

PRODUCT FAQ

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General Configuration and User Interface

1. [What PC configuration do I need to install AssetGen Connect – desktop edition or the equivalent desktop client for the Server Edition?](#)
 Standard Microsoft operating system such as XP, Vista or Windows 7. With Internet Explorer 6 or above, .Net Framework 3.5, Crystal Reports 2008 (included with AssetGen products). Microsoft Visio 2007/10 Professional recommended. Other variants of Visio 2003/7/10 are supported, though the professional version is best suited.

2. [How do I access AssetGen Connect from my workstation?](#)
 AssetGen Connect – Desktop Edition is installed on the workstation or PC and is accessed by double-clicking on the AssetGen Connect icon.

 AssetGen Connect – Server Edition can be accessed by the desktop client installed on a workstation, or by the web enabled application. For web access the user needs only a standard browser (e.g. Microsoft Internet Explorer) to access it.

3. [Is there a difference between the AssetGen Connect – Desktop Edition and the desktop client of the Server Edition?](#)
 No, the functionality and usage for most purposes is the same. The Desktop Edition accesses a local SQL database on the PC. In the Server Edition the desktop client accesses a server based MS SQL database.

4. [What audit capabilities do I have?](#)
 The application maintains a comprehensive audit log. All database changes are recorded (with before and after looks) and can be reported on by user, site, building, location, cabinet or equipment. User login/logout records are also maintained. The audit log can be exported to a text file and purged if required.

5. [Am I limited to a fixed list of device types to represent my infrastructure?](#)
 No. The list of equipment types is completely user definable.

6. [Is AssetGen Connect limited to structured cabling, or can it also do power, WAN, SAN and other types of physical connectivity?](#)
 Any type of connection is supported. The program differentiates only between ‘interlinks’ – connecting the rear of patch panel ports, ‘connections’ – the cables between the front of ports and ‘fixed links’ – multi-way cables that connect the rear of patch panels to front ports (normally switches).

7. [Am I limited to a fixed list of port types for my equipment?](#)
 No. The list of port types is completely user definable.

8. Is there a licence limitation on the number of equipment, sites, buildings or cabinets that I should be aware of?

Yes, this is dependant on the type of licence purchased. The Desktop Edition is licenced only by the number of equipment (which includes cards in chassis devices).

The Server Edition is not limited by equipment numbers, but is licenced by physical sites and buildings. There is no limit on the number of web users accessing the system.

Unlimited	Multi-site, multi-building, multi-location
Campus	Single Site, multi-building, multi-location
Standard	Single Site, single building, multi-location

Product upgrades are achieved by simply issuing a new licence number and a small administration fee.

9. Can devices have both common and unique attribute fields?

Yes. Attributes (information fields) are assigned to an equipment (device) type by means of a template so that each type need only have a sub set of the total number of attributes defined in the database. The data type for each attribute is defined (text, number, currency or date) and can be assigned to a fixed list of values (to ensure data integrity). When defining the template an attribute can be assigned a default value which is propagated when new equipment is defined. Equipment can also be cloned, providing a rapid way of creating a new record, copying port configuration and attribute data from an existing item.

10. What levels of access control are within AssetGen Connect?

AssetGen Connect contains its own list of users with validation at the initial login page. Each record contains the user number, name, encrypted password and one of four authorisation levels controlling the actions the user is permitted to perform:

Level / Process	Users	Hierarchy *	Connections	Work Orders
Administrator	Edit	Edit	Edit	Edit
Builder	n/a	Edit	Edit	Edit
Operator	n/a	View	Edit	Edit
Viewer	n/a	View	View	View

*Hierarchy – Sites, Buildings, Locations, Equipment, Ports, Contractors, Contacts

11. How do I represent virtual servers as well as physical servers?

Any device can be specified as being 'virtual' and is assigned to a parent device. Parent-child relationships can be nested to any depth to accommodate chassis devices, cards, daughter boards and so on.

