

Case Study: Pitney Bowes MapInfo



FLEXNET® Operations

Customer Profile: Pitney Bowes MapInfo, part of Pitney Bowes Inc., is the leading global provider of location intelligence solutions, integrating software, data and services.

The Challenge: MapInfo's legacy licensing approach limited the company's ability to analyze and track product usage around the world, while customers had few licensing options and an inconsistent experience across products.

The Benefits: MapInfo has improved multiple aspects of its licensing operations. Day-to-day operations are smoother and remote operations are now managed with one tracking system. The company has more accurate data of how its products are being used around the world, and customers have gained more options in choosing how and when they deploy MapInfo products.

The Solution: Using FlexNet Publisher and FlexNet Operations, MapInfo has added universal licensing capabilities, thereby enabling automated trials, license activation and license management.



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Chuck Schwerin
Senior Product Manager
of Licensing Technologies,
MapInfo



Pitney
Bowes
MapInfo
Matches Its

Solutions' World-Class Capabilities with Licensing Solutions from Flexera Software

Providing location intelligence to over 7,000 businesses and government organizations around the world, Pitney Bowes MapInfo was the first vendor to develop, in 1986, desktop mapping software that provides users with a data analysis and visualization tool. Today, MapInfo is a global organization of more than 900 employees. It develops the world's leading location intelligence software, data, online tools and professional services to help organizations in a wide range of sectors make more profitable decisions.

Used in more than 60 countries, MapInfo's products are developed in a creative environment that embraces innovative ideas, teamwork and customer focus. These values were top of mind for MapInfo's licensing professionals when they set out to globally transform the company's software licensing strategy – and chose Flexera Software FlexNet solutions as MapInfo's enabling technology.

Licensing transformation: Communication is key

At the time MapInfo decided to overhaul its licensing practices, there were no universal

policies, and certificate-based licensing was only present in a few versions of a few products, available only in certain regions. MapInfo had no ability to track those entitlements other than with an internally developed, manual system.

The licensing team knew a licensing transformation would benefit both MapInfo and its customers, but any transition would need to be handled very carefully. According to Chuck Schwerin, Senior Product Manager of Licensing Technologies at MapInfo, the transformation would touch partners, customers and internal stakeholders at many different levels. Extensive communication with each group therefore would be essential.

"We knew we would be gaining advantages by universally automating product licensing, but we wanted to make the transformation as seamless as possible for our customers and colleagues," Schwerin says. "We decided that communicating, even over communicating, at every turn would help each group anticipate the changes that would take place in their organization."

The path to selecting the best licensing solution

The cross-department team's first step was a search for a comprehensive licensing system. The team considered a handful of different choices, looking for an automated solution that:

- Would support Java
- Be interoperable with MapInfo's other systems
- Have an external customer-facing portal for license management.

Flexera Software quickly emerged as a top contender. As a customer of Flexera Software's earlier FLEXIm technologies, the MapInfo team liked the idea of continuing to work with a trusted source, and Flexera Software's leadership in the industry provided reassurance, as well. "Going into a project to adopt licensing universally was a significant commitment for our team and our company as a whole," states Schwerin. "We all wanted to feel confident about the licensing technology we selected, as well as with the vendor behind the technology."

The MapInfo team selected Flexera Software based largely on three factors:

- Financial: The team's due diligence showed that using Flexera Software's solutions to improve the licensing and activation process, and expand the license models available to MapInfo customers, could result in a powerful return on investment (ROI). "We were persuaded by compelling evidence in the marketplace that other companies were benefiting financially by using Flexera Software licensing and back-office software, so we

decided to select it as our technology as well," Schwerin says.

- Technical: MapInfo wanted one code base and one process for its licensing software worldwide, as opposed to, for example, a product line that had separate protected, unprotected and demo versions.
- Customer experience: Offering advanced, secure licensing technology would create more options for customers. "Interoperability is a core competency for us. We felt we were well-positioned to take what Flexera Software had and integrate it with our product line and create a combined offering that would be attractive to our customers," comments Schwerin.

The MapInfo team chose two solutions from Flexera Software: FlexNet Publisher would be used as their general licensing technology. FlexNet Operations would automate license generation and entitlement management, and integrate with MapInfo's back-end financial systems for reporting, tracking and analysis.

A smooth transition to FlexNet licensing

FlexNet Publisher and FlexNet Operations were implemented in a parallel process, with an initial focus on FlexNet Operations. The MapInfo engineering team worked closely with Flexera Software Professional Services to familiarize themselves with the changes required to implement activation style licensing. "We had to make sure we covered all of the situations that might be presented. We did everything to provide our customers with as seamless an experience as possible," states Schwerin.

An important issue during the deployment was assuring that revenue recognition should not be slowed down by the new licensing process. In order for MapInfo to be able to recognize revenue from a sale of MapInfo Professional, customers had to have everything available to them to use the software when they opened the box. Although MapInfo Professional updates were delivered electronically, new purchases were delivered by CD. It was critical that the new form of automated licensing not affect MapInfo's ability to recognize revenue.

Silence rings golden

In March 2007, MapInfo's flagship product, MapInfo Professional, was shipped with new automated licensing and activation capabilities. Schwerin recalls, "We knew the transformation would be a success if there was a large silence. A vast majority of our customers were silent."

MapInfo also received positive reviews internally after establishing license servers in each region to support internal use of their own products. "Customer service teams are now realizing they can use FlexNet Operations for diagnostics to understand where an internal activation went wrong. Only now are they realizing the power of capturing data."

Universal licensing delivers universal benefits

Using FlexNet Publisher and FlexNet Operations, MapInfo has implemented a common engineering approach to licensing and entitlement management across its product line, with minimal impact to customers. Additional benefits include:

- More effective day-to-day operations: Having shed light on internal processes, the new licensing system now helps the team rationalize their actions, achieve consistencies globally across offices, and improve order processing.
- Improved management of remote operations: The licensing team uses FlexNet Operations to integrate with the multiple instances of the financial system used by different regions, allowing these remote operations to be centrally tracked and managed.
- Accurate statistics and reports on customer activation and usage: According to Schwerin, the activation and usage statistics are now considerably more accurate than prior to the implementation of Flexera Software's technology. "Our internally developed tracking system wasn't adequate enough to give our customers a comfort level to know if they were accounting for all the seats that were used in the field. Today, we have instantaneous report capabilities that provide data by customer and entitlement," he says.

Specifically, the licensing team instantaneously knows to what degree customers are using MapInfo Professional, and when activation and usage begins. This allows MapInfo to improve maintenance, technical support and training programs, and understand when the programs should begin and end. All of this data can now be shared with MapInfo's sales teams, which can use it to plan intelligent licensing strategies.

"Being able to learn how many seats were purchased and to what degree they're being used has been valuable to our customers. The service extends MapInfo's capabilities to be a trusted advisor to our customers who ask for assistance with accounting and auditing their license use," says Schwerin.

Today, the MapInfo licensing team is confident in their decision to incorporate FlexNet Publisher licensing and use FlexNet Operations as their entitlement management solution, having significantly improved internal operations and brought greater value to customers.

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