

Happy Valentine's Day!

February 2016

Tech Times



Solutions Unlimited, LLC

WITH THE RIGHT BLEND OF PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY
We make your IT systems run. Better.



Buying Hardware Shouldn't Be Like A Box Of Chocolates; Know What You're Getting

Forrest Gump once said, "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." Unfortunately, buying hardware for your business can often feel like this too. It's difficult to determine when to replace your equipment and select the appropriate items for your operations.

When do you need to buy new equipment? Investing in the foundation of your business is essential to keep your business running smoothly. We recommend replacing hardware that is over five years old so you don't have to deal with outages and exorbitant repair costs for your aging equipment. However, for some small to mid-sized companies, this is just not feasible. Imagine throwing your server, firewall, workstations and printers out the door and bringing in all new equipment. How much would it cost? It would probably blow your IT budget for the next 3-5 years, right?

Consider a replacement plan. One project at a time starting with your oldest pieces of equipment first. Maybe you need a new firewall, then a new

server, and finally a few new computers. Take the time you need and spread out the costs over a few years. Plan your hardware investments according to the most urgent needs so you can keep your IT infrastructure healthy and running smoothly while you beef up the environment.

Here are a few tips to get you started.

Where should you buy equipment?

Sure, you've bought things online and they are great products, but there is a lot of hardware online to choose from. When you buy off-the-shelf technology, you could be buying inferior hardware. The components that go into off-the-shelf equipment are generally slower and of a lesser value so that large box stores can extend low cost solutions for home users. The equipment may not be suitable for business use and the efficiencies may be compromised if the equipment is overstressed. Businesses generally require more robust solu-

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Where Did Valentine's Day Come From?

Valentine's day, otherwise known as the Feast of Saint Valentine, Saint Valentine's Day or to some, fatty chocolate day has become a worldwide celebration of love.

Valentine's Day truths.

Did you know that there were originally no romantic connotations associated with Valentine's Day? The Feast of Saint Valentine was actually a celebration about sacrifice and dedication.

Geoffrey's unintentional contribution.

Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a short poem in honor of the first anniversary of the engagement of the king of England in the early 14th-century. "For this was on St. Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate." Many readers assumed that Chaucer was writing about Valentine's day as a celebration of love despite the fact that February was an unlikely time for birds to mate in England. Geoffrey's poem inspired a handful of other writers to create poems about

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Lovely

"Life's too short to remove a USB safely."
~Unknown

"AT&T to wed T-Mobile. Following the ceremony there will be no reception."
~Richard Lerner

"The last time there was this much excitement about a tablet, it had some commandments written on it."

~The Wall St. Journal,
Unveiling the iPad

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HAAS

Technology is expensive! Yea, I'm sure I could write that about 100,000 times and you would agree.

Technology spending in 2016 for businesses large and small is on an upswing. Most small to mid-size companies spend tens of thousands of dollars annually on hardware, security, support and more. