

**Jeremiah Okpala**

**ENHANCING IT ASSET MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY**

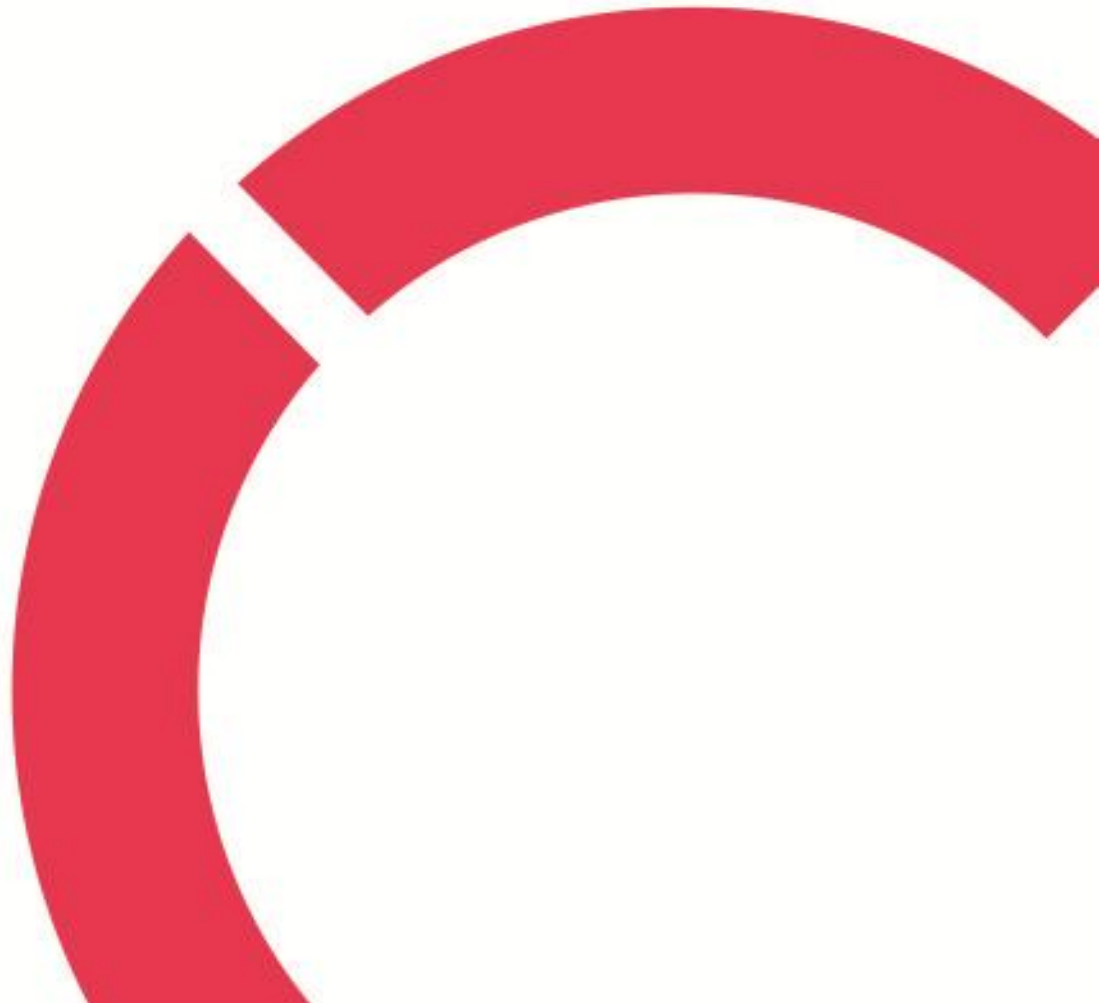
**Recommendations for Centria University of Applied Sciences**

**Thesis**

**CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

**Bachelor of Engineering, Information Technology**

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**ABSTRACT**

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<b>Name of thesis</b> ENHANCING IT ASSET MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY. Recommendations for Centria UAS		
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<p>Effective IT Asset Management (ITAM) is critical for organizations to optimize resource allocation, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with IT governance policies. As a subset of IT Service Management (ITSM), ITAM focuses on the financial, inventory, and contractual aspects of IT assets throughout their lifecycle. Managing IT assets can be complex, particularly in large institutions like Centria UAS, which supports over 4,000 students and 340 employees, each relying on various hardware and software resources for academic and administrative functions.</p> <p>This thesis examines Centria UAS current IT asset management processes and compares them with global ITAM best practices. The study aims to identify gaps in the existing system and propose recommendations for improvement. A key focus is on modern ITAM solutions that integrate automation, cloud-based accessibility, and lifecycle notifications to streamline asset tracking and management.</p> <p>To achieve this objective, the research employs a combination of literature review and interviews with IT personnel at Centria UAS. The findings of this study will provide actionable insights for enhancing the institution’s IT asset management framework, ensuring better resource utilization, cost efficiency, and seamless IT service delivery.</p>		
<b>Key words</b> cloud asset, hardware asset, IT asset management, software asset, software asset management		

## **CONCEPT DEFINITIONS**

### **AD**

(Active Directory) is a product from Microsoft used for organizing computers in a windows platform.

### **AI**

Artificial intelligence.

### **CAM**

(Cloud asset management) is a type of asset management that deals with cloud base application such as Microsoft, Google and Amazon.

### **Centria UAS**

Centria University of Applied Sciences.

### **CMDB**

(Configuration Management Databased) is a platform on which most Asset management solutions run.

### **DEP**

(Device Enrolment Program) is a service from apple that allows newly bought apple devices to be pre-enrolled to organizations apple school manager account for digital asset management.

### **GDPR**

General data Protection Regulation is a European regulation on how personal data should be processed and stored.

