

KEEPING UNLICENSED AND UNAUTHORISED SOFTWARE OUT OF YOUR BUSINESS

Your business as a whole might recognise the importance of avoiding illegitimate or unauthorised software, but what about employees (however well meaning)? Training, processes and policies will ensure that no one purposefully installs unlicensed or unauthorised products.

Use this checklist to help ensure you get the most out of your software assets and minimise the risks to your business:

- Get top management on board**
by explaining the risks poorly managed software can pose to the business, and the financial and other benefits good SAM provides.
- Ensure someone is responsible**
for 'doing' software asset management in the business. This individual is responsible for ensuring that all software is properly acquired, deployed, used and retired.
- Develop written policies**
that employees can sign, to make them aware of their responsibilities when using any IT equipment or service, including software.
- Make sure all employees are aware of the processes**
through which they can request and purchase new software or subscriptions.
- Only procure software from vendor-certified**
partners to ensure that the software you buy is legitimate and properly licensed.
- Keep accurate records of your hardware and software assets -**
make sure you know what software you own, and how many individuals have subscriptions or which computers have the software installed.
- Carry out regular audits of your IT systems**
to ensure that you have not over-installed software, are paying for unused subscriptions, or that your employees are not making use of unlicensed or unauthorised software.
- Make sure that your software is regularly updated**
to stop hackers exploiting vulnerabilities.
- Don't be tempted to buy software on the cheap -**
the software may not be sold with a valid licence and may pose security risks to your business. It may also not be licensed for commercial use, particularly if it has been sold at a significant discount.

Proper software asset management takes time and effort, but the payback is well worth it. If you have followed the steps outlined in this guide to implement a SAM system to manage your software, you have taken the steps necessary to get the full benefit from purchased software and eliminate your company's exposure to the risks of unlicensed, unbudgeted and unauthorised software.