

SOFTWARE ASSET MANAGEMENT TOOLS REFERENCE GUIDE



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

For each tool you will find what it is in plain language, what problem it solves, what makes it stand out, who typically uses it, its limitations, and what to know for the exam or interview.

What It Is

Plain language explanation of the tool

What Problem It Solves

The core challenge the tool addresses

What It Does

Key features and capabilities

Where It Stands Out

Differentiators and strengths

Who Uses It

Typical users and industries

Exam / Interview

Key facts to remember

CATEGORY 1: ENTERPRISE SAM PLATFORMS

Full lifecycle SAM tools — the backbone of any serious SAM program

Flexera

FlexNet Manager Suite — market leader for complex enterprise SAM

Snow Software

Snow License Manager — strong SaaS and cloud license management

ServiceNow SAM

Built into the ServiceNow platform — integration-first approach

Aspera

SmartTrack — specialist in IBM and SAP licensing complexity



FLEXERA (FlexNet Manager Suite)

What It Is

Flexera is one of the most widely deployed enterprise SAM platforms globally. It provides end-to-end software asset lifecycle management — from discovery through compliance reporting and cost optimization.

What Problem It Solves

Large organizations have software deployed across thousands of endpoints, servers, cloud instances, and virtual machines — from dozens of different vendors, under different license models. Manually tracking this is impossible. Flexera automates discovery, reconciliation, and compliance management at enterprise scale.

What It Does

- Discovers all software across the IT estate — on-premise, cloud, and virtual environments
- Imports license entitlement data from procurement systems and contracts
- Reconciles actual usage against entitlements to calculate ELP automatically
- Generates compliance dashboards, audit-ready reports, and cost optimization recommendations
- Manages the full contract lifecycle — tracking renewal dates, true-up obligations, and agreement terms

Where It Stands Out

Flexera has particularly strong capabilities in managing complex vendor licensing rules — especially **Oracle, IBM, and Microsoft licensing** — which are notoriously difficult to calculate correctly. Its **normalization library** maps the thousands of different ways the same software product might be identified by discovery tools (different names, versions, publisher spellings) to a single consistent record.

Who Uses It

Large enterprises — typically organizations with complex, multi-vendor software environments and dedicated SAM teams. Financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, and public sector organizations are common Flexera customers.

Limitation

Flexera's power comes with complexity. Implementation requires significant expertise and time. For smaller organizations, the full capabilities may exceed what they need.

SNOW SOFTWARE (Snow License Manager)

What It Is

Snow Software is a leading SAM platform known for its user-friendly interface and strong SaaS and cloud license management capabilities alongside traditional on-premise SAM.

What Problem It Solves

Organizations increasingly use a mix of on-premise, cloud-hosted, and SaaS applications. Traditional SAM tools were built for on-premise software and struggle with SaaS visibility. Snow addresses the full hybrid environment — giving SAM teams visibility across all software spend regardless of deployment model.

What It Does

- Discovers software across on-premise endpoints, servers, cloud instances, and SaaS applications
- SaaS management module tracks SaaS subscription spend, user activity, and license utilization across cloud applications
- Identifies unused SaaS accounts for reclamation
- Calculates ELP, generates compliance reports, and provides cost optimization recommendations

Where It Stands Out

Snow's SaaS management capabilities are considered **industry-leading**. As organizations shift spending from on-premise to SaaS, the ability to manage Microsoft 365, Salesforce, Zoom, Adobe Creative Cloud, and hundreds of other SaaS applications in the same platform as traditional software is increasingly valuable.

Who Uses It

Mid-to-large enterprises across all industries. Particularly popular with organizations in active cloud migration where SaaS spend is growing rapidly alongside residual on-premise software.

Limitation

Snow's handling of the most complex vendor license models — Oracle processor licensing in virtualized environments, IBM sub-capacity licensing — is sometimes considered less sophisticated than Flexera's.

SERVICENOW SAM (Software Asset Management)

What It Is

ServiceNow's SAM module is built into the ServiceNow platform — which most large organizations already use for IT service management (ITSM), HR, and other business processes.

What Problem It Solves

SAM data is most powerful when connected to other IT and business data — hardware assets, employee records, service catalog requests, change management. When SAM lives in the same platform as ITSM, these connections happen naturally. Organizations already running ServiceNow can extend it for SAM without deploying a separate platform.