### **HAM**

(Hardware asset Management) is a type of asset management that deal on how physical IT asset such as computers, Mobile communications devices and other auxiliary devices such as keyboards, mouse and cables are managed.

**IAAS**

(Infrastructure as a service) is when a cloud solution provided offers an infrastructure to a company where they can build a customized solution themselves.

**IOT**

Internet of things

**IT**

Information Technology

**ITAM**

(IT asset Management) is a process of managing IT asset entire life cycle, by tracking, cost management, compliance monitoring and efficiency enhancement.

**ITSM**

(IT Service Management) is the structure by which organization operates its IT services to meet its business needs

**ML**

Machine Learning

**SAAS**

Software as a Service is when an entire software that provides complete or partial solution is offered to an organisation.

**SAM**

(Software asset management) is a type of asset management that deals with managing various software such as operating systems, applications and licenses.

**SCCM**

(System Centre Configuration Manager) is a product from Microsoft used in various enterprise to manage deploy and secure devices and applications.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

IT service management (ITSM) is “the implementation and management of quality IT service that meet the needs of the business” (Mann 2025). The overall delivery of IT services to which IT asset management (ITAM) is a subset falls under the coverage of ITSM. Implementing ITSM provides benefits such as improved customer experience, increased business productivity and increased collaboration between the organization and the organization’s vendors. ITAM as a fragment of ITSM caters for the financial, inventory and contractual terms of deploying IT assets to meet an organization’s growing IT needs. ITAM process encompasses the entire life cycle of an IT asset. An efficient IT management system highlights a business IT need thus allowing organizations to allocate optimum budget to the IT department. Managing IT asset can be very cumbersome due to large quantity of devices, software and applications needed for the smooth running of the organization. In today’s digital world, modern trends and technology have streamlined this complicated process by offering tools and methodologies that can be used to seamlessly manage all IT assets in one interconnected environment. Centria UAS needs an asset management solution that is automated, online or cloud based (data available via Teams or similar tool), capable of sending notifications related to asset life cycle and can be fully integrated to existing IT asset management system configurations such that all necessary information about an asset can be obtained from the system.

This thesis work is of importance because Centria UAS is an education institution with over 4000 students and 340 employees, and each employee is equipped with basic work devices that includes in the minimum, a work phone and a personal computer preinstalled with needed software and applications. The institution uses various applications like Peppi, Itslearning, Zoom and Teams as communication and teaching tools in both regular and hybrid classrooms, enabling students to attend classes remotely and still have the same learning experience as those who attended the classes in-person. The IT department is responsible for managing the entire spectrum of IT assets and the effective synchronization of these assets to ensure a smooth-running teaching and learning environment. To deliver on its responsibilities of ensuring a modern technological environment, the IT department must adopt tools and processes that are efficient, cost effective and easy to use. To meet the objective and scope of this thesis work, a structured and systematic approach was adopted. The primary objective is to examine Centria UAS IT department’s asset management system in detail. The study further aims to compare the findings with global ITAM current trends and best practices. The goal is to provide actionable recommendations to the IT department on how to enhance their ITAM process and align them with organizational needs. To achieve this, a qualitative data analysis methodology was employed. This involved a

combination of document review and interviews carefully designed to meet the set objective. The results of the analysis were then used to make recommendations which when implemented would bring Centria UAS ITAM practices to par with global best practices.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodologies convey the approach adopted to acquire and analyse data in this thesis work. There are 2 fundamental approaches namely quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis, with each having its own unique method as well as advantages and disadvantages. Quantitative analysis uses numerical and statistical data to detect patterns, try-out hypothesis and make projections. It is used when working on data that can be counted, measured or expressed as a numerical figure. Surveys, pools and experiments are typical data collection methods for quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis on the other hand is used on data that cannot be quantified. It is used to investigate the “*why?*” and “*how?*”, offering descriptions and explanation that aids the understanding of different scenarios. Data collection methods are detailed interviews, focused group, document analysis, observations, case study or ethnography. Table 1 below highlights the key differences between quantitative and qualitative analysis. (Fullstory 2024.)

Table 1: Key difference between qualitative and quantitative analysis

Feature	Qualitative Analysis	Quantitative Analysis
Definition	Aids the understanding of concepts, reason and motives.	Uses measurements and compares numerical data.
Data types	Descriptive, non-numerical	Statistical and numerical
Data Obtaining Technique	Detailed Interviews, focus groups, document review, observations.	Experiments, structured surveys, statistical records.
Aim	To understand reasons, motivations.	Detect patterns, try-out hypothesis and offer projections.
Method of Analysis	Content analysis, narrative analysis.	Statistical analysis, mathematical models, data visualization.
Advantages	Offers insights and unravels complex perspectives.	Results are objective and reliable and provides comparison.
Disadvantages	Difficult to generate findings and subjective.	Indept in behavioural understanding is lacking.
Flexibilities	Very flexible and allows broader exploration of topics.	Rigid because it follows a defined framework.

