



"PCProfile offers practical technology tips aimed at helping you use your PC business systems more efficiently."

## Looking for a new audit tool for software inventory?

For years we have been licensing our software audit tools to customers and auditors to allow them to conduct a software inventory to enable them to become software compliant and have been successful in having large numbers of customer audits conducted using our audit tools since 1991. It's time now to offer some radical and new advice!

## Why not use what you already have in place?

Why give that advice when we have our own inventory tool that we license?

PCProfile has been in the auditing and anti-piracy advice business since 1991 and we have seen multiple versions of many different types of inventory and audit tools that have been evaluated, acquired, installed, run and then mothballed as the IT/audit staff change or move on within the position/environment to other organizations.

Why? It all comes down to personal preference of the person conducting the audit which often is based on the audit tool they are most familiar with at their previous organization.

This has occurred through the churn rate of IT staff in the industry (18mths to 2 years in many cases) and so presents the organization with a real dilemma in terms of "are they getting the right advice from the person selecting or recommending the tool and how challenging are management over acquisition of these tools in terms of justifying the cost".

If you changed operating systems at the same rate as organizations waxed and waned in new and old tools then you would be out of business in the same time as it takes to turnover a new IT person as they move onto their next job!

## Many audit tools already exist in some sites

In our long engagement in this industry, predominantly as advisers to organizations and also designers and developers of specialist auditing tools, we have discovered, with our customers, that many audit tools are already in existence at many sites where they have enterprise wide software deployment tools for patches/fixes and upgrades eg; Unicentre, SMS, Altiris, Tivoli, Tangram, Peregrine, Centennial and many others on the market. These are all great tools BUT if they aren't used correctly for auditing then they are being wasted.

## So, why aren't these tools in use as audit tools?

What our clients discovered was that in some cases the audit functionality has been turned off due to several reasons, and management were not advised or had incorrectly assumed the audit was still operating. Typical reasons given were;

- The audits generated too much data daily, weekly, monthly and we couldn't process it all,
- The audit was too labour intensive in terms of building definition terminology to detect software applications, or
- We were never able to complete an audit before the next set of data is gathered.

In some cases, failure to renew annual maintenance, which typically runs about between 15% and 25% of software licence fees, due to budgetary constraints means that the upgrade to software library definition tables is quickly out of date, hence the site falls behind in terms of the ability to detect new software on the market being installed.

Another reason these enterprise wide tools have the audit function turned off is that the normal competition and trade-offs that occur with priority over bandwidth utilization and speed/performance often results in the IT team switching off the audit requirements to appease the CEO/Management and user base.

## Where do you start?

First port of call has to be to check your systems for existing software inventory/audit tools to find out what you have already, see if it's still under license to your organization but be careful as some have "use by" expiry dates.

If it's still under license, then use that set of tools before launching out and wasting more money and time and selecting yet another tool!

In the current economic climate we expect that with everyone cutting costs (tools and staff) due to tight economic conditions that provides a common sense practical approach rather than wasting yet more money!

## Facing cutbacks in Resources?

It's 2009 and the Global Economic Crisis is cutting deeply into many overhead areas and it's not over yet. As a Manager, Auditor, SAM or ITAM professional you are more than likely facing significant cutbacks in costs and resources. If you haven't yet, our tip is you soon will be!

When staff in your organization hear that audit teams, SAM and ITAM resources are shrinking in size (the communication lines are clear and very fast when it comes to loss of staff and resources in any business) and that audit and monitoring tools might be turned off, or turned down in frequency of audit monitoring due to cost cutbacks, the end user will be freer than ever to take advantage of the massive bandwidth and pipelines that exist into your organization to do a wide range of things that you have been guarding against eg;

- Installing unauthorized software;
- Make, share or distribute copies of licensed software;
- Use of software that you suspect or know to be unlicensed; or
- Download, duplicate, share or use Bit Torrent, Peer to Peer (P2P) systems or file transfer protocol (FTP) to circulate, distribute and access copies of copyrighted material. This specifically includes all executable files, music and sound files (eg: \*.wav and \*.mp3) and video files (eg: \*.wmf, \*.avi, \*.mpg and \*.mov), and font files (eg: \*.fon and \*.ttf)

## Take 4 Steps

PCProfile has recently re-invigorated a simple management tactic we used many years ago (last century 1995-1998) that proved very effective when IT/Audit/Management were faced with budget cuts, no money for audit software and no resources to use to gather the inventory data.

We offer a 4Steps approach to software compliance to make sure that your staff "started to behave themselves at the desktop" so you could, at the very least, generate a change in attitude at the desktop.

This approach is a higher level management strategy that can be used to improve your level of protection before you even start using an audit tool approach.

If you are wondering how you are going to manage compliance after having your budget and resources cut in the

current economic climate, then take a look at 4 key steps that can change attitudes at the desktop by end users to compliance!

- Step 1 - Define an Acceptable Use Policy**
- Step 2 - Deploy the Acceptable Use Policy**
- Step 3 - Audit to the Acceptable Use Policy**
- Step 4 - Enforce the Acceptable Use Policy**

Sometimes going back to basics is the best way to force the changes in attitude at the desktop you need to keep you compliant! Don't be surprised when you discover that this approach will save you money in the long run!

If you haven't got Steps 1 and 2 in place then you are really wasting your time on bothering with Step 3. Step 4 backs up your management position by taking action against those who infringe.

