

How prepared are you?

Software Audits are on the increase. Gartner has acknowledged that there has been an accelerated growth over the last few years.

Software Vendors see Audits as sales opportunities. We have seen organisations having to foot major unbudgeted bills as a result of software audits because they didn't have a healthy respect for the risk when they accepted the audit and hadn't performed private internal audits beforehand. Microsoft, as an example, has always worked on a trust basis which allows you to download and install the software required from the VLSC. It is up to you to ensure you are licensed for the software, using the right versions and editions and are compliant. Therefore, internal vigilance around Software Asset Management and what software is being installed is required. How do you manage this currently? How often do you review what your IT Team has installed?

There are generally two types of Audit:

- Light Touch – This is in the form of an Excel sheet called a Deployment Summary which you are requested to complete and send to Microsoft. Additional information on your server installations both Physical and Virtual can also be requested. A common mistake is to complete this based on the licenses you own rather than what is actually in use and / or deployed.
- Heavy Touch – This is where Microsoft utilises an accredited third party to come in, install approved software of their choice on your systems which provides a series of reports for them to analyse what software you have in use against what you own. This is a point in time view and if there is incorrect or unlicensed software installed then you are deemed to have benefitted from the software. At this point you can expect Microsoft to be in contact for the unlicensed software to be purchased.

The SAM Club have seen many instances where software has been installed incorrectly causing a compliance issue. If any of the following examples apply to your company, take steps to resolve them as soon as possible:

- Own one edition but a different edition is installed:
 - o Do you own Microsoft Office Professional but have Microsoft Office Standard installed? If so, you are out of compliance. There ~~is~~ are no cross edition rights with Microsoft Office.
 - o SQL Server Enterprise installed instead of SQL Server Standard. Have you licensed for the correct number of cores (different for physical and virtual servers)?

- Are you on an Enterprise Agreement and not including all devices for Office Pro Plus for example? Devices are different to the number of users. Do any of your users have more than one device? If so then each device must be licensed for Office Pro Plus within an Enterprise Agreement.
- Do you have Mac's in your environment? How are you licensing them for accessing a Microsoft Windows OS?
- Have you turned on enterprise functionality in your Microsoft SharePoint Server? The enterprise functionality in SharePoint requires a SharePoint Enterprise CAL (client access license)
- What Microsoft products do you have published in Citrix or Remote Desktop Services? If you have published Project or Visio for example, that are licensed for a small number of devices, how are you restricting access to these products?

The best possible situation is to try and avoid an audit altogether. This is becoming harder as software vendors have realized that audits are a profitable activity that helps them meet revenue goals. The SAM Club has seen organisations from 100 users upwards being audited every 2 years.

The best form of defence is to regularly conduct your own internal audit. If you do this, make sure the person performing this task fully understands the relevant vendors' licensing rules.

The SAM Club is a Microsoft SAM Partner which allows us to enter our clients into the Microsoft SAM Program on a voluntary basis. We can help you through this process or perform an internal compliance review for you. It will always be to your advantage to validate your compliance position and to make corrections to installations beforehand rather than be audited and required to purchase unbudgeted software or software that is not required.

About The SAM Club:

Established in 2010, The SAM Club provides an independent software asset management (SAM) service to assist Heads of IT manage their software licensing.

The SAM Club covers all vendors licensing and working with our clients on procurement of new software & renewals of existing software. We have an extensive contact base to ensure our clients receive competitive quotes as well as introductions to specialised technical services as required.

The SAM Club is independent; we do not resell any software so our advice is always unbiased.

Contact us to find out more about how we can help you: info@thesamclub.co.uk