Outcome	Offers clear comprehensive understanding and interpretation.	Results are generic and can be measured.
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A qualitative analysis approach has been adopted for this thesis work because it allows for investigation into how? and why? which are fundamental in gaining insights into Centria UAS ITAM practices as against global best ITAM practices. With this approach, a thorough assessment of ITAM best practices, modern trends and innovations and Centria UAS current practices was done which led to the gaining of theoretical knowledge and capturing of empirical data used for the analysis. Data collection was carried out through two main methods: literature review and interviews. The literature review provided a foundational understanding of ITAM frameworks, best practices, and current trends within the ITAM landscape. Sources included peer-reviewed academic articles, websites of leading industry stakeholders, and content from technology hubs specializing in ITAM. These sources offered definitions, classifications, best practice guidelines, and insights into emerging technologies and trends in asset management.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key IT personnel at Centria UAS, representing various levels within the department. These interviews explored how the institution manages its IT hardware assets, software assets, and cloud resources. Topics discussed included the types of IT devices under management, procurement procedures for both hardware and software, asset storage and registration processes, and the tools used in asset management. Notably, tools such as Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, SCCM, Active Directory, Microsoft Intune, and Apple School Manager were identified as part of the asset management ecosystem at Centria UAS. Data obtained from both literature review and interviews were then analysed and benchmarked against each other using a comparative analysis approach. Centria UAS practices were compared with global best practices in the following key areas: integration of IT asset capabilities, asset tracking and lifecycle management, and ITAM automation and digitalization (Use of spread sheet vs modern ITAM tools). From the comparative analysis, significant insights into Centria UAS strength and weakness were gained and used to the basis of the recommendation to enhance its ITAM efficiency made in later chapter.

### **3 IT ASSET MANAGEMENT**

To meet IT goals and to stay up-to-date with global trends, organizations need a solution to manage hardware, software, and information throughout an IT asset's life cycle. Managing and tracking the state of an organization's IT assets involves time-consuming and labour-intensive tasks that cost money to complete. The ITAM solutions software was thus developed to enhance an organisation's IT department services, facilitate employee and management decision making, and assist to ensure a better responsibility on IT assets by personnel. (Mesa, Fleras, Pagdato & Yu. 2014, 460-464.)

#### **3.1 Definition ITAM**

ITAM is an aspect of ITSM process which involves the combination of inventory, financial and contractual functions to enable asset life cycle management, strategic decision making and cost optimization in the IT ecosystem. An efficient ITAM process enables organisation to make well-informed decisions related to IT expenses and transfer of assets. All devices (hardware), systems (Cloud environment), applications (Software) and information such as knowledge and data used in the deployment of IT services are referred to as IT assets. There are ITAM solutions capable of supporting organizations in the process of its asset management. IT data can be collected, recorded and analysed across IT assets on which such application have been deployed. ITAM can also be seamlessly linked with the service desk thus IT personnel can access needed IT information. (Reda, C. Brian, H. and Emily, M. 2018.)

#### **3.2 Significance and Types of ITAM**

An efficient IT Asset Management (ITAM) process enables the use of modern technology to meet an organization's IT needs, aligning all employees with organizational goals. A thorough IT inventory, which provides businesses with a quick overview of all the company's IT assets—including networks, user workstations, software, hardware, mobile and cloud assets, data centres, and other technology—is necessary for a successful ITAM strategy. ITAM's primary objectives are to govern the company's IT environment more effectively, provide an efficient IT lifecycle management, track assets to save money, and manage IT asset disposal to reduce waste. With the use of ITAM solutions, the return on

investment (ROI) for IT assets can be clearly seen, as the process offers adequate information on the asset lifecycle and delivers sufficient data that relates the positive impact of asset acquisition to relevant stakeholders (White 2021, 1.)

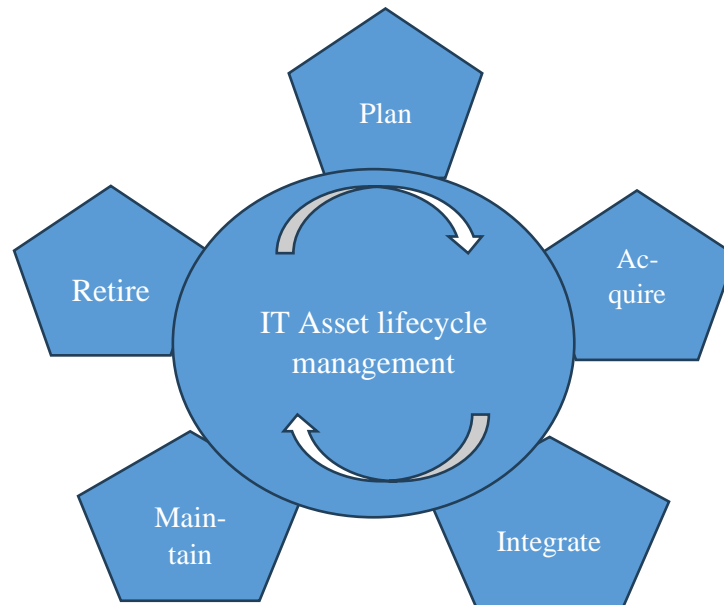


figure 2: Asset Management Lifecycle (TechTarget)

IT asset Management lifecycle as shown in figure 1 covers entirely every information regarding a particular asset starting with the planning phase where the justification for the purchase of the asset is considered, the acquisition process where the vendors are identified and selected, the integrated of the asset into existing asset management infrastructures, all maintenance and history related to the asset and end with the removal of the asset from service. Since ITAM is an ongoing process, the asset lifecycle concept aids in organizing tasks and facilitating decision-making thus offering advantages such as unified application for all IT asset data, improved insight into the location of assets and their specific details, risks minimisation, keeping track of and reporting on all the various asset types while remaining orderly, and cutting down on waste from multiple asset purchases. (TechTarget 2018.)

There are different types of IT Asset Management (ITAM). The first type is hardware asset management (HAM) which consist of physical devices such as computers (laptops and desktops), monitors, projectors, switches, on-premises servers, mobile phones, iPads, as well as peripherals like mouse, keyboard and cables. This type of asset management is centred on the life cycle of the asset which involves planning, acquiring, deploying, maintain and retiring of the asset as shown in picture 1. The

second type is Software Asset Management (SAM), which includes assets such as operating system, licenses and various software applications. This type of asset management involves managing these assets such that they comply with regulatory framework as well as managing their acquisition, deployment and expiration. The third type is Cloud Asset Management (CAM), which involves using cloud service providers like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft to manage IT assets in the cloud. (Chuoffani, Holak & Mclaughlin.) Other types of assets are Virtual assets and Digital assets. Virtual assets include asset in a virtual environment such as virtual machines and virtual network. This asset needs to be managed to prevent VM sprawl. A digital asset includes organizational intellectual properties and data patents which are managed through governance policies. (Mann 2024.)

