

PREPARING FOR SOFTWARE ASSET MANAGEMENT

Licence Dashboard Ltd is one of the UK's leading Software Asset Management practitioners

After completing more than 400 successful Software Asset Management (SAM) projects in the last few years, Licence Dashboard has developed a unique service and set of business applications that enable organisations to leverage significant financial benefits while reducing the risk of illegal exposure.

LICENCE DASHBOARD™

Earlier this year, we launched the fourth generation of our Licence Dashboard™ product – this has now become the market-leading licence management and Software Asset Management tool.

With its easy-to-use management interface and ability to combine all licence entitlement and software usage information into a single reporting tool, some of the largest organisations in Europe now recognise the unique ability of Licence Dashboard to manage the total lifecycle of their software assets.

SETTING THE STANDARD - ISO/IEC 19770-1

With the release of ISO/IEC 19770-1 - the new international Software Asset Management Standard - and the many associated press releases, there has been increased activity surrounding the requirements of SAM. The guidance associated with the Software Asset Management Standard outlines the outcomes required to implement an effective Software Asset Management programme and there are now supporting technologies to help assess an organisation's compliance against its recommendations.

One such technology is the ISO's Self Assessment Engine. This engine, which is an interactive version of the Standard,

helps guide an end-user through the required outcomes, identifying any associated gaps, while providing a document repository for all associated policies and procedures.

In addition, training is also available, along with two internationally recognised qualifications - Software Asset Management Essentials and Software Asset Management Practitioner.

Holders of the Software Asset Management Practitioner qualification are able to demonstrate their competence in planning, implementing and maintaining a Software Asset Management programme.

THE LICENCE DASHBOARD APPROACH

Although these resources have been introduced to ensure that all organisations understand the requirements and can now work to a certified blueprint, many organisations still find it difficult to understand where to start.

Over the last three to four years, the main project drivers for Software Asset Management have been around compliance. As more and more organisations recognise their legal obligation, or are reminded of it by the software regulators or publishers, many have been driven simply to complete a compliance review which has little or no return and in most cases has been seen as a costly exercise.



'make more informed purchasing decisions - ultimately leading to significant cost savings'

For those organisations which have engaged with Licence Dashboard Ltd and adopted our approach, however, it has been a different story. They have been able to continue managing their compliance status, which has in turn enabled them to make more informed purchasing decisions - ultimately leading to significant cost savings.

Essentially, what Licence Dashboard Ltd has been professing and delivering for more than four years, is the core and initial processes required for managing software effectively. Clearly understanding what entitlement you have and what software has been installed, and then being able to continually track that equation, is the 'first critical hurdle' that any organisation needs to overcome.

With the launch of the ISO/IEC Software Asset Management International Standard – which, through Investors in Software, Licence Dashboard Ltd assisted in developing - the subject of Software



Asset Management has now shot-up the business agenda and its priority has been upgraded. The reasons for this are obvious:

- Many organisations now recognise the importance of managing their software more effectively
- Many organisations also now recognise that Software Asset Management delivers significant financial rewards and those rewards are long term

During this mind shift, however, we have noticed that many organisations have forgotten the importance of the 'first critical hurdle'. While they engage on long process development projects,

many organisations are missing the opportunity of establishing quick wins, such as saving money and minimising the risk of illegal usage.

While we do not underestimate the importance of implementing all the processes associated with Software Asset Management, this cannot be achieved until first establishing and understanding the compliance status of an organisation.

By clearly understanding this baseline and recognising the risks associated with it,

the organisation can better plan for the implementation of an effective Software Asset Management programme. For one, it would be beneficial to implement an effective stop-gap processes that immediately deals with any compliance risks recognised, prior to engaging on a lengthy Software Asset Management programme which could take over a year to implement and adopt.

Getting Started

The primary objective of Software Asset Management is to manage, control and protect an organisation's software assets, including the management of risks arising from the use of those assets.

