

Case Study: National Instruments



FLEXNET® Publisher

Challenge: To meet the needs of a global customer base, National Instruments needed a licensing solution that enable them to flexibly price, package and protect their product offering.

Solution: Flexera Software's FlexNet Publisher software enables National Instruments to meet customer requirements for license management and new product options.

Benefits: FlexNet Publisher allows National Instrument to maintain a strong focus on customer needs, reduce time to market, lower costs and decrease the environmental impact of physical media.

Customer Profile: Founded in 1976 and with operations in 40 countries, National Instruments is transforming the way engineers and scientists design, prototype, and deploy systems for test, control, and embedded design applications.



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Brian Sierer
Senior Group Manager,
National Instruments



NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS National Instruments Adopts

Flexera Software Licensing Solutions To Better Serve a Global Customer Base

National Instruments transforms the way engineers and scientists around the world design, prototype, and deploy systems for test, control, and embedded design applications. Using the company's open graphical programming software and modular hardware, customers at more than 25,000 organizations annually simplify development, increase productivity and dramatically reduce time to market.

However, until several years ago, National Instruments lacked an electronic licensing solution, making it difficult for large customers such as Motorola and DaimlerChrysler to easily do business with it. After adopting Flexera Software FlexNet Publisher, National Instrument has dramatically streamlined its licensing process, enhancing customer satisfaction and enabling a richer product offering.

Customer demand more flexible licensing options

Prior to implementing its Flexera Software licensing solution, National Instruments distributed each software product on multiple CDs. Each time a customer wanted to upgrade

or add new feature sets, new CDs would be shipped. This method proved time-consuming and inefficient for both National Instruments and its customers, incurring unnecessary shipping costs and negative environmental impact.

"Our largest customer accounts needed better policies and tools for managing large quantities of our software within their organizations," explains Brian Sierer, Senior Group Manager at National Instruments. The company looked to electronic licensing to streamline the process of distributing its software and simplify customers' license management.

The best licensing features to meet customer needs

National Instruments initially considered creating licensing in-house, but soon recognized that partnering with a provider would result in a richer solution and free up internal resources. After evaluating several licensing options, Sierer and senior architects chose FlexNet Publisher from Flexera Software. The Flexera Software solution enables software and hardware vendors to flexibly price, package and protect their product offerings, as well as profitably manage licenses throughout their lifecycle.

"In terms of service and features, FlexNet Publisher provided the best features available for the cost," said Sierer. "Plus, a lot of our key accounts were already familiar with FlexNet, so it was a no-brainer. I think we would have had a lot more resistance if we had gone with another party's solution."

With FlexNet Publisher, National Instruments packages multiple editions of each product, such as base, full, and professional development systems; customers receive a license key code that unlocks the specific development system they have purchased. For additional functionality, they simply contact National Instruments to purchase an upgrade and the correct key code, allowing them to access new features immediately.

Expanding customer reach while gaining efficiencies

By choosing Flexera Software's FlexNet Publisher, National Instruments has been enabled to meet customer requirements for license management, while implementing an innovative method for packaging and selling its software. For example, National Instruments is now able to include trial versions on product CDs. At the end of their 30-day evaluation period, customers can order full versions online, and National Instruments simply sends an activation code to enable the complete product.

Incorporating all of the functionality on product CDs allows National Instruments to shorten

its sales cycle and pass on cost savings to its customers. The company saves significant media, shipping and packing costs required to deliver software to customers, and reduces the environmental impact of physical media.

Additionally, internal efficiency has increased by combining multiple versions of software together on CDs, streamlining the process of preparing software for release. "Before we implemented this process, National Instruments needed about six months to prepare all feature sets and versions of a release. The ability to merge all product functionality together has reduced that time to about three months," said Sierer. "That capability alone saves about 1.5 person months."

Moving forward, National Instruments sees electronic licensing as an important way to maintain a competitive advantage. "Flexera Software FlexNet allows us to innovate the way we sell our software so that we're always ahead of the competition," added Melissa Garrity, Product Marketing for National Instruments. "Being unique and making it simple for customers is really valuable."



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