

ISC13D037

Title: Software Procurement Project
Author: Malcolm Rae (ISD)
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Issue

- The process through which academic staff in the Faculties request, and procure software does not allow Faculty IT or Finance teams to check for the availability of unused licences elsewhere in the University, or allow for individual Faculties to make best use of institution wide purchasing power, due in the most part to a lack of any central searchable location for licence information.
- There is currently no consistent guidance for Faculty staff to liaise with IT support teams for purchasing assistance and in some instances this has led to the purchase of incorrect software versions or purchases of software for which there is an institutionally licenced alternative.
- The lack of coherent licence information makes it very difficult to check the compliance status for any given software installation. Additionally in instances where academic staff purchase software themselves for reimbursement through expenses, the fact that software may have constituted part of the claim is not routinely identified and University IT staff may never have sight of the associated licence. This further complicates any compliance search and makes it problematic to transfer the software to another member of staff if required.

Recommendation

- It is recommended that all requests for the purchase of software are directed to the IT support teams for licence availability checking and for purchasing assistance. This will ensure that existing licences that may be available elsewhere on campus are used where possible, that any appropriate alternative software can be considered and that quotes, where required, are obtained from preferred suppliers and are for the appropriate software versions. IT Support involvement in this process at an early stage will also enable us to package the software for delivery via the Software Catalogue web service.
- It is recommended that existing working practice be amended to identify any software purchases that may constitute part of a staff expenses claim. This will ensure that the purchase can be properly coded in the University Finance system which will in turn allow it to become searchable should the need arise to provide evidence of purchase.
- It is recommended that a simple licence information repository be developed. This will be specified to allow the necessary support teams to query availability of licences, identify instances where aggregation of individual licences may allow adoption of a cheaper or more inclusive licencing model, and allow tracking of licence ownership for audit purposes.

Resource Implications

The actions to amend current purchasing procedures will fall mainly to Faculty Finance teams who are responsible for processing expenses claims and who currently receive direct requests for software

purchases. Specifically Faculty Finance teams under the recommended process will redirect software requests to IT Support staff when received directly and will query the content of staff expenses claims to identify software purchases. Discussions have been held with heads of Finance for all Faculties and with senior central Finance staff and support for the recommendations outlined here have been unanimous.

The licence repository proposed at this stage is not required to directly interact with other systems nor will the structure need to be complex. It is likely that a spreadsheet will be sufficient to meet short term requirements pending a larger review of IT Service Desk provision that is likely to include comprehensive, integrated Software Asset Management capability. Resource needs for development of this repository are therefore very low.

Risk Implications

This project is essentially an amendment of existing practices and is considered low risk.

Discussion

We are asking the Committee to support the recommendations outlined here.

Attachments

Appendix A is a flowchart illustrating the proposed software procurement process.

Appendix A

