



novatech

“When did IT become a Delivery Service?” Turning IT’s Biggest Headache into a Strategic Advantage

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Foreword

By David Furby, CEO Novatech

The business I run today is very different to the one I set up nearly forty years ago which was based around supplying car parts for Vauxhall Novas. In that time, Novatech has generated over £1 billion in revenue. Over the years we have adapted and learnt from our customers and today we are proud hardware partners to some of the most progressive, fast-growing and customer-centric organisations in the world, including Monzo and Octopus Energy.

A founding principle, which we have stayed true to, has been our readiness to take on complex customer requirements, and be open to bespoke development, relishing the complexity and learning that it brings. This means that we never stand still.

I am especially proud of the journey that my team has made to achieve a carbon positive operating environment which we attained in 2023. Our premises in Portsmouth, Hampshire now creates more energy than it uses. The journey to get here was hard but the effort was thoroughly worthwhile. We hope that we can now inspire and guide our partners and customers in their journey towards net zero, by demonstrating that with the right approach, improved environmental outcomes can be achieved in tandem with – and not at the price of – efficiency gains and increased profitability.



Introduction

For most large organisations, getting laptops to the right end users, on time, creates a world of problems – and in many cases keeps a small army of valuable IT people occupied. If this was a game, there are more snakes than ladders: lost devices, frustrated workers, poor tracking and opaque systems, a lack of tracking systems in the first place – and more pitfalls at the end stage too with widespread instances of data loss and devices being dumped without proper wiping or certified disposal processes.

These problems are worsening. In 2025, only 43% of organisations say they have complete visibility across their IT estate, down from 47% the previous year. This decline is widely linked to the increased use of cloud and SaaS without matching ITAM maturity. When IT teams cannot see where their assets are, they cannot properly manage cost, risk or user experience.

On the disposal side, the picture is no better. In the UK, more than 12 million computers and laptops have gone to landfill in the last five years, despite the hazardous materials and recoverable value locked up in each device. This is not only an environmental problem: improper IT asset disposal is now recognised as a material security risk, with a significant share of data breaches being

traced back to misconfigured, untracked or poorly decommissioned assets.

This is not only a missed opportunity to make a positive rather than negative environmental contribution: there are also missed opportunities to re-purpose devices for community projects, and to re-imagine the holistic employee experience to bring tangible benefits in terms of both productivity and motivation levels.

This white paper explores some of these challenges and outlines a best practice approach to end-to-end device lifecycle management. It shows how IT leaders can surface those “ladders” that will help them to reclaim time, reduce risk and eliminate all the noise that managing device lifecycles creates – without turning their team into a delivery service.

“IT leaders don’t want thunderous applause. What we really value is silence. That means things are going well.”

As Jamie Wilson, Chief Operating Officer at Novatech comments.

Know where your IT assets are: a data driven approach to device lifecycle management

Having full visibility of the IT fleet and where each individual device is at any given time gives IT leaders the data to make the right decisions, whether that is to swap out machines for higher spec models, to replace those that are performing sub-optimally or to end-of-life certain models before they become problematic.

Depending on the different machine specifications, laptops can be assigned to user groups in the most efficient way, with the economics always in mind. For example, it would not make sense to over-spend on a high specification Apple Mac M5 laptop for a user group who only require very basic functionality. However this ability to maximise the IT device budget through smart allocation choices, minimising wastage or downtime, can only be exercised if the IT leader has complete command over his or her IT fleet. It all starts with knowing where your devices are.

Put simply, you cannot manage what you cannot see – and it is increasingly difficult to have the whole IT estate in view without re-thinking the lifecycle model.

A typical in-house device lifecycle still includes most of the following steps:

- Buy stock or refresh existing devices
- Register and allocate each device
- Capture end-user details
- Book delivery
- Chase couriers and check delivery status
- Handle device set-up issues and returns
- Book and manage collections
- Update the asset record every time a device changes status
- Fix or upgrade devices
- Update the asset record again
- Arrange secure disposal at end of life

Every one of these steps is an opportunity for manual error, which might include lost devices, inconsistent tracking and out-of-date records, culminating in more time being spent “chasing boxes” rather than driving strategic IT change. In fact, 45% of organisations spent more than one million pounds on software vendor audits over the past three years, a cost directly linked to inaccurate inventories and usage data. When a laptop is swapped, reassigned or disposed of

and the system is not updated immediately, estate visibility becomes inaccurate – and the further a hybrid workforce is from the office, the worse that problem gets.

