

Licenseware

Microsoft License Management Certification



LICENSEWARE

Licenseware Microsoft Certification

Executive Summary



ITAM Review certifies Licenseware for the management of Microsoft licensing. The solution is highly flexible, data source agnostic, and can be deployed rapidly. Acting as a “license expert in a box” it enables users to automatically determine Microsoft license requirements and compliance position even if they have limited Microsoft knowledge. Like all Licenseware’s solutions it is available as a

modular SaaS solution with flexible pricing including a free tier which offers time-limited access to the full features of a module. This flexibility enables customers to make best use of their budgets and means the solution is ready to deliver ROI in days rather than the months a traditional SAM tool might require. The option to purchase the tool to carry out a single analysis – for example for an annual true-up activity – is particularly welcome for customers with limited SAM budgets and capabilities.

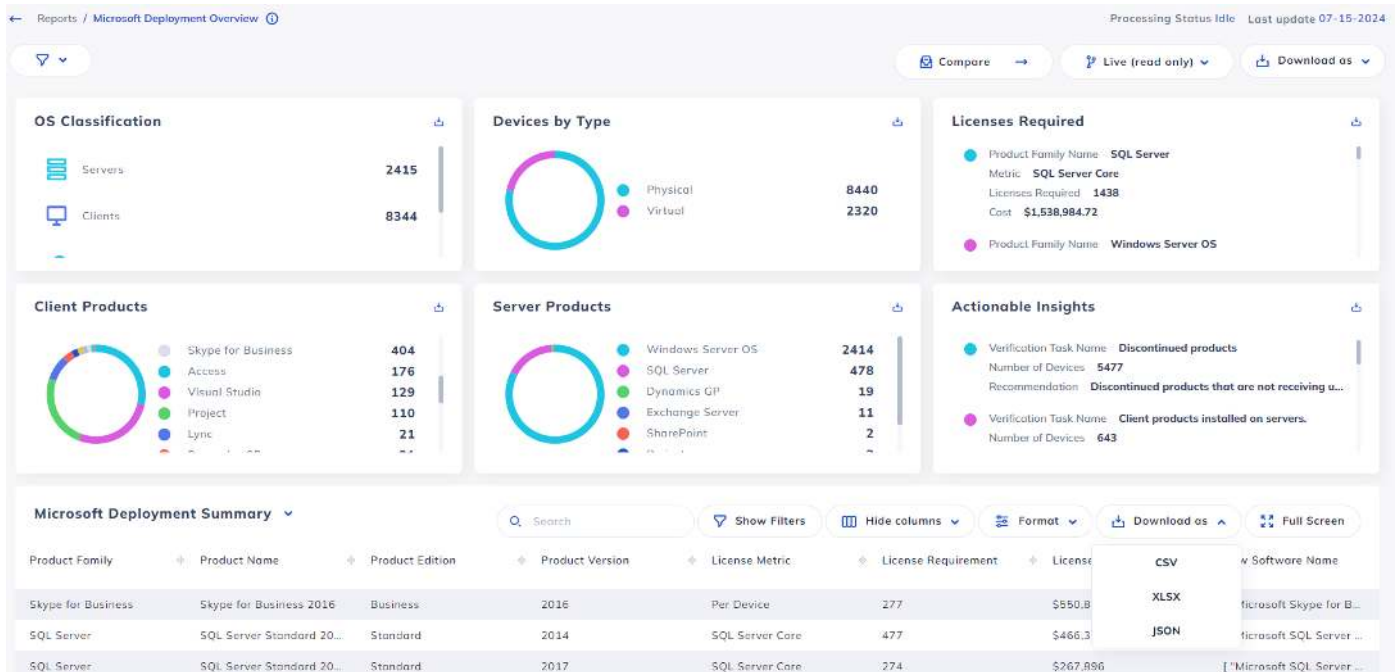
About the Certification

Licenseware was evaluated for its ability to manage Microsoft licenses across 4 dimensions: Entitlement, Consumption, Optimization, and Reporting. Overall, the solution scored 78%. It is particularly strong on Reporting. As a SaaS solution Licenseware deliver improvements based on customer demand and references indicate that they are quick to respond to new use cases and requirements. The modular approach of their SAM ecosystem enables this, as does the agnostic approach to data collection and normalization.

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Analyst Review

This review is based upon the survey answers provided along with a live demo to the author and two customer references supplied by Licenseware.



