



Selecting the Best Fit for your Business from OpenLM's Product Range

As our customer base has grown over the years, so has our product range to accommodate the diverse needs of public and private enterprises, educational institutions and a wide range of industries. We have come a long way from the original offering, a software solution for effective ArcGIS management. Today we support thousands of engineering software products and can improve on all the license management software that is provided by the vendors. If you are contemplating investing in OpenLM for your license administration and management, but are unsure what product combination works best for you, here is a brief guide.

What OpenLM can do for You

When companies have previously been managing their software license manually or with only the license management tools provided by the vendor, we find that they begin by using the monitoring and reporting features of OpenLM. Then, once they have got used to the superior visibility into product use that OpenLM provides, they start introducing proactive management practices, like harvesting of idle licenses. The final step in the process is optimization, where the minimum of licenses are made available to accredited users, with very few or no denials. This is often a period where customized reports are designed to complement the standard OpenLM reporting.

Monitoring and Reporting

OpenLM provides minute-by-minute monitoring for the majority of engineering software products that it manages, and second-by-second monitoring for some of the most popular engineering tools, like AutoCAD, Matlab and Solidworks. Using OpenLM gives you an advantage in that you can monitor all your software licenses with a single product, instead of having to use each and every vendor's license manager software. This reduces your risk of non-compliance with your vendor license agreement and all the consequences that could ensue, as you have visibility and control over all your licenses from a single viewpoint, which also saves you a great deal of time and effort.

You have the ability to monitor licenses used, licenses not used, denials and actual utilization of licenses, thus helping you to determine whether you have too many, too few or just enough licenses for a particular vendor's product. You can even take this further by interrogating which features of a product you use. This information can be used to manage your portfolio on a daily basis or for strategizing your renewals for the next year. All this information can be viewed on your screen or as a set of comprehensive and customizable reports.

The following are some of the standard reports available:-

- List of license servers - showing each server, what type of license applies (such as FLEXlm or Sentinel) the total license pool, the number of licenses used and the percentage of license utilization.
- License Usage - the usage of licenses can be displayed as a chart, a table or a heat map.
- Denials - shows date and time where licenses were denied, as a chart or a table

All reports are flexible; parameters such as start and end of day can be entered and it is possible to include additional fields such as user name, which can be selected from a drop-down list.

While our core product provides much of the functionality you require for administering your licenses, we have additional products that augment the basics, two of which are optional additions to the core product at no additional cost, and a set of extensions or add-ons that incur an additional cost but provide extra features which could be what you need for your environment. We will discuss their features separately.

Management of Licenses

Many of our customers require fairly uncomplicated license administration. Others have complex and scattered environments that operate in different timezones and have multiple license pools and agreements for a single product, and multiple products from a single vendor, such as AutoDesk or Bentley. Active management is needed to ensure that the users who really need the licenses most do not experience denials. Users often have a tendency to book out a license and not return it to the licensing pool when they have finished, often planning to have the license available the next day, without the effort of having to check it out again. You can “harvest” these idle licenses, suspending the workstation’s session and returning the license to the pool so that others can use it. There are different options for how and when you harvest a license, which you can select based on your license management policy.

You can also manage user access, granting or removing it via OpenLM, instead of having to open the vendor’s product to update the access tables. This is very handy and a great time saver when you have a new recruit who needs access to a variety of software tools, such as Autodesk, ArcGIS and Matlab.

Compliance with your agreement, or agreements, with a vendor is critical in any organization, especially with the threat of spot audits. The visibility and control that OpenLM gives you over your license landscape ensures that you can pass an audit with the minimum of stress. We do recommend conducting your own spot checks periodically, which is easy to do with the toolset we provide.

You can even administer licenses for software that is outside OpenLM’s listed range of engineering and software tools, ranging from widely used commercial software such as the Adobe products to software that was custom-written for your organization. This also helps you manage software where the vendor does not provide their own license manager.

Optimization

Specialized software can have extremely expensive licensing costs; take Dassault’s Catia for example. Clearly, if you can minimize the number of licenses that you purchase from a vendor, this results in a health reduction in capex from your IT budget. While keeping your licenses to a minimum, you need to ensure that your user community suffers the minimum of denials because of your restricted license pool. This is a juggling act that cannot be managed manually. OpenLM

provides accurate reporting on licenses available and the quality of service to users, where you can clearly see what your true license needs are on a real-time or near-time basis.