### **3.3 ITAM Best Practices and Procedures**

ITAM requires consistency, integration and communication to achieve its goal which are saving cost, improving security, and increasing the overall IT efficiency. Proper planning is needed for ITAM to be fully implemented. In 2023, 39% of ITAM and SAM solution users saved between \$1million to \$10 million while 11% gained more than \$25 million. (Leachman 2023.)

#### **3.3.1 Overview of ITAM best Practices**

According to Virma (2024), to achieve cost reduction, improved security, better decision-making, and increased efficiency, the following seven best IT asset management processes should be adopted. First, keeping the IT asset inventory updated is crucial. An effective ITAM process is built on a detailed and accurate asset inventory management system, which should contain all assets and have their histories regularly updated. Additionally, automating the IT asset tracking process is necessary to reduce the enormous and time-consuming task of monitoring and discovering assets.

Developing a standard for the IT asset management process is also essential for maintaining consistency. A clear procedure for everyone to follow reduces the risk of mistakes. Adopting an asset lifecycle approach simplifies planning, acquisition, deployment, maintenance, and retirement of assets. It also aids in adequate budgeting since the lifespan of IT assets can be predicted in advance. Moreover, using IT management software is a key recommendation. ITAM solutions are designed to integrate IT assets efficiently, saving costs, energy, and time.

It is also important to frequently review and update the IT asset management process to keep it in line with modern trends. Personnel training is critical, ensuring that staff are well-informed about existing IT asset management procedures and equipped with the necessary skills to adapt to advancements in trends and technology. The perspectives of other key industry players are also vital. For instance, Leachman (2023) emphasized the importance of regularly reviewing and updating ITAM processes, which aligns with Virma's (2024) recommendations.

There are ISO standards established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to unify IT asset management (ITAM) processes. The ISO 19770 standard consists of five major segments, as outlined by ServiceNow, one of the key industry players. ISO/IEC 19770-1 details a company's ITAM best practices, enabling organizations to demonstrate that their procedures align with global standards and governmental regulations. ISO/IEC 19770-2 provides guidance to companies on software identification. ISO/IEC 19770-3 outlines the rights a company holds for a given software product and explains how to measure software consumption. ISO/IEC 19770-4 establishes a standard for reporting used resources, particularly useful when managing complex licenses and cloud-based software. Finally, ISO/IEC 19770-5 serves as a glossary for ISO ITAM terminology.

### **3.3.2 ITAM processes**

The first phase of the ITAM process is the planning phase. This phase involves strategic decision-making on procurement of assets including vendors selection, determining what the asset is to be used for, and securing funding. Sometimes it includes the total cost of ownership which is an estimate of the expense on the acquisition of assets. The second phase is the acquisition phase where the organization either buys or leases the asset after purchasing, the integrated phase then follows by installing the asset and adding it to the existing IT infrastructure thus fully integrating the device with another component environment. After deploying the asset, it moves to the next phase where maintenance and regular upgrade are carried out on the asset when necessary to increase the lifecycle of the device. The last phase is retiring the asset from service when it gets to the end of its lifecycle. (Chouffani et al).

### **3.4 ITAM Trends, Innovations and Commercial Offering**

Technology such as cloud computing, Internet of things (IOT) and blockchain are currently shaping the future of ITAM (Redbeam 2023). The capabilities and efficiencies of ITAM are further improved with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and ITAM solutions running on integrated platforms known as Configuration Management Databases (CMDB) which are offered by commercial vendors. These innovations, however, require that organizations develop governance frameworks that “*Develops a clear IT strategy*”, “*Implement comprehensive security measures*” and “*engage in continuous learning*” (Misso 2025). It will also require personnel to learn new skills to maximize the advantages of implementing these innovations to existing ITAM processes. (Misso 2025.)

### 3.4.1 ITAM Trends and Innovations

There is more to IT asset management (ITAM) than mere stock keeping, as the process involves making decisions on budgeting, managing procurement, overseeing vendor relationships, and ensuring compliance. Therefore, it cannot be effectively handled using spreadsheets alone.

Without an efficient ITAM system in place, organizations will most likely lose out of huge cost savings and an efficient sustainable system. Hence there is a need to adopt modern trends of deploying an ITAM software which offers an integration of all ITAM processes with automation capabilities to a single environment (Virima 2022). IT Asset Management (ITAM) is undergoing a significant transformation with the growing adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). These technologies are reshaping traditional ITAM practices, unlocking vast new possibilities while also introducing a set of emerging challenges. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) into IT Asset Management (ITAM) brings numerous benefits that enhance overall operational effectiveness. First, automation and efficiency are significantly improved, as routine tasks such as inventory management, report generation, and software tracking can be automated, thereby freeing up valuable time for more strategic activities. Secondly, AI and ML improve accuracy by minimizing the human errors commonly associated with manual processes, leading to more reliable reporting and asset tracking. Additionally, these technologies contribute to cost savings by optimizing asset utilization, extending asset life cycles, and reducing unnecessary purchases or replacements. Finally, AI and ML support efficient decision-making by providing accurate data analysis and predictive insights, enabling organizations to make informed decisions based on real-time, error-free data and statistical trends. To effectively adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in IT Asset Management (ITAM), personnel must enhance their skills and competencies to manage these technol-

