



## Software License Renewals

The UAE has been gearing up its intellectual property laws, by creating an environment in which research and development can flourish, and providing protection of the rights of the software and other copyright creators.

To this end, the Federal Law No. 7 of 2002 on Copyrights and Neighbouring Rights has been repealed and replaced with Federal Decree-Law No. 38 of 2021 on Copyrights and Neighbouring Rights.

### **What do recent changes introduced by the current Copyright Law mean for businesses which rely on the use of software licenses?**

If your business is exceeding the terms of the software licenses that you have purchased or if the business is downloading computer programs without a license from the owner, your company could be facing the risk of litigation, large fines, and imprisonment.

The Copyright Law has introduced increased punishments, including a minimum prison term of six months and/or fines ranging from AED 100,000 to AED 700,000.

### **What should you do?**

#### **Take an Inventory:**

Take an inventory of the software licenses which your business needs to support its objectives and clients.

***Tip:** Sometimes the best place to start for medium to small business, is by working with finance to identify the current software inventory via your accounts payable.*

#### **Assess your business needs:**

Identify which roles within the business need access to which software.

***Tip:** HR is usually well placed to identify job responsibilities across the business and this bird's eye view can be a good place from which to make decisions about necessary tech tool usage across the business.*

#### **Renew Software Licenses according to your existing business needs:**

Review your current enterprise software license agreements to ensure that your business is not exceeding the provisions contained in the license.

***Tip:** Your in-house legal team or procurement team, depending on the size of your business, can help summarise the scope of current licenses and support negotiations for new licenses or renewals.*

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