



# Meeting Compliance Goals with the 3Com® Enterprise Management Suite

## WHITE PAPER

### Executive Summary

Regulations and best practices have always impacted the life of businesses. However, in the wake of recent corporate scandals, the number and enforcement of business regulations has grown dramatically. As the regulatory burden increases, pressure on IT organizations to both comply with additional requirements and to support other parts of the business with overall compliance efforts has grown substantially.

Meeting compliance objectives stemming from multiple internal and external sources is a challenge compounded by already shorthanded critical IT resources and increasing mission-critical business responsibilities. Efficient, flexible processes and powerful technology tools are necessary to meet this evolving and demanding compliance environment.

Major corporations in a wide range of industries and markets are currently implementing adaptable, unique processes enabled by innovative tools, such as the 3Com® Enterprise Management Suite (EMS). Its distinctive combination of configuration control and audit capabilities and exceptionally robust automated processes reduce the time and effort required for many of the most time-consuming compliance tasks.

### The Compliance Problem

As businesses have evolved in the free-market economy, so have their compliance concerns: moving from the rudimentary reporting of revenues and expenses of the 19th century to the extremely detailed financial reporting and associated regulations of today.

### The Regulatory Environment

The evolution of compliance requirements has accelerated in the wake of recent corporate accounting scandals. Reacting to those scandals, lawmakers are legislating complex actions designed to mitigate the chances of future corporate misconduct and provide additional protections for private consumer data. Some of the more well-known and wide-ranging directives include:

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)
- Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)
- Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX)
- CA Senate Bill 1386: This law, applying to any business with operations in the state of California or with California residents as customers, requires consumer notification where potential compromises of personal information may have occurred.

In addition to new regulations, regulatory agencies, such as the FDA, FDIC, and the FCC, have begun more stringent enforcement of existing legislation. For example, a recent audit by the FCC at a large Internet Service Provider (ISP) found several violations of network device security best practices. The FCC warned the ISP about these violations and returned for a follow-up audit a few months later. Unfortunately, while the ISP in question had initially raised all device configurations to an approved standard, those devices had subsequently fallen out of compliance. IT personnel were found to be using outdated configuration templates. The ISP had no mechanism in place to verify compliance with best practices in real time at the device level—the results of the second FCC audit showed that violations were nearly as commonplace as they had been prior to the initial audit.

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**Rigorous Best Practice Obligations**

To ensure compliance with these new regulatory requirements, businesses are often forced to adopt even more stringent best practices to meet both the letter and the spirit of the sometimes vaguely-worded regulations. This reaction is especially true in the IT arena where third-party auditors, internal audit groups, and audit associations have begun to require that organizations adhere to additional standards and safeguards beyond those required by government regulations.

For instance, in order to certify an organization's financial results, major third-party auditors are assessing the ability of each client to meet IT compliance objectives as specified by best practice standards such as CobiT, ITIL, and the Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF).

Some of the CobiT standards against which IT departments are being tested include:

- Verifying that procedures exist and are followed to ensure that infrastructure systems, including network devices and software, are installed and maintained in accordance with the acquisition and maintenance framework.
- Ensuring that system infrastructure, including firewalls, routers, switches, network operating systems, servers, and other related devices, is properly configured to prevent unauthorized access.
- Validating that periodic testing and assessment is performed to confirm that software and network infrastructure is appropriately configured.

**The Compliance Burden**

As both internal and external audit groups begin to require that IT organizations comply with best practice standards, the documentation and data verification burden on IT continues to expand dramatically. Demonstrating compliance is a complex and demanding undertaking. Corporations must generate and verify the appropriate paper trails and necessary evidence to substantiate any claims of compliance. Additionally, timely access to up-to-date audit trails and records becomes imperative when an organization is faced with an external audit or process review. Delays and inaccuracies in records can be costly.

Unfortunately, the concerns surrounding IT compliance and meeting auditor and regulatory agency dictates is exacerbated by the severity and frequency of security risks. The impact of a single destructive worm or

malicious act of data theft can be significant and directly impact the company's finances. Enforcing information security best practices, such as those contained in the NSA Router Security Best Practices document, becomes a critical responsibility.

Finally, as these additional documentation, audit, and enforcement requirements make themselves felt, IT departments are finding themselves constrained by lack of growth in personnel. Further aggravating this resource issue are the technology demands of VoIP and wireless networking implementations needed by businesses to remain efficient and competitive. These compliance-based pressures create a major burden on organizations and their IT staff that can be reduced by innovative technological solutions.

## The Solution— EMS, Compliance, and IT

3Com provides IT organizations with a robust, powerful solution to compliance-related issues—the 3Com Enterprise Management Suite. High-performance management software helps businesses cost-effectively fulfill the evidentiary obligations of regulatory compliance and the policy enforcement requirements of IT and security best practices.

Strong and comprehensive EMS capabilities can facilitate both compliance reporting and enforcement throughout an IT environment.

