

## Storage Solutions

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**Managing IT in a crisis:  
The “Systems Insight” advantage**



## Changing business requirements

We are facing a challenging economic landscape that seems to increase in uncertainty on a daily basis. The recent failure within the banking system, coupled with a global downturn has forced a review of financial and operational activities within many organisations. Governance at company level is under serious scrutiny and with it a drive to reduce unnecessary expenditure, cut costs and to finally realise a frequently abused term in business - "to do more with less".

The IT function is continually asked to drive down the cost of providing IT infrastructure and services. This article aims to give you a glimpse of how working with Computacenter and using HP Systems Insight Manager and associated software modules can drive down the operational cost of managing one of the largest enterprise IT footprints, the x86/x64 server environment (Intel based servers).

With the lower capital purchase cost (in relation to mainframe or enterprise UNIX platforms) and relative ease of deployment, the x86/x64 server environment has quickly grown to become the most popular server processing environment within organisations. However, the initially small footprint of x86/x64 servers has grown to become a vast, difficult to manage, underutilized and expensive to maintain IT processing estate. With the drive to reduce energy now a key topic and operational management costs regarded as a major operational expenditure, the recent economic downturn is forcing widescale reviews to drive down excess financial spend.

## System Management Activities

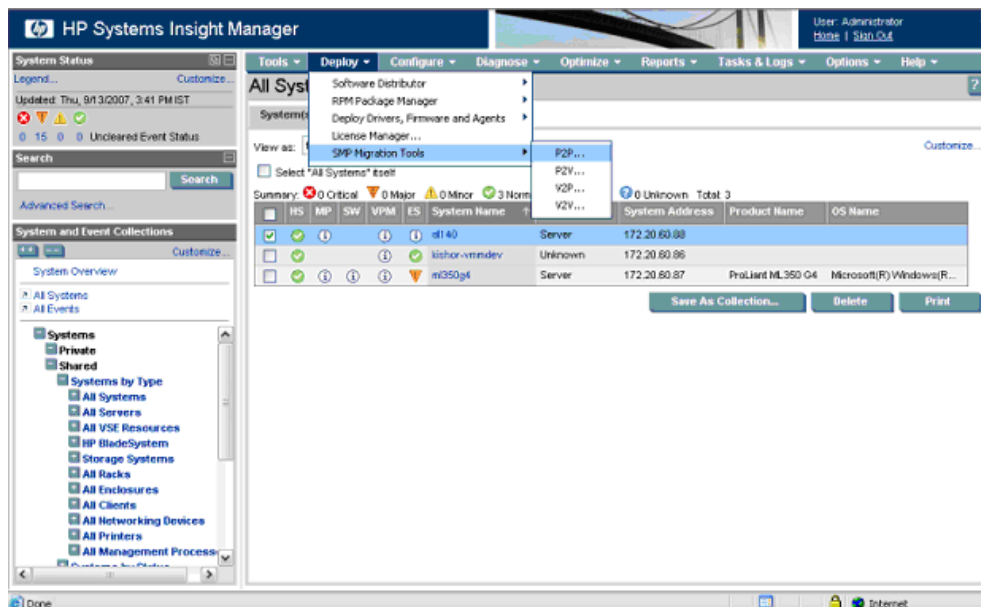
The current landscape has invigorated the systems management arena. Effective management of IT Infrastructure assets is required more than ever as business transformation activities seek hard data to reduce the customer "time to benefit". The benefits of understanding the IT estate, optimising it based on accurate real-time information, upgrading it in line with business activities or future projections and automating it to enable self healing or "lights out" operation have been frequently published. However now the need is *real* as unnecessary human intervention is not only costly but time consuming. We have finally reached the chapter where resilient systems that are optimised in operation by automation are actively sought by organisations and being implemented at an accelerated pace.

It is frequently stated "what isn't measured, can't be managed". Whilst not totally valid, management activities based on anecdotes or ambiguity certainly lack the accuracy of those based on empirical evidence. Better still if the data derived is

secure, centrally available, capable of being used as input data for other systems and can be used as much for prevention as cure, the benefits available are immense.

The scale of the management activity is also important. Hardware infrastructure with the potential to physically fail (requiring replacement) can be managed by a different approach to applications or business processes. A hardware failure event can deliver clear triggers with clarity around the component (or components) failing, whereas a business process or application underpinned failure can hide the root cause below numerous dependant layers. To this end all management is not equal and a detailed understanding of the outcomes expected of the management activity is fundamental before any management framework or solution is formulated.

HP Systems Insight Manager (HP SIM) is an award winning element level infrastructure management environment supplied at no charge with HP server products. It excels at monitoring and managing hardware events in a both reactive and predictive manner (figure 1).



**Figure 1: HP Systems Insight Manager – Summary Screen**

Whilst the functionality of HP SIM can be extended via the additional of optional software components it should be noted for enterprise grade business process or application monitoring a service management framework like HP Openview would be the ideal companion and utilise data discovered by HP SIM.

