

Happy Holidays

microTECH Times

Covered I.T. 24/7—Never Worry Again!



4 Signs That It's Time For New Hardware This Year

Hardware is important to keep up to date and replace when it's out of date. Technology changes all the time and you don't want your business functions to fall behind because you can't keep up with your competitors. Some may think that repairing things is better than replacing them, however, replacing your hardware may save you valuable time and money in the future as well as provide new features that could improve efficiency.

Repair or replace... the age old question.

Here is our general rule of thumb; if you are having performance issues, update concerns, excessive repair costs, or compatibility struggles it's time to look at new hardware. Simply pouring more money into repairing the old equipment may be dragging your company down not only financially, but with regard to efficiency too. Let's review each of these factors:

1. Performance issues abound. The faster your hardware works the more your workers can accomplish. The growing age of your hardware may be directly impacting the performance of your team. Slow computers, network equipment, and even Internet connectivity can drag down your company every day. Sometimes you can give aging equipment a break by uninstalling unused software, removing malware, or deleting old files, but even regular maintenance can't make your equipment more robust or more compatible.

2. Trouble updating your equipment?

If you have any trouble updating your software or operating system, you should seriously consider new hardware. Using old hardware that cannot be updated any more creates security vulnerabilities for your company. Updates and patches are critical to ensure your software has the latest repairs for concerning weaknesses that have been discovered and fixes for known bugs. In addition, updates may open up new features and remove outdated ones.

3. Excessive repairs costing you too much?

Think about all the money you've invested in repairs and the time you've lost waiting for repairs to be completed or parts to be ordered. Add up your human resource costs, the business you may have lost, as

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Jolly Stuff

"Christmas is a baby shower that went totally overboard."
~ Andy Borowitz

"I stopped believing in Santa Clause when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph."
~ Shirley Temple

"Who's the bane of Santa's life? The elf and safety officer."
~ Catherine Tate

"Even before Christmas has said Hello, it's saying 'Buy, Buy'."
~ Robert Paul

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Unusual Holiday Festivities

The holiday season is upon us. Retail stores across the nation carry smells, tastes and products for the festivities. However, sometimes people catch me off guard with their unusual celebrations. Take a look.

Elfapalooza in Alabama.

The great state of Alabama is on a mission to go down in the Guinness book of World Records for the most Santa elves in the same place. In 2014 Bangkok took the title with 1,762 elves counted. Alabama currently draws over 1,000 elves each December in the city's historic Bienville Square park. Maybe this year they will raise the bar.

The Farolitos of New Mexico

are quite a site. Often referred to as Luminarias as well, in New Mexico the holiday tradition is to light tea candles and place them in paper bags on the street or roof tops for Christmas Eve. What a site on Canyon Road in Santa Fe, the plaza in Taos, and even in Old Town in Albu-

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4 Signs That It's Time For New Hardware...

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well as the hard costs for parts and repairs to get a full picture of what you're truly spending on repairs for your equipment. If this number outweighs the cost to replace, it's definitely time to invest in new hardware.

4. Compatibility struggles preventing you from trying new things?

Have you ever had to pass on a new software program because of compatibility struggles? As business software becomes more advanced, you will need to replace your hardware to support new software requirements. In general, we recommend replacing laptops and computers every 3 to 5 years. This type of refresh will ensure you have the processing power you need to run new software that helps you push your company forward and stay competitive in your market.

Three things you should never try to repair. The following three things, are just a sink whole of money. Don't ever try to repair them. Replacing them

is the only way to be sure they will stay working efficiently.

Power supplies aren't something that you should ever repair. If your power supply is showing signs of failing you should replace it as soon as you can. Make sure that you pick the reputable brands and do not go for a cheap brand because it's cheaper, it will fail again and fast. In this case, the extra money would be worth it for a long-term functioning power supply.

Hard drives are something else that just cannot be repaired.

It's better to replace them when they start to fail. Make sure you keep regular backups of your current hardware just in case of a hardware malfunction and once you see that there are issues with your hard drive, please replace it right away.