It might be seen as a bluff, and may even be seen to be drastic but it can work in your favour if you are faced with cuts in resources and lack of tools to use!

## Why You Need To Take 4 Steps

What would your manager ask when they saw that for one PC in the organization there was this level of compliance issues?

Would you have difficulty in explaining how this has happened and why they could be at risk?

Now multiply that by the number of PCs' in your

organization. **How many PC's do you have? 25? 50? 100? 500? 1,000? 5,000? 10,000? No idea?????**

Discovery Audit Version 10.0 Snapshot Audit File		
Date of Audit: 20090528		
Report for Computer/Hostname: HARMER-AEDD98C5		
File counts listed below include HIDDEN files.		
File Types Detected	File Count	Bytes
<b>Files Subject To Licensing Compliance</b>		
EXECUTABLE files	3,257	3,489,472,688
FONT files	800	147,826,517
<b>Image Files (some may be subject to licensing issues)</b>		
BMP files	7,639	710,840,065
GIF files	7,717	55,072,917
JPG files	8,009	4,187,012,426
TIF files	16	30,703,193
<b>Movie Files (some may be subject to licensing issues)</b>		
AVI files	104	1,242,020,938
MOV files	9	16,357,880
MPG files	12	33,301,876
SCR files	37	18,562,124
<b>Sound Files (some may be subject to licensing issues)</b>		
MP3/MP4 files	46	73,692,167
WAV files	343	41,579,820

Are we "at Risk with Software Compliance, and the integrity of files and data on this PC as a result of this audit"?

Are any of these images "inappropriate" ie; PORN? Are we licensed to use these files in this manner?

Why are there so many Exe (application) and Font files on this PC? Have we matched these to Proof Of Purchase records? If not, why not?

Are any of these movie files "inappropriate" ie; PORN? Are we licensed to use these files in this manner?

Are we licensed to store and use these files in this manner?

**Unless you have clearly defined management objectives through an acceptable use policy and also provide regular reminders to staff at the desktop level, then you are likely to see wild fluctuations in what has been downloaded and installed on PC systems - unless you have the system so tightly locked up that users can't install anything at all!**

***Failing to recognize and act on what you discover during an audit places you at risk!***

*If you wish to Discover what is actually on your systems contact us at [pcprofile@pcprofile.com](mailto:pcprofile@pcprofile.com) today.*

***We will send you a FREE 1 page Acceptable Use Policy and Discovery Snapshot Audit which runs from USB.***

## Published by PCProfile.com

### Worldwide Copyright Notice

Discovery Snapshot Auditor Copyright © 2009 PCProfile All rights reserved worldwide

Copyright © 2007-2008 PCProfile trading as Rob Harmer Consulting Services Pty Ltd ABN 77 035 134 400 All rights reserved worldwide.

### Guidance For Publishers

Publishers are encouraged to publish this report as free content resource in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) Articles must be published "as is" (unedited);
- 2) Articles must be published with the author's bio paragraph and copyright information included;
- 3) URLs listed should be set as hyperlinks, with no redirection;
- 4) Whenever possible, authors should be notified of intent to publish;
- 5) This Published Article cannot be used in spam communications or sold;
- 6) PCProfile prohibits the use of copyrighted material in a manner that violates the copyright owner's rights;
- 7) Publishers who violate copyright law are legally liable and subject to possible fines under Copyright Laws worldwide.

### Disclaimer

The content of this report is provided for informational purposes only as "guidance notes" and for redistribution as outlined in the "Guidance For Publishers" paragraph and Copyright Notice above. PCProfile does not represent that all technology aspects have been outlined as a complete position and does not accept any responsibility or liability for the use or misuse of the content of this report or reliance by any person of the publishers contents.



**About the Author - PCProfile is an Adelaide based company with over 30 years practical computing experience in small, medium and large enterprises and offers managers and business owners in SMEs, and SOHO businesses practical tips and advice on how to get the best out of the technology used by your SME/SOHO business.**

**Rob Harmer is the owner of PCProfile and specialises in providing practical and relevant advice on Technology issues that are relevant for managing your business. For the last 19 years he has been a champion for anti-piracy advice and activities assisting businesses with keeping their systems compliant in the face of piracy of software. During the 1998 to 2000 years he played an active role with pragmatic advice for Year 2000 issues worldwide for PCs and managed the successful transition for a major high profile Year 2000 activity (covering 2 million lines of code and substantial legacy assets) at a defence site in Australia.**

**He has been running his small business PCProfile continuously since 1991 and has won prestigious IT awards in SA in 1994 and 1999 for IT excellence. Rob has published numerous articles on overseas audit community web sites and has been a contributor to the National Accountant IT section as well as other publications overseas. He has occupied various roles as a Senior Executive Manager with almost 40 years experience in computing at various levels, with significant achievements in all aspects of business management, finance accounting and commercial agreements, process mapping, risk management, staff development, coaching and training managers, organisational and cultural change, and business process improvements. Presenter Bio can be seen at [www.pcprofile.com/resume.htm](http://www.pcprofile.com/resume.htm)**

**PCProfile also runs seminars on technology topics for SME and SOHO business owners.**

**[www.pcprofile.com](http://www.pcprofile.com) email [enquiries@pcprofile.com](mailto:enquiries@pcprofile.com) Mobile +61 (0) 448 650 227**