

## PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL CASE STUDY



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### Portsmouth City Council achieves compliance with FAST

**Best practice advice and training helps the council implement effective software management processes and save money.**

Portsmouth City Council is a unitary authority providing a full range of local services including: social services, education, planning, housing, leisure and many more. The council supports more than 180,000 residents and employs over 8,000 staff to maintain its high standards.

The council's IT team delivers services across 170 sites in 30 different departments. With more than 4,000 PCs and 150 servers supporting the day-to-day functions, from answering public queries to ensuring school buildings are fully maintained, the council has a challenge to deliver complete IT support and services whilst trying to keep costs to a minimum.

#### Why did Portsmouth decide to become FAST certified?

As part of its drive for greater efficiency, the council had to ensure that it was software compliant, and so enlisted the services of FAST. A core remit of the IT team was to confirm its licensing position while also avoiding unnecessary spending on over-licensing.

#### What was happening before?

Before Portsmouth City Council joined the FAST Compliance programme, there was a possibility that it was underlicensed in some areas, whilst paying for surplus software licences and losing money on licences left on redundant PCs in other areas.

This meant that the council risked using software illegally which could have resulted in an uncapped fine and up to ten years imprisonment, leaving the council vulnerable to unlimited fines as well as damaging its well established reputation.

Mark Gottig from IT Services Business Support at Portsmouth City Council was given the responsibility of working with FAST to become certified. This involved a four-step software management programme.

Gottig said, “We understood that achieving software compliance was a complex task and needed professional help to ensure that nothing was missed. The four-step programme was a process that was easy to follow yet thorough. I was confident that although it was a big task, FAST could help and advise us on how to be future-proofed and maintain software compliance.”

#### The four-step process

Previously, it was the responsibility of the individual departments to buy software licences, just as they would stationery.

Gottig's first task was to educate all users of the importance of the project and introduce FAST as a guide in the process. He first reviewed the council's policies and procedures for software procurement to ensure that all staff were fully aware of what they were entitled to have on their PCs. This meant working closely with other departments to update policies and procedures concerning IT equipment and to inform all users of the changes made.

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The council's second task was to run a full audit on installed software. This process started with the council's 4,000 users updating an existing IT asset inventory to reflect exactly what software was on their individual PCs, laptops and hand-helds. The next step was to run a second more in-depth audit using a software-auditing tool, which ran across the whole network identifying what software was installed.

"We needed to ensure we were legally compliant and wanted to give staff the responsibility of ensuring their individual department was properly licensed. FAST's programme reduced the time the council would have taken to run the audit by itself as it provided clear guidelines and specialised advice and support" said Gottig.

This led to the third step - the reconciliation process - where the information gathered from the audit allowed the Council to match up software on each desktop with hard copy licences to spot discrepancies between the software installed and the licences held.

Running the two audits together ensured that the process was thorough and complete. This allowed the IT team to identify where they needed to buy in more licences or where money could be saved. This was not only an important step in the certification process but also gave the IT team invaluable technical support information as they then knew exactly what was on each user's desktop.

Following a successful submission to FAST, Portsmouth City Council achieved FAST certification for all of its non-school sites and has renewed its certification on a further two occasions.

Gottig added, "Not only did FAST advise and guide us on the best practice to achieve certification, but I found that the training courses it offered were particularly helpful.

They gave me a chance to meet with people from other public sector organisations with similar specific needs, going through the same processes. We were able to discuss strategies and problems and it was also an opportunity to make contacts for future reference."

The final step of the process was to put in place a framework for ongoing management of software licensing, so Portsmouth City Council decided to break this down into manageable chunks. The council now runs a software audit every quarter and generates reports to detect any changes.

By achieving FAST certification, the council has saved money as some departments were disposing of redundant equipment without removing software and recycling licences. The council therefore strengthened its inventory system to log all software held by each department. With the turnover of staff in such a large organisation, it is now much easier to keep track of what software is being used, what licences are needed and which are spare.

The certification process also educated staff and highlighted the need to keep all licences in safe central repositories within departments as before, many departments were storing licences in drawers and cupboards, which meant licences were being misplaced.

Through running regular audits, maintaining a log of all software and storing licences, the council now has a holistic view of its software assets across all departments and sites. Together with the changes made to internal policies and procedures, this has not only saved the council money but will ensure that it remains legally compliant as the organisation evolves.

"Now we are safe in the knowledge that Portsmouth City Council is software compliant and isn't going to find itself in a position to have to pay out for underlicensing. Without FAST's advice and support, we would have found it a difficult and complex task to achieve. Instead, we have saved money and our time has been freed up to concentrate on other areas of IT, like getting all processes on-line for the government's 2005 e-government deadline!" concluded Gottig.

For more information please call **0844 815 5742**, email **[contactus@fast-compliance.co.uk](mailto:contactus@fast-compliance.co.uk)** or visit **[www.fast-compliance.co.uk](http://www.fast-compliance.co.uk)**