What It Does

- Manages software inventory, license entitlements, and ELP calculations within the ServiceNow platform
- Integrates natively with ServiceNow's CMDB — connecting software assets to the hardware and services they relate to
- Supports workflow automation — software requests flow through approval processes that check existing license availability before approving a new purchase
- Generates compliance and optimization reports

Where It Stands Out

Integration. Because ServiceNow is the platform for many other IT processes, SAM data connects naturally to hardware asset management, change management, incident management, and HR (knowing when employees join or leave automatically triggers license management workflows).

Who Uses It

Organizations that have already invested heavily in the ServiceNow platform and want to extend it for SAM rather than deploying a separate tool. Particularly common in large enterprises with mature ITSM practices.

Limitation

ServiceNow SAM's compliance calculations for the most complex vendor licensing scenarios are generally considered less sophisticated than dedicated SAM tools like Flexera. Organizations with very complex Oracle or IBM environments often supplement ServiceNow SAM with a specialized tool.

ASPERA (acquired by OpenText)

What It Is

Aspera SmartTrack is an enterprise SAM platform with particularly strong capabilities in managing complex vendor licensing rules — especially for **IBM and SAP**, which have some of the most complex licensing models in the industry.

What Problem It Solves

IBM and SAP licensing is notoriously complex — sub-capacity licensing, processor value units (PVUs), named user types, and industry-specific license metrics make compliance calculation error-prone and audit exposure very high. Aspera specializes in getting these calculations right.

What It Does

- Provides software discovery, inventory management, license entitlement tracking, and ELP calculation
- Applies complex vendor-specific licensing rules accurately — particularly IBM's sub-capacity licensing for virtualized environments
- Handles SAP's named user licensing metrics with precision

Where It Stands Out

Aspera is considered the most specialized and accurate tool for IBM licensing. Many organizations that use another primary SAM tool (Flexera or Snow) use Aspera specifically for IBM license management because of the complexity and audit risk involved.

Who Uses It

Enterprises with significant IBM or SAP license investments — manufacturing, financial services, and large public sector organizations in particular.

- ❑ **What to know for the exam or interview:** Aspera is most associated with IBM and SAP license management. It is now part of OpenText following an acquisition. For organizations with major IBM relationships, Aspera is the specialist tool of choice.

CATEGORY 2: SAAS MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

Purpose-built for managing cloud and SaaS software spend

Torii

Shadow IT discovery and SaaS portfolio management — finds what IT doesn't know about

Zylo

Enterprise SaaS spend intelligence — financial discovery and benchmarking

These platforms represent a **new category of SAM tool** — not competing with Flexera or Snow but complementing them by addressing the SaaS-specific challenge that traditional SAM tools were not designed for.

TORII

What It Is

Torii is a SaaS management platform — purpose-built to discover, manage, and optimize an organization's SaaS application portfolio.

What Problem It Solves

Shadow IT in SaaS form has become one of the biggest challenges in modern software management. Business units subscribe to SaaS tools independently using credit cards, expense reports, or departmental budgets — often without IT knowledge. Torii discovers these applications by analyzing financial transaction data, single sign-on (SSO) logs, and browser activity.

What It Does

- Discovers all SaaS applications in use across the organization — including those IT does not know about
- Tracks spending per application, usage activity per user, and license utilization
- Identifies unused accounts — users who have not logged in for 60 or 90 days — and automates license reclamation workflows
- Provides visibility into the total SaaS spend portfolio, often revealing spending that is **30–50% higher** than IT believes it to be

Where It Stands Out

Shadow IT discovery. Torii's ability to find SaaS applications that IT does not formally manage — often representing **40–60% of total SaaS spend** — is its defining capability. Most traditional SAM tools only track software that IT has formally procured.

Who Uses It

Technology companies, fast-growing organizations, and any business where departments are empowered to subscribe to SaaS tools independently. Particularly common in organizations using platforms like Slack, Notion, Zoom, Figma, and dozens of other modern SaaS tools.

- ❏ **What to know for the exam or interview:** Torii and similar SaaS management platforms (Zylo, Productiv, BetterCloud) represent a new category of SAM tool — not competing with Flexera or Snow but complementing them by addressing the SaaS-specific challenge that traditional SAM tools were not designed for.

ZYLO

What It Is

Zylo is an enterprise SaaS management platform focused on giving organizations a complete, accurate picture of their SaaS investments and providing data to optimize them.

What Problem It Solves

Enterprise organizations typically underestimate their SaaS spend significantly. Zylo addresses this by aggregating SaaS spending from all sources — procurement systems, accounts payable, expense reports, and credit card transactions — to build a complete picture.

