



Customer: Softedge Systems

Web Site:

www.softedge-systems.com
www.docsalive.com

Customer Size: 30 employees

Country or Region: Ireland

Industry: Manufacturing -
Software publishing

Company Profile:

Softedge Systems, one of the first IP Venture Partners for Microsoft, is the creator of DocsAlive, all-in-one multimedia content creation software built on the 2007 Microsoft Office system.

Software and Services:

- InishTech Software Licensing and Protection Services
- 2007 Microsoft Office system

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Customer Solution Case Study

Developer Safeguards Intellectual Property and Revenue with Innovative New Services

"We do not want someone to just pick up our software and walk away; we want them to pay for it! The single biggest advantage of using SLP Services is being able to help protect our revenue."

Vikas Sahni, Chief Executive Officer, Softedge Systems

In 2006, Softedge Systems developed DocsAlive 2007, a multimedia content-creation tool built on the 2007 Microsoft® Office system. As an independent software publisher, Softedge Systems needed to safeguard its intellectual property from theft and piracy. It implemented the Software Licensing and Protection (SLP) Service and expects to help enhance the software and increase revenue protection as well as gain more flexibility in licensing and product definition.

Business Needs

The original concept behind Dublin, Ireland-based Softedge Systems was to provide a service to multimedia content developers, but after evaluating its strengths the company decided to develop its own unique product instead. "We realized that most multimedia content creation programs on the market are designed for professionals—you need at least a year of training to use them," says Vikas Sahni, Chief Executive Officer, Softedge Systems. "We wanted to develop a multimedia content-creation tool that's easy to use right out of the box."

After refining its concept, the company approached Microsoft and IBM. "We needed to make sure they didn't have anything similar in development," says Sahni. "Right from the beginning, Microsoft offered us a lot of support. We were very pleasantly surprised."

Softedge Systems licensed Microsoft® technology to develop its product, DocsAlive, and became one of the first Intellectual Property (IP) Venture Partners for Microsoft. "We wanted to devise a multimedia content-creation tool that was very, very easy to use," explains Tibbs Pereira, Head of Sales, Softedge Systems.

“With this in mind, we decided to use Microsoft Office and just extend the capabilities of Office into multimedia creation. Basically, anyone who knows how to use Office can use DocsAlive.”

“DocsAlive does for multimedia content creation what Office Word did for desktop publishing,” Sahni adds. “It is the multimedia content creation tool for the ordinary person, just like Office Word is the publishing program for the ordinary person.”

As the DocsAlive product launch drew near, the company began looking for a software licensing and IP protection solution. “We spent six person months trying to develop our own licensing compliance software, but the code that our developers wrote was cracked by our other developers within days,” says Sahni. “We also spent four person months evaluating third-party products. We procured one and spent another four person months trying to implement it, only to find that we weren’t satisfied with the features it offered—we couldn’t control the activations or track customer data, for example.”

DocsAlive needed a software licensing and safeguarding solution that would provide a high degree of management over activations and features, give visibility into customer use, and help protect DocsAlive from IP theft and piracy.

Solution

In November 2007, Softedge Systems received an e-mail announcement about the Software Licensing and Protection (SLP) Services. The company learned that independent software vendors (ISVs) like Softedge Systems could use SLP Services to create, manage, and activate licenses, as well as to help protect against piracy, hacking, and reverse engineering.

“We immediately contacted Microsoft, and the Director of SLP Services connected us with the technology and tutorials,” explains Sahni. “The training materials were excellent, so we only had a couple of queries and those were answered promptly. The support from Microsoft was very good.”

Softedge Systems began testing SLP Services in December 2007 and within one month the solution was fully implemented. “We were able to go from start of evaluation to completion of implementation in a two-person month,” Sahni says. “We spent over 14 person months trying to implement other solutions—time we could have spent bringing DocsAlive to the market sooner—whereas SLP Services are very robust and easy to implement.”

DocsAlive developers are using the SLP Code Protector with Secure Virtual Machine (SVM) technology to define the granularity of code protection and automate which features should be licensed or monitored. The DocsAlive sales and marketing team is particularly enthusiastic about SLP License Designer, which Softedge Systems is using to gain greater control over licensing terms.

For the SLP Activation Service, Softedge Systems opted for the hosted version under the Microsoft software-plus-services offering. “We’re using the online service because the start-up costs are lower than purchasing a server,” says Sahni. “The online service also saves us the headache of maintaining the server ourselves. It is an excellent experience—completely reliable. Plus we simply pay a small setup fee and keep paying every few months as we sell.”

Benefits

Softedge Systems anticipates that using the SLP Service will provide DocsAlive with a competitive advantage through improved licensing management, increased revenue protection, and enhanced software protection.

Improved Licensing Management

Softedge Systems is using SLP License Designer to manage trial versions and activations. “The flexibility of licensing is the most important feature,” says Sahni. “We can control the behavior of each individual license key and easily modify those behaviors without touching the code—we just log on to the server and change the key.”

Sahni adds, “Another benefit of SLP

Services is being able to track customer usage—trial copies, downloads, and activations. We now have visibility into how many copies of DocsAlive are out there, where they are, and how they’re being used.”

Enhanced Software and Revenue Protection

Using SLP Services gives Softedge Systems added peace of mind. “If somebody wants to crack our code, it’s Microsoft software protection they’re trying to break. Knowing that the product is more secure creates a level of confidence that’s good for the sales force, the board of directors, and our promoters,” Sahni says.

“We developed DocsAlive to integrate with Microsoft Office, which has two benefits for customers: anyone who can use Office can use DocsAlive with no learning curve, and DocsAlive is very cost-effective,” Sahni concludes. “These two factors make DocsAlive a very attractive proposition for our customers. They get great value out of DocsAlive and we want to ensure that all our customers are licensed for what they are using. We do not want someone to just pick up our software and walk away; we want them to pay for it! The single biggest advantage of using SLP Services is being able to help protect our revenue.”