

Asset Navigator® Helps Growth at UK's Blitz Games



The Customer

Blitz Games is one of the top 5 independent game developers in the United Kingdom with over 20 years of experience in the games business. Publishers of Blitz Games have included such notables as Universal, Disney Interactive, Sony, THQ, Empire Interactive, and Hasbro Interactive.

This award-winning company is headquartered in Leamington Spa, north of London. The region's *Midlands Business Insider* magazine recently ranked Blitz Games as #17 on their list of the 50 fastest-growing companies in the West Midlands.

The Problem

After much growth, Blitz Games needed an integrated solution for asset management and software licensing compliance.

The Solution

Asset Navigator® Professional Edition Version 4.3 with current licenses for 550 nodes and 5 users.

The Benefits

- ✓ Software installation data to ensure licensing compliance
- ✓ Helping make decisions about purchasing assets and properly allocating them
- ✓ Accurate project cost analysis
- ✓ Flexible filtering of list views
- ✓ Quick-and-easy retrieval of data for audits and budgets
- ✓ Powerful reports module
- ✓ All-in-one system that readily supports future IT growth

Building an Infrastructure

When James Corrigan joined Blitz Games six years ago as its first IT manager, the company's primary focus was, as he puts it, "Games. Plus administration." At the time, Blitz Games employed about 70 people who worked locally on about 100 machines.

And their IT department? It was a Windows 98 diskette and a single PC server.

According to Corrigan, everything was outdated. There were no backups, standards, or procedures. They had minimal infrastructure, and there was no asset management. As Corrigan wryly states, "It was a shambles, but we were surviving." Since that time, Corrigan reports, "We've grown up quite a bit and are now very structured."

More than ready for the task at hand, Corrigan worked hard to begin building the IT department from the ground floor. He started by using a dual system of spreadsheets and Word documents to track equipment and software licenses. He also built an Access database to monitor the lending of around 4,000 library items and to track Help Desk tickets.

The database did a good job for about a year, although Corrigan found it to be clumsy. This piecemeal approach worked fairly well for the next three years and helped him put together a much-needed structure. However, he says he had to prove to management that the structure was actually a good idea!

Finding Asset Navigator®

Somewhere around the three-year mark, Corrigan decided what he really needed was a complete package that comprised asset management and software licensing compliance. He eventually tried another leading PC asset inventory tool, which was, he states, "Very slow, so we could only use it once a month. And there were no reporting tools anyway, plus it was hard to set up and hard to maintain." Clearly, this tool was not the solution.

Two years ago, Corrigan found Asset Navigator® while surfing the web. After downloading the demo, he says, "I didn't realize there was a full software system out there. I was quite amazed that it did everything we wanted it to do." As he puts it, "It was an all-in-one system." He started with the audit and slowly developed a full system. Now, he says, "We use pretty much every bit of it."

Today, Corrigan's IT department comprises an IT administrator and an IS coordinator, whose daily use of Asset Navigator® includes reporting and managing the library as well as moving all their equipment around. (At Blitz Games, the emphasis on game projects requires the constant reassignment of assets to the right location.) On the technical side, Corrigan has a network manager and an IT technician who manages the network and provides daily support.

As a whole, the group currently maintains an infrastructure of around 260 machines for 120 employees — around twice the size as when Corrigan started.

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*James Corrigan
IT Manager
Blitz Games*

About Blitz Games

Blitz Games began as the tale of two twin brothers who loved computer games. While Philip and Andrew Oliver's philosophy obviously encompasses the concept of fun (and games), their incredible success story is more about talent, dedication, and hard work than it is about rocketing to the top in record time. Blitz Games has now designed over 100 premier games across all platforms, and in the process, has earned numerous prestigious industry

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awards, including the first UK-based Application of Technology Award for their *Fairly OddParents* game. Blitz Games uses its exclusive internal FUSE engine technology in the development process. This accelerates the creation of their game prototypes and allows the company to stay well ahead in the very competitive games business.

Several recent Blitz Games titles have included:

- *Fairly OddParents: Breakin' Da Rules*, a cartoon-style adventure based on the Nickelodeon show
- *Bad Boys II*, an action game inspired by the 2003 movie starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence
- *Disney's The Little Mermaid II*, an underwater adventure based on the Disney movies
- *The Mummy Returns*, an action adventure based on the movie
- *Disney's Lilo & Stitch: Trouble in Paradise*, a children's game based on the Disney movie

Using Favorite Features

One of Corrigan's favorite Asset Navigator® features is filtering, especially when he doesn't want something as formal as a printed report. He says, "The way you can filter views, drag headers around — it's really quite brilliant. If someone comes along and wants to know how many playstations we have in the building, it's an absolute breeze. We can get the information in seconds."

And he adds, "We use the reporting tool to create our own reports. We have some fantastic reports. The data is all there, so it's just knowing how to get it."

Of course, Corrigan has numerous other favorites, including the availability of data to make informed purchasing decisions. He states, "When we're doing the yearly budget, I can use Asset Navigator® to find out about past purchases."

He adds, "I can determine the equipment we need when new projects are pending. I can answer people's questions instantly from my laptop when I'm in meetings, or on-the-fly whenever someone needs proof about something we purchased."

And when the time comes for the annual financial audit, Asset Navigator® makes it easy for Corrigan to prove to the auditors that he's purchased something. Corrigan declares, "This used to be a nightmare! I had to send out warning emails two weeks before the audit. Now I just import the audit data and it's all there. It's a breeze nowadays."

And as much of the work at Blitz Games is project-based, Asset Navigator® lets Corrigan quickly provide other departments with valuable data so they can perform accurate project cost analyses.

The Blitz Games environment presents its share of other unique challenges. As a company of artists, designers, and programmers, Blitz Games has more than a handful of software power users. "Everyone is always asking for better software," states Corrigan. "This goes against standardizing across the company."

Corrigan uses a paper-based software allocation sheet that he constantly checks against Asset Navigator®'s Software Installations list. He says, "If people are downloading software from the Internet, the IT technicians will remove it, unless it's really needed, in which case we'll buy a license."

Corrigan also sends out monthly software audit reports to managers so they can decide whether to keep a software product, remove it, or just keep it until a certain date. When a project changes, they may not need the product anymore and can allocate it to someone else. Corrigan performs this same task for the hardware assets.

Growing into the Future

When discussing the growth of the company, Corrigan indicates that they're expanding, and he states, "The Asset Navigator® system will grow with the company. We'd only have to add audit and user licenses. It's future-proved," as he puts it. "It can do everything we need it to do."

And he's quick to add, "The support has been brilliant. It's second-to-none every time that we've needed it."

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James Corrigan
IT Manager
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For more information about Blitz Games, go to www.blitzgames.com.



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