What It Does

- Discovers SaaS spend through financial data analysis
- Identifies all active SaaS subscriptions
- Tracks usage and adoption
- Identifies renewal dates and provides optimization recommendations
- Benchmarking capability compares an organization's SaaS spending against industry peers — helping SAM managers understand whether they are paying market rate for specific tools

Where It Stands Out

Financial discovery and spend intelligence.

Zylo's approach starts from the financial data — finding spending that IT does not know about — rather than starting from IT-managed software inventories. Its benchmarking data adds a market intelligence dimension that pure inventory tools do not provide.

- ❏ **What to know for the exam or interview:** Zylo focuses on SaaS spend intelligence — it is more about financial visibility and optimization than traditional compliance management. The concept of discovering SaaS spending through financial transaction analysis is a key differentiator from discovery-based approaches.

CATEGORY 3: MICROSOFT- SPECIFIC SAM TOOLS

For the most widely audited software vendor in the world

VLSC

Volume Licensing Service Center — the primary portal for Microsoft volume license entitlements

Microsoft 365 Admin Center

SaaS subscription management for Microsoft 365 — user assignments and license utilization

Microsoft License Advisor

Customer-facing tool for understanding Microsoft licensing options and entitlements



MICROSOFT LICENSE ADVISOR AND VLSC

What It Is

Microsoft provides its own tools for customers to manage Microsoft licensing — the **Volume Licensing Service Center (VLSC)** and **Microsoft 365 Admin Center** are the primary portals where customers access their entitlement information.

What Problem It Solves

Microsoft is the most widely deployed and most frequently audited software vendor. Understanding what you are entitled to under your Microsoft agreements requires regular access to Microsoft's own entitlement data — which is maintained in their licensing portals.

What It Does

- VLSC allows organizations to view their volume license agreements, download software, access license keys, and review entitlement quantities
- The Microsoft 365 Admin Center shows subscription quantities, user assignments, and license utilization for Microsoft 365 services
- Microsoft 365 usage reports show which features and services are being used by which users

Why Every SAM Professional Needs to Understand These

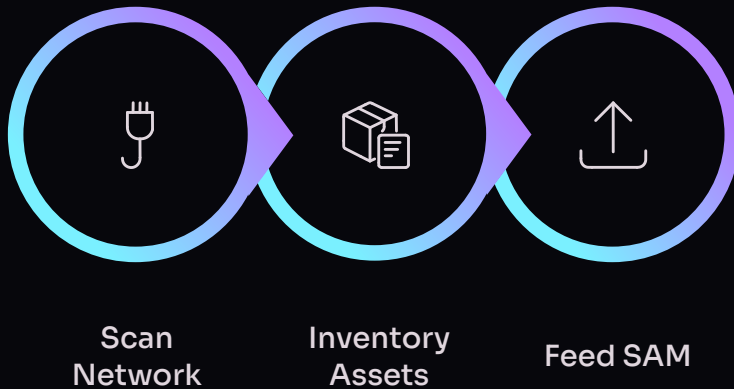
Microsoft licensing is ubiquitous — virtually every organization manages Microsoft licenses. The data available in these portals is the **source of truth** for Microsoft entitlements. SAM tools import from these portals, but SAM professionals must understand the portals directly.

- ❏ **What to know for the exam or interview:** VLSC is where Microsoft volume license entitlements are accessed. Microsoft 365 Admin Center is where SaaS subscription management happens. Both are free tools provided by Microsoft — but they show only entitlements, not full ELP. A SAM tool is needed to combine entitlement data with discovery data to calculate ELP.

CATEGORY 4: DISCOVERY TOOLS

Finding what is installed before you can manage it

Discovery tools are the essential first step in any SAM program. You cannot manage what you cannot see. Before any SAM activity can begin, an organization needs to know what software is installed across its endpoints, servers, and virtual machines.



Discovery tools provide the raw inventory data that enterprise SAM platforms use to calculate compliance and optimize costs.

LANSWEEPER

What It Is

Lansweeper is an IT asset discovery and inventory tool that scans networks to identify hardware and software across the IT environment.

What Problem It Solves

You cannot manage what you cannot see. Before any SAM activity can begin, an organization needs to know what software is installed across its endpoints, servers, and virtual machines. Lansweeper provides this discovery capability at a lower cost and complexity point than enterprise SAM platforms.