12. Can you have devices in both the front and back of a rack?

Yes. The equipment record contains field for size in U, rack start position and a front/back flag. This helps with understanding both usable rack space as well as hot/cold aisle facing.

13. How can I create custom reports?

AssetGen Connect allows some user definition of reports. A template is provided to list equipment with up to three selected attributes. In addition, customised reports can be provided on an ad-hoc basis and the program incorporates a simple screen to include them into the reports list.

14. How would I reserve space, power and switch ports in a rack for a future project?

Users of the Desktop Edition would create actual or dummy equipment to represent the space required – setting the status to reserved. The same with ports on switches, power strips, etc. Customers with the Server Edition can also use the Work Order process, a standard part of the web application. This allows the user to create new cabinet, equipment, port and connection records which are then designated as 'reserved'. Marking the work order as completed then updates the status in the database. In the meantime cabinet/equipment reports will show the expected changes.

15. How do I associate existing documents or data such as floor plans, build documents, projects, router configuration files, etc. with devices?

Each item in the AssetGen Connect hierarchy (sites, buildings, locations, cabinets and equipment) can have documents assigned to it. A document is any file that can be viewed in a browser window (Word or PDF documents, images, spreadsheets, URLs, etc). As long as the user has read access to the file, it can be viewed.

16. Does AssetGen Connect support colour coding of cables?

Yes. A fixed attribute of a connection is the cable colour. The colour range is user definable.

17. Can I search across devices attributes such as IP addresses, operating system, etc?

Yes. A comprehensive search page allows filtering by any level in the hierarchy, by equipment name, reference, type or status and by filters on one or more attributes.

18. How do I trace connectivity at a local cabinet level and from end to end?

Several options are available, dependent on whether the desktop or web based application is used.

- 1) If an item of equipment is selected in the infrastructure viewer of the desktop system, selecting the port trace feature will then show all endpoint connections on that equipment.
- 2) Selecting at equipment level also offers a full connectivity report. All port connections, (including child devices) and the full path to an endpoint is listed, along with cable IDs and length.
- 3) Selecting a specific port and then selecting port trace shows the end to end connectivity from the selected port (e.g. a server port may be connected to a switch port via a number of patch panels). The user can drill down into individual device or connection records from this view.
- 4) Selecting port trace on equipment flagged as patch panels shows a different report format where the front and rear end point connections are shown.

19. How do I get output from AssetGen Connect to update a spreadsheet?

AssetGen Connect provides export utilities to filter data and produce spreadsheet compatible outputs (.csv or .txt formats). The Crystal Reports engine (supplied with AssetGen software) used by many of the standard application reports can export to a number of target file types, including Excel spreadsheets.

20. Can I use external data sources such as audit tools or monitoring systems to update cabinet or device attribute information in AssetGen Connect?

Yes. The utilities section of the desktop client includes an attribute import facility which can read data from text files. A data map is defined for each import type which relates fields in the source data to attribute templates. During import any data changes are written to the audit log. By this means output from a discovery tools can be used to bulk update device attributes.

21. Can I automatically populate AssetGen Connect from a spreadsheet to save manual typing of data I already have?

Yes. AssetGen Connect has an optional feature called **dataloader** which can read in data from spreadsheets and then create cabinets, add/position equipment and automatically link all devices with connectivity. This optional feature can be purchased separately and typically requires consultation with AssetGen technical support. It is very useful when an audit team is collecting data initially in spreadsheets for upload into AssetGen.

22. If a project team doesn't follow a planned AssetGen Connect work order and puts equipment in a different rack, how would I complete the work order?

In the server version, the work order can be amended up until the point it is set as completed. The changes can thus be incorporated so the work order reflects the 'as built' situation. The status is then set to completed to update the database and make all reserved ports and devices "live".