Licenseware's approach to license optimization is highly modular and datasource agnostic. Much of the approach and ecosystem is the same regardless of publisher. For example, Licenseware provides connectors to external data sources. In the case of Microsoft, the solution consists of two modules – Deployment Manager & Entitlement Manager - plus the necessary connectors to external data sources such as RVTools for VMWare.

Pricing is also flexible. A free fully featured but time-limited trial for a single module is available at no cost. Paid commitments are either per module per annum (for unlimited analysis) or Pay As You Go for a single project. This pricing model, familiar to any SaaS buyer, enables prospective customers to test the water, meet a pressing demand (e.g. an EA true-up), or to commit long-term if they get ROI from the solution.

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Initially, Licenseware's core customers were independent license analysts, managed service providers, and specialist SAM partners. Increasingly they are now selling to end users. Whilst the platform does reveal its specialist beginnings it is increasingly "consumer" ready with excellent dashboarding and reporting.

The approach it takes with normalizing multiple data sources is key to being end-user-friendly as this is the key area of heavy-lifting a SAM team must perform when calculating a license position from diverse data sources. Of note was how the solution "shows its homework" – every optimization calculation contains the evidence and logic used to come to the outcome. This is vital when relying on a tool to help manage what's often a multi-million-dollar contract.

The screenshot displays the 'Uploaders' interface, divided into two main sections: 'Microsoft Deployment Manager' and 'Infrastructure Mapper'. Each section contains a grid of uploaders, each with a description and a list of accepted file formats.

Microsoft Deployment Manager

- BigFix Software Report**: Description: Upload the script outputs after running the Licenseware script for... Accepted files: .csv
- Flexera**: Description: FIM/MSI installation and inventory device custom report. Accepted files: .xls, .xlsx, .xlsm, .xlsb
- Lansweeper**: Description: Custom Microsoft Lansweeper report by Licenseware. Accepted files: .csv
- Lansweeper Cloud - Microsoft Data**: Description: Get data from lansweeper api and upload to the database. Accepted files: .zip
- Licenseware - MDM Template**: Description: Upload software data collected via MDM template. Accepted files: .xls, .xlsx, .xlsm, .xlsb
- MAP Toolkit**: Description: Uploader for outputs from Microsoft Assessment and Planning Toolkit. Accepted files: .bak, .zip
- Microsoft - Manual User Input**: Description: Bulk upload changes dataset, currently supporting only SQL... Accepted files: .csv
- Office365**: Description: Upload the Office365 Admin Portal usage reports for processing. Accepted files: .csv
- Proactivanet**: Description: Custom Proactivanet Microsoft report by Licenseware. Accepted files: .csv
- SCCM Queries**: Description: Upload the script outputs after running the Licenseware script for... Accepted files: .csv
- ServiceNow MDM Report**: Description: Upload the Microsoft Data outputs exported from ServiceNow. Accepted files: .json
- Snow Software by Device Report**: Description: Snow License Manager, Applications per Computer report. Accepted files: .csv

Infrastructure Mapper

- Big Fix Report Hardware**: Description: Upload the script outputs from IBM BigFix. Accepted files: .csv
- Flexera Oracle Infrastructure**: Description: CSV export of the LMS DETAIL report from Flexera after scanning... Accepted files: .csv
- IBM Hardware Management Console**: Description: Excel export from IBM Hardware Management Console... Accepted files: .xls, .xlsx, .xlsm, .xlsb
- Lansweeper Cloud - Infrastructure Mapper**: Description: Get data from lansweeper api and upload to the database. Accepted files: .zip
- Lansweeper On-Premises - Infrastructure Mapper**: Description: Upload Lansweeper on-premise Infrastructure data collected using... Accepted files: .csv
- Licenseware - IFMP Template**: Description: Uploader hardware data collected via the IFMP template. Accepted files: .xls, .xlsx, .xlsm, .xlsb
- Licenseware Collector**: Description: Uploader for custom Licenseware data collection solution. Accepted files: .info
- Microsoft Hardware**: Description: Upload the script outputs after running the Licenseware script for... Accepted files: .csv
- Oracle CPU Queries Script**: Description: Output files from the Oracle CPU Queries script, having a naming... Accepted files: .txt
- RHEL Discovery Infrastructure**: Description: Upload the official outputs of RHEL Discovery Tool into infrastructure. Accepted files: .tar, .gz
- RVTools**: Description: XLSX export from RVTools after scanning your VMware... Accepted files: .xls, .xlsx, .xlsm, .xlsb
- ServiceNow Infrastructure**: Description: CSV export of infrastructure data report from ServiceNow after... Accepted files: .zip, .csv
- ServiceNow Cloud - Infrastructure Mapper**: Description: Get data from servicenow and upload to the database. Accepted files: .zip
- Snow All Devices Details**: Description: Standard report from Snow License Manager showing all physical and... Accepted files: .csv
- Snow Physical and Virtual Servers per Datacenter**: Description: Standard report from Snow License Manager showing all physical and... Accepted files: .csv, .xlsx, .xls, .xlsm, .xlsb
- VMware PowerCLI**: Description: CSV output after running the PowerCLI script on your VMware... Accepted files: .csv, .xlsx, .xls, .xlsm, .xlsb

