

Data#3 Customer Story

ElectraNet

*ElectraNet Cuts Costs and
Increases Visibility with
Technology Intelligence
Solution*

Data#3

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Project Highlight

The cost and resource demands of the audit process have reduced drastically since implementing the Technology Intelligence Solution from Data#3.

Objective

ElectraNet wanted to ensure that they held the appropriate licenses required for all Microsoft products in use across the organisation, while also avoiding overspend on essential business software.

Benefits

- Accurate monthly compliance reporting
- Ability to approach Microsoft True-Up audit process confidently
- Reduced IT time managing licensing needs
- Costs are more predictable, and overspend is eliminated
- Has delivered a 200% ROI per year

Solutions & Services

- ✓ Software Asset Management
- ✓ Software as a Service
- ✓ Microsoft Licensing
- ✓ Microsoft 365

Approach

The ElectraNet in-house IT team was determined to meet all software compliance requirements. Data#3 had discussed its unique Technology Intelligence Solution and demonstrated its suitability to improve visibility of software usage. This allowed ElectraNet to better manage licensing needs and get the best value for their technology investment.

Testimonial

“The solution helps us get on top of license renewals and saves costs because it points us to the applications that are not being used, so it takes away the potential for paying for something we don’t need.”

**Steve Calabro, IT Infrastructure Manager,
ElectraNet.**

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The Background

ElectraNet is the owner and operator of South Australia's high-voltage electricity transmission network, playing a vital role in providing safe, affordable and reliable solutions to power homes, businesses and the economy.

The grid is continually evolving, using new technologies to deliver cleaner, more environmentally friendly services to the community it serves.

Throughout the organisation, managing costs is a constant focus, as efficient operation allows ElectraNet to offer the best value to its customers. Microsoft software plays an important role across the organisation and is one of the business's most significant ongoing technology expenses. However, limited visibility made it difficult to accurately gauge usage.

The Challenge

Providing the right energy service to suit the needs of the community is a complex task and requires everyone in the ElectraNet team to perform at their best. Technology plays a key role. From field engineers to corporate users, the ability to connect and collaborate is key. IT Infrastructure Manager, Steve Calabro, said that Microsoft is at the heart of the company's daily activities.

“We run Microsoft on all of our devices, we have Microsoft on 90% of our servers, we are predominantly a Microsoft shop. We use the Microsoft 365 platform, as well as Exchange, Dynamics, SharePoint, and Teams. Our use of Microsoft Teams, in particular, accelerated when staff had to work from home due to COVID-19 restrictions.”

Keeping track of licensing coverage and usage in a complex, multi-site environment was a challenging task for the busy in-house IT team. In fact, Data#3 research found that **54% of organisations are overspending on hardware and licensing¹**, wasting precious IT budget. The remaining **46% are under-licensed and pose a compliance risk¹** to the organisation. ElectraNet had invested in a software asset management (SAM) tool in the past, but it was unwieldy, and the team lacked time to make sure the tool delivered the right data. This led to a situation where visibility of the current environment was very limited, making it hard to prepare for software audits.

“We needed assistance keeping track of our software licences, because we don't have full-time employees who can focus on the licensing that is in use in our environment,” explained Calabro.

“It can be a very complex area, and without that specialist focus, it is hard to fully understand. The licences available are ever-changing, so it is hard to keep up with. To track the Microsoft licensing situation year-to-year, you really need a dedicated person.”

Risk management is an integral part of ElectraNet to ensure good corporate governance, improve decision making and enhance outcomes and accountability. This extends not only to the grid it manages, but also to its corporate and IT environment. Effective management of software licensing reduces risk of overspend, and of penalties applied for compliance failures. To the business, getting it right is part of being a good corporate citizen.

“The risks include not being correctly licensed for products we have out there, and facing fines when we get audited, plus we risk missing out on getting more advantageous deals from our software providers,” explained Calabro.

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Business Outcome

Given the proportion of annual IT expenditure that is used to pay for software licences, and the potential for fines if compliance requirements are not met, the ElectraNet team was very clear that managing the situation would be a valuable exercise. With this in mind, Calabro turned to Data#3, whose Technology Intelligence Solution was designed to give accurate oversight and expert recommendations on software licensing obligations and benefits.

“We needed assistance, and were speaking to Data#3, who came back to us with a managed solution that utilises Snow Software to give us a monthly report, and we decided to take that path,” recounted Calabro.

“We are now four years down the track, and still going with it. It helps us keep track accurately.”

Data#3’s licensing experts explained ways in which ElectraNet could use a managed Software as a Service (SaaS) solution, paired with Software Asset Management (SAM) expertise, so that they no longer had to manage the application. Instead, Technology Intelligence specialists took on the day-to-day monitoring and management, reporting back to ElectraNet in regularly scheduled meetings that outline risks from a security, compliance, and governance perspective.

“As a part of the solution we have a monthly meeting with Data#3. Their monthly report outlines how we are travelling with licenses, whether we are over or under, and reports on applications that are not utilised or wanted. When we have these monthly catch ups, we get some actions to work on for the coming month, regroup, and go from there,” explained Calabro.

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Audits, such as the Microsoft True-Up process, are a different experience since the Technology Intelligence Solution was put in place. Previously a member of the IT team would need to devote a significant block of time to preparing for any upcoming audit, and variance was still problematic. ElectraNet can now have confidence in its information.

“The solution helps us get on top of license renewals and saves costs because it points us to the applications that are not being used, so it takes away the potential for paying for something we don’t need,” said Calabro.

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“Data#3 has provided us with the expertise, support and solution we needed to manage our Microsoft licences, which has been a good outcome for our business.”

**Steve Calabro,
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Conclusion

By lifting the burden of ongoing license monitoring from the in-house team, ElectraNet can spare resources for other projects, while also taking a more proactive approach to its software assets.

“When we catch up with Data#3, they give us some actions, ranging from uninstalling unused applications, or prompting decisions about end-of-life applications. We go through and uninstall or upgrade, we clean things up, and it gives us a good insight,” described Calabro.

In contrast to the previous audit, a time-consuming process that diverted IT time and uncovered inaccuracies that led to a lump-sum payment, Calabro said the experience is now far less stressful.

“Previously, it was hard when it came round to being audited every so often. We got audited at the beginning this year, for the first time since Data#3 installed Snow Software. We can now readily demonstrate compliance. Following the previous audit, Data#3 was able to negotiate with Microsoft to get the shortfall to a reasonable number, and the feedback from the business was that it was a job well done.”

With the Technology Intelligence Solution giving clarity around software usage, and matching that to the right licensing options, Calabro is clear that the right knowledge pays off in this specialised discipline.

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¹ Data based on a study of all Data#3 Software Asset Management Customers

ElectraNet

Data#3 and Snow

As an Expert Snow Partner, Data#3 has a skilled national team with unparalleled experience in deploying and managing Snow software. Leveraging the broader expertise of our managed services, licensing consultancy and cybersecurity teams, the Technology Intelligence Platform has been built with a strong focus on data protection and providing a secure solution, with an established Information Security Management System aligned to ISO 27001.

Data#3

snow *