Visio Diagramming - Cabinet and Floor Diagrams

23. How do the Cabinet Diagrams features work?

Cabinet diagrams can be generated in two ways, top down floor plan views or cabinet layouts. Filtering by location, room, function, row, etc. is available so that selected cabinets are then automatically created in a Visio diagram. Cabinet/device attribute data are added to the Visio shapes (as shape data) and hyperlinks are automatically created to link back to server based AssetGen Connect or SysMap web applications.

24. How do I make my Visio diagram look like the actual data centre floor layout?

Once a Visio diagram is created, you can add backgrounds such as grid numbering, floor mounted equipment, cable runs and physical features such as doors, walls, etc. We then update existing top down floor plans to preserve manually entered positioning criteria.

25. I need to generate a specific set of cabinet diagrams, what is the easiest way to repeat this on a regular basis?

Create cabinet attributes that reflect your needs such as owners, functions, suppliers, rows, etc. so you can filter and repeat when needed.

26. Do I have to put in a lot of effort to make AssetGen Connect create cabinet diagrams in Visio with equipment graphics that look like the front panels of equipment?

It depends on user choice. Initially, with no user effort we can create a complete set of Visio rack diagrams as a default. The Visio file is kept small using simple graphics, so we can embed device data and hyperlinks.

If you want to use equipment graphics, you have the option to assign more detailed shape graphics by equipment type, or for individual models. This gives flexibility and control to users to produce the level of detail they want to achieve. The template you wish to use is selected at the time of diagram creation, making it possible to choose different styling options..

27. If I publish the Visio diagrams as web pages to an intranet server, what happens to the shape data and hyperlinks?

When MS Visio 2007/10 saves web pages, it embeds the shape data and hyperlinks we store against devices and cabinets. From an intranet page you can hyperlink direct into the server based AssetGen Connect or AssetGen SysMap applications, to then search and examine data on devices.

Visio Diagramming – Equipment Details

28. What type of Visio diagrams does the equipment details option provide?

To support architecture and system diagrams, AssetGen Connect can extract all the equipment data and include web hyperlinks for users who do not need the physical connectivity data. Filters are provided to help select equipment by location, type, attribute and status to produce a list of extracted equipment. The selected equipment is then placed on a Visio diagram to enable the user to arrange and add additional detail as required.

Examples include.

- Hardware build with chassis / card locations
- Floor boxes or power connections positioned on floor plans
- Server domain diagrams
- Backbone cabling diagrams between buildings
- Network routing and VLAN allocation diagrams
- Firewall paths and rules
- System diagrams showing functional elements

Settings can be saved in templates so that diagrams can be updated with the latest data.

29. If I have a list of devices in a spreadsheet, can I use it to select devices for a particular diagram?

Yes. The import option will bypass all the filtering and select devices based on the equipment name. A quick way to create and maintain system diagrams based on critical components. It also allows a selected set of equipment to be continually used in multiple diagrams – such as in test or DR environments.

Visio Diagramming - Network Topology Diagrams

30. What are the steps to create a Visio topology diagram?

Because topology diagrams can vary in scale and size, the approach we follow is straightforward and simple. Plus all the settings can be saved as templates for creating repeatable diagrams – such as LAN/SAN networks

- a. Select a start point – could be anything from a device up to a site so that we can then cover the most relevant devices.
- b. Select an end point – this limits the diagram to devices contained by a physical location such as rooms, buildings, cabinets etc. It is possible to do a power diagram of every 200 locations on one page, but would not be particularly useful in practice.
- c. Choose the end device types you want on the diagram, the order you select them will order them on a page if using hierarchy views.
- d. Choose diagram properties – new/update, centric/hierarchy, data/power and then press run.
- e. If you choose the equipment preview, it will enable you to uncheck and remove devices you recognise as of no interest to the diagram you want.
- f. Press RUN.

Depending on the numbers of devices you have chosen, the page size will be adjusted to cope.

31. Can I choose the Shape symbols, or do I have to use a pre-determined template?

As a default, all devices are drawn as a simple box. If you wish to represent equipment types by particular shapes (logical or physical) you can add them to a shape template as required and select at the time of creation. This allows the use of existing standards for presentation styles.