One example demonstrated was determining the optimum use of SQL Server licenses – be they Enterprise or Standard editions. Given the high ongoing cost of SQL Server Enterprise it's vital to ensure utilisation is maxed out and tool can do this, highlighting workloads on other servers which would be cheaper if moved to an Enterprise cluster.

Customer Reference 1 – SAM Consultancy

This reference is an independent SAM consultancy based in EMEA.

Why did you select this product?

Been in contact with Licenseware on their Microsoft reporting tool as we are looking for a tool to support us in reporting of on-premises Microsoft environments. The tool looked great and seemed to provide the required insights. Did not use competitive vendors as I am unsure if there is any that do the same.

Please rate the ease of installation and commissioning of the product or service

Was able to get started in a few minutes. Requested an initial demo environment to play around in and they quickly set me up with an environment to run some projects in.

What do you use the product or service for?

As we are a small consulting firm, we use this to support our services around Microsoft inventory projects (like an EA renewal, audit, etc).

Please rate the ROI (Return on Investment) you've received from the product or service

ROI is difficult to calculate, as I was testing the tool to see if the results from the tool were satisfactory to some projects we have done in the past. The tool matched our findings and did the job in a fraction of the time, so the ROI is there.

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Please rate the customer service/support you've received from the vendor

Amazing. The guys at Licenseware are truly customer oriented and obsessed, they were quick to jump on a call and to explain any topics if you had any issues. Would highly recommend these guys.

What should the vendor do to improve this product or service?

I gave some examples in my discussions with them, but I think most of these are already incorporated (not disregarding unscanned MAP Toolkit machines - or labelling them differently) for instance. I would also appreciate if the tool would go a step further and provide optimization potential instead of the cold hard facts, but unsure if that's on the roadmap.

Customer Reference 2 – SAM Consultancy

This reference is an independent IT & SAM Consultancy based in North America.

Why did you select this product?

We chose Licenseware's Microsoft Deployment Manager due to 1) its ability to upload, deduplicate, and normalize discovery data from a wide variety of tools and map it to Microsoft products, and 2) its product-specific reports and single-button export of all reports in a single workbook.

We chose Licenseware's Microsoft Entitlements Manager for 1) its ability to consume entitlement data from an MLS and an Excel template and 2) its compliance reporting.

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Please rate the ease of installation and commissioning of the product or service

Licenseware is SaaS, so there is no installation. Instead, it is a simple process of setting up a project and uploading data via drag-and-drop. The tool quickly assesses whether the data is in the correct format for processing. Data is consumed in minutes, and results are ready for analysis.

What do you use the product or service for?

My company uses Licenseware to deliver projects and managed services to our customers. For large projects a data analyst handles all the data uploads. For smaller projects and updates our license specialists also find it easy to use.

Please rate the ROI (Return on Investment) you've received from the product or service

The ROI is very high.

Please rate the customer service/support you've received from the vendor

The customer service/support we have received is incredible. Licenseware is responsive and consistently makes the highest level of support available for both feature requests and issues.

What should the vendor do to improve this product or service?

Never. Stop. Building.

Conclusion

Licenseware's modular approach to solving SAM requirements is innovative and perfectly placed to enable customers to focus on specific areas of their estates, rather than purchasing a more complex and expensive tool. The focus on individual publishers and products means that users won't necessarily be a SAM or ITAM team. For example, an organizations SQL DBA team could use the tool to validate technical and architectural decisions from a cost and risk management perspective.

Customers consistently note that the SaaS-based approach taken by Licenseware means that deploying the solution is rapid and straightforward and that this in turn leads to rapid ROI. They are also impressed with the support and customer service provided. This is in keeping with our experience of how startups respond to customer requests – often building solutions on demand. This is something which is also enabled by Licenseware's modular architecture.

