Software License Management
Incubator
Charter

Dated 12/14/2010

Ver. : 1.1

The information provided below is subject to change and reflects the current state of the Incubator.

Management Problem(s) and Environment

There is a lack of standards in describing licensed products and product usage, and supporting tools. . The emergence of cloud computing along with virtualization adds additional complexity to software license management for platform vendors , application providers and their customers.   The following cases are not considered to be comprehensively addressed by existing standards:

1) The ability to discover and enumerate software product usage. This could encompass what instances, users, CPUs or other measurable units that may be running, where (e.g. whether in an operating system on hardware server, or a virtualized or cloud computing environment) , with what device, and by whom (i.e. on which processor of a given hardware server).

2) The ability to uniquely identify the software licensed product(s) associated with a particular usage.

3) The ability to technically express product usage information of licensed product(s) for pre-deployment or reporting purposes. For example, product usage information in a package such in Open Virtualization Format (OVF).

These difficulties and others combine to increase the amount of effort required to produce an accurate software inventory.

When virtualization is used, customers have an opportunity to improve the efficiency, availability and flexibility of their IT systems over time.

Customers benefit when approaches to describing and reporting software products and product usage enable product interoperability. Providing these data artifacts, identified in items above, could serve as an input to creation of a framework to support associating licensed software products, product usage and licensing policies (See succeeding section on Incubator Scope that identifies what is in scope for this activity).

Incubator Scope & Charter

This Incubator will develop whitepaper(s) which focus on the challenges listed above to enable the industry to manage licensed software product(s) and product usage, and to move closer to interoperable solutions. For each of these challenges the Incubator will identify real world use cases and scenarios, and create a taxonomy of existing or proposed solutions to identify licensed software products and product usage. Where existing standards can address these challenges, they shall be enumerated. Where they do not exist, the Incubator shall establish requirements and make recommendations to fill in gaps required to address these challenges.

The white paper(s) may also recommend a solution to these challenges by leveraging or defining extensions to existing work. The purpose of this document is to define the technical aspects required to address the requirements, use cases, scenarios and solutions identified. For example:

- The representation of the identity of a licensable product (virtual machine instance, on premise product, etc)
- How it is associated with an instance or operating system
- Who and what (device) are assessing that instance, and
- The ability to discover if and where the licensable product is running.

Licensed software products and product usage may be captured through the use of modeling technologies.

The whitepaper(s) may identify examples of licensing policies and scenarios defined by vendors (i.e. how the product instance is licensed, packaged or used) to guide what product and product usage information, as outlined above, is relevant.

These deliverables are intended to jumpstart our mission to create interoperable standards to overcome these challenges. These may result in:

1. New work items to existing chartered working groups.
2. Expanded charters scope to existing chartered groups
3. Creation of new working groups if needed.

It is believed that there is much prior art that must be considered and included in the final recommendations.

Out of Scope

The Incubator will ensure that the whitepaper(s) supports identifying and capturing relevant software product and usage information to support existing or future use cases and cloud computing scenarios.

This Incubator Activity **shall not** take a position, make any recommendations, constrain or define licensing policies. Any such activity is explicitly out of scope for this Incubator.

Business Justification

Improving the interoperability with which software inventory and product usage are expressed provides an organization with a host of benefits, including:

1. Improved IT governance through known software standards and processes for product usage that provides data artifacts relevant to software licensing management.
2. A known correlation of relevant software products within an organization's infrastructure and their product usage.
3. Customers can understand their product usage as an input to purchase decisions.

Expected Incubator Input

Requirements from customers and stakeholders

Other prior art as appropriate

Incubator Deliverables

1. Whitepaper: Taxonomy of existing use cases and scenarios that identify software product usage and provide examples of licensing policies useful to address the challenges listed above.

2. Whitepaper(s): Use cases, technical requirements and recommendations for future industry standardization for improved Software License Management. This document should define potential mechanisms to address these challenges. This document may serve as an input into future standardization work.

Incubator Timeline

12 months from start of the Incubator

Alliance Partnerships

TagVault.org

ISO/IEC

Reliance/Coordination with other WG Models

The Systems Virtualization, Partitioning, and Clustering Working Group including all profiles and the OVF specification.

Application Working Group

Metrics Model Extensions Working Group

And others TBD

Interim Chairs

Winston Bumpus – VMware Inc. - wbumpus@vmware.com

Supporting Companies

The following leadership or board companies are interested in the formation of a DMTF Incubator to address the problems identified in this document. The companies and participants listed below will constitute the initial Leadership Board of the Incubator.

- **CA Technologies** – Paul Lipton - Paul.Lipton@ca.com
- **IBM** - Mike Baskey - mbaskey@us.ibm.com
- **Novell, Inc**. –Alan Clark - aclark@novell.com
- **Oracle** – Christina Crowley - christina.crowley@oracle.com
- **VMware, Inc**. – Winston Bumpus - wbumpus@vmware.com

Participation Requirements

Addition of new leadership board members requires a SUPER MAJORITY (75%) of the Review Board.

Leadership Board Voting Policy

Review Board Voting will be a SUPER MAJORITY (75%) of the Review Board.

Change log

0.1	08/05/10	Winston	Initial Draft
0.2	08/23/10	Winston	Added inputs / Deliverables / Timeline
0.3	08/24/10	Winston	Modified to make deliverables consistent
0.4	08/26/10	Winston	Modified to clarify that initial supporters will be initial Leadership Board