Data Center Asset Management Solutions

Asset Vue, LLC is a Bristol, Pennsylvania based provider of RFID based asset management and data center management solutions. The company offers technology designed to solve the kinds of regular challenges faced by "data center people" in their daily roles and their strategic responsibilities that is not found in other tools. The passive-RFID solution represents the culmination of living and working through the daily challenges faced by data center management and leadership across the industry. The company's executive leadership and product development staff bring vast, direct experience from the world of data center operations, where they have worked with some of the world's most complex and most high-profile data center operations.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Aron, what is the concept at Asset Vue?*
Mr. Aron: Asset Vue is a company focused on Data Center Asset Management (DCAM). We have applications that manage and track assets for the lifecycle of the asset as well as provide services that enable our customers to effectively control their assets and related information.

Gary W. Aron - Partner

The challenge we face is that data center managers and other IT professionals in charge of managing data center assets often feel like they're on a pirate treasure hunt. That's because data center assets like servers, storage and switches can suddenly become the high-tech equivalent of lost treasure when they are "hidden" due to improper asset management or undocumented moves, adds and changes.

CEOCFO: *You have a long history in IT. Why Asset Vue? What attracted you to the concept?*
Mr. Aron: That is a great question. My background has been in is working for large companies that have very large data centers with a significant number of assets and resources. For the last ten or fifteen years we have been focused on DCIM (Data Center Infrastructure Management) tools, to help us to manage our environments more efficiently and more effectively. One of the biggest gaps or holes is having accurate asset information. That is because, with all of these sophisticated tools we have, we struggle to keep the asset information up to date because the data center is so dynamic. We invest a considerable amount of time, money and resources into managing the space, power, cooling and infrastructure using DCIM tools that are not nearly as effective as they should be without having accurate asset information. In addition with the many compliance rules now in place having accurate information on corporate assets is essential. We started Asset Vue going on three years ago with a focus on addressing that gap, gathering and validating asset information which takes customers a considerable amount of time producing and maintaining. We leverage RFID technology to track assets and update our customer's asset data.

CEOCFO: *What is it that you are providing to your clients? How does it work differently from other methods available?*
Mr. Aron: We are providing the ability for our clients to track assets and leverage asset information for consumption in a number of ways. We are currently using a passive RFID technology. We did an analysis and looked at the different types of technologies, which includes bar coding, passive, active RFID; and found passive RFID to be the most cost effective means of addressing the gap that exists at this time. It does not solve every problem, but it solves most of the issues that customers really need addressed as it relates to tracking assets and maintaining their information in data centers, storage areas and throughout their facilities. Asset Vue Inventory gets information into it initially either via imported data that the customers may currently have or by going onsite and collecting data in a customer's data center. Then we associate that information with an RFID tag and validate the data much, much quicker than a human would do it in the traditional way. When we scan a rack it takes about ten seconds to scan the rack of assets and validate what exists in the rack and reports on what has changed. In that time we build an elevation drawing of the rack and provide a visual status of the assets contained within the rack. If something has changed about the disposition of the asset that asset is highlighted and the change is reflected. Any corrections can be made right at the asset and the database is updated immediately.

CEOCFO: *What would be the traditional way? What are you competing against?*
Mr. Aron: Most customers still track their assets in an Excel data base manually and many periodically validate that their inventory is updated, but often it is too time consuming for customers to do this and it doesn't get done or get done right. The staff performing these audits are highly trained technicians who consider this a mundane and time consuming task. Another major factor is accuracy of information and it is estimated that the asset inventories have a 20%-30% error rate. That is a large number. With RFID the accuracy improves to 99% or better and the audit time is improved by 90%.

CEOCFO: *Is there a typical customer who is using your services?*
Mr. Aron: Our customers are generally very experienced and understand that planning up front leads to success and they have specific goals in mind. Many have had difficulty locating assets in a timely manner in large facilities or they want to do proactive planning for growth or they may have to meet compliance standards and want a way to ensure they know where there assets are and have information that is important to them such as when warranties expire, when the asset is due to be replaced or just want to have control over their assets. Tracking assets is a very challenging and time consuming task and most struggle with this on a daily basis.

Our Asset Vue Tracker application includes portals which are placed at loading docks, entrance and exits to track equipment coming and going. This is an RFID portal much like what you see at the entrance of retail outlets. We are using that same type of technology to track IT assets, laptops and things of that nature. We can track and report when assets move and alarm and send notifications when the situation warrants. We tie the Tracker and inventory applications together to dynamically update the current location of the asset and can use the information compiled to do reporting.

