

Customer Success Story

Elders

▶ Elders Implements ManageSoft-Driven ITAM Solution



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“ManageSoft is virtually making the impossible, possible.”

– André Laubscher, IT Facilities Manager at Elders

Corporate Profile

- ▶ Elders connects primary producers with worldwide agricultural markets

The Challenge

- ▶ Timely deployment of software to 4000 users
- ▶ Protect systems from external security threats
- ▶ IT Compliance across the enterprise

ManageSoft Solution

- ▶ Configuration management
- ▶ Enterprise asset recognition
- ▶ License reconciliation
- ▶ Notification of compliance drift

Elders Survives Three Software Audits Unscathed

Elders is an icon in rural Australia, with a rich history of providing services to the nation's primary producers since 1839. Today, the company operates in three major areas: branch network, supply management, and production.

Branch networks are the core of Elders' business, with more than 420 branches and agencies spread across every state in Australia. The domestic network provides Australia's rural producers with inputs, services, products, and support in Elders' core areas of wool, livestock, rural finance, insurance, merchandise, and real estate. Its supply management division, Elders International, connects 100,000 Australian rural producers with the world's agricultural markets.

The Challenge

The vast majority of Elders' 420 branch offices are located in rural and remote areas — many of them hundreds of kilometres from the nearest capital city and thousands of kilometres from Elders' Adelaide head office. The geographical spread of

the business adds complexity to managing Elders' wide area network (WAN) of 3750 computers. The majority of branches operate without a server. The network provides 4000 users with online access to internal business systems and applications hosted out of Adelaide, as well as email and Internet access. Asset tracking, software updates, and security were identified as problem areas that required attention.

Elders' branch offices had manual processes in place to check hardware assets visually and post reports to the head office. Software asset reporting was another matter. Manual tracking of authorised and unauthorised software installations across their enterprise wasn't feasible. Rolling out software updates required IT staff to travel vast distances or send costly CDs through the mail. Addressing security threats, such as viruses, was also an additional growing time sink. Elders needed a closed-loop solution to manage and monitor branch IT assets and software licensing, deploy software applications, and protect its systems from security threats.

The ManageSoft Solution

Elders has implemented a ManageSoft IT asset management (ITAM) solution, including asset recognition, configuration management, and reporting. This enables Elders to easily deploy and update business-critical applications for its fleet of computers and provide compliance reports for internal and third party audits. "Introducing an automated ITAM solution has enabled Elders to automatically track the systems and software it has deployed and manage its licenses and compliance requirements effectively for the first time," explained André Laubscher, IT Facilities Manager at Elders. "We had an inventory management system, but it was based on a manual effort. For staff to do a visual check of equipment takes long enough without then checking what software is on it. It was impossible to do software license management properly. Moving from manual checks to using ManageSoft meant we were able to discover what software we had deployed where, and ensure our licensing requirements were met. Since we deployed ManageSoft, we have been audited three times — twice by Adobe® and once by IBM®. Each time we were able to extract the information we needed from ManageSoft. Both organisations, when they learned we use ManageSoft for licensing, were a lot more engaged because they knew we were taking licensing seriously. If we didn't have ManageSoft, I don't know how we would have done it."

Elders now uses ManageSoft for large-scale application deployment, including a recent mass rollout of Adobe Acrobat Reader® to the entire network. Mr. Laubscher added, "Without ManageSoft it would have taken years. We wouldn't have even attempted it. Now we can roll out a new application that is potentially a critical business application to the whole organisation in a short time frame and realise benefits to the business pretty quickly." The ManageSoft software deployment solution has delivered Elders tangible time and cost saving benefits, according to Mr. Laubscher,

"In the past, we had to send out CDs or have people travel. Now it's done in a more timely fashion. There's more consistency and quality over the whole process. We don't incur the cost of burning CDs or running the risk of software getting lost in transit or taking a year to roll out.

"The ManageSoft configuration management solution has also given Elders an effective insurance policy against security threats," Mr. Laubscher added. "It's a simple fact of life when running Microsoft applications you need to patch. ManageSoft provided us with an enterprise-wide patch deployment solution for all our applications. Prior to ManageSoft, we didn't run organised patch management. You don't realise how difficult it is to cover the Australian continent, until support people are required to travel from Brisbane to north-west Queensland. Typically we got there once every one or two years. Now we can service our remote offices far more effectively and provide a level of service and software that was only available in our head office previously. **ManageSoft is virtually making the impossible, possible.**"



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