Fusion UDM Premium

◂▸ **vxl** software

Is Software Compliance A Concern to You?

Is Software Licensing Compliance a Concern?

Line of business applications and productivity software are essential to modern business operations, encouraging software vendors to increase efforts to identify and prosecute those companies who fail to comply with license terms.

Unannounced audits have become a regular occurrence as software companies team up with law enforcement agencies to raid business premises in order to verify that all software is licensed for the appropriate number of users. Those found to have failed compliance checks are taken to court, facing extremely heavy fines and punitive damages for breach of copyright; the rulings are often far in excess of the cost of the original software. In some cases, criminal charges of theft have also been brought and prison sentences imposed. The drive to improve licensing compliance is spearheaded by organisations like the Business Software Alliance (BSA) and Federation Against Software Theft (FAST), who seek to address the issue of illegal software being used in the workplace.

Businesses flouting software compliance also face whistle-blower reports to the BSA or FAST from employees eager to earn one of the large rewards offered for delivery of a complete report on the status of non-compliance within a company.

A compliance raid on your premises, or the sudden arrival of a lawyer's notice demanding sums of money for additional licenses and costs, is just the start of a far larger problem. Licensing audits typically lock users out of their systems, preventing them from working for the duration – some investigations last weeks or months. This can have a disastrous effect on projects, damaging customer relationships and associated revenue. Audits and investigations may also attract large legal fees that run to tens of thousands of pounds as businesses seek to defend themselves in court.

It is extremely important then to know exactly what software is currently deployed within your network, and whether it is fully licensed. To do this you will need a software auditing tool that can monitor the number of licenses held, and the compliance of all software within the network.

Fusion UDM Premium from VXL constantly monitors your corporate software usage to ensure that it is compliant and that you are not holding too many unused licenses. Fusion UDM Premium's software license metering helps to verify your licensing regime is both accurate and fiscally responsible.

Are You Over-Over Compliant?

Whenever the issue of software licensing is raised, most businesses purchase extra "just in case" leading to overstock of unused licenses. But if you do not properly understand current license levels you could panic, buy 10% more licenses, and still fail an audit because you have underestimated the amount required.

Instead, a more prudent purchasing strategy can be implemented through efficient and accurate cataloguing to create a legally compliant environment for your users and management.

Fusion UDM Premium has a built in software metering technology that allows you to record your assets, license models and renewal schemas. The system then automatically alerts you to usage levels and upcoming renewal dates so you can deal with instances of non-compliance immediately, delivering complete peace of mind to you, your fellow IT colleagues and your management.

There are two elements that are used by Fusion UDM Premium to ensure compliance: Software Metering Engine (SME) and End-Point Agent. The agent is installed on each end point, silently gathering information about the client hardware, installed software and usage metrics. This information uploaded to the Fusion server during normal use and whenever the device reboots.

At the server, administrators access the compliance module within Fusion UDM Premium where they can see all the software the Fusion agents have detected. Administrators can then select

the software products that they wish to monitor, providing a range of details including the license type, renewal dates, number of licenses purchased, and more. The Fusion UDM Premium server will then monitor the use of the selected software in near real time, logging the launch of an application, close and consequent license metering. Should a software product be used outside of the specified limits, administrators are sent a warning so they can take immediate action.

The SME and its associated technology is essential to ensuring that the licenses you have are both compliant and used efficiently.

Be Accurate ... Be Compliant ... Be Legal ... Be Efficient - These are the four keys to a successfully managed software asset base. Without the assistance of a process driven technology however, most businesses will find it hard to implement all four. Fusion UDM Premium allows you to achieve accuracy, compliance and efficiency with relative ease using the in-built Software Metering Engine.

The process of ensuring effective software asset management and compliance is not just about the software though. Software is intangible, and can prove difficult to locate and quantify. But by implementing disciplines and processes supported by a quality management tool that offers software asset management, you can stay on top of your licensing obligations.

