

MARKSMITHPRO

IT Deployment Guide

Two deployment options for school networks. Choose the one that fits your setup — both take under half an hour.

App version	Platform	Audience	Updated
v2.0.3	Windows 10 / 11 (64-bit)	IT Manager / Network Administrator	March 2026

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1 — Overview

MarksmithPro is a single portable .exe — no installer, no registry entries, no admin rights required to run. Data (class files, mark schemes, licence) lives in a folder next to the exe by default, or on a network share for a shared deployment.

There are two ways to deploy it across a school. Both use a central data folder on your server. The difference is where the exe itself lives.

2 — System Requirements

Component	Requirement
Operating system	Windows 10 (64-bit) or Windows 11
Processor	Any modern x64 CPU
RAM	4 GB minimum (8 GB recommended)
Disk space	~250 MB for the application; data folder grows with class files (typically a few MB per class)
Network	SMB file share access to the shared data folder (standard Windows file sharing). No internet access required.
Dependencies	None — all runtime components are bundled inside the executable.
Antivirus	You may need to whitelist the executable on first deployment. See FAQ.

3 — Choosing a Deployment Option

Option A — App on Network Share SIMPLEST

The exe sits on a shared folder on your server. Teachers run it directly from there via a desktop shortcut. All data — class files, mark schemes, licence — lives in the same shared folder.

Best for: Most school setups. Easy to manage. Updates are a single file swap on the server — no rollout to individual machines needed.

Limitation: Teachers can only use the app when they can reach the server. If a teacher takes a laptop home without VPN access, the app won't open — the exe is on the share. The site licence is cached locally for up to 30 days, but that doesn't help if the exe itself is unreachable.

Option B — App on Each Machine, Central Data Folder

BETTER FOR MOBILE USERS

A copy of the exe lives on each machine. A config file tells it where the shared data folder is on the server. Data stays central, but the app runs locally.

Best for: Teachers who regularly take laptops home or mark offline. The app opens and runs without the server — but class data needs to be exported before going offline and imported back when they return.

Important — offline data handling: When the server is unreachable, the app saves work locally. On reconnection, teachers are prompted to import their local work back into the shared folder. This is a manual step — teachers need to understand it. See Section 5 for details.

Not sure which to choose?

Option A is the right default for most schools. Use Option B only if you have teachers who regularly mark offline on laptops they take home and who don't have, or won't use, a VPN.

4 — Option A: App on Network Share

Folder structure

```
\\server\marksmithpro\  
  MarksmithPro.exe           ← the application  
  data\  
    license.dat              ← published here after licence activation  
    classes\  
    projects\  
    backups\  
    activations.json         ← seat tracking (auto-created)  
    _config\  
      marksmith.config.json
```

Permissions

Folder	Teachers need
\\server\marksmithpro\ (exe location)	Read only
\\server\marksmithpro\data\ _config\	Read / Write
\\server\marksmithpro\data_config\ marksmith.config.json	Read only (after initial setup)

Setup steps

- 1 Create the shared folder on the server.** For example: `\\server\marksmithpro\`. Set permissions as above.
- 2 Copy the exe into the shared folder.** Place `MarksmithPro.exe` in the root of the share.
- 3 Enter the site licence key.** Open `\\server\marksmithpro\MarksmithPro.exe` from your own machine. Go to **File** → **Licence** and paste the licence key. This switches the app into site licence mode and unlocks the Admin Panel.

- 4 **Configure the data folder path.** Go to **Help** → **About** → **Admin Panel** (you will be prompted to set a password on first access). Set the **Data folder path** to `\\server\marksmithpro` . Save. This creates the config file and data subfolders automatically.
- 5 **Publish the licence to the network folder.** Go to **Help** → **About** → **Admin Panel** → **Licence tab** and click *Publish to network folder*. All other machines will pick up the licence automatically on first launch — no activation steps for teachers.
- 6 **Create a desktop shortcut on each teacher's machine.** Point the shortcut target to `\\server\marksmithpro\MarksmithPro.exe` . This can be pushed via Group Policy (Computer Configuration → Preferences → Windows Settings → Shortcuts) or however you normally deploy shortcuts.
- 7 **Done.** Teachers double-click the shortcut. On first launch they enter their name once — it appears on all their PDFs from then on.

Option A does not work offline or from home

Because the exe itself is on the network share, the app cannot open if the server is unreachable — network outage, maintenance window, or a teacher working from home without VPN. If any of your teachers regularly mark from home, use Option B instead, or ensure they have reliable VPN access.

Updating in Option A

Download the new exe from marksmithpro.co.uk and overwrite the exe in the shared folder. Every teacher picks up the update automatically on their next launch — no rollout, no reboot, no notice required.

5 — Option B: App on Each Machine, Central Data Folder

Folder structure

Each machine (local):

C:\Program Files\MarksmithPro\ (or any local path)

MarksmithPro.exe

data\

_config\

marksmith.config.json ← points to \\server\marksmithpro

license.dat ← cached locally

Server (shared):

\\server\marksmithpro\

data\

license.dat

classes\

projects\

backups\

activations.json

Permissions

Folder	Teachers need
Local exe folder (e.g. C:\Program Files\MarksmithPro\)	Read (to run the app)
Local data_config\ folder	Read / Write (for licence cache and local offline saves)
\\server\marksmithpro\data\	Read / Write

Setup steps

- 1 **Create the shared data folder on the server.** For example: \\server\marksmithpro\ . Set permissions as above.