Overall, Licenseware has found traction with SAM Consultancy services, and it will be interesting to see if this can be repeated with direct sales to end user organizations. The tool is not a substitute for a full SAM suite and does require a degree of general and publisher-specific knowledge to get the best out of it. Their ongoing work around AI applied to ITAM shows that they are continuing to innovate for their customers, and this will be of particular benefit to end user companies purchasing their services.

Below are the answers provided by Licenseware in response to the certification questionnaire, split into the categories of Entitlement, Consumption, Optimization, and Reporting.

Appendix – Survey Results

Entitlement – 75%

How does your tool record entitlements?

Via an upload of the Microsoft Licensing Statement or via a templated spreadsheet, these are stored in dedicated reports and are also automatically assigned to deployments requiring entitlements

Does your tool enable the metrics listed in Appendix 1 to be recorded?

Yes – License requirement metrics are automatically allocated to deployments by default, if more than 1 metric is applicable this is based on the most used metric, if entitlement of a different metric is assigned this overwrites the deployment metric (assuming that the entitlement can be assigned compliantly).

Can entitlements be structured by Buying program, agreement, affiliate, etc?

Yes – entitlements can be assigned by any defined data point including custom tagging

Are entitlements with active Software Assurance (SA) differentiated from those without?

Yes, and so are the license allocation rules

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For entitlements with SA are SA-specific benefits (e.g. license mobility) recorded in the license record and available for consumption and optimization purposes?

They are not surfaced as a list anywhere however the rights are consumed

Can entitlements be loaded from a Microsoft License Statement (MLS)?

Yes, via drag and drop

Is an audit trail maintained regarding adds, amends, and deletions of entitlement data?

No not currently

Can licenses be imported from a 3rd-party source – e.g. Reseller account records?

Licenses can be imported via a template so yes

How does your tool handle license renewals and true-ups?

This is a broad question – we identify non-compliance and surplus and specify the most optimal method of trueing up or down, if this refers to diarising renewals from a project management perspective this is not included

Does your tool record pricing (list and/or actual) to enable calculation of associated licensing costs?

We utilize Level A Enterprise 6 (perpetual) USD for price comparison

Are license SKUs recorded?

No however they can be added as custom fields

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Are OEM licenses (i.e. OS licenses provided with hardware) identifiable and segregated from purchased licenses?

No not currently

Does your tool track subscription licenses?

It tracks online subscription licenses e.g. 365, it does not track subscriptions of Windows or SQL Server

Where applicable, are Azure Hybrid Benefits recorded?

They are not "recorded" anywhere however we utilize the rights accordingly to cover infrastructure that can make us of it providing the entitlement allows

Can upgrade/downgrade rights be tracked?

They are not "tracked" however the logic is implemented in the back-end and applied automatically.

Can existing licenses be upgraded via license grants when metrics change? e.g. migration from per CPU to per core.

We would expect the entitlement data to reflect this before ingestion however the processed entitlement can be adjusted freely also to consider any grants.

Consumption - 70%

List the methods your tool uses for gathering consumption data (e.g. agent-based, agentless, API, third-party sources, manual input)

Data agnostic including but not limited to:

Lansweeper

Microsoft SCCM

MAPToolkit

365 Admin Portal

Snow

Flexera

BigFix

ServiceNow

IBM HMC

Templated data

API

Does your tool import data from an organization's computers and users directory (e.g. Active Directory)?

It can import data from any tool.

How frequently can consumption data be collected? (e.g. continuously, daily, weekly, ad hoc)

All of the mentioned.

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For virtualized on-premises environments can a deployment hierarchy be established and maintained (e.g. Datacenter/Cluster/Host/VM), including relevant data such as processor type, core count, and hyperthreading status?

This is done automatically.

Can environments be tagged as Production/Non-Production/DR?

Yes, and the licensing requirements and allocation is adjusted accordingly.

For the purposes of calculating consumption can appropriate metrics be assigned to consuming devices/users? For example, tagging a Cluster as entitled to unlimited deployment due to assignment of Datacenter licenses, or assigning a Device CAL to a device, or marking a SQL deployment as being licensed with Server/CAL licenses.

License and metric allocation are done automatically, as an example clusters with high density virtualisation and vmotion enabled will have Windows Server Datacenter with SA as a priority allocated, and if there is no entitlement, recommended as its licensing requirement.

Are user connections to environments discovered and inventoried? This is required to determine user-based consumption metrics such as User/Device CALs and MSDN/Visual Studio.

