

4 Steps to Effective Software License Compliance & Management

1. Understand your risk

Firstly review the way in which software comes into the organisation. Consider who authorises the purchase, how the licensing arrangements (“licences”) are recorded, who carries out the installation of the software and how these processes are communicated to the employees/users.

- Do you have a record of the licences for all the software installed on your computers?
- Do you have an up to date, accurate inventory of all software in use in your organisation?
- Have you recently conducted a software audit and reconciled the findings with the number of licences held to ensure compliance with the licence terms?
- Are there policies and processes in place for controlling the purchase and use of software?
- Do users sign to confirm that they have been made aware of, acknowledge & understand such policies and processes?

If you answer no to any of the above you may be at risk and need to perform a software audit to determine the size of the problem and take appropriate steps to ensure that you are compliant, for example, ensuring you have sufficient licenses for software installations, or the licence is sufficient for the number using/accessing the software.

2. Achieve Licence compliance

Software must be installed and used in accordance with the software publisher’s licence terms.

- You first need to collect and record all evidence of licenses and entitlements to use software in a secure place, so you can be confident that you have the right to use.
- Perform an inventory of your computers, software and users.
- Match the number of licenses to the installed software and ensure that the software is being used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the licence, on occasions, licences limit the number of users accessing software.

- If there is a miss-match take appropriate steps to achieve licence compliance by procuring additional licenses; redeploying unused licences (if permitted) or reducing the number of users.

3. Maintain Licence Compliance

Now you have a baseline, start to implement processes and policies that make it easy to control and manage your software assets in the future.

- Make your directors, IT staff and users aware of the importance of software licence compliance, and remind them periodically.
- Review your IT policies to ensure they promote good software management practices and ensure that everyone signs up to them.
- Review and improve your requisition, procurement, use and asset retirement practices.
- Make sure that everyone is aware of your procedures that back up your policies, that they are supported by your company directors and that they are used when appropriate.

4. Optimise your Software Licences

Now you are in control, plan for the future.

- Implement processes to collect and reuse software instead of buying additional licences, as long as this is in accordance with the terms of the licence.
- Review your license procurement and maintenance contracts on a regular basis in line with changed patterns of software use and different computer hardware set ups.
- Ensure any internal software developers for the business understand the licence options and costs when developing new business applications. This will help you make better decisions about the costs and benefits of potential options.

For further guidance, please e mail the Federation Against Software Theft at fast@fast.org or call 01628 622 121 to request a list of organisations that may assist with software compliance and software licence management.

For more information about Intellectual Property please visit the Intellectual Property Office website at www.ipo.gov.uk