32. What shape data is embedded automatically when drawing Visio diagrams?

For equipment, we embed the data that is current within the AssetGen Connect system. There is no need to set up fields or attributes as we create them for you. If you uncheck the shape data option, then no data is added to the shapes.

For links, we work out the logical end points and embed the port names at either end as well as any IP addressing data such as IP address, VLAN etc.

33. What types of Visio connectors do you use?

Links between equipment are created using dynamic “glue” so that shapes can be moved and the links follow. The links can also be made into right-angled connectors for laying out cable runs, parallel paths etc.

34. What happens when I have child equipment such as cards in a chassis? Do you show the cards in the topology diagram or are they ignored?

Part of the user control over diagram output is whether to include children equipment. If you were to connect a blade chassis to two network switches – all of which have cards of varying types, then you can choose what you want on the page.

For instance	- just show the Blade linked to the Switches
Or..	- show the blade chassis and blade servers linked to the switches
Or..	- show blade chassis, blade servers, switch cards and switch chassis

The level of detail can be adjusted to suit the need

35. How do the templates work in topology diagrams?

We provide the ability to store user settings as templates in the AssetGen database, enabling common templates to be re-used by different team members. All of the selection criteria used are saved, making it easy to modify for a new diagram. For instance, one template could show the LAN set up for a building. This could be re-used for all buildings to get a consistent set of Visio diagrams across an organisation.

36. Can I link Visio directly to the AssetGen SQL database?

Yes. AssetGen uses MS SQL Server which means standard Microsoft applications such as Visio, Excel and Access can be linked directly. For Visio diagrams it means that you have to manually select the devices and choose shape symbols for each. They can be refreshed as required directly using the database linking features of Visio 2007/10. To ensure data integrity, we do not recommend direct linking without training or professional support from AssetGen.

Batch Impact Analysis

37. How does the Batch Impact Analysis work?

We provide a two stage process, with output results at both stages. Firstly, we identify equipment using a combination of inventory and connectivity queries. Secondly, we submit a list of devices to service management analysis (provided by AssetGen SysMap), where each device is separately checked for impact on software, services or systems – with the end results being collected into a report.

38. How does the inventory part of Batch Impact Analysis differ from a typical data centre inventory?

AssetGen Connect allows a combination of filters covering environment, passive and active components (including child devices). This gives us the flexibility to cover the impact of taking down power to a building, room or cabinet – or, at a more granular level, upgrades to specific device types such as switches or PDUs. As it is so easy to pull out

multiple device types in a single pass, the inventory function is also a very convenient way to create specific lists of affected devices for platform or outsource teams.

39. What is the difference between connectivity tracing in the Batch Impact Analysis feature, compared to equipment port tracing?

AssetGen Connect will normally trace individual devices for single or multi-port connectivity (including daughter cards in chassis devices) to their end points. The batch impact analysis feature will trace **multiple** devices of selected **different** equipment types in a single pass and produce a consolidated list.

Example 1. Trace all SAN switch connectivity for connected Wintel and Unix hosts

Example 2. Identify devices connected to power strips served by a particular PDU

Example 3. Identify all components affected by an upgrade to multiple switches

40. What if the devices I'm interested in are not directly connected to the hardware I'm changing, such as a core infrastructure component with no user devices directly attached?

Batch impact analysis provides the ability to trace connectivity several times in a single operation specifically for network and power components.

- Example
- a. Trace all servers and edge switches connected to a core network switch
 - b. Trace all servers and other switches connected to the edge switches
 - c. Trace all servers connected to those switches
 - d. Finish with a list of servers up to two hops from the core switch

41. How does the Batch Impact Analysis identify service impact?

It uses the same process as AssetGen SysMap to navigate the relationships between configuration items (CI) representing servers, software, processes and services. If an equipment item on the input list is mapped to a CI, then the impact analysis is performed against target groups and types. For example, if you select a target group of "services", then all equipment listed will be analysed to the services they support. The results are consolidated into a single list on the screen which can be printed or exported.

