

FAULKNERBROWNS ARCHITECTS CASE STUDY



“We saw that there was very little discrepancy over the number of licences we had in place. We were over-licensed on some software applications and under-licensed on others but in the end we only had to spend £3,000 on new licences to become fully compliant.”

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FAST™

FAST helps FaulknerBrowns Architects to formalise IT compliance processes

FaulknerBrowns became the first firm of architects to achieve the FAST Platinum Award of the FAST Standard for Software Compliance, ensuring the organisation is in control of its IT assets and legally compliant.

Case study highlights

- Policies and procedures ensure staff are aware of what they can and can't download onto the company network
- Regular software audits make sure FaulknerBrowns has no illegal software on its PCs
- FaulknerBrowns is awarded the Platinum Award of the FAST Standard for Software Compliance after demonstrating software compliance for three consecutive years

Founded in 1962, FaulknerBrowns has built a reputation for innovation and creativity, achieving acclaim for its work on a national scale. The practice has five partners, seventeen directors and over 100 permanent members of staff, including architects, technicians, interior designers, graphic designers, technologists and model makers.

To remain at the cutting edge, the organisation relies a great deal on technology to produce quality designs as well as manage contracts and invoicing, ensuring a professional service for clients. As such, the company uses numerous software packages including project management, CAD, graphics and accounting programs.

IT Director Grahame Bevan is responsible for the procurement and management of all software. As the business has grown in recent years, Grahame has found it increasingly difficult to keep track of what software is actually on the company network and what is needed or used. The increased awareness of software licensing issues raised by campaigns from the likes of FAST and the BSA also caused Grahame to look more in depth at the organisation's IT policies and procedures.

“I was confident that we had our house in order but thought it was important to have more formal policies and procedures in place to ensure that staff know exactly what they can and can't do on their PCs. That way I can be sure I know what is on the network and that we have the appropriate licences in place,” explained Grahame.

Grahame contacted FAST for help in formalising IT compliance processes and ensuring that FaulknerBrowns was compliant.

Formalising policies

FaulknerBrowns already had a good understanding of the issues surrounding software compliance but upon initial talks with FAST, Grahame realised that the process of ensuring compliance encompassed more than he first thought.

“The first step in the process involved attending a FAST software management workshop which gave an overview of the FAST programme. I was surprised by the scope of the programme which includes reviewing data protection, email management, internet usage and backup policies,” said Grahame.

Following the workshop, Grahame worked with a FAST advisor to review all IT policies and set about revising procedures to ensure that employees understood what they can and can't do and the consequences of noncompliance.

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“Before working with FAST we had few formal procedures in place so were less able to keep track of who was doing what and therefore had no grounds to reprimand staff if they were found to be illegally downloading

software onto the system. We put clear policies in place which advised staff of the proper route to take when purchasing or downloading software," Grahame said.

The policies now form part of the overall office policies and procedures and are an integral part of the new staff induction process, meaning that all employees are fully aware right from the start.

Auditing and reconciliation

Once policies and procedures were in place, the next phase involved auditing the software. FaulknerBrowns did have an asset management tool in place but until now had no clear policies regarding the frequency of auditing. With FAST's guidance, the organisation started to electronically audit PCs once a week. Through doing this, it was able to compile a database of all hardware and software present on the network and identify any unauthorised products.

The audit process was fairly straightforward and involved auditing 95 networked PCs. As well as conducting an electronic audit, a walkround audit was also performed to ensure additional hardware such as laptops and PDAs were included and recorded.

Once the audit process was complete, FaulknerBrowns started reconciling the software and hardware against licences and proof of purchase. "This was the hardest part of the process as we realised we had numerous pieces of OEM software which we had acquired with hardware purchases and no proof of individual purchase. We were however able to find the original media authentication for the software and after completing the reconciliation we had found licence agreements for 98 per cent of the software. For the other two per cent, we bought new copies to ensure we were fully covered," explained Grahame.

"The findings reassured me that very little unauthorised purchasing of software goes on within the company and with the new policies and procedures in place we can be assured that we remain fully compliant," Grahame continued.

Following FAST's advice, as well as carrying out weekly software audits FaulknerBrowns now regularly reviews policies and procedures to ensure the organisation remains compliant and is always in control of its assets.

Achieving the Standard

FaulknerBrowns submitted its first reconciliation in 2003 and after an on site visit from a FAST representative, was awarded the Gold Award of the FAST

Standard for Software Compliance (FSSC- 1:2004), a private standard developed in collaboration with the BSI.

"FAST has given us a great deal of support and guidance on legal issues and an advisor is always on hand to explain terminology and advise us of any changes in legislation which we should be aware of. Going through the process also highlighted the complexity of licensing and brought to our attention things we had not realised were part of the FAST accreditation process such as data protection and security," said Grahame.

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"Achieving the FAST Standard not only provides us with peace of mind but shows prospective clients that we are compliant, giving us the edge over our competitors. As the Standard is backed by the BSI, the certification sits alongside our ISO 9001 accreditation for quality management, as a recognised industry standard and has some weight and credibility behind it," said Grahame.

FaulknerBrowns was the first architect firm to achieve registration to the FAST Standard. Since achieving the Gold Award the organisation has submitted three years of audit and reconciliation data and as a result, in April 2005 was awarded the FAST Standard for Software Compliance Platinum Award.

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

The process has created a good return on investment for the company. More than anything however, achieving compliance has given us peace of mind.