ogies effectively. Key skills include data literacy—the ability to read, interpret, and make informed decisions based on data—as well as foundational knowledge of AI and ML concepts, including algorithms and the functionality of basic AI tools. In addition, cybersecurity awareness is essential to ensure data security and mitigate potential threats associated with AI integration. Furthermore, soft skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking are crucial for navigating complex scenarios and making sound, data-driven decisions in a rapidly evolving IT environment. There are also concerns regarding the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in IT Asset Management (ITAM). Therefore, it is essential for organizations to carefully consider and mitigate certain risks when integrating AI and ML into their ITAM processes. One major concern is data protection. The safeguarding of sensitive data processed by AI must be a top priority. Organizations should implement robust security measures and ensure compliance with data protection regulations. This includes regular software updates, end-to-end encryption, and the use of secure data storage procedures. Another key issue is bias and fairness. Data used to train AI and ML models may contain inherent biases, which can compromise the reliability of the outputs. Consequently, companies must regularly audit their AI and ML models to identify and eliminate potential biases.

Finally, regulatory compliance is a significant factor. Given the rapid evolution of AI technologies, regulations are constantly being updated. Organizations must stay informed of these regulatory changes to avoid non-compliance and associated risks (Misso, 2025)

### **3.4.2 Commercial offerings in the ITAM space**

Asset management software that offers a comprehensive solution for ITAM are available Commercially. Most of these software solutions operate on a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) platform, which, when deployed, enables organizations to achieve cost reduction, enhance asset performance, and improve overall operational efficiency. The availability of several options makes it challenging for organizations to pick the right ITAM tool that proffers solution to their needs. (Virma 2024.) Before choosing an ITAM tool, it is important to ensure that the choice is capable of essential functionalities such as Asset Discovery and Inventory, Asset tracking, Software license management, Cost optimization, Centralized information access, Automation and Integration processes. The following are some leading ITAM tools that offer essential functionalities for effective asset management; The Now Platform is a cloud-based ITAM solution developed by ServiceNow. It operates on a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) platform and enables organizations to monitor asset costs, utilization, and regulatory compliance using artificial intelligence. As part of the broader ServiceNow

ecosystem, the Now Platform integrates seamlessly with other ServiceNow applications, offering data reliability and operational scalability. One of its key advantages is its ability to create workflows that connect processes, devices, and people (ServiceNow).

Ivanti Neurons for ITAM is a solution from Ivanti capable of managing the IT asset lifecycle, tracking asset availability and costs. It includes a mobile application that allows performance and tracking to be monitored on the go. The tool can automate and integrate processes to optimize services. Ivanti also provides an on-premises solution. Its user-friendly interface and well-designed self-service features make it a popular choice (Ivanti, 2023). Matrix24, formerly known as Efecte, offers ITAM software built on a CMDB platform with real-time update capabilities. It supports process simplification, enhanced compliance, and improved productivity, making it efficient in managing asset inventories and IT assets. The software can generate interactive reports that evaluate costs, aiding effective cost management. Matrix24 also provides a Software Asset Management (SAM) tool for license acquisition, tracking, and cloud usage cost. When combined, the SAM and ITAM tools offer an integrated environment that addresses nearly all aspects of IT asset management (Matrix24).

Flexera One, often used in combination with Snow Atlas (also by Flexera), is a SaaS-based ITAM solution designed to enhance cost reduction, ensure regulatory compliance, and improve IT visibility. It provides a unified platform for hardware asset management, software asset management, and cloud services. Utilizing a technology intelligence platform, Flexera One performs data and analytical operations to manage asset lifecycles efficiently and optimize software license usage. It also offers automation and seamless integration, especially valuable in hybrid IT infrastructures, as it integrates well with existing on-premises environments (Flexera). Optimo Dux is an ITAM tool from Optimo that leverages data from finance and information management systems to automate lifecycle management of IT assets. It displays real-time usage rates and captures costs instantly, supporting efficient financial monitoring and planning. The tool's four key functionalities include data management via automation, cost reduction in device acquisition, improved asset utilization, and inventory management with "find my device" compatibility. Finally, Lansweeper is an IT asset management tool that provides organizations with complete visibility over their asset inventory, ensuring no asset remains untraceable throughout its lifecycle. This visibility supports effective maintenance, upgrades, and replacement planning. Its data transformation capabilities help identify trends, reduce costs, and address security vulnerabilities (Lansweeper, 2024).

## 4 CENTRIA UAS ITAM PRACTICES

Centria is a university of applied sciences, operating on three campuses located at Kokkola, Ylivieska and Pietarsaari. The UAS's 4400 students and 340 employees makes it rooted in the Ostrobothnia region of Finland and its "solid foundation of knowledge and research" boosts its ability to collaborate and share needed insight with industries in the region thus contributing its quota to the growth in "construction commerce and warfare industries" (Centria 2025). To understand Centria UAS current ITAM Practices, interviews were conducted using 2 set of questionnaires with the IT personnel across various roles. The questions forming the basis for the interviews can be found in appendix 1 and 2.

### 4.1 Centria UAS Hardware Asset Management Process

The IT department manages IT hardware such as on-premises servers, network infrastructure, and other auxiliary IT devices. However, the most day-to-day hardware asset been managed are personal devices used by Centria UAS personnel and devices used in the classroom for teaching (Interviewee 2). They include devices such as laptops, desktop computers, monitors, mobile phones, tablets, projectors. There are also auxiliary devices like keyboards, mouses, chargers, web cameras, and different types of cables (Interviewee 3). *Most classrooms are currently being upgraded to hybrid classes and the audio Visio (AV) devices used for the upgrade also need to be properly managed.* (Interviewee 1.)

