

FIVE CASE STUDY



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Software licence management programme makes interesting viewing at Five

Five implements good practice and saves money with FAST.

Five, the terrestrial television channel, is headquartered in London where a 24/7 IT operation helps to broadcast a varied schedule of news and entertainment to the nation.

To do this, Five use a wide variety of Microsoft, Mac and bespoke broadcast software applications.

The IT team is constantly working towards a more effective and reliable IT environment, providing full functionality and support for users as well as controlling the costs of hardware, support and software on 300 desktops and 40 servers through an asset management programme. Part of this includes software licence management, an important part of the IT remit, as the Copyright Design and Patents Act (1988) conveys responsibility for software licensing to the directors of any organisation and the maximum penalty for breaching this law is 10 years imprisonment.

Ken Davis, head of IT at Five, recognised the importance of correct software licensing, and decided that Five would become a FAST customer to gain guidance and advice on appropriate management and control procedures. The firm joined FAST in November 2000 and achieved FAST Audit Certification on 30 August 2003.

Julia Collingburn, the IT service delivery manager with responsibility for licence management, describes why she found the training and advice given by the FAST programme so helpful, “When it comes to software licence management, it’s hard to know where to start, despite having worked in IT for so many years. Each software company has different rules and regulations, and often simply finding out what software you’ve got on the network can be a mission.”

“It was the structured programme with clear goals and processes to follow which most attracted me,” she says. “I knew Five needed to implement policies and procedures to stop any potential software piracy and protect both staff and the company from prosecution, and the FAST programme and training provided me with the expert resources I needed.”

The FAST programme covers four stages - designing and implementing policies and procedures, auditing what software the company currently has, reconciling this against the licences held and then managing and maintaining an ongoing programme of licence compliance.

The initial policies and procedures put in place by Five covered items such as the downloading of shareware from the Internet and the correct way to purchase software (through the IT team, and not individually!). Although some policies and procedures had existed before Five joined the FAST programme, they had been managed ‘in good faith’ with few controls in place to ensure that staff were complying with the regulations.

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Collingburn continues, “Undertaking the FAST certification process gave the policies and procedures added weight and encouraged staff to comply. The process involves a presentation to the board so the issues of software piracy were raised within the company at the highest level. FAST encouraged us to get the staff to properly read and sign a staff handbook agreeing to the procedures which ingrained them in the corporate consciousness.”

As part of the software management process, Five purchased an out-of-the-box software audit tool which searches for software and reports on the total number of installed software applications within the business. At this point, Five called on FAST’s Consultancy division to undertake the audit data analysis using the new tool. The tool divides the software it finds into two levels -

primary and secondary usage (i.e. used on a day-to-day basis, or rarely accessed). It then rests with the IT team to reconcile the software identified against the licences held. Collingburn says, "The IT team at Five, as in most companies which run 24/7, does not have a lot of spare time, and I just couldn't afford the time it would have taken me. The tool is complicated, and we needed someone professional with experience of working with audit tools on a day-to-day basis to manage the process. I really believe that the consultancy division reduced the pain of certification - our consultant was in for two weeks, and it would have taken me a year with all of the other jobs I have to do."

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Phil Gauge, FAST Consultant, examined which software had been identified in the primary use category, and help to reconcile this against the licences held. He also investigated the files which the tool didn't recognise in the secondary use category - these included isolated .exe files such as games or screensavers, many of which had been downloaded by staff before the new procedures were introduced - and advised on what should be done with them.

Gauge comments, "It's my opinion that FAST Consultancy doubles the value of any audit tool, as we work with this type of software every day. We run the audits faster, therefore saving the customer's IT team time and money. We also help our customers with the management of the information they receive once they've run an audit. To some people, it looks like an incomprehensible list of files,

but we can help with decisions on what is primary use software and what is secondary or obsolete."

Collingburn continues, "The audit tool is great - it helps with policies and procedures in that it blocks users from downloading software and alerts the IT team to any potential problems, returning control of the networks to us. It means that maintaining software compliance will become more straightforward in the future.

"Having undertaken the FAST programme, we worry less about over-spending, as I know any purchases are controlled through policy and procedure."

Following the analysis of the audit data, Five undertook the reconciliation of licences versus software used. Collingburn continues, "We did actually find that we were overlicensed on a few things - some staff didn't need Photoshop, for example. We also discovered the use of shareware and some software which hadn't gone through the normal channels of purchase. I'm happy to say that either through deletion of nonessential software or additional purchase we are now software compliant!"

Five now feels that because FAST's software compliance programme fits into a recognised good practice programme, it has saved money in the long term and given the IT team peace of mind.

Collingburn concludes, "Now we know where the licences are and when they run out. Overall it gives that extra control to make the lives of the IT team that little bit easier!"

For more information please call **0844 815 5742**, email **contactus@fast-compliance.co.uk** or visit **www.fast-compliance.co.uk**

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