Motherboards are also important to replace when they malfunction.

Motherboards are just how they sound. They are the home to all of your other hardware and very important to be in good working order. They are tough to repair, so it is truly worth it to just replace a failing motherboard as soon as you see an issue.

Keep all of your hardware in good working order

to ensure that your business is up-to-date and running efficiently. If your technology and systems are behind that just makes it easier for hackers to get into your network and take what they want. Technology changes all the time, so it's important to set time aside each quarter to evaluate your hardware, network and company needs.

Need help? Give us a call today.

We will conduct a Network Security Audit to help you identify aging equipment, security vulnerabilities, and backup concerns. We will provide you with an in-depth assessment that will reveal all the elements of your IT infrastructure as well as highlight our recommendations for the future.

Network Security Audit.

Micro Enterprises LLC

877-540-6789

Tech Courtesy For The Holidays

Yeah, we are going to throw this one out there. With the holiday's shimmering all around us, family gathering, and work parties it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Many of us find ourselves looking for an out. Sure, you cell phone can provide that anytime. Especially if you have a friend or coworker call you at just the right time. However, we found a few tech tips to guide you with common tech courtesy.

The most annoying interruptions with phones, were found to be at the movies in a dark theater, church, and in restaurants. The Trends in Consumer Mobility Report from Bank of America found these three places ranked the highest for those in which the general public is annoyed by interruptive light pollution and noisy electronics.

Keep your attention on the person in front of you, well unless you're trying to escape. The survey also found that 1/3 of people generally check their phones in the middle of a conversation and about four in 10 people actually text during a meal. Show some respect for those around you and make time to truly spend time visiting with others. Put the phone down!



"I've been good this year, so I don't think I'll be getting any 'It's the thought that counts' gifts."



Unusual Holiday Festivities...

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querque. Traditionally they are said to light the way for the spirit of Christmas.

The Rappelling Santa in North Carolina

is just a hoot. Whoever thought this up was just genius. Apparently, on the 2nd Saturday in December each year, you can actually watch a rock-climbing Santa rappelling from the 315 ft granite monolith on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains. What a sight!

Crested Butte Santa Ski Crawl in Colorado.

Don't worry, skiers and snowboarders alike gather for this fun event. Crested Butte in Colorado throws some color on the slopes each year with this fun ski crawl event. They hold an informal world record for the most skiing Santa's counted at 750 headed down the mountain together.

Tumbleweed Christmas Tree in Arizona.

20 gallons of flame retardant, 65 pounds of glitter, and 1,200 tumbleweeds later, Arizona constructs the largest tumbleweed Christmas tree. This unusual tradition began in 1957 so the city of Phoenix gathers tumbleweeds from the outskirts and pieces them altogether each year to light up the suburbs.

Shut The Front Door! There Are Really Simple Backup Solutions That Can Keep My Data Safe?

Most businesses use data in every aspect of their daily functions. If something happens to their systems, this could mean that a business would have to stop operations altogether. There could also be a variety of issues if there were a natural disaster, system malfunction, hardware failure, or infection from a hacker. Backing up your data is the best way to make sure you can recover should an issue arise, but it seems so complicated. Ugh!

What is out there for backups today? There are many different solutions that you can implement to prevent data loss. When it comes to data backups, it really just depends on your business needs as to which backup system you should implement. There are USB, external hard drive, and cloud storage options to help you preserve your sensitive data..

USB for quick backups in your pocket. For very simple companies like the local barber shop or video store, a USB flash drive is the most compact choice. It's a miniature hard drive that you connect to your computer using a USB port. It's portable and cheap. It can be used to back up data from several computers. However, they are really best used for quick backups if your

company is very small and has limited data or just until you find a better solution.

External hard drives are another choice that are compact and easy to use. You can connect an external hard drive just like you would a USB flash drive, but it can store and hold more information from multiple computers. The transfer rate is faster than a USB flash drive and you can back up a large amount of data within seconds. The biggest downfalls of these two options are that you must remember to back up your systems regularly with this system and make sure to store your device in a secure place so your files aren't compromised or lost.

