

## SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD CASE STUDY



### Scottish Legal Aid Board demonstrates three consecutive years of software compliance

The Scottish Legal Aid Board ensures compliance and makes large cost savings by obtaining the FAST Platinum Award.

#### Case study highlights

- Regular audits ensure that The Scottish Legal Aid Board remains legally compliant year on year
- Staff are regularly informed of the necessity of staying software compliant and they are aware of the penalties for breach of company policy

The Scottish Legal Aid Board manages legal aid in Scotland. Legal aid allows people who would not be able to afford it to get help for their legal problems. The Board makes decisions on granting applications, and in assessing and paying solicitors' and advocates' accounts in accordance with legislation of the Scottish Parliament. Based in Edinburgh the Scottish Legal Aid Board employs over 320 full-time staff.

The Board has been working on an ongoing basis with FAST for the past seven years to manage software licensing and employees' use of the IT network. The Board had policies and procedures for software compliance in place before working with FAST, but was not sure if they were sufficient. With a network of around 330 PCs on one site connected to 32 servers, the organisation realised that staying compliant was a massive task which it needed assistance with. The IT department wanted to look further into software management and ensure that their policies were fit for purpose and that they were fully compliant.

The first step in achieving registration to the FAST Standard was for Rachel Anderson, Assistant Manager IS, who would be heading the compliance process, to attend a Software Management training day. The training day gave her pointers on how to implement policies and procedures, provided an overview of the FAST programme and reinforced the dangers of not staying software compliant. "I was aware of some of the implications of not staying compliant before I attended the course but the training day assisted me in learning about all the stages of the FAST process.

The exam at the end of the day was proof of the massive amount of information which had sunk in throughout the course and stood me in good stead to make changes to our existing processes," Rachel said.

Following the help and advice provided, Rachel and the FAST Project Team then went away and revised the existing policies and procedures. As FAST advised, they were short, simple and to the point, setting out exactly what is expected of staff and the correct processes to follow with regard to purchasing and installing new software.

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Attending the Software Management Day alone was enough to prompt her to write efficient policies, but FAST was always at the other end of the phone to guide and advise her.

Rachel and the FAST Project Team now needed to roll-out the new policies to staff throughout the Board. All Board staff were talked through the policies and procedures. They were made aware of the seriousness of illegally downloading software and were advised of the actions that the board would be willing to take if the policies were broken. Alongside a staff training day each member of staff was issued with a handbook containing the updated regulations. The policies and procedures were also publicised in the in-house magazine and in a short email to reinforce the changes and get staff buy-in.

The next step in the FAST process was for the Scottish Legal Aid Board to conduct a full audit to ensure it was fully aware of all software on the system. The board had previously conducted audits manually, however this was immensely time consuming and not as thorough as the FAST process recommended. The FAST Project Team had been auditing hardware and software separately, but this was a frustrating and ineffective process. After an auditing training day Rachel and the FAST Project Team followed FAST's advice to conduct an electronic audit as well as a walkaround audit. All 330 PCs and 32 servers were checked using an electronic audit tool as well as spot checks on a number of individual machines.

Once the audit was carried out Rachel and the FAST Project team realised that in many areas they were over-licensed and had copies of unused applications on a number of machines. This meant they could go on to make huge cost savings by re-deploying the licences elsewhere, instead of purchasing new ones. In other areas they were slightly under-licensed finding they had illegal copies of software on the system. To rectify this the Scottish Legal Aid Board bought licences for those applications they needed both documentation for and deleted all unauthorised software. Most illegal software was as a result of staff downloading shareware and freeware and not understanding terms and conditions. As part of the reconciliation process the team moved to a site licence for a large proportion of applications. For example they now have all their versions on Microsoft Office covered under one licence, making it easier to reconcile software with the licence agreements. This has resulted in large cost savings.

Rachel said, "As we have progressed through the programme we have found less and less instances of inefficient licensing. Each audit and reconciliation now takes less time to conduct as more often than not licences correspond to software and hardware in an orderly fashion."

The FAST process is an ongoing procedure. Every six months a working group at the Scottish Legal Aid Board reviews the policies and procedures to keep them current and remind staff of the necessity of staying compliant. Weekly spot checks are regularly carried out to ensure that rules are being followed. A full software audit is also completed every year as well as a six monthly spot check.

Rachel said "FAST encouraged diligent policies and procedures and enforced the fact that staff needed to be advised of these and sign an agreement to say they have read and understood them.

The process was a big leap for the Scottish Legal Aid Board as we put in place a more formal process, for usage and management. Following FAST's recommendations we now send emails to all members of staff if someone illegally downloads software to reinforce the process. We often go to FAST to seek clarification of points such as confirming information of licensing conditions. A FAST advisor is always on the other end of the phone and is quick to offer advice and back us up.

"Achieving registration to the FAST Standard adds weight to back up our actions as we strive to achieve constant compliance. The FAST team was an immense help in guiding the Scottish Legal Aid Board through the FAST programme. Not only are we now legally compliant but we have saved money year on year through being more informed about the applications of our system and this will only continue."

The Scottish Legal Aid Board was awarded the FAST Standard for Software Compliance Platinum Award for three years of continuous compliance in November 2005 and is well on its way to a fourth successful year of software compliance.

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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