42. How does the service impact analysis differ from AssetGen SysMap?

AssetGen SysMap will allow you to undertake service impact or dependency analysis choosing either a single or multiple start points such as servers, software modules or services. The batch impact analysis enables **multiple** start points to be analysed in a single process from AssetGen Connect. Checking for the service impact of an OS patch to 50 servers takes only a few seconds. In the examples of changes to SAN or LAN switches (above), identifying risks and service owners is very quick.

43. Do I have to use all of the affected devices for service impact analysis? Some devices I don't care about, or know we have in-built resilience.

The list of devices from the first stage of analysis are presented with tick boxes, so that you can manually deselect those that are of no interest.

44. I have a spreadsheet of devices given to me by a server consolidation team, can I use the service impact analysis function with this list?

Yes. We allow you to go straight to the service impact stage and import a list from a csv (comma separated variable) file from Notepad or Excel. This was designed to support major projects such as data centre moves, refresh, consolidation or virtualisation programmes.

45. How do I know if a device change potentially impacts more than one service?

The service impact report provides all devices that have corresponding service impacts. If there is more than one service impact, it is listed separately so that you can sort by device or by service. This list can also be saved in a spreadsheet compatible output for further manipulation or inclusion into change requests, project plans, etc.

46. As part of a data centre move I have to re-check my original assumptions to cope with in-life changes - Can I save a Batch Impact Analysis query for re-use in the future?

Yes. We provide a template capability specifically for this as major projects take place over many months or years. You can save a complete, or partial analysis and re-load it at a later date. This makes it easy for colleagues to replicate a common project task.

Cabinet Search

47. How does the Cabinet Search work?

Cabinet Search provides a powerful single pass query that combines physical location (buildings, rooms, cabinets), cabinet space, cabinet attributes (function, owner, network), connectivity (copper, fibre, power) and power rating. The output is a list of suitable cabinets with each layout visible with a single click.

48. How do I limit my search to just my needs? – I need to put a network router in a cabinet allocated to network devices for instance.

By suitable use of cabinet attributes in AssetGen Connect, cabinet function can be a criteria to filter on. Examples of cabinet functions we see in use are typically Network, Server-Production, Server-Other, Storage, Cabling, 3rd Party Supplier, etc. Searching for a network cabinet to install a new router is then simple.

49. How do I know if a cabinet has the number of network connections I need for a server?

The search criteria allows multiple connectivity types to be specified by device and by port. For instance, patch panels with RJ45, fibre patch connections, KVMs, power strips with monitoring could all be selection criteria. AssetGen Connect will check the status of all the ports on those component types to ensure they are not connected or reserved.

50. My new blade server requires two 16A power sockets - How do I use Cabinet Search to find cabinets with these high powered sockets?

As with the previous answer - set a query to look for cabinets with power strips that have ports you have classified as 16A, rather than normal 10A supplies.

51. We use blanking plates to ensure good air flow, how does Cabinet Search include or exclude these when identifying available space for equipment.

As part of searching for space we give you the ability to either include or exclude blanking plates. You have flexibility in how you name blanking plates (or spacing plates).

52. How does Cabinet Search calculate cabinet power, because there are so many different ways in use.

Equipment power can be summarised using different parameters as part of AssetGen Connect. Typical approaches include manufacturer plate value, design power, actual power (from intelligent power strips or manual readings). In the same way, cabinet power limits can be represented using design, actual and rated values. When you perform a cabinet search you can select the desired values to calculate and compare.

53. How do I reserve space once I've decided where to place equipment?

Three options are typically used

a) Manually create a device called cabinet space with attributes containing project references.

b) Create a server and place it in the cabinet with a status of reserved, entering reference notes.

c) Our preferred method – use the web application and create a work order for the new device so that you have more tracking capability, plus cabinet space is then colour coded as a work order in rack layouts.