



## Software Audit – how much software does a MAT or school need?

### KEY POINTS



- Weigh up the pros and cons of having multiple pieces of software on your systems
- Running a complete Software Audit to evaluate and refine your software catalogue
- There are other areas, such as Infrastructure Audits, that you may need to consider
- An objective, expert ICT consultant might be better placed to conduct these Audits for you.

Without an effective system in place to manage and evaluate software systems being used, a school or MAT could find themselves in the middle of a software sprawl, whereby they have accrued application duplicates and redundant subscriptions that could be burning through budgets and creating more labour-intensive IT support needs than strictly necessary.

You may be shocked to learn that we have worked with schools whom, after having conducted a Software Audit, discovered they were running 105 different pieces of software. Not only was this amount of software overwhelming for the school's network team, but the school also struggled to justify this number themselves – they had continued to accumulate new software without considering if this was even in their best interest.

This Novatia Note covers the pros and cons of having multiple pieces of software and why your school or MAT could benefit from conducting a Software Audit.

### The pros

We have identified three main advantages to having masses of software within your MAT or school:

#### 1. A positive technological attitude

Having lots of software available suggests a positive correlation between technology and improvements within the organisation. In other words, whatever the task, the school or MAT believes there to be a software to improve it and will invest time and money into said software.

With such a favourable view towards IT, the organisation can build staff and pupil confidence in their technological aspirations.

#### 2. Staying ahead of the software curve

It also indicates that the organisation is enthusiastic about finding the best software applications to undergo specific tasks, which can have a huge impact on teaching and learning.

For example, rather than accepting a Management Information System (MIS) that is good at producing Data Dashboards but does not have the analytical focus of a more specialised piece of software, the organisation is committed to providing the best solution to ensure resources offer an effective and seamless experience to its users.

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### 3. Motive for improvement

A substantial software library correlates with a desire for continuous improvement, or the 'there must be a better mousetrap out there' motive for seeking new and improved ways to do things.

With leadership using technology to its fullest potential, having plenty of resources to ensure accessible learning can be fully optimised.

### The cons

Whilst the positives are more 'intangible', the negatives are very real:

#### 1. Overloading network management

If you had 105 pieces of software, your network management team would need to know 105 different software applications.

This includes:

- Understanding their implications on network resources

- Tracking their licensing agreements
- Researching dependencies and conflicts with other systems

#### 2. Losing money on redundant software

It is highly likely that within the 105 applications you are running, there is redundant software that is costing you money in subscription fees for licensing that could be put to much better use if invested elsewhere.

#### 3. IT support "expertise"

How much software can you expect your IT support team to be honest experts in? Technicians should be able to manage most support challenges that come their way, but with a wide range of software and only a handful of technicians within the organisation, you run the risk of falling short of experts to cover every app.



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#### 4. Staff confusion

If overloaded with options, your teachers and administrators could find themselves in a position where it is unclear which software they should be using to achieve certain tasks, which can be a particular issue if you are aiming for a centralised approach to ICT in your MAT.

#### 5. Induction difficulties

Training new staff is already a lengthy, detailed process. This could be made even more challenging when there is excessive software for them to become acquainted with.

#### 6. Best practice becomes the worst

Just as we mentioned network management teams and IT support might struggle to keep up with vast amounts of software, which could hinder their support capabilities, your other staff members may lose the ability to help each other with software queries if best practice gets lost in the medley of applications.

For example:

A MAT we worked with recently was surprised to learn they used more software to create quizzes (12 applications) across its schools, than it had schools (10). This spread the expertise thinly across the Trust and prevented the implementation of best practice in teaching communities.

### Software Audit

We've covered the positives and negatives surrounding masses of software, but to determine and set up an effective software strategy to support your educational outcomes, we recommend running a Software Audit.

A Software Audit determines how much software you have on your systems and how much of it is being used regularly, if at all.

If you are working across a group of schools, a Strategic Audit can help identify gaps in ICT Strategic Governance and the recommendations to fill them.

By strategically identifying the preferred applications for use across your group or Trust via the Audit, you can move to develop a 'Software Catalogue', which will serve as a reference point for all schools within your Trust.

#### When multiple pieces of software are crucial

Once you have conducted a Software Audit, you may find yourself with hundreds of applications which are all being put to good use.

If this is the case, and you have reasons for maintaining the amount of software you have, then it is crucial to ensure your network infrastructure and support services are in excellent condition to maintain the quality of your software to support the schools' education ambitions. A Core Infrastructure Audit can be conducted to review this.

#### FIND OUT MORE

**Our expert team of ICT Consultants can undertake all or any of the elements of the Software Audit.**

**We're independent, objective, and knowledgeable about what ICT in MATs and schools should look like, and experts in creating and delivering ICT infrastructures that work for your MAT or School.**

**If you feel your Software Audit and subsequent development of a robust ICT Strategy would benefit from being carried out by an external team, do get in touch.**

Visit [www.novatia.com](http://www.novatia.com) call **01962 832 632** or email [info@novatia.com](mailto:info@novatia.com)