Many organisations still struggle, however, with meeting their legal obligations which include:

- Ensuring all externally sourced software run or installed on any of its computer systems has been legally sourced and paid for
- Holding bona fide software licences
- Being fully compliant with the terms of these software licences

In light of this, therefore, the underlying justification for Software Asset Management is clear - the need to apply good governance

LICENCE DASHBOARD™

Without a comprehensive licence management tool, the function of managing licences essentially becomes a manual process, one which is prone to error, complacency and eventually leads to regression. Most organisations end up using a number of spreadsheets to manage and track their entitlement - these documents become difficult to summarise and make it almost impossible to demonstrate effective audit trails which outline the allocation of upgrade paths and maintenance agreements.

In addition, having multiple interfaces, each managing different stages of the process, leads to confusion. To achieve best practice, therefore, it is essential that all information is reported through a single interface, such as Licence Dashboard.

The Licence Dashboard family is a powerful range of products which put you in control of our software assets. Designed with finance and procurement reporting requirements in mind, the products give you the power to manage the entire lifecycle of your organisation's software assets.

To see for yourself, watch our online demo at www.licensedashboard.co.uk

“This unique product enables organisations to comprehensively manage an effective Software Asset Management programme. At Microsoft we look at ways in which we can help our customers achieve ongoing SAM processes and provide long term benefits from being compliant - Licence Dashboard enables you to achieve that”

Amanda Sleight - Head of Licensing, Microsoft UK

Microsoft

to an organisation's software assets, ensuring that there is a continued process in place for managing this process.

Licence Inventory

The basis of any good Software Asset Management programme is to keep accurate and up-to-date software licence information, together with processes for controlling and maintaining its accuracy.

Having a comprehensive database to store this information is essential. Not only does this allow you to archive effectively but it also allows you to publish this information when required and clearly balance the equation between what you have installed and what you are allowed to install.

Potentially, licence management tools are one of the most important aspects of a Software Asset Management implementation and can eliminate overspend and reduce instances of buying too many licences, the wrong licences or not buying enough. In addition, knowing with certainty that your organisation is compliant with the licensing terms puts you in a strong negotiating position with software manufacturers and prevents serious embarrassment.

Licence Dashboard™

With the Licence Dashboard™, organisations can effectively and automatically control the entire lifecycle of their organisation's software assets from purchase, to upgrade

and beyond. With its easy-to-use interface authorised users to take control of software and licence inventories, combining all licence register and software audit information into a single reporting tool. In addition, Licence Dashboard has an intrinsic module called Audit Cleanse - this enables organisations to extract usage data from their existing discovery tools.

As many organisations have already experienced, most software inventory tools on today's market are excellent at scanning the network for hardware and software information. Manipulating this software information into a format that enables you to identify your licensable products, however, is somewhat challenging. The Audit Cleanse module enables organisations to extend the software recognition process of most software inventory tools and provide further distilling of scanned software, highlighting which installed products need a licence.

Once Licence Dashboard is implemented and configured to maintain this state, then SAM managers, licence administrators, IT managers and all other authorised members of staff can gain access to software inventory, licence register and purchasing information at anytime, in any place, on any device from a central Web console.

Ultimately, this application not only allows you to keep accurate information, it also helps drive an effective Software Asset Management programme – one which, with

the supporting Software Asset Management processes, will remain up to date.

THE REAL VALUE OF SAM

Software Asset Management is critical and has become a statutory requirement for all organisations. It is important, however, that an organisation prioritises its approach – otherwise it could be subject to a lengthy project that does not return the benefits or reduce the risk quickly enough.

Only through a thorough assessment of its compliance status can an organisation have a better understanding of its Software Asset Management problems. In so doing, it will be possible to realise the real value of SAM.

FIND OUT MORE

For further information on the Software Asset Management services we offer, contact the Licence Dashboard Team on **0845 265 1217** or email info@licencedashboard.co.uk

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