You can also use OpenLM to query whether the license costs determined by a vendor using their proprietary software agree with your analysis of costs. This is especially handy for software that is managed via tokens, such as Autodesk and Abaqus. Discrepancies between the vendor's estimate and your own findings can be debated with your account manager, using OpenLM's reports.

Functionality that also helps drive down costs is the ability to charge back license costs to each business unit or cost centre. Where a business unit or a project is charged licensing costs based on their usage of a software product, the manager will actively ensure that his users toe the line when it comes to using the product, and they will improve efficiency because it has a direct impact on their bottom line. Where chargebacks are not done, the fact that there is a real license cost associated with each use of a product does not cross the manager's mind, as it comes out of the overall IT budget.

Knowing that you are compliant removes the threat of fines and penalties that can be applied by the vendor because you are in breach of contract. Not only does this remove the risk of financial loss, it helps to maintain a good working relationship with your service provider.

Choosing the Environment, Cloud or on-site

Moving with the times, we now offer a cloud solution.

Our larger customers usually opt for an on-site solution, especially where they are multinationals or have a large network of branches, and have many license servers to manage. Other organizations can opt for our cloud solution, which removes all those overheads associated with managing licenses on-site, like backups, version management and server space. We have made the decision to go cloud or on-site even easier, because it is possible to migrate from on-site to cloud and vice versa. This also makes it easier to switch because your organizational needs have changed.

Our Product Range

Whether you are a small consulting concern or a major multinational operating across the globe, our core product will suit your needs. We have also introduced a "light" version for small companies that need limited, but effective license administration. You can evaluate what works for you using a trial version. If you are a University or other educational body that uses specialized scientific and engineering software, contact us to find out about our special offering for yourselves.

OpenLM Core

Our core product provides enough functionality to let you administer the licenses in your portfolio. You will be able to:-

- monitor compliance and keep your usage in alignment with your license agreement
- have visibility and control over your portfolio in real time, supported by comprehensive reporting, some of which we mentioned earlier.

- Balance the needs of your users against your IT budget for an individual product or feature.
- Forecast and strategise on future use of a software product in anticipation of license renewal
- Manage the migration from one license type to another, as you may have to do if you use Autodesk products.

You have the options of using OpenLM core as a fully functional toolset on-site or in the cloud, or you can even opt for OpenLM to manage your services for you. There are two additional applications that you can opt to download or not based on your requirements, OpenLM Agent and OpenLM Broker.

OpenLM Broker assists you in monitoring your license server, and you need to install it on each server that you want to monitor.

OpenLM Agent gives the user of a workstation information on license availability and is loaded on each workstation where this information is needed.

Our more advanced users use one or both of these products, but they are optional.

OpenLM Light

This is a stripped-down version of our core product. It is free, but is limited to monitoring a single product for no more than 50 users. This works well for a smaller company who does design or geospatial work. They can monitor their AutoCAD or ArcGIS licenses without having to resort to manual processes.

OpenLM App Manager

While OpenLM is dedicated to managing engineering and scientific specialized software, it does not stop there. The OpenLM App Manager enables you to manage licenses of other software, such as commercially available offerings from Adobe and Microsoft, and even custom-written software and software that does not have a license manager provided with it. This is useful in cases where you use Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Project in conjunction with one of your engineering tools and want to manage these licenses together. Identifying license usage for custom software can be a nightmare to administer manually, so the APP Manager can both reduce the workload and produce fact-based reporting on what your usage actually was for such a product.

The App Manager also allows you to control license usage within the organization on your own terms, according to your software allocation policy. You can balance and manage allocation of licenses based on location, time of day and user group, project or business unit. This is invaluable when you are working with many different projects in different timezones.

OpenLM License Router

This is a virtual router that smoothes out network challenges, such as a break in communication to a particular license server. users who usually access licenses from that server will then be rerouted to another server to access the software they need, based on parameters you set up regarding prioritization, for example. You achieve redundancy with the minimum of fuss, and avoid delays while the failed connection is being restored.

Our other products - the Extensions

We have several extensions that are very useful, such as OpenLM Alerts, which lets you program reminders and alerts that will pop up when events such as license renewals for a particular application are coming close, or where usage is reaching its peak. In the interests of keeping this article short, we discuss these options separately.

We hope that this article has given you enough guidance as to what benefits you can derive from using OpenLM, but if you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. In addition to our product range, we also offer managed services, where you can outsource your license challenges to us, and we will do the rest. Ask a consultant today about this service.