### Compliance Reporting

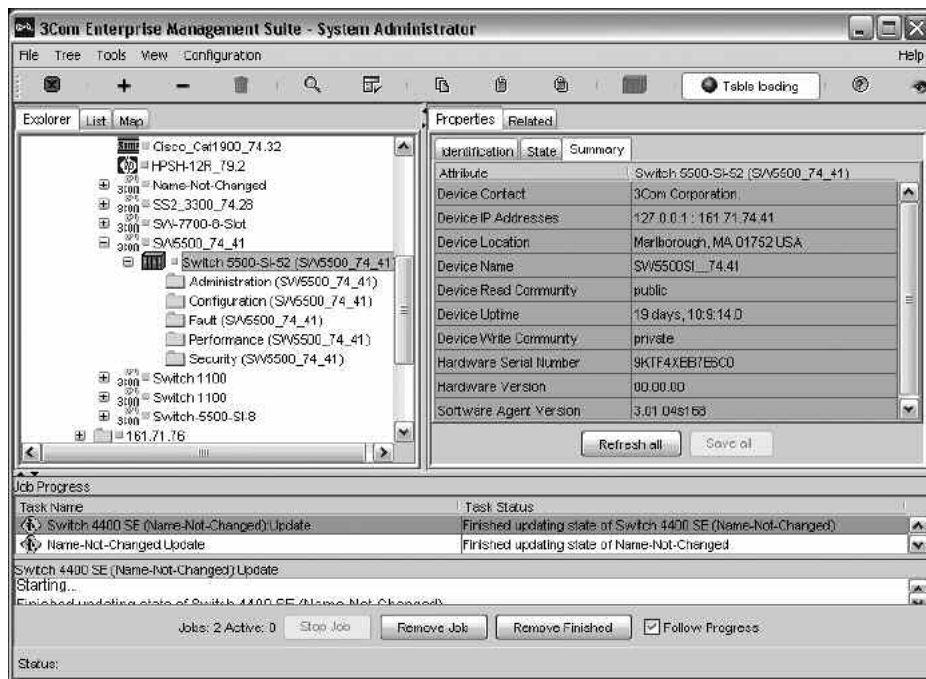
Data provided by a compliance tool must be accurate and timely. EMS, with built-in real-time change detection, user/change attribution, and an extensible, open database provides IT personnel and decision makers with the tools that they need to create and maintain effective audit trails of network changes. For businesses that use EMS, maintaining accurate records, ensuring timely compliance reporting, and tying those records to change management systems is a trouble-free and automated process.

### Best Practice Enforcement

Beyond compliance reporting, businesses need to ensure that security and IT best practice policies are consistently enforced throughout the enterprise. In the past, IT organizations would need to manually monitor devices to ensure that such simple best practices as “All passwords must be at least six characters or more” were enforced uniformly throughout the enterprise. This was a tedious and resource-intensive process that often missed policy violations and overlooked those very problems that might materially effect a business’s bottom line.

With its policy compliance and software management capabilities, EMS lets organizations proactively ensure compliance throughout an organization. In fact, a major education customer recently implemented EMS to ensure policy compliance throughout its IT organization, saving countless hours of effort and enabling levels of adherence to best practices that were not achievable prior to EMS deployment.

FIGURE 1: 3Com Enterprise Management Suite System Administrator Interface



## The Solution— EMS, Compliance, and Auditors

Auditors, whether they are internally or externally based, have a set of requirements different than those of the IT department. For the IT department, compliance duties revolve around the maintenance of compliance. For the internal auditor, the major concern is compliance enforcement. Consequently, when the organization is subject to an external audit, the level of compliance with regulatory obligations and best practice requirements is as high as possible. For external auditors, the main concern is verification of adherence to those policies and rules.

### Automated Evidence Gathering

There are certain commonalities to the needs of both groups of auditors. For both internal and external auditors it is critical to obtain accurate and timely evidence to support any assertions that the business is or is not compliant with the appropriate regulations and best practices. This is a time-consuming and often paper-intensive task, characterized by manual comparisons of documentation and records. With EMS, performing audits of an IT environment becomes dramatically

easier. Its audit capabilities provide auditors, whether internal or external, with a record of all device configuration and inventory changes along with user attribution created in real time over the period of the audit.

The EMS-generated evidence trail shows the level of compliance present in the IT environment, eliminating repetitive and error-prone comparisons of paper and electronic records. For internal audit groups, the EMS ability to enforce policy compliance, in real time at the network device level, is significant. It makes their role much easier and less intrusive. For external auditors, there is tremendous value in the ability to install EMS at a client site at the beginning of a 60-day engagement, and then by the end of the engagement have a fully searchable, verifiable audit trail of changes and device information. EMS has the flexibility to be used by external audit firms on a temporary basis at each client location, allowing dramatic time savings and increased audit accuracy.

## Conclusion

The burden posed by an increasing number of government regulations and more widespread adoption of IT and security best practices impacts businesses and audit firms. The 3Com Enterprise Management Suite helps deliver to both groups the ability to quickly and efficiently meet compliance goals while ensuring a high level of responsiveness to ever-changing IT demands. With EMS, compliance is no longer an impediment to business activities, but rather acts as an enabler of enhanced business performance.

## About the Author

During his five years with 3Com, Les Stuart has worked as a Solutions Architect, defining network management solutions for today and for the future. He is a 17-year veteran of the high-tech industry. Fourteen of these years were spent doing business development activities and as a developer, product and product line manager, and marketing manager in the network management organizations of Hewlett-Packard, Nortel, and Extreme Networks.

With a background as a developer, years of direct experience in managing networks, and involvement in standards committees, Les is a well-known resource in the area of Network Management. He has gathered patents for management tools, authored numerous white papers, and lectured around the world. He has also held positions with the Distributed Management Task Force (DMTF) and Web-Based Enterprise Management (WBEM) task force—two groups at the core of defining network management standards—and worked with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) in reviewing Requests for Comments (RFCs) for network management.

He majored in Computer Science with an emphasis on application development and a minor in Business Administration at California State University at Chico.



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