What It Does

- Scans the network and discovers all connected devices — workstations, servers, network equipment — and the software installed on them
- Inventories installed software versions, license keys where accessible, and hardware specifications
- Provides dashboards showing software distribution across the environment

Who Uses It

Mid-sized organizations that need reliable software discovery without the full complexity and cost of an enterprise SAM platform. Often used as a **stepping stone** — organizations start with Lansweeper to understand their environment and then deploy a more comprehensive SAM tool.

Limitation

Lansweeper provides discovery and inventory but has limited license management and compliance calculation capabilities compared to enterprise SAM platforms. It tells you what is installed — it does not tell you whether you have the right to have it installed.

- ❑ **What to know for the exam or interview:** Lansweeper is a discovery and inventory tool — it is the input to a SAM process, not the complete SAM solution. Understanding the distinction between discovery tools and full SAM platforms is important for the exam.

CATEGORY 5: OPEN SOURCE AND COMPLIANCE TOOLS

Managing open source license obligations in modern software development

Modern software development relies heavily on open source components — libraries, frameworks, and dependencies pulled from public repositories. Each component carries a license — and different licenses carry different obligations. This category of SAM tool addresses the growing discipline of open source license compliance.

FOSSA

Open source license compliance and software composition analysis — scans codebases to identify components and obligations

Black Duck

Similar open source compliance scanning and SBOM generation capabilities

SPDX

Software Package Data Exchange — a standard format for communicating software bill of materials information

FOSSA

What It Is

FOSSA is an open source license compliance and software composition analysis tool — it helps organizations understand what open source components are present in their software and what license obligations those components create.

What Problem It Solves

Modern software development relies heavily on open source components — libraries, frameworks, and dependencies pulled from public repositories. Each component carries a license — and different licenses carry different obligations. Without visibility into what open source is present and what those licenses require, organizations face inadvertent open source license violations.

What It Does

- Scans software codebases and build artifacts to identify all open source components and their licenses
- Maps license obligations — flagging GPL components that may require source code disclosure
- Identifies license conflicts where two dependencies carry incompatible licenses
- Generates **software bill of materials (SBOM)** documentation

Who Uses It

Software development organizations, technology companies, and any organization that develops software incorporating open source components. Increasingly relevant as regulators require SBOM documentation for software used in critical infrastructure.

- ❑ **What to know for the exam or interview:** FOSSA and similar tools (Black Duck, SPDX) address open source license compliance — a growing SAM discipline distinct from commercial software license management. The concept of a **Software Bill of Materials (SBOM)** — a complete inventory of software components and their licenses — is increasingly important in SAM and is likely to appear in exam questions.

TOOLS MAPPED TO SAM ACTIVITIES — QUICK REFERENCE

SAM Activity	Primary Tools	Purpose
Software Discovery	Lansweeper, Flexera, Snow, ServiceNow	Finding all software across the environment
License Entitlement Management	Flexera, Snow, Aspera, Microsoft VLSC	Recording and managing what the organization is entitled to use
ELP Calculation & Compliance	Flexera, Snow, Aspera, ServiceNow SAM	Reconciling entitlements against usage
SaaS Management	Torii, Zylo, Snow (SaaS module)	Managing cloud and SaaS subscriptions
Contract Management	Flexera, Snow, ServiceNow	Tracking contracts, renewal dates, terms
Cost Optimization	All SAM platforms	Identifying savings opportunities
Open Source Compliance	FOSSA, Black Duck	Managing open source license obligations
Microsoft Licensing	Flexera, Snow, Microsoft VLSC, M365 Admin Center	Managing the most common and complex license environment
IBM / SAP Licensing	Aspera, Flexera	Managing the most complex vendor licensing rules
Reporting and Dashboards	All SAM platforms	Compliance status and optimization reporting

CERTIFIED SOFTWARE ASSET MANAGER(CSAM)



ABOUT GSDC CERTIFICATION



EBOOK

Extensive and exclusive Ebook created by world's experts to help you with understanding core concepts.



LEARNING MATERIALS

Get access to learning materials such as videos, ebooks, templates, and practice exams, which will help you clear the certification exam.



CREATED BY EXPERTS

GSDC certifications are created and authored by world's leading experts in the field.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- Gain insights into autonomous decision-making processes
- Apply knowledge using ready-to-implement templates
- Demonstrate ability to work with Agentic AI models
- Validate your skills wit

Enroll now with the code **LEARN20** To avail **20%** discount

Enroll Now

www.gsdouncil.org 