

CRAYON CASE STUDY

Net Streams



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Net Streams, a Microsoft SPLA partner, has launched diagnostics on the compliance of its software base with the assistance of Crayon France to improve its asset management and to optimize the solutions offered to its customers.

Hosting service provider since 1997 and Microsoft SPLA (Services Provider License Agreement) partner for 10 years, Net Streams took advantage of the opportunity offered by Microsoft to help them review its software assets.

Objectives: to verify the compliance of its software base, optimize its use and raise awareness with technical teams. Very satisfied with an operation that was considered profitable at all levels, the company has even used this diagnostic as a marketing tool to convey the seriousness of its offer and its interest in terms of optimizing the solutions offered to its customers.

Founded in 1997, Net Streams specializes in hosted services, the implementation of IT architectures and operational maintenance of the internal infrastructures of its customers. Very early on, the company became interested in the Microsoft SPLA (Service Provider License Agreement). "To us, the offer seemed perfectly tailored to customers", explains Valéry Baudoin, the CEO of the company. "One point of contact, a clearer offer, usage-based billing... But the SPLA is a rather comprehensive document with a lot of clauses that are not always easy for a new partner to decipher. Even when taking great care, you can never be sure not to miss anything or be immune to misinterpretation.

That is why we were immediately enthusiastic about the idea proposed by Microsoft for a "preventive" compliance review. Conducted at our own pace, without pressure and in a friendly atmosphere, it was a kind of mock exam offering us the opportunity to improve ourselves in areas where we may not have been so good."

The need: verify compliance and optimize use

Conducted by Crayon, a Microsoft Gold Partner specializing in Software Asset Management, or SAM, with extensive expertise in the field of hosting, the compliance diagnostics met several objectives for Net Streams.



"This compliance review proves the seriousness of our offer and clearly shows that we do not put our customers at risk"
Valéry Baudoin, CEO

Net Streams In-Brief

Since its creation in 1997, the main goals of Net Streams have always been to be recognized by its customers for its honesty and technical expertise and by its engineers for the quality of its projects. Based in Courbevoie (92), its business is the design, implementation and operational maintenance of system, storage, network and security infrastructures for its customers.

The mission

To verify and optimize the use of SPLA licenses, through a preventive SAM compliance review.

Project challenges

Improving compliance and efficiency whilst having a competitive advantage with customers and competitors.

Firstly, the company wanted to ensure that it had correctly interpreted the rules of the Microsoft SPLA. Secondly, it wanted to know if its use of licenses could be further optimized through legal rules that it may have missed. Finally, it also wanted to ensure that data collected and stored corresponded to Microsoft's expectations.

In passing, Net Streams seized the opportunity to raise awareness with its teams, as license management is rarely a primary concern for technical staff in any company.

The Solution: Software Asset Management (SAM) diagnostics

The compliance review lasted three months but only took up 10 man-days at Net Streams.

"It was carried out in iterative phases. Crayon consultants adjusted to our pace so as not to disrupt operations. This was also one of the major highlights of this project: the Crayon team is not only very competent on the use of licenses and the hosting business but also very respectful of individuals and business requirements", notes Valéry Baudoin.

During the initial phase of diagnostics, Net Streams presented its business, customer profiles, environments, information collected and the processes used to store such information. Crayon carried out an inventory of servers and applications and requested additional information to support its analysis of the situation.

"For hosting service providers, infrastructures are constantly evolving and it is not always easy to understand the differences", explains Alexandre Chimenti, Senior SAM Consultant at Crayon in charge of the compliance review at Net Streams.

"However, there is no miracle tool for verifying compliance. These types of checks require a set of tools, a methodology which must be adapted to the customer's environment and training methods to enable them to better understand the rights and responsibilities of a hosting service provider."

At the end of their mission, Crayon provided Net Streams with a summary report, which, of course, included the identified areas of non-compliance in addition to advice and recommendations on improving its uses.

"Their work was never intrusive and requests were always justified, which allowed us to completely go along with the process", explained the CEO of Net Streams.

Having the opinion of a third party outside of the company with real experience with the issue and a very educational approach had more of an impact than I had originally imagined. Even technical teams had been fully briefed! Their perception of the subject has radically changed and they are now much more vigilant when creating a new virtual machine, for example."

Benefits: optimized processes, reduction of risks and a competitive advantage

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Assessing the achievements, Valéry Baudoin very simply sums up the question: "in the ten years of the SPLA contract, it is the best initiative that Microsoft has ever had! We have learned so much and are so pleased with the process that we have suggested it to our customers."

For the CEO of Net Streams, the operation is definitely cost effective. The company has gained peace of mind, it knows that its practices are now compliant with the clauses of the agreement. "Microsoft has also had the intelligence to understand that these anomalies were involuntary and left us time to correct them whilst taking into account our business constraints. We had time to calmly explain the situation to our customers and then act accordingly", highlights Valéry Baudoin.

Thanks to the areas of improvement for internal technical processes and the collection of information identified by Crayon, Net Streams has become more efficient. At the same time, the company now has knowledge enabling it to optimize its investments in licenses, a particularly important point in terms of economic efficiency for a hosting service provider with regard to not only its competitors but also its customers.

Reassured and more efficient, Net Streams is today a hosting service provider with a very significant strategic competitive advantage according to its CEO: "We have been very vocal about this compliance review because to some extent, it proves the seriousness of our offer and clearly shows that we do not put our customers at risk. In passing, we took the opportunity to make them aware of something that they are not always fully acquainted with. In other words, we have transformed this review into a marketing tool that we keep capitalizing on."



Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guarantee of compliance Optimization of technical processes and data collection Optimization of license costs Competitive advantage for customers: solutions at the best price ROI in less than 12 month
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Services Performed	SAM (Software Asset Management) compliance review
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Partner	<p>Founded in 2002, Crayon offers services relating to software and licenses to help companies and hosting partners plan and manage the costs and compliance of licenses. The company has 100 skilled Software Asset Management (SAM) consultants, the largest team of certified consultants in Europe. It was awarded the title of "Worldwide SAM Partner of the Year 2013" by Microsoft.</p>
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