There is no written standard procedure to follow in the asset management process as, most IT personnel adopt different sequence in completing ITAM related task. Generally, hardware asset management process starts by placing orders for the required quantity and type and model of the device. Upon delivery, the items delivered are first checked against the order placed using the delivery note and physically counted then the item is inspected for any physical damages before moving them to storage (interviewee 2). The hardware asset management tools in use by Centria UAS are Excel spread sheet, which is referred to as device register, Active directory (AD), SCCM, Microsoft Intune and Apple School Manager (Interviewee 5). Before devices are moved to storage, details such as device model, year of purchase, warrantee duration, serial number, cost centre and location of use are manually recorded in the device register (Interviewee 2). The register contains different tabs with computers and mobile phones, having their own separate tab while other auxiliary assets are recorded together in a separate tab as shown in figure 2 below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Status	Serial Num	Secondary ID	Device Type	Device Model	Association	Room	Location	Buy date	Warr
2269	Varastossa	5W1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2270	Varastossa	3ZCBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2271	Varastossa	DV6CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2272	Varastossa	7GQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2273	Varastossa	4JQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2274	Varastossa	C7KBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2275	Varastossa	9W1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2276	Varastossa	3WWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2277	Varastossa	36KBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2278	Varastossa	2X1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2279	Varastossa	5JQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2280	Käytössä	FZCBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO	Okpala Jeremiah		Kokkola	12/2024	
2281	Varastossa	BV1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2282	Poistettu	HXCBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO	Okpala Jeremiah		Kokkola	12/2024	
2283	Varastossa	8WWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2284	Varastossa	HDQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2285	Varastossa	6CKBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2286	Varastossa	50DBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2287	Varastossa	2W6CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2288	Varastossa	6XWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2289	Varastossa	6RWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	

Picture 3: Centria UAS Device register with different sheets for different hardware asset

When new computers are installed, the installation media automatically registers the name assigned to the computer during installation to the AD and the SCCM. Other information capture by the AD from the computer are BitLocker keys and groups to which the computers have been added (Interviewee 1). The AD links the installed device to the school domain thus group policies can be enforced on the device. Creation of guest user accounts is also done from the AD (Interviewee 2). The SCCM automatically captures information such as the type of operating system installed on the computer, the user assigned and the login activities on the device. Software installation, report generating, and queries are done using the SCCM (Interviewee 3). The hardware management process ends when the asset reaches the end of its life cycle. The asset is then withdrawn from service, manually marked as retired from in the device registry, and deleted from the AD and SCCM before finally disposing them (Interviewee 5).

	Status	Serial Num	Secondary ID	Device Type	Device Model	Association	Room	Location	Buy date	Warranty
2269	Varastossa	5W1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2270	Varastossa	3ZCBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2271	Varastossa	DV6CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2272	Varastossa	7GQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2273	Varastossa	4IQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2274	Varastossa	C7KBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2275	Varastossa	9W1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2276	Varastossa	3WWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2277	Varastossa	36KBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2278	Varastossa	2X1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2279	Varastossa	5IQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2280	Käytössä	FZCBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO	Okpala Jeremiah		Kokkola	12/2024	
2281	Varastossa	BV1CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2282	Poistettu	HXCBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO	Okpala Jeremiah		Kokkola	12/2024	
2283	Varastossa	8WWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2284	Varastossa	HDQBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2285	Varastossa	6CKBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2286	Varastossa	50DBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2287	Varastossa	2W6CG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2288	Varastossa	6XWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	
2289	Varastossa	6RWBG74		Laptop	Dell Latitude 7450 XCTO			Kokkola	12/2024	

Figure 4: Asset marked as Deleted in Device Register after end-of-life cycle.

For mobile devices, the physical inspection is also done before adding them manually to the device register. However, Centria UAS mainly uses iPhones and iPads, the devices are usually DEP to Centria UAS school manager account. DEP refers to device enrolment program that pre enrols Apple devices to Centria UAS Apple school manager account capturing information such as serial number, model, and IMEI number from the device automatically which can then be seen on the school manager application thus allowing the devices to be managed digitally and from Microsoft Intune (Interviewee2). The Intune provides a digital register for the device and makes their management much easier and seamless (interviewee 1). During installation of a new mobile device, the user signs in with their work credentials, the Intune then captures this information automatically and records it as the primary user of the device. From the Intune, other actions such as locking, wiping, updating and unlocking of the device can be done remotely thus giving the IT depart total control of the device (interviewee 4).

## 4.2 Centria UAS Software and Cloud ITAM Process

Centria UAS manages different licenses. These licenses can be classified into On-premises licenses and cloud-based licenses. The on-premises licenses run on servers, they include licenses like Solid

Works, Cads, and Visual Component while the cloud base licenses such as Padlet can be used on internet browsers (Interviewee 3). The tools used to manage software at Centria UAS are Central password manager for storing license accounts and passwords, SCCM for deployment to computers, Intune for storing Microsoft licenses, Microsoft Azure (Cloud) for storing Adobe licenses and Excel sheet for tracking available license and their expiry date (Interviewee 4).

The pull or push method is adopted in the process of obtaining a license. When there is a trigger based on need or request, the license compliance with Centria UAS security requirements and European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is checked and if found to be compliant, the software is then acquired from the right vendor, after which necessary information such as name of license, duration of license and expiry dates are in-putted manually to the excel sheet (Interviewee 3). Some software licenses are also managed through vendor-specific systems; for example, Autodesk licenses are managed using the Autodesk Flex Token system (interviewee 6). A deployment mode is usually setup for all acquired license. On cloud services, Centria UAS uses two different types which are Infrastructure as a service (IAAS) and Software as a service (SAAS). Microsoft Azure, Microsoft Intra, Microsoft Intune and Amazon Web services are all IAAS used by Centria UAS while other Isolated cloud environment such as Itslearning, Zoom, Panopto and teams which are a type of SAAS are also used (Interviewee 7). For server mode deployment, An SCCM package is created for the license, the license is then deployed to the customers computer while the web-based license is installed using either a Chrome or an Edge internet browser. Cloud based licenses are deployed with the use of Microsoft Intune in the form of applications. (Interviewee 2). When licenses are no longer needed, they are simply allowed to expire or terminated before the expiry date but if license is still needed, it is renewed (Interviewee 7).

