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Microsoft is upping audits so keep on top of licences

But there is no need to panic, says local Gold Partner

MICROSOFT has increased the number of audits it carries out on local companies.

Next Generation IT director Matt Hale said increasing numbers of Guernsey companies were being contacted by the software company.

'We first heard of a Guernsey company being audited by Microsoft about seven years ago but recently it has become apparent that Microsoft is casting the net wider and dozens of companies are now being audited on an annual basis and this number is growing exponentially,' said Mr Hale.

As companies grow they increase the number of computers but may forget to add licences, which could be the reason for Microsoft increasing the number of audits it conducts. Mr Hale said that the vast majority of companies tried to comply but licensing could be a complex area and trying to keep track became more difficult over time.

'While it is, of course, better to make sure you keep up to date with your licences as you go along, so you can be confident that you are not leaving yourself open to reputational loss, or a significant bill for the backlog of li-

centences to become compliant, we know that doesn't always happen. The key is not to panic if you are contacted about an audit.'

There are various types of licences which are suitable depending on the size and nature of an organisation. Next Generation IT, a Microsoft Gold Partner, provides advice on the various options available. These can include liaising with Microsoft, auditing a company's network for installed software, and providing advice on the most suitable licensing options to resolve any shortfalls.

'Microsoft provides different methods of buying licences, de-

pending on whether you are an individual, small or larger organisation,' said co-director Tom Heyworth.

Mr Hale said that companies should take action now to ensure they were compliant.

'Then, once you are up to date and have control of your licensing, it's good to implement a strong change control process, and tie down the security on PCs to prevent staff from installing unlicensed software. As a complementary benefit, this will also help with reliability and speed of devices, as well as minimise the spread of viruses and malware.'

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Matt Hale