- 2 **Set up one machine fully — this becomes your template.** Copy `MarksmithPro.exe` to a local folder, for example `C:\Program Files\MarksmithPro\`. No installer required.
- 3 **Enter the site licence key.** Launch the app on that machine. Go to **File** → **Licence** and paste the licence key. This switches the app into site licence mode and unlocks the Admin Panel.
- 4 **Set the data folder path.** Go to **Help** → **About** → **Admin Panel** (you will be prompted to set a password on first access). Set the **Data folder path** to `\\server\marksmithpro`. Save. This writes `data_config\marksmith.config.json` next to the exe — the file that tells the app where to find the central data folder instead of creating a local one.
- 5 **Publish the licence to the network folder.** Go to **Help** → **About** → **Admin Panel** → **Licence tab** and click *Publish to network folder*. This copies the licence to the shared folder so all other machines can pick it up automatically.
- 6 **Copy the configured folder to every other machine.** The template machine now has a `data_config\` subfolder containing `marksmith.config.json` and `license.dat`. Copy the whole folder structure — `MarksmithPro.exe` plus the `data_config\` subfolder — to `C:\Program Files\MarksmithPro\` on each machine. On first launch, each machine reads the config file, connects to the server, and syncs the licence automatically.
- 7 **Create shortcuts.** Add a desktop shortcut to the local exe on each machine, or deploy via GPO.

Offline working — what teachers need to know

Important — offline data handling in Option B

When a teacher's machine cannot reach the server (at home without VPN, network issue, etc.), the app switches to offline mode and saves class data locally. When they reconnect and relaunch, they are prompted to

export their local work

and then

import it back

into the shared folder. This is a manual step — teachers need to know it exists.

The site licence is cached locally and remains valid for up to 30 days without a server connection, so the app will open and run regardless. The offline data sync is the only step that requires attention.

Suggested teacher guidance (Option B only): "If you're marking at home, export your class file before you leave school using File → Export Class. Work from that file. When you're back, import it using File → Import Class."

Updating in Option B

Download the new version from marksmithpro.co.uk and replace the exe on each machine using your existing method (GPO software deployment, login script, SCCM, or manual copy). The config file and data folder are unaffected — no reconfiguration needed after updating.

6 — Licence and Seat Management

How it works

The site licence is a text key delivered by email when you purchase. Enter it once on any configured machine and publish it to the network folder. From that point, all machines read the licence from the server — no per-machine activation, no steps for teachers.

Each teacher registers automatically on first launch by entering their name. This claims one seat. Their name then appears automatically on every PDF they produce.

Seat management

Action	Where
View seat usage	Help → About → Admin Panel → user list
Remove a teacher (staff leaving)	Help → About → Admin Panel → remove button next to their name
Edit a teacher's display name	Help → About → Admin Panel → edit button
Reset all seats (new school year)	Help → About → Admin Panel → Licence tab → <i>Reset seats</i>
Renew the licence	Help → About → Admin Panel → Licence tab → <i>Publish to network folder</i>

Annual renewal

Enter the new licence key at File → Licence and click *Publish to network folder*. Teachers notice nothing — the app picks up the renewed licence on next launch.

7 — Updating the Application

Option	How to update
Option A (app on server)	Download new exe from marksmithpro.co.uk. Overwrite the exe in the shared folder. Every teacher picks it up on next launch.
Option B (app on each machine)	Download new exe and deploy to each machine using your existing method (GPO, SCCM, login script, or manual copy). Config file and data are unaffected.

Rollback

Keep a copy of the previous exe before updating. To roll back, replace the new exe with the previous version.

8 — IT FAQ

Does it need installing on every machine?

No. It's a single portable executable — no installer, no registry entries, no admin rights required to run. In Option A it lives on the server and teachers run it via a shortcut. In Option B you copy the file to each machine, but there is nothing to install.

Will our antivirus flag it?

Possibly on first encounter. Electron apps bundle a Chromium/Node.js runtime into a single exe, which can trigger heuristic scanning. Add an exclusion for `MarksmithPro.exe` in your endpoint protection policy if needed. The app makes no outbound internet connections.

What folder permissions does the shared data folder need?

Teachers need **Read/Write** on `\\server\marksmithpro\data\`. In Option A they also need **Read** on the folder containing the exe. The `data_config\` subfolder only needs to be writable during initial setup — it can be locked to Read-only afterwards if preferred.

What if the server is down?

In Option A, the app won't open — the exe is on the share. In Option B, the app opens and runs normally using local storage, and prompts the teacher to sync when they reconnect. The site licence is cached locally in both cases and remains valid for up to 30 days without a server connection.

Can teachers work from home?

In Option A: only if they have VPN access to the school network. In Option B: yes — the app runs offline. They export their class file before leaving school, work from it at home, and import it back when they return. See Section 5 for the import/export workflow.

How do we push the config file (Option B) to all machines?

Deploy `marksmith.config.json` to `data_config\` relative to the exe using GPO File Preference, a login script, or SCCM. The file rarely needs to change after initial deployment.

Which path format should I use in the config file?

Use UNC paths (\\server\share) rather than mapped drive letters. Mapped drives may not be available when the app launches, particularly at login. UNC paths are more reliable on a domain network. Environment variables (e.g. %HOMESHARE%) are also supported.

A teacher has left. How do we free their seat?

Go to **Help** → **About** → **Admin Panel**, find their entry, and click Remove. The seat is freed immediately and available for a new member of staff. No contact with us needed — it is self-managed from within the app.

Is any data sent over the internet?

No. The app makes no outbound internet connections. Licence validation is entirely local — there is no licence server. All class and student data stays on your own storage.

Does it comply with GDPR / data protection requirements?

All student data lives on your own server. Nothing is transmitted externally. The school is the data controller — MarksmithPro reads and writes files on your storage only.

What is the audit log?

Monthly log files in `data_config\` recording launches, seat claims, and admin actions. Local only, not transmitted anywhere.
