

Using Enterprise Technology Management to Stay Ahead of IT Compliance Audits

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Introduction

For IT teams, staying ahead of compliance audits is a consistent challenge. Annual audits can divert staff from servicing tickets, employee or infrastructure needs and route them onto repeated, manual tasks tallying and correlating data in spreadsheets. Increasingly, audits happen with greater frequency due to changing legal and regulatory requirements. For companies serving multiple industries, the same IT team may be required to follow different schedules and compliance requirements. As more and more countries and states roll out their own regulations for cybersecurity and data / privacy compliance, the number and type of compliance requirements continues to grow.

In this environment legal and financial risks of falling out of compliance are becoming increasingly onerous:

- Attorneys have filed [multiple class-action lawsuits](#) to sue companies (including Walmart and Blackbaud) for allegedly violating CCPA regulations.
- The number of GDPR fines [surged 113%](#) for the 12 month period ending June 2021, as compared to the previous 12 months.
- Cybercriminals have expanded their targets to include more types of organizations as online fraud has expanded. For example, health care and finance organizations are seeing more attacks because of the value of their customer datas for medical fraud and business email compromise.

To improve IT compliance audits, enterprises should leverage automation and modern enterprise technology management (ETM) solutions. An ETM solution automatically discovers, aggregates, reconciles, monitors and orchestrates all IT assets, connecting dozens of previously disparate product silos. Holistic ETMs with robust APIs and extensible connector architectures are designed to cover all systems required for IT compliance audit completion, including: MDM, SAM, CMDB, ITAM, SIEM, help desk and ticketing, UEM, HRIS, SSO and ERP. By connecting these silos and enabling bi-directional data links, ETMs provide a workflow automation and reporting layer that can transform much of the rote manual labor from IT audits into programmatic, script-driven routines that can be run on demand, as frequently as needed. This allows teams to stay comfortable ahead of IT audits while improving the rate of compliance. By automating most manual labor associated with audits, ETM reduces the overall costs and compliance checks of all types: certifications, partner audits, legal and regulatory compliance or internal compliance rules.

Problems for IT Compliance Audits in the Modern Enterprise

Traditionally, IT audits and compliance involve a complex choreography of pulling data from different siloed IT management tools. Relevant IT asset ownership and status data might be stored in any number of point solutions. Identifying and then documenting asset ownership, status, location and usage requires pulling data from logs and records of the various siloed systems and combining them manually in complicated spreadsheets. This task has become more complicated in the past five years due to growth of new enterprise IT product categories including IaaS, PaaS and SaaS. Hybrid and remote work configurations have also added complexity, forcing IT teams to account for a distributed workforce logging on from home or nominally secured external connections.

For large organizations, an IT compliance audit has traditionally required multiple FTEs and outside consultants. Due to the manual components of the process, IT compliance audits often contained errors that, compounded over time put the organization at even greater compliance risk. Creating repeatable processes around IT compliance has always been challenging. Organizations could either pay for custom connectivity between siloed data sources or they could adopt manual approaches. More recently, some have turned to low-code/no-code solutions for connecting silos, but general purpose low-code/no-code solutions tend to break more frequently and can introduce their own compliance risks when those solutions are hosted elsewhere and in non-compliant environments. In faster-growing companies, lack of automation and cross-silo connectivity may mean that compliance data is badly out of date even a week after data collection. Monitoring and managing all the different software agents for collecting data from IT assets adds an additional layer of complexity.

The Benefits of Automating IT Compliance Processes

Automating IT compliance processes generates numerous primary and secondary benefits to enterprises including the following:



Offloads repetitive, tedious work from humans to machines

Human IT teams loath audits for the obvious reason that they are boring, tedious, and painful. Running manual collection and counts for audits also keeps human IT experts from other critical work resolving tickets and planning for future IT strategies and rollouts.



Improves accuracy and recency of compliance data

By switching from human data collection and compilation to automated capabilities, enterprises generally benefit from improved accuracy and better recency. Because audits take time when done manually, the data grows stale quickly. Any tedious manual task humans are doing results in errors; machines do not grow tired and do not accidentally transpose numbers.



Makes compliance processes more agile, adaptable and repeatable

Automating IT compliance converts manual processes to scripted programmatic capabilities with rules that can be more easily applied and changed across multiple point tools. Making a change to a process is as simple as changing a workflow. As more of the process becomes automated, it becomes more repeatable.



Reduces costs of running IT compliance audits

Automation of IT compliance audits cuts costs by replacing manual hours with far fewer machine hours. In addition, the opportunity cost of tying up humans is dramatically reduced with automation. Lastly, costs of checking and correcting data in audits is also reduced.



Enables better visualization of and reporting on compliance

Automation means aggregating data from multiple systems. This also enables near-real-time reporting and improved ability to visualize compliance status at granular levels by role, geography or business unit. Improved reporting and visualization can simplify overall education and communication on compliance process and status.



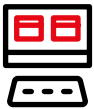
How to Improve IT Compliance Audits

To improve IT compliance audits and allow IT teams to stay comfortably ahead of the process, IT teams should work with compliance teams closely to establish the following:



Identify all regulatory and certification requirements

Building an inventory of all IT compliance audit requirements informs creation of compliance processes. The inventory will not only identify all relevant assets to be subject to compliance but also denotes which IT asset management, HR, finance and legal systems must also be included in the compliance processes. This inventory is a living document and should be revised at least annually, as the needs of the business change.



Create an inventory of IT compliance processes and playbook

Identifying all the required processes for IT compliance will allow IT teams to map out the necessary steps and create a more efficient approach that can run either sequentially or in parallel. A process map can also clarify dependencies and illuminate which stakeholders must be apprised of and prepared for the audit. Processes can be bundled into playbooks.