The 5 Stages of a Successful Internal Software Audit

Like any effective business practice, a successful software asset management regime is built on regularly reviewing and repeating the discovery and reporting process. These 5 stages are essential to properly documenting and proving compliance in the event of a licensing query.

Discover → Define → Monitor → Reconcile → Report

1. Discover

Discovering and recording all the deployed assets within your IT framework is critical to achieve accurate audit results and good success metrics. Fusion UDM Premium is equipped with a highly sophisticated system that will not only discover your hardware end point assets, but also the software that has been installed on each. Once complete you will have the base information required to achieve full compliance using Fusion UDM Premium.

2. Define

Once software assets have been discovered, you will need to provide licensing details that form the basis for all calculations and reporting done by Fusion UDM Premium. You will need to have collated specific information like: date of license acquisition, number of licenses purchased, type of license, renewal information etc.

This information is then entered for each software product that you need to monitor for compliance. The process is relatively simple and is contained within Fusion's compliance configuration section.

3. Monitor

At the heart of Fusion UDM Premium, the Software Metering Engine (SME) runs continually, working in concert with the Fusion Endpoint Agent, to collate information on the usage metrics of specified software. The SME records the presence of said software, when it is launched and how much it is used (active time). Usage data is continually updated and sent to Fusion's Software Monitoring Engine where it is stored ready for use in the reporting modules and dashboards.

4. Reconcile

It is best practice to regularly reconcile your monitored software estate and associated usage reports against the actual software licenses you hold. You will also need to ensure that details of

license procurement or disposals are recorded to ensure success metrics remain accurate.

5. Report

Fusion UDM Premium, with its advanced reporting will ensure that you satisfy the requirements of your senior management, providing detailed and accurate reports whenever they require them. External audits, if and when they occur, will be quick and painless once auditors see that you have an accurate reporting system in place, monitoring your IT framework automatically.

Conclusion

As it stands, the software industry is in a very aggressive mode; with increased competition and operating costs vendors must be seen to address the increasing levels of software piracy in home, SMB and enterprise segments. Disgruntled employees have increased the number of unannounced software audits taking place, and your business needs to be prepared for any eventuality – even of you are totally compliant.

Software audits can take up an inordinate amount of time, leading to productivity losses and raising concerns with employees and customers that there may actually something politically or structurally wrong within the organisation.

Software audit or not, Fusion UDM Premium and its SME mechanism will allow you to rationalise and reduce your software license costs, informing you and management of any over- or under-spend on your software license provisions. You can then use Fusion UDM Premium to constantly verify and address compliance issues, avoiding fines, prosecutions and damage to your corporate reputation.

About VXL Software

VXL Software is a global company, with offices in Asia, Europe and the USA. VXL Software is a division of VXL Instruments. Established in 1976, VXL is a global leading manufacturer of thin-, zero- and cloud-client devices. VXL Software has locations in the USA, UK, France, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, India and Singapore. VXL Software's Americas Group is headquartered in Houston, Texas. The European headquarters is in Manchester. VXL Software's development team, and the Asia Pacific headquarters, are based in Bangalore, India.

Web: www.vxlsoftware.com

E-mail: sales@vxlsoftware.com

Americas
403 Corporate Woods Drive, Magnolia, TX 77354, USA
Tel: +1 877 242 7801

Europe
Carrington Business Park, Manchester Road,
Manchester. M31 4DD, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 161 775 4755

United Arab Emirates
1610, Tiffany Tower, Cluster 'W', Jumeirah Lake Towers,
Dubai, UAE
PO Box : 337111
Tel: +971 4 4508361

India
4th Floor, Kimatrai Building, 77/79, Maharshi Karve Marg,
Marine Lines(E), Mumbai - 400002, India
Tel: +91 (0) 22 42203100

Asia Pacific
167, Jalan Bukit Merah, # 06-12(SR-25) The Connection II,
Singapore -150167
Tel: +65 6278 8180

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