“Something to bear in mind is that for a lot of technology leaders, managing remote workforces is still quite new. This pivot required a huge amount of adaptation during COVID-19 and many firms are still operating in this kind of extended crisis mode, rather than implementing smart, low-effort systems that can scale and take away the day-to-day task element and the headache that goes with that”

Comments Mark Tomlinson, Sales Director at Novatech.

Indeed, recent statistics reveal that 63% of the UK workforce now work remotely all or some of the time, with that percentage rising to 80% for those working in the IT & Communications sector.

Getting the laptop back into the equipment pool when required is particularly problematic, whether this event is triggered by a leaver or the laptop is at the end of its life. There are often logistics issues and the process can be painful and cumbersome for the IT leader to manage. However, with a digital portal-based system, it is simply a case of pressing a button, selecting a simple option, such as whether a box is required or not, then submitting the request into the portal.

With the added complications of serving a geographically dispersed remote workforce, having full visibility across the whole IT estate becomes vital for any forward-thinking IT leader.

“Serving fast-paced, customer-centric enterprise organisations with thousands of users and often complex IT needs requires a transparent and highly efficient system”

Says Jamie Wilson, Chief Operating Officer at Novatech.

Appropriate asset management systems should follow three principles:

- Single source of truth or one real-time view of all endpoints, including ownership, configuration, warranty status, location and lifecycle stage.
- Integrated processes with asset records automatically updated as devices move through joiner/mover/leaver, repair and disposal workflows, rather than relying on manual data entry.
- Configurable policies or rules that block a device from being reassigned or disposed of until required actions (such as wipe or audit) are complete.



Get onto the front foot: prioritise data security and employee experience

“Even with a robust system in place, things can occasionally go wrong, particularly in the area of Collections, but a transparent asset management system means that IT heads know the bad news as early as possible and can take action, which is vital in these situations. For example, if a device is lost, this becomes evident very quickly and the machine can be locked down and secured before any threats emerge.”

Jamie continues

Security needs to be a day-to-day discipline which puts IT leaders on the front foot, rather than a sporadic project carried out on a reactive basis. This means having clear, tested lost/stolen protocols in place, guaranteed proof of data erasure and automated alignment between endpoint security tools and ITAM records.

The customer experience is also a very important aspect to consider, whether it is a new employee unboxing her laptop to find a company branded mug has been included in the delivery, or a long serving member of staff who on retirement receives a thank you gift along with a pre-paid laptop box at his appointed day and time slot, making it easy and convenient to return the equipment to his IT team. In both cases, the worker can be updated on the progress of the laptop's journey in real-time, so he/she is kept fully informed and is ready to receive the equipment. In this way, the manual nature of the Collections task which can sometimes require a team of IT people to administer is not only removed it is transformed into a memorable moment for the employee.

However, what is required to create these positive, repeatable employee experiences, is a combination of a very slick, portal-based system alongside a dedicated support team.

“When you are dealing with such high volumes, things do occasionally go wrong, or unwelcome factors such as the British weather can create delays. In these cases, having a dedicated support team is crucial because the customer needs to be able to speak to that one individual managing the issue and quickly understand what is happening and how it is being resolved. This builds trust and confidence and is an essential part of a successful IT device lifecycle system.”

As Mark Tomlinson says

“We are quite lucky to have all our operations under one roof because it gives us complete visibility and control. It speeds things up for the customer too, as we don't have to liaise with subcontractors or suppliers – the answer will always be a short walk away, with someone on the stock room floor quickly diagnosing the problem via the online system, along with their prior knowledge of the customer's estate.”

Jamie Wilson adds

Explore refurbishment and reuse – ask “Can this asset work harder?”

