

CHANGES TO SIMS SOFTWARE AND COST IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION OF SOLUS 3

Scomis are planning to introduce SOLUS 3 during the Autumn term 2012

Capita are introducing a revised way in which SIMS and FMS software and data is updated. SOLUS 3 software is designed to run on a dedicated server within your school and to automatically issue updates to computers attached to the schools local network. This major revision to the way SIMS is upgraded will prove beneficial to schools that have a suitable network infrastructure and dedicated server.

For those schools who do not have a dedicated server, SOLUS 3 will need to be installed on the main administration PC. As SOLUS 3 is resource hungry it may result in staff experiencing degraded computer performance and a decrease in available hard disk space. The cost of upgrading a school network to improve performance could be significant and Scomis would strongly recommend these schools consider migrating to the Scomis SIMS Hosted Application Service. Schools that are already subscribing to the SIMS Hosted Application Service will not need to install SOLUS 3, upgrades will be carried out as part of the existing SIMS terminal server service.

EXTENDED SUPPORT FOR WINDOWS XP, SERVER 2003 AND OFFICE 2003

Recently Capita announced that end of support for these products would be **Autumn 2012**, but due to feedback from Local Authorities and schools Capita have now extended support to **Summer 2013** for Windows Server 2003 and **Autumn 2013** for Windows XP and Office 2003.

However, the extended support comes with this caveat from Capita:

Please note that all of the above are already in a period of Microsoft Extended Support. This means that whilst we will test our software against the above Microsoft products, there may be cases where it is not possible to provide a fix as it will be reliant on a solution being delivered on the basis of 'reasonable endeavours.'

In view of this Scomis recommend that schools who have a Windows 2003 server or Windows XP workstations plan to upgrade their infrastructure as soon as is reasonably achievable.

The following should be considered:

- There is currently no direct upgrade route from Windows XP to Windows 7. If you are considering retaining your workstations they will need a full reload with the Windows 7 operating system software.
- Windows 7 needs a higher specification machine in order to run efficiently so you may need to purchase new hardware.

- We do not recommend you upgrade from Windows Server 2003 to 2008 to avoid carrying forward any legacy problems. If you are considering retaining your server a complete rebuild will be needed providing it is of high enough specification (please see the attached flow chart).

If you are considering upgrading any existing machines to Windows 7 Scomis recommend running the Microsoft Upgrade Advisor which can be found here - <http://windows.microsoft.com/upgradeadvisor>. This utility will advise as to whether this is a viable option for you.

In seeking an alternative to the above you may wish to consider migrating to the Scomis SIMS Hosted Application Service. Schools on the SIMS Hosted Application Service will not need to upgrade their server or workstations to accommodate these changes, and may be achieving considerable savings.

MAIN ADVANTAGES OF MIGRATING TO THE SCOMIS SIMS HOSTED APPLICATION SERVICE:

- **No requirement to upgrade your network infrastructure and hardware to accommodate these changes**
- **Scomis hosts your FMS and SIMS data – no requirement to allocate resources on site**
- **Upgrades and patches are included as part of the service**
- **Backups of SIMS and FMS are taken daily as part of the service**

Currently over 250 schools have chosen the [Scomis Hosted Application Service](#) as their [preferred solution](#).

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2010

All schools using office XP or 2003 will need to upgrade to Office 2007 or 2010. Full Microsoft Office licences are available from Scomis and currently cost:

Office 2010 Pro £31.77 per workstation.
Office 2010 Std £24.86 per workstation.
Installation CD's are available at £9.72.

Other Microsoft licence models are available.

PLEASE NOTE: Scomis do not hold an inventory of Microsoft licences bought by schools and individual schools are responsible for ensuring that they hold sufficient licences and keep/maintain their own licence inventory.

Microsoft Office 2010 training is currently available – click here to see details of the course <http://training.scomis.org/office-2010/>. Extra training courses can be scheduled at alternative venues if required. Please register your interest by e-mailing scomis@devon.gov.uk.

We have attached a flowchart which will be helpful when exploring which option is the best for your school.