On cloud services, Centria uses two different types which are Infrastructure as a service (IAAS) and Software as a service (SAAS). Microsoft Azure, Microsoft Intra, Microsoft Intune and Amazon Web services are all IAAS used by Centria UAS while other Isolated cloud environment such as Itslearning, Zoom, Panopto and teams which are a type of SAAS are also used (Interviewee 7). The process of managing cloud asset is somewhat like that of software asset management except that the software management and cloud software acquisition is not registered in an excel sheet, as all necessary information can be obtained from the cloud environment of the services acquired (Interviewee 6). In cloud software management, asset usage is segmented, thus it is important to assign appropriate cost centres to allow for proper billing process (Interviewee 7).

## 5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

To enhance Centria UAS IT position, there is a need to benchmark it against modern trends and technology to point out areas that need to be improved as well as those that need to be held on to (interviewee 7). There are global best practices in ITAM (Section 3), comparing Centria UAS practices with the best global practices will identify the gaps in existing practices and offer a path through which it can be improved.

### 5.1 Comparison of Centria UAS current position with modern Trends and Technology and Best Practices

Information obtained from Centria UAS by interview reveals that Centria uses an excel sheet, SCCM and AD for most of their IT Management system (Sec. 4.1). Each of this tool work independently and cannot be synced together, thus making it difficult pull up device history or report from one centralized source. This practice falls short in comparison with global best practice which deploys ITAM software that offers integration functionality (Sec 3.3.1). The Excel spreadsheet requires asset to be manually registered when newly acquired, manually updated when such asset is issued out, changes owner or software, returned and manually marked as removed when asset is retired from service. This process consumes a lot of time leaving the personnel with little time to focus on other crucial IT activities. Sometimes personnel may forget to mark these changes thereby making the data in the excel sheet sometimes inaccurate, unreliable and obsolete. (Sec 4.1) This places Centria UAS behind global best practice which requires IT asset inventory to be frequently reviewed, kept updated and asset tracking process automated (Sec 3.3.1).

While most Centria UAS personnel carry out ITAM related task in similar manner, there is no written standard of procedure to be followed as required in global best practices thus leaving personnel with the liberty to use discernment in executing ITAM related activities. The consequence is that tasks are sometimes done in the wrong order, or important steps are sometimes omitted which leads to waste of time. The use of Microsoft Intune and apple school manager by Centria UAS puts its mobile device and apple-based software management in line with best practices as both platforms are synced and allows for seamless integration, tracking and automation in the mobile phone management (Sec 4.1).

However, the same cannot be said of the general software management system where Excel is still in use to track license purchase and validity instead of a software management (SAM) tool (Sec 3.3.1).

## **5.2 Implication of comparison result for Centria UAS**

The comparison in section 5.1 identifies various implication for Centria UAS. Aside the utilization cost-to-performance ratio benefits, Centra UAS current IT hardware management tools put Centria UAS at a disadvantage when placed beside other organizations that have adopted modern trends and tools in their ITAM practices. Centria UAS Process lacks Integration and automation due to its heavy dependency on Excels, SCCM and AD which are not fully synced. The manual process involves in registering, updating and retiring IT asset is not just time consuming but also prone to errors thus leaving the device register with inaccurate, unreliable and obsolete data. With the absence of a written procedure for ITAM process, Centria personnels often adopt inconsistent approach which in some cases leads to waste of time and possibility of a security breach in a situation where security compliance is omitted. Although Centria UAS manages its mobile device better with the use of Apple manager and Microsoft Intune, its license acquisition and validity tracking are poor due to the reliance on excel.

## **5.3 Recommendations to enhance Centria UAS ITAM practices based on current trends, technology and specific needs**

ITAM is more than just stock taking, it involves planning, strategic discission making, cost budgeting and savings, procurement, vendor management and process optimization which cannot be manage effectively using excel sheet and some unsynchronized tools. To enhance Centria UAS's ITAM practices, several key recommendations can be implemented. First, Centria UAS should deploy an ITAM solution that integrates seamlessly with its existing SCCM and Active Directory (AD) infrastructure, as discussed in Section 3.4.2. In addition, the institution should move away from its current reliance on Excel spreadsheets by implementing a dedicated Software Asset Management (SAM) tool. This tool should have the capability to integrate with the chosen ITAM system to improve efficiency and accuracy in software asset tracking.

Furthermore, it is essential to develop and document Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These SOPs will provide clear guidelines on how personnel should carry out ITAM-related tasks, promoting

consistency and adherence to best practices. Training staff is another critical step; personnel must be adequately trained to use the ITAM and SAM tools effectively. They should also be educated on relevant industry standards and best practices to strengthen internal knowledge and capabilities.

Finally, Centria UAS should strive to align its ITAM practices with industry standards by benchmarking against other educational institutions. By adopting effective practices from peers and conducting regular assessments, Centria UAS can ensure its ITAM operations remain compliant with international frameworks such as ISO/IEC 19770, as highlighted in Section 3.3.1.