No, user connections are not sufficient to determine this, and manual intervention is required, we allow for user declaration instead.

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Are last access dates to products (servers, applications, etc) by devices and users recorded?

This depends on the data source as not all have this, if it is present we can record this.

Does your tool record consumption of Azure Hybrid Benefit rights?

Not currently.

Does your tool record creation and deletion dates for assets (users, devices, installations)?

Not currently.

Optimization – 78%

Does your tool reflect and track Microsoft license assignment rules including the 90-day rule and License Mobility?

The tool reflects assignment rules and does this automatically, we do not cover the 90-day rule.

Are licenses automatically de-allocated when a license assignment rule such as the 90-day rule is met?

No.

Is a renewal calendar or similar view provided for licenses (e.g. CSP, SaaS, EA renewals)?

No.

Are license entitlements allocated automatically based on consumption data in order to minimize cost and/or maximize license compliance?

Yes.

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Can licenses be “pinned” to certain environments? e.g. assigning unlimited deployment rights to a specific cluster, or tagging a non-production environment to use MSDN/Visual Studio licenses

This is done automatically, or assets can be flagged as non-prod etc.

Where downgrade or upgrade rights are being utilized is this reflected in the compliance calculation?

Yes, this is done automatically.

Are license costs captured in order to determine the financial aspects of consumption optimization?

Level A EA USD is used to compare licensing scenarios and curate optimisation. E.g. automated comparison of Windows Standard vs Datacenter

Does the tool provide evidence to support automated optimizations/license allocations. For example, indicating a cluster has unlimited deployment rights due to assignment of Datacenter licenses?

Yes, all data and calculations are surfaced to evidence the choice of license requirements or allocation.

Does your tool support scenario modelling to aid decision making? For example, calculating the compliance impact of proposed hardware upgrades.

Yes, ingesting templated scenarios will allow for this.

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Reporting – 88%

The screenshot displays a reporting tool interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Reports / Report Builder Page'. Below it, a search bar is labeled 'Create custom reports' with a subtext 'Use any report component to make your own custom reports'. The main area shows a report titled 'SQL Server Topology' with a search bar and several action buttons: 'Show Filters', 'Hide columns', 'Format', 'Download as', and 'Full Screen'. The report content is a table with the following data:

Cluster	Physical Server	Virtual Server	Device Type	total number of CPUs at Physical Level	total number of Cores at Physical Level	total number of CPUs at Virtual Level
amer-windows02	fdc00vmh921	2016-temptest	Virtual	2	24	1
amer-windows01	fdc00vmh984	auslin	Virtual	2	24	-
cls-synapse	fdc00vmh958	bionic-server-clou...	Virtual	2	24	2
amer-linux02	fdc00vmh963	clclsciap01	Virtual	2	24	4
amer-linux02	fdc00vmh962	clclsciap01s	Virtual	2	24	4
amer-linux02	fdc00vmh962	clclsciap02	Virtual	2	24	4
cls-ria01	ria01applvmh901	clone of template	Virtual	2	20	2
cls-citrix	fdc00vmh952	ctx_ovstemplate...	Virtual	2	24	2
vce_nonprod	fdc00vmh912	devops-base-0	Virtual	2	24	2
vce_nonprod	fdc00vmh912	devops-base-hard...	Virtual	2	24	2

At the bottom of the table, it says 'Rows per page 10' and '1 to 10 of 12,425 Page 1 of 1,243'. On the right side, there's a sidebar titled 'Available components' with a search bar and four table components listed: 'SharePoint Details', 'Infrastructure Reconciliation', 'Actionable Insights', and 'Identified Data Destro...'. At the bottom of the sidebar, there are buttons for 'Save as template' and 'View'.

Does the tool provide a dashboarding function, including customization by users?

Yes

Does the reporting engine enable role-based access – i.e. limiting access to certain data to certain subsets of users?

Yes, but it can be improved.

Are costs relating to license deployments, compliance shortfalls, etc. made available in applicable reports?

Yes.

Can users create their own custom reports?

Yes.

Can reports be generated and issued on a scheduled basis?

Not currently – reporting is real-time from the product.

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Is it possible for external reporting tools (e.g. PowerBI, Tableau) to access data in your tool?