> **"Asset Vue is a company focused on Data Center Asset Management (DCAM). We have applications that manage and track assets for the lifecycle of the asset as well as provide services that enable our customers to effectively control their assets and related information." - Gary W. Aron**

CEOCFO: *Have many companies been looking for a better way or is it more they would be happy to know that it exists?*
Mr. Aron: Most companies are looking for a more effective ways of managing their assets. The RFID technology that is used is not new but until recently it has been cost prohibitive to implement RFID technology, especially active RFID. The costs have come down considerably while the technology has developed so it can be integrated easily without complicating an already complicated environment. Many tools require the customer to adapt to the technology but we strive to ensure our solution compliments our customer's current process and enhances their ability to maintain their asset inventory.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential customers? How do they find you?*
Mr. Aron: Our team comes out of the data center industry with most of us having worked in data center throughout our careers. We are involved in many of the data center industry professional organizations. Our sales and marketing teams also are pretty well known in the industry so we have a pretty far reaching network. We have several partners who we work with and hold webinars fairly often to get the word out that there are solutions available to address asset control in the data center.

CEOCFO: *What did you learn as your customers started to use the product? What have you changed from the original concept?*
Mr. Aron: We have grown a lot and our products have benefitted greatly from input from our customer base. When we first got the product out of the box, so to speak, it was based locally on a laptop. We really wanted to be able to get a visual in front of the customer of what their assets looked like in the racks in their data centers to make it easy to identify and resolve issues. We recently upgraded our products to web based applications with many additional features that were beneficial to our customer base. We support multiple device types and now have more flexibility to allow our customers the ability to customize to suit their needs. Although our main focus is the data center we have expanded beyond the data center to storage areas, offices and track equipment between various locations. Having amassed a lot of asset information we can make use of this information with SMART reporting that helps customers get the most out of the assets they own. We plan to continue to evolve to be the best Data Center Asset Management (DCAM) product on the market. You do this by listening to your customers and growing with them.

CEOCFO: *You said that originally designed for laptops?*
Mr. Aron: When we originally developed the product it was laptop based and we have now rewritten the product to make it web based. We have an unlimited number of user defined fields which has been very beneficial as customers want to track more than just the typical asset information. Many want to use our applications to track warranty expirations,

technology refresh cycles, audit compliance, financial depreciations and things like that. We have the ability to do all that and more. As the technology evolves so do we; this allows us to offer more solutions and benefits to our customers.

CEOCFO: *What is the key to evaluating new technology? It seems that so much comes out every day. How do you know what might be something to keep on the radar screen, let alone actually be right to incorporate?*
Mr. Aron: Every customer has different needs and of course they would all like to see different things, what is most important to them. We need to ensure what we offer is adaptable as new technologies emerge and that is a major focus of ours. We continue to evaluate and work with many partners in the industry to drive improvement and enhance our capabilities.

CEOCFO: *What is the business model for you? Is it a service? Is it a license?*
Mr. Aron: We will sell the product outright, but we also offer our service and we now offer hosting services for our customers. Therefore, we have a very flexible model in terms of the way that we get it out to our customers. Some want to host it themselves. Many want to do their own audits while others would prefer to have us provide a full services solution for them where we implement the technology and perform the audits for them.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to Asset Vue?*
Mr. Aron: Asset Vue is a company that is made up of professionals that have extensive data center backgrounds; we are users. Therefore, we approach it from a different standpoint, I believe, than any of our competitors, where we are providing a solution specific for customers needs in a data center. Most companies provide a product that is made to suit general purpose situations and many do not adapt to their environment. We partner with the customer to insure that solution works for them. We do not just turn our software for the customer to implement and allow it to become shelf ware. We partner with our customers to ensure they have a solution that is sustainable.

BIO: Gary Aron has been an IT/data center leader at some of the most successful corporations in North America. He started at Bell Atlantic/Verizon in IT Operations and after 22 years at Verizon moved onto Bank One/JP Morgan Chase and then Comcast as Vice President of Data Center Operations

Asset Vue, LLC
**115 Sinclair Road
Suite 120
Bristol, Pennsylvania 19007
267-225-4790
www.assetvue.com**