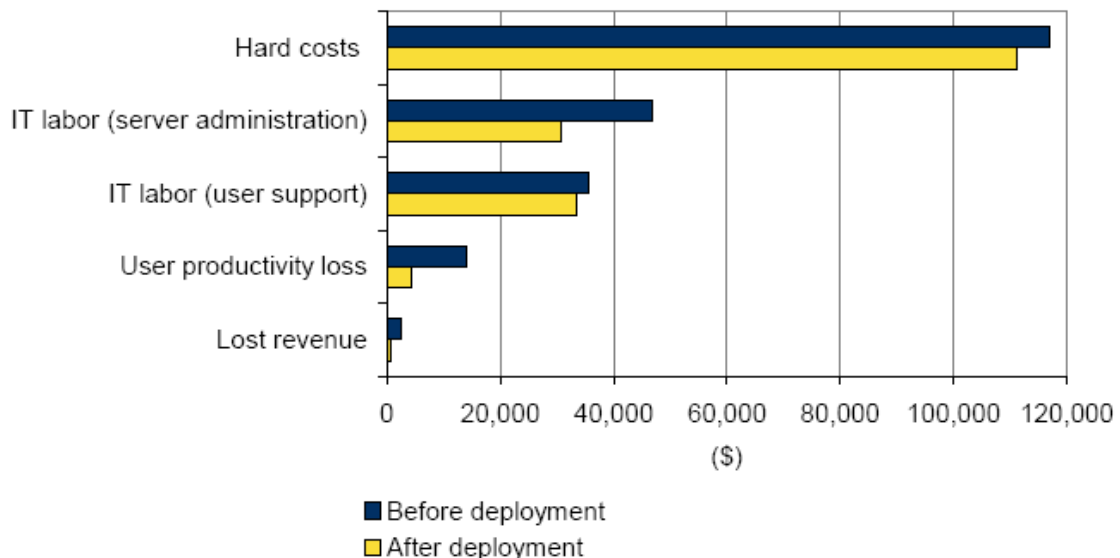
For those desiring rigid structure or who are bound by rigid SLAs ITSM best practice frameworks like ITIL assist greatly by providing a library of management tools and techniques with known measures and outcomes. But even without the use of end to end ITSM and the investment required to implement it, substantial benefits can be realised by utilising off the shelf infrastructure and software components from the industry’s leading vendors. HP Systems Insight Manager (HP SIM) is grouped firmly in that category and enables standard setting infrastructure management at an extremely low entry point.

### Do nothing is not an option

Historically, substantial investments in time and money were required to deliver systems management to IT infrastructures. Products like HP Openview, IBM Tivoli and BMC were deemed to be the only way to obtain the real time systems related information needed to proactively manage systems and make informed upgrade decisions. However HP Systems Insight Manager has changed the market by presenting continually evolving functionality within a product supplied at no charge for HPs enterprise rack and bladesystem ranges.

IDC has identified three year savings from the implementation of HP Systems Insight Manager of \$35,533 per 100 users based on analysis undertaken in 2007 (figure 2).

Average Three-Year Savings per 100 Users from Deploying HP Systems Insight Manager



Note: Total of three-year savings is \$35,533.

Source: IDC, 2007

**Figure 2: HP Systems Insight Manager 3 year savings - IDC**

Since the IDC research was based on an earlier release of HP Systems Insight Manager it is expected that the savings outlined will be even greater when current Systems Insight Manager solutions stacks are utilised.

With savings so tangible and the unmatched benefits highlighted throughout this document it would be expected that implementation of HP Systems Insight Manager would be prioritised by all. However investigation undertaken by Computacenter has highlighted lack of time as the main inhibitor to successful implementation of Systems Insight Manager even with the volume of easy to realise benefits available.

In the current economic and operational landscape with every unit of cost and time under intense scrutiny the tangible benefits delivered by HP Insight Manager can no longer be ignored.

## **Working with Computacenter**

Computacenter is the largest HP enterprise partner in the UK with extensive expertise in the implementation and ongoing management of critical IT infrastructure estates. Whether the requirement is for a project based solution design and implementation or the delivery of a full scale managed service, Computacenter ensures system management is “designed in” through the planning and analysis phase. Computacenter has an unmatched level of expertise working with HP Systems Insight Manager (HP SIM) and utilises the platform within its managed service operational framework.

Computacenter systems management designs build on the advantages of HP SIM and incorporate automation and proactive monitoring with awareness of physical and virtual IT infrastructures to bring reality to the overused term “lights out datacenter”.

The need to “prove the benefits” to ensure a tangible ROI can be obtained from systems management is a key element of a Computacenter systems management implementation. With consultants specialising in understanding cost benefits, Computacenter frequently works with organisations to prepare the business case for delivering enterprise systems management which is key to securing company commitment and financial investment.

Working with Computacenter eliminates “lack of time” as the reason not to benefit from the clear, real world benefits delivered by using HP Systems Insight Manager. By utilising Computacenter design and implementation services for HP Systems Insight Manager underpinned by in house best practise installation guidelines, organisations can be confident of a rewarding and successful systems management implementation and above all, “doing more with less”.