Cloud storage is truly the most convenient and secure resource for backups. Most businesses can set up a cloud back-up storage system to automatically do backups in just a few short hours. You can also access the cloud from anywhere at any time. Cloud storage has many storage options as to how much space you can get so you pay for only the amount you need. Should disaster strike, you could be ready to work after restoring your data just a few short hours.

Yule Love These New Firewall Features

Next generation firewalls can actually help secure your network more than ever. Take a look at these new features.

What's a firewall? For those of you who haven't invested in a firewall yet, these devices are unified threat management (UTM) systems that monitor all the data going in and out of your network. A firewall blocks and allows data to pass through according to set rules that have been created to sort the traffic.

What kind of new features?

There have been several types of firewalls developed over the years and the newest ones now come filled with new security features. Geolocation, intrusion detection or prevention, sandboxing, and URL checking are just a few of the

fresh features to improve your network security.

What do these features do exactly?

Geolocation allows you to restrict your network from accessing specific geographic locations. Many businesses use it to lock down their network from accessing sites from countries they do not do business with. This narrows the playing field for attacks. URL checking and intrusion prevention are similar in nature. They check websites or data pushing through your network to ensure they are not reported as malicious or include harmful data. Sandboxing is basically a colander to sift through the traffic and capture all questionable information, unpack and filter it, then release only what's safe for your company.

Fixins At Your Fingertips

All the fixings are on the counter, you're ready to kick off your holiday cooking marathon, right? Maybe? Um...

Reality check...

nope! It's never that easy. My thought is, you're probably working late all week, you double booked yourself for three holiday parties, and you need to make a few trays of food to be sure everyone knows how much you care.

Don't forget your gifts too! We found a handy little app you may love. Shipt can give you same day grocery delivery or goods right to your doorstep.

Tight on time?

Give the grunt work of shopping to a professional. Grocers and box stores alike are included with Shipt and you can rest at ease that all you need will be right at your fingertips so you will be ready for the holidays.



“We make all of your computer problems go away without adding additional full-time I.T. staff!”

Ask about our fixed price service agreements — Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for, just like payroll!

Inquiring Minds...

3 Questions To Ask Yourself When Browsing or Shopping Online. The holidays are a busy time for online retailers. However, if you're not familiar with browsing on the Internet then you should keep reading. Be sure to ask yourself these three questions when you're shopping this holiday season. All it takes is one wrong click to end up on the wrong page at the wrong time and find yourself in a world of spyware or malware.

1. Is this website legit? Look at the URL or website address at the top. Stay away from websites without HTTPS enabled. If you are visiting a new retailer you haven't shopped with in the past, Google their business and call them. Make sure they are 100% real before you enter any type of payment information on their website.

2. Ask yourself, why is it FREE? If you're looking for a new piece of software or buying a gift, don't fall victim to the free downloads and prizes online. Be sure to only download software from sites you know and never enter payment in website that are unsecure. Remember, FREE doesn't equal safe!

3. Are my browser settings enabled? Take a look at your browser privacy and security settings. Make sure they are fully enabled and that your browser extensions are set to prevent pop-up's that may contain harmful viruses.

Follow these quick tips to help you browse the Internet a little safer this holiday season. It is all too easy for websites and software downloads to appear reputable without actually being so. It's always a good idea to be critical of sites and services you don't know. If you find something that you're unsure about and still want to try it, research it first to see what others are saying about the site or product. If there is an issue, undoubtedly you will find some chatter about the problem and know to steer clear instead of taking on a nasty little infectious gift in your computer.

Happy Holidays

This season we're taking time to reflect on all the good things we have, like our partnership with you. We appreciate working with you and consider it the greatest gift of the season.

We just wanted to let you know... We hope that the holidays and the coming year bring you and yours nothing but happiness and success.

With our warmest regard,
Thank you for your business.

*Enjoy the Holiday Season
and we hope you have a
Happy and Safe New Year!*



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