EVIDENCE BRIEF · IT ASSET MANAGEMENT

The need for ITAM 3.0.

Why the current ITAM operating model cannot keep up.

Gartner, Forrester and Deloitte are describing the same structural problem from three different directions. **None of them calls the answer ITAM 3.0.** This brief sets out what each published, and what we conclude from reading the three together.

1 WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

The tools are getting better.
The operating model is still falling behind.

Asset management tools do more than they did five years ago. Yet analyst research still describes substantial gaps in automation, process scalability and operating capacity. The three firms below reach that conclusion from unrelated starting points.

GARTNER — **The automation gap is real.**

“Organizations mistakenly overestimate the capabilities and automation that a SAM tool will deliver.”

Gartner, *How to Select the Right Software Asset Management Tools*, Jaswant Kalay and Yolanda Harris, 5 March 2024.

This describes an expectation set at the point of purchase, not a defect in any product. Gartner's managed services research names the consequence: SAM and FinOps require capable resources, specialist skills, processes and governance, which is why a services market exists to supply them. **The platform cost is visible. The operating capacity around it is staffed continuously.**

Gartner, *Magic Quadrant for Software Asset Management Managed Services*, 29 September 2025.

DELOITTE — **Partial automation cannot keep pace.**

“Manual or partially automated ITAM processes cannot keep up with the scale, speed, and complexity of today's IT estates.”

Deloitte, *Global IT Asset Management Survey 2025*.

The plainest statement of the three, and it is about the process rather than the product. The same survey reports that fewer than 40 percent of organizations have fully adapted their ITAM processes for hybrid environments. **The shortfall is not in what is known. It is in what is continuously maintained and acted on.**

FORRESTER — **The destination is autonomous operation.**

“Deterministic workflow engines, robotic process automation (RPA) bots, and digital process automation (DPA) tools are not powerful enough to implement the complexities required for autonomous operations.”

Forrester, Bernhard Schaffrik, *Announcing The Evaluation Of The Adaptive Process Orchestration Market*, 4 September 2025.

Forrester describes autonomous operations for most processes as a North Star for many enterprises, then says the automation layer those enterprises already own cannot reach it. This is not ITAM research. It matters here because the workflow engine is what most asset programs automated with, and it explains a result they know well: **you can automate every step in a lifecycle and still leave every handoff between the steps with a person.**

None of these firms calls this ITAM 3.0.
We do.

Read together, they describe why the next operating model has to move past systems that record and optimize, toward an estate continuously reconciled and operated.

2 FROM ITAM 2.0 TO ITAM 3.0

Six things change.
None of them is a feature.

	ITAM 2.0	ITAM 3.0
Primary job	Record and optimize	**Maintain and operate**
State	Reassembled when it is needed	**Continuously reconciled**
Automation	Inside a tool, or inside a workflow	**Across the estate, between the tools**
Human role	Reconcile the data, coordinate the systems	**Judge the exceptions**
Output	A finding, or a recommendation	**A verified outcome**
Truth	Several system views, resolved by a person	**One governed Position**

ITAM 2.0 is not broken. It is incomplete.

Discovery, SAM, HAM, UEM, the CMDB and procurement can each be correct for their own domain while people still reconcile the estate between them. That reconciliation is not a defect in any of those products. It is the space between them, and no product owns it. **ITAM 3.0 is the operating layer that is missing:** maintain the Position continuously, act against policy, verify the intended state became true, and escalate only the exceptions that need human judgment.

3 WHAT THAT CHANGES ON MONDAY

1 STOP REBUILDING THE TRUTH

Maintain it.

If a defensible position takes three weeks to produce, it is being assembled on demand rather than maintained. That assembly is staffed, it recurs, and it is rarely itemized anywhere a CFO can see it.

2 STOP ROUTING EVERY EXCEPTION TO PEOPLE

Operate it.

Most exceptions are not judgment calls. They are two systems disagreeing, and policy could resolve them the same way every time. A decision that depends on who picked it up is an escalation, not a control.

3 STOP MEASURING WORKFLOW COVERAGE

Measure outcomes.

Coverage counts the steps that were automated. Count instead the outcomes completed end to end, with no person carrying work between the steps and no one checking afterward that it held.

WHERE XOPS FITS

XOPS is the ITAM 3.0 operating layer. It works across the systems already in the estate to maintain a current Software Position and Device Position, and to execute governed lifecycle outcomes against them. The systems of record stay where they are and stay authoritative for what they genuinely know. No rip and replace is required to start.

THE ITAM 3.0 OPPORTUNITY REVIEW

Bring one renewal, audit or lifecycle decision your systems cannot answer cleanly.

We map how that answer is assembled today, name where people are carrying the process, and give you three recommended next actions in priority order. No data changes hands for the review itself, and nothing in the three actions requires a purchase.

xops.io/itam-3-assessment

READ NEXT

ITAM 3.0: What It Is, and How It Differs From ITAM 2.0. A category guide that takes the argument in this brief and states it as ten differences you can check against your own program.

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