#### **5.4 Expected benefit upon Implementation of recommendations to Centria UAS**

Implementing the recommendations offered in (section 5.3) will significantly enhance Centria UAS ITAM Practices. Deploying an ITAM software will enable assets to be managed in an environment that has the capability to integrate necessary tools and make activities such as tracking, reporting and updating much easier and faster thereby saving time, energy and cost. A software asset management tool when deployed can be integrated with the ITAM software thus creating a synchronised asset management space. With notification functionality, the SAM can easily track licenses and send renewal prompts before their expiry date. When personnel are properly trained, they are equipped with required skills needed to swiftly execute ITAM related task, this results in time saving and improved security as they are more aware of vulnerabilities and can mitigate them. The availability of standard operating procedures ensures that all tasks are handled in a certain optimized sequence regardless of which personnel is performing the task thus reducing time spent on the task and eliminating the possibility of omitting critical steps which could lead to security vulnerabilities. ISO standards and other institution practices can offer framework that will help standardize and streamline Centria UAS IT practice thus keeping it in-line with global best practices.

#### **5.5 Reflection**

The results obtained from this thesis work aligns clearly with the theoretical framework gathered from the literature review. The recommendations offered to enhance Centria UAS ITAM practices are grounded in the principle of saving cost, security enhancement and overall efficiency boost as highlighted by Redbeam (2023). Also, the personal learning and knowledge in ITAM gained in the process of writing this thesis have been substantial. The opportunity to interview Centria UAS personnel and

apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios has greatly improved my understanding of ITAM and its impact on Organisations efficiency. The structure of this thesis has been meticulously organized to ensure a logical flow that supports the reader's understanding, as each section builds upon the previous one thus creating a narrative that is coherent and guides the reader through the complexities of ITAM. Adhering to strict academic writing standards, this thesis offers valuable insight and serves as a model for future research work on ITAM. The thesis process was managed by independent initiative and regular consultation with the thesis supervisor as well as other stakeholder to ensure the discussion stay focus and relevant. The quality of the work was also enhanced by constantly receiving feedback and implementing suggestions.

## 6 CONCLUSION

In summary, this thesis work identifies several key areas where Centria UAS can Optimize its IT asset management practices. Organizations such as Centria UAS that are yet to implement affective tools in their ITAM processes are missing out on the enormous cost and time reduction benefits it offers. Stand alone tools such as Excel, SCCM and AD are cheap to operate but do not provide any significant cost reduction benefits for asset life cycle management and are no longer capable of meeting the current complex nature of ITAM as they lack the ability to effectively track IT assets. The only reason Centria UAS has stuck to the is because of the high initial cost of deploying an ITAM but their inability to be integrated into a unified central platform without the deployment of an ITAM software have put Centria UAS far behind in comparison with other organizations that have adopted modern IT trends. This is evident in the discrepancies found in Centria UAS's device register, as well as the considerable amount of wasted man-hours spent trying to manage it in daily operations. To enhance Centria ITAM practices, action will be required to reduce its heavy dependency on Excel spread sheet and migrate to a CMDB ITAM solution and an SAM application for sustainability, and reliability. Implementing the recommendations offered in section 5.3 of this thesis will align Centria UAS's ATAM practices with global best practices leading to significant benefits such as cost savings, regulatory compliance and efficient processes.

While this thesis work provides it is important to acknowledge that it has limitations as the thesis work was based on qualitative data obtained primarily from literature reviews and interviews which may be subject to biases. Additionally, the scope of the study was limed to Centria UAS, and the findings may not be applicable to other universities with different ITAM needs. Due to the availability of several types of ITAM tools on offer from numerous vendors, selecting a suitable tool that meets the specific needs can be overwhelming. Since the need to deploy an ITAM management tool have been identified by this thesis work, the task of examining these commercially available tools and identifying which is most suitable to meet the exact need of Centria UAS and exploring the possibilities of integrating AI based ITAM system are areas for future research work.

In conclusion, this thesis work highlights the important role of efficient IT asset management in modern educational institutions. The recommendations provided can help Centria UAS place itself among the best in ITAM practices. The findings can also help other universities of applied sciences to benchmark their ITAM process with global practices.

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- 1) What comes to your mind when we talk about ITAM?
- 2) Which of the 3 types of ITAM does Centria UAS practice
- 3) What assets will you classify as hardware?
- 4) What tools do you use to manage hardware assets?
- 5) What is your Hardware asset management process
- 6) What assets will you classify as software assets?
- 7) What tools do you use to manage software assets?
- 8) What is Centria UAS software asset management process?
- 9) What assets do we currently manage at the cloud and what cloud services do we use?
- 10) What assets do we manage digitally and what service provider do we use?
- 11) What assets do we manage digitally and what service providers do we use?
- 12) What are the benefits of the current asset management system?
- 13) What are the current challenges with Our ITAM practices
- 14) Where would you like it to be? (what would you want to improve upon)?
- 15) What are current trends and innovations of ITAM you know off that could be beneficial?

- 1) What are Centria UAS IT need
- 2) How will you describe ITAM generally?
- 3) What are the types of IT Assets?
- 4) What is the importance or benefits of Efficient ITAM to Centria UAS?
- 5) What assets do you classify as software assets?
- 6) What tools is used to manage Centria UAS software asset (tracking, assigning and deployment)
- 7) Briefly describe Centria UAS software acquisition process.
- 8) What type of IT assets do Centria UAS have and how are they managed?
- 9) What is cloud asset management and what type of assets do we currently manage at the cloud and what cloud services do we use?
- 10) From start to finish, briefly explain Centria UAS Cloud asset management process.
- 11) What are the benefits of the current Centria UAS IT asset management system?
- 12) What are the current challenges with Our ITAM practices?
- 13) Where would you like the Centria UAS ITAM systems to be? (what would you want to improve upon)?
- 14) What are current trends and innovations in ITAM?
- 15) What are some available commercial offerings that you think would soothe Centria UAS need?
- 16) What are your overall expectations from this thesis work?