficiency and productivity of their Client Computing Services.

### About Flexera Software

Flexera Software helps application producers and enterprises manage application usage and increase the value they derive from their software. Our next-generation software licensing, compliance, security

and installation solutions are essential to ensure continuous licensing compliance, optimize software investments and future-proof businesses against the risks and costs of constantly changing technology. Over 80,000 customers turn to Flexera Software as a trusted and neutral source for the knowledge and expertise we have gained as the marketplace leader for over 25 years and for the automation and intelligence designed into our products. For more information, please go to: [www.flexerasoftware.com](http://www.flexerasoftware.com)

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