

## OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

### CIO Message

March 30th, 2012

### Microsoft Product Support

Yesterday, VA notified Microsoft that we would no longer be carrying Software Assurance for the Microsoft products we have licensed in our enterprise. The purpose of this email is to provide you with information on that decision so that you are prepared to discuss with your customers should they ask.

Most importantly, there will be no near-term impact to VA operations from this decision. VA currently has a license for the latest released version of each product we use. In many cases, such as Windows 7, we do not yet widely utilize the latest version of the product. We will continue to use the software we have installed, and we will be able to upgrade to these newer versions of the software in the coming years.

In order to ensure our enterprise remains properly supported, we will also continue to procure Core Services and Support through an authorized Microsoft reseller.

This decision also means that we no longer have an “enterprise license” for Microsoft products. This means that we will need to make smart decisions about whether a product needs to be installed on a particular desktop or server. We will begin to closely monitor where we have these products installed, to ensure that we do not exceed the number of licenses we have paid for.

Fundamentally, discontinuing Software Assurance will allow us to move away from automatically paying for all new releases and updates, giving us the opportunity to foster competition between vendors and assess the value of the software before purchase.

Having a single contract for such a major piece of our infrastructure has provided the VA with substantial benefits over the last 14 years. However, the market for desktop and server software is changing, with substantial impact from both Cloud service providers and personal mobile devices. In the future, we are looking to increase our flexibility and the amount of competition for our business to ensure that we provide the best value and emergent technologies to our customers.

Until there is widespread knowledge of the VA’s action in the marketplace, this is non-public information and both criminal laws and the Standards of Ethical Conduct forbid you from using it in your outside activities.

#### Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will my desktop or server software stop working on Monday because of this decision?
  - a. No! VA owns a license for the software we currently have running. There will be no impact on our current operations.
  
2. Why are we making this decision now?
  - a. Because our current contract for software assurance was expiring, we were faced with a decision that would be locked in for the next 5 years.
  
3. Will this affect our desktop or laptop purchase contracts?

a. No! Each unit we purchase comes with a license for the Windows operating system.

4. Will this affect our ability to support our customers?

a. No! There will be no near-term impact on our ability to support our customers because of this decision.

Roger W. Baker

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VA Core Values: Integrity Commitment Advocacy Respect Excellence VA Core Characteristics:  
Trustworthy | Accessible | Quality | Innovative | Agile | Integrated