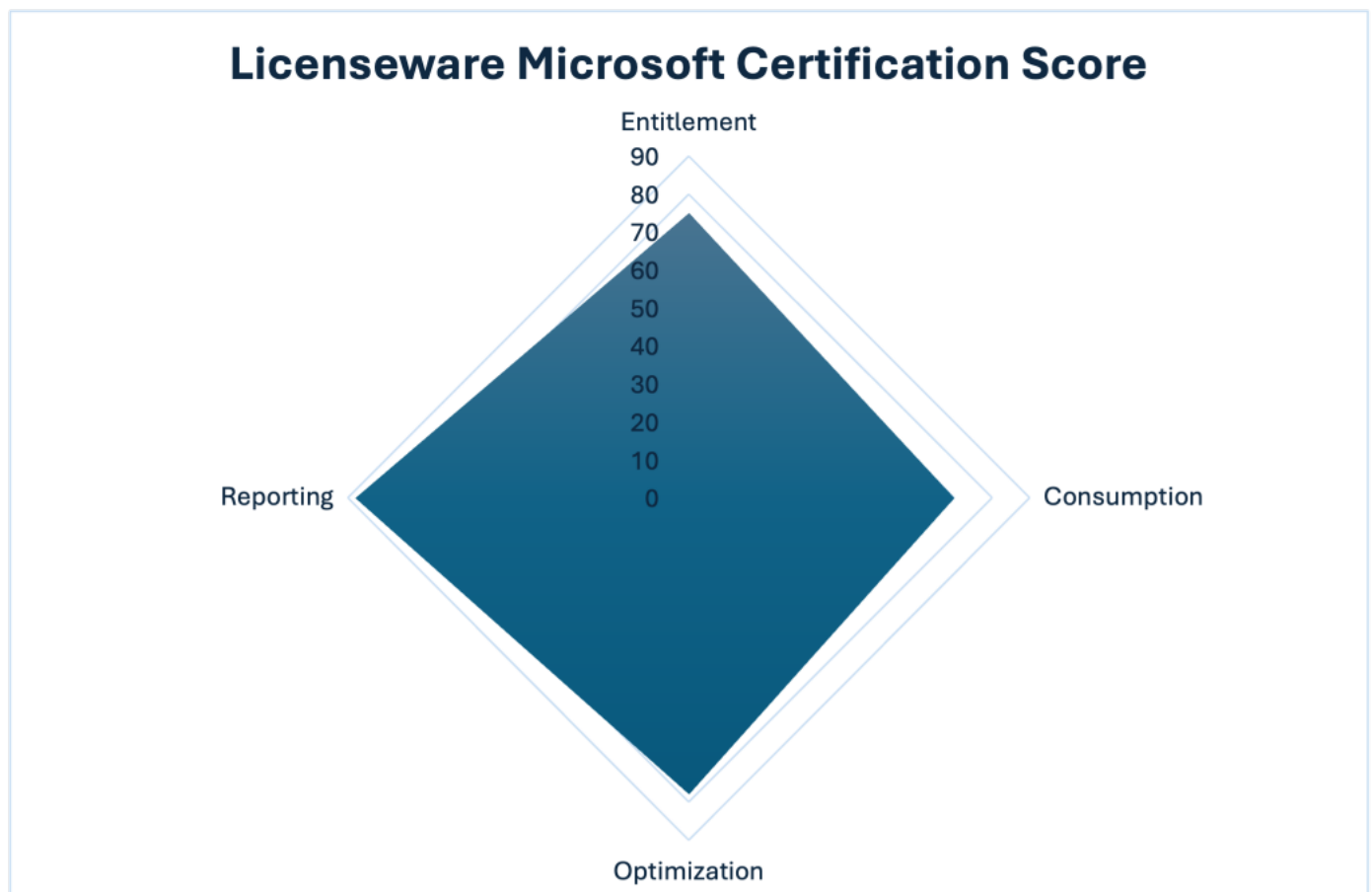
Yes, csv, xlsx, json and API

Can users generate and access trend data? For example, show the progress of compliance or optimization aspects over time.

Yes, snapshotting and data differentials are available

Does the dashboarding facility provide users with actionable insights, e.g. optimization opportunities?

Yes, including optimization, risk and security issues.



About ITAM Review

[ITAM Review](#), founded in 2008, is an independent global community for ITAM, SAM, and Licensing professionals. ITAM Review organizes conferences worldwide alongside webinars, podcasts, whitepapers, news and analysis. Subsidiary [LISA](#) provides online and in-person training, helping to educate and develop the next generation of ITAM professionals.. ITAM Review product certifications are designed to inform ITAM teams about the suitability of ITAM tools & services.