Identify potential bottlenecks and establish mitigation strategies

Once the compliance inventory and process maps are complete, teams in charge of IT audits should identify potential bottlenecks and establish mitigation strategies. The bottleneck could be technological, process or resource constraints. Pro-actively seeking out points of failure will reduce surprises later and simplify audits.



Identify where automation and orchestration can improve processes

As part of the above effort, IT teams should identify areas where automation can improve compliance audits, from low-hanging fruit to more complex automation projects. In addition, alongside automation should come considerations of how to better orchestrate compliance once elements are automated.



How ETM Can Enable Compliance Automation and Repeatability

Modern, holistic ETMs are meta-systems that connect all the point solutions used for different IT tasks. To be more effective, ETMs must provide an aggregation, publishing, management and orchestration layer that works across all departments in an enterprise. ETMs can take data from MDM, CMDB, SAM, ITAM, HRIS, ERP and security sub-systems, reconcile and clean that data, and create a single datasource of record for IT assets. Two-way data pipelines ensure that changes in any one of the point solutions is accurately reflected in other systems. Because ETMs have well-documented APIs and flexible connectors, these systems can power workflows that automate key IT-related processes such as compliance and audit. More advanced ETMs tend to have numerous pre-built connectors and visual workflow tools that enable rapid startup. Dashboards and drag-and-drop workflow automation enable the entire IT team to automate key parts of their compliance work; repeatable playbooks captured in the ETM allow for quick orchestration of multiple dependent compliance processes.

Crucially, modern ETMs are agentless (collecting data via other installed agents) and require minimal integration work. This flexibility and extensibility is crucial for addressing the full spectrum of lifecycle challenges because new classes of assets are appearing every few years.

In summary, modern ETMs have the following benefits for creating repeatable IT audit compliance workflows and processes:

ACQUIRE AND UNIFY

data from multiple point tools to create a single source of truth for all asset data across all classes, locations and types

RUN AGENTLESS DISCOVERY

which can easily pull in information from a variety of tools and can be modified to add new data sources and fields or objects

DEDUPLICATE AND NORMALIZE

asset data for easier compliance reporting

CREATE AUTOMATED WORKFLOWS

and triggers to remediate audit and compliance gaps

AUTOMATE

governance and policy enforcement by tracking asset disposition and status and kicking off workflows when anomalies appear

INTEGRATE

with external vendor (OEM, distributor, IaaS, SaaS, PaaS) APIs to automate data collection and updates required for subsequent audit and compliance processes

INCLUDE

dozens of pre-built integrations to streamline and simplify integration processes

CREATE PLAYBOOKS

for repeatable, programmatic compliance processes, allowing humans to focus on anomalies

Benefits of Using Omnitza ETM for Audit and Compliance Processes

Omnitza is an enterprise-grade cloud-based ETM solution widely used by companies across a broad range of industries to streamline and simplify IT compliance audits. Omnitza offers intuitive workflow tools and reporting, visual dashboards, and easy integration with the majority of important systems for IT compliance audits. Omnitza includes a range of broad, deep, and rapidly growing pre-baked integrations with a wide variety of partners in ticketing (Zendesk, Jira, ServiceNow), security (Sophos, Tanium), finance and ERP (Oracle), authentication, employee directories and SSO (Okta, Active Directory, Google Workspace) and device management (Intune, SCCM, Jamf). Omnitza allows IT teams to quickly identify easy paths to save time and improve the accuracy and delivery of IT compliance audits and turn those improvements into playbooks and repeatable workflows. The benefits of Omnitza ETM for compliance audits include:

- **Improved data accuracy** and a single source of truth for all asset data, eliminating the need to create this repository manually in spreadsheets
- **Agentless architecture** that leverages existing tools without requiring additional software installations or management of yet another agent.
- **Elimination of inaccurate** and time-consuming manual data collection
- **Integration with dozens of best-of-breed tools** to break down silos separating critical management of all IT asset classes (hardware, software, mobile, IaaS, PaaS, SaaS, IoT, connected
- **Ability to integrate or remove** data sources quickly into IT compliance audits
- **Default charts and dashboards** and reporting for common IT compliance audit requirements
- **Automated reporting**
- **Field-level customization** of data tables to allow for flexibility in creating reports, processes and workflows
- **Improved compliance enforcement** through workflows to automate remediation and notification
- **Easy creation and maintenance** of compliance playbooks that allow for push-button audits and compliance checks of IT assets



peripherals)

- **Reduced time** to complete audits and compliance procedures

Conclusion: Holistic, Modern ETM is Becoming a Requirement for IT Audit Excellence

As the world of IT assets continues to grow more diverse and complicated, audits are following suit. Enterprises and their employees are accessing and using more exposed surfaces and networks for their work. The number of IT asset classes continues to grow, as do the number of connected devices and services used by workers and enterprises. Compliance regulations and laws are also growing more complex with industry, state, country, and other bodies adding and updating compliance requirements frequently. At the same time, enterprises are trying to hold the line of IT costs and minimize hiring of more IT staff. In this environment, maximizing automation and repeatability becomes a crucial part of achieving IT audit excellence and delivering the type of visibility, repeatability, and agility that modern enterprises need to stay comfortably ahead of IT compliance audit requirements.

About Oomnitza

Oomnitza offers the industry's most versatile Enterprise Technology Management platform that delivers key business process automation for IT. Our SaaS solution, featuring agentless integrations, best practices and low-code workflows, enables enterprises to quickly achieve operational, security and financial efficiency leveraging their existing endpoint, application, network infrastructure and cloud infrastructure systems. We help some of the most well-known and innovative companies to optimize resources, mitigate cyber risk, expedite audits and fortify digital experience.

Learn more at [Oomnitza.com](https://oomnitza.com).



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