Recent ITAM and sustainability data shows that the majority of organisations now include explicit hardware sustainability measures in their policies. Around 63% participate in recycling, nearly 60% are refurbishing or reusing assets and more than half are extending retention periods where appropriate. By baking these options into the lifecycle design, IT leaders can demonstrate tangible progress against ESG metrics with minimal additional effort.

In a linear economy, most IT assets follow a “take-make-dispose” path. To transition to a Circular IT Economy, organisations must challenge the status quo by asking: “Can this asset work harder?”

Refurbishment and reuse are the engines of this shift. Instead of treating a broken screen or keyboard as the end of a device’s life, these components should be viewed as

maintenance milestones.

By implementing a Triage and Repair workflow, assets that were previously destined for the recycling bin are restored to organisation standards. This not only extends the lifespan of the hardware by 2–3 years but also significantly lowers the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and reduces the environmental “Scope 3” emissions associated with manufacturing new equipment.

The notion of “paying tech forward” occurs when an organisation recognises that an asset no longer fit for a high-intensity power user can still provide immense value to another department, a remote worker, or even a partner organisation. This is illustrated by the example below featuring national charity FitzRoy.

FitzRoy & Novatech – The Circular Economy in Action



The Challenge:

FitzRoy, a large charity supporting people with learning disabilities, faced a common dilemma: stacks of “broken” or unused laptops gathering dust, while the cost of buying new fleet replacements was doubling.

The Work Harder solution:

Partnering with Novatech’s Direct2Desk service, FitzRoy moved away from premature recycling. Instead of scrapping older tech, they implemented a professional asset triage and repair system.

The Impact:

- **Asset Recovery:** Out of 110 “unused” laptops sent for assessment, 75 were repaired, upgraded, and returned to service.
- **Financial Savings:** This “repair-first” mindset saved the charity £60,000 in the first year—funds redirected to front-line work.
- **Paying Tech Forward:** The circularity extended beyond their own walls. When FitzRoy needed PCs for their digital inclusion suites, Novatech facilitated a donation of three-year-old desktops from a major UK Energy Supplier. These assets, “retired” by one firm, were perfect for FitzRoy’s needs, proving that one organisation’s surplus is another’s vital resource.

The Result:

FitzRoy won the Infrastructure Transformation of the Year 2025 award, proving that sustainable IT is not just an ESG goal, it’s a smarter way to do business.

Phil George, Head of IT at FitzRoy reflects:

“Having a team who can repair our devices and do all of it for us is just a huge benefit. Being able to reuse equipment and repair it, rather than it just sitting and going to waste, is financially beneficial for us. We aren’t having to buy new devices, and we’re getting them reconditioned and sent back to our end users at a fraction of the cost. The funds that we’ve saved can go right back into the front line of our work, enriching and enhancing the lives of the people that we support as an organisation.”

Key Takeaways:

- **Triage over Trash:** Establish clear criteria for when a repair is financially viable.
- **Zero-Touch Redeployment:** Use automated tools (like Microsoft Autopilot) so that refurbished tech feels like new to the next user.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Look for opportunities to donate or receive mid-life hardware to keep functional silicon out of the waste stream.

Ensure timely collection and responsible disposal

Ultimately devices need to be disposed of at the end of their service and this is an area which is subject to regulatory pressure, ESG scrutiny and reputational risk – all aspects that IT leaders need to be tuned in to.

The problem is very real: in the UK, around 12 million computers and laptops have ended up in landfill over the past five years. These devices contain hazardous materials such as lead, mercury and cadmium, which can leach into the soil and water, posing major health and ecological risks. These statistics illustrate the growing urgency for sustainable solutions to tackle this waste, as millions of tonnes of discarded hardware might have been recycled or re-purposed. Improving collection and recycling rates is essential to reduce the environmental burden and conserve resources. Worryingly, industry reports suggest that less than 20% of e-waste is properly recycled.

Balancing sustainability goals with digital transformation and increasing reliance on IT hardware is indeed a challenging task. For many organisations, most of their greenhouse gas emissions are in their Scope 3 emissions* (indirect emissions in the value chain).

*Scope 3 emissions account for approximately 80-95% for a large number of organisations - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Scope 3 Emissions in the UK Reporting Landscape. October 2023.

Calculating and reducing Scope 3 emissions is a complex and ongoing journey that requires strong partnerships and collaboration across the value chain. With lack of data and complex value chains, Scope 3 emissions are a significant challenge to measure and control.

Manufacturing new IT hardware requires energy-intensive extraction of limited raw materials, transport across complex global supply chains and carbon intensive manufacturing and assembly, all contributing to an organisation's Scope 3 emissions.

For those looking for sustainable devices, extending asset lifecycles and keeping hardware in circulation for longer offers many benefits. Reducing the need for new hardware minimises resource consumption from raw materials and transport, reducing waste and the associated emissions.

Responsible IT fulfilment ensures the proper recycling and material recovery at the end of an asset's life, assuring safe handling of hazardous materials, recovery of valuable materials and a reduction in the Scope 3 emissions associated with waste.



Vicky Gamble, QHSE Controller at Novatech shares her experience of working to create a sustainable device ecosystem

“We have worked hard to reduce our Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions and are proud to operate within a Net Positive building since 2023. This assists our customers by reducing emissions associated with the distribution and processing of their IT hardware. Like many organisations, we continue to calculate and reduce our Scope 3 emissions and remain committed to reducing these with our net zero target set for 2050.”



Improper e-waste disposal can be avoided with careful consideration. Firstly, it is important to use a certified e-waste disposal company: they will ensure that the device is either responsibly recycled or disposed of appropriately, providing the relevant certificates and accompanying metrics.

In some instances, depending on the sensitivity of the data, laptops are shredded in their entirety. Of course, alongside the environmental risk, there are also data security risks to consider at the device disposal stage. Cybercriminals are becoming more resourceful and sensitive information can be recovered and misused if not dealt with properly, leading to identity theft and fraud.

Hard drives should be wiped to eliminate these risks. For maximum security, use specialist software that meets internationally recognised wiping standards & produces certificates of wiping, or physically destroy the drives to a recognised standard to ensure ultimate data protection. In addition to this, there are specific data protection guidelines that all IT providers must follow during laptop disposal to avoid potential legal penalties and data breaches.

Recent case studies show that a significant proportion of reported data breaches can be traced back to assets that were thought to be decommissioned but were never properly wiped, tracked or destroyed. Without a verifiable chain-of-custody and auditable certificates of destruction, it is extremely difficult for IT teams to prove that they have met their obligations if regulators, auditors or customers ask awkward questions after an incident.

A defensible disposal model should deliver:

- Timely collections: structured trackable collections for leavers, device refreshes and site clear-downs, with full chain-of-custody.
- Certified data sanitisation and destruction: use of industry-standard wiping tools and physical destruction where required, backed by certificates of destruction and verifiable audit trails.
- Documented environmental outcomes: evidence of recycling, recovery and reuse rates to support ESG reporting and demonstrate responsible stewardship.

A practical checklist for IT leaders

Best Practice approach to device Collections and Disposal

Step 1

Know Where Your IT Assets Are

- Ensure your IT Hardware partner can provide transparent, real-time device tracking.
- Request a single point of contact for issue escalation.
- Set metrics against staff downtime and device delivery and collection.

Step 2

Make Security and Employee Experience top priority

- Agree lost/stolen device protocols with IT Hardware partner, with required response times.
- Request visibility of device wiping and internal re-purposing processes to ensure data is fully protected.
- Work with HR and your IT Hardware provider to design and deliver an outstanding employee experience.

Step 3

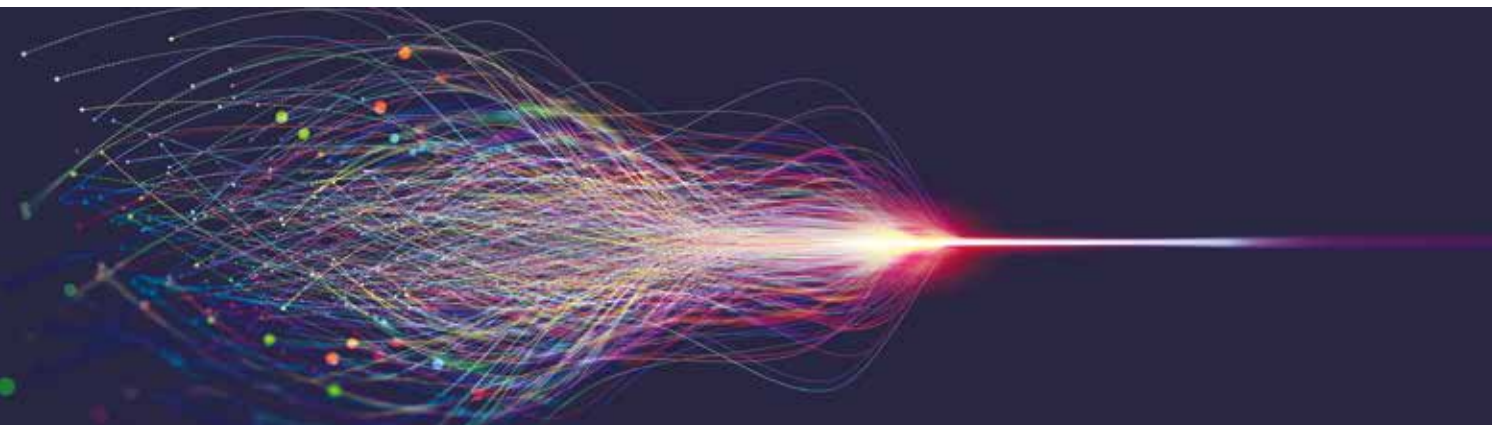
Explore Refurbishment and Reuse

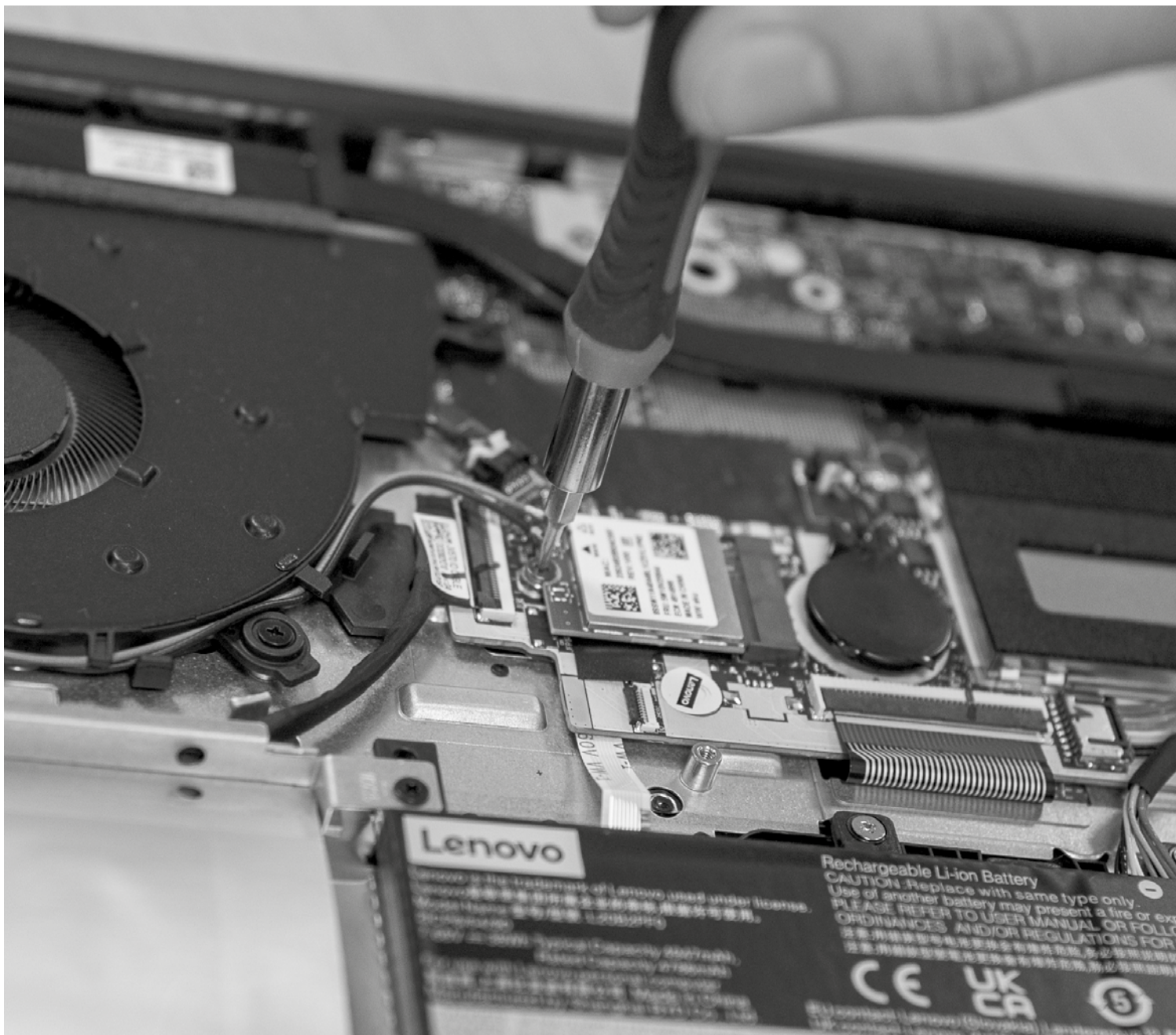
- Audit your estate to ensure that you are matching device specifications to user needs in a way that maximises your IT budget.
- Consider internal recycling and reuse.
- Explore donation options and align with a preferred charity or community project.

Step 4

Ensure Timely Collection and Responsible Disposal

- Ensure that you have a robust and timely Collections process in place.
- Request visibility of disposal processes and SLAs to ensure your data is protected and disposed of responsibly.





Summary

Conclusion

There is a financial, environmental and social value of every device which can be maximised with the right advice and correct IT hardware practices. This is a collective effort and requires educating employees, engagement between the IT operations, governance and ESG teams and sponsorship at the highest level of the organisation.

It is very clear that in today's demanding and fast paced business environment, IT asset management is now a strategic function, not a background process run on a "best effort" basis.

The positive news is that the infrastructure, platforms and expertise exist to produce modern, transparent device lifecycle systems which deliver consistently outstanding employee experiences whilst putting the IT leader firmly in control, freeing up his or her time to dedicate to more strategic initiatives.

By focusing on visibility, security, employee experience and responsible reuse and disposal, IT leaders can turn one of their biggest operational headaches into a clear strategic advantage.

Contributors



Vicky Gamble | QHSE Controller at Novatech. A member of TechIOSH and PISEP, holding the NEBOSH national general certificate and IEMA (ISEP) Certificate in Environmental Management, Vicky is highly experienced in developing, implementing and improving quality, health, safety and environmental management systems.



Mark Tomlinson | Sales Director at Novatech, leading the Direct2Desk division and managing enterprise client relationships, including Monzo, Octopus Energy and Kraken. Mark takes a partnership approach, providing custom, cost-effective solutions designed to make businesses smarter, faster and greener.



Jamie Wilson | Chief Operating Officer at Novatech. Jamie has 30 years of experience in the IT industry and directs a wide variety of operational and technical teams, taking overarching responsibility for the successful delivery of complex IT projects, cutting-edge technical solutions, and stringent business compliance. Jamie is passionate about empowering teams and aligning technological innovation with the core business strategy.

“Novatech and Direct2Desk has become pivotal in supporting our IT growth, offering facilities, services and a level of support unparalleled and unrivalled in the industry. From deep API integration to bespoke services that are helping us to achieve our rapid growth, Novatech have always been on hand to support us in any way they can.”

Chris Hyder | Technical Operations Specialist | Monzo

“Novatech and Direct2Desk were the only provider offering a tailored model of service like this, without excessive costs or fixed contracts. It’s been a real weight off my shoulders”

Phil George | Head of IT | FitzRoy

Resources

1. <https://www.flexera.com/about-us/press-center/it-teams-losing-visibility-according-to-flexera-2025-state-of-itam-report>
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5. <https://info.flexera.com/ITAM-REPORT-State-of-IT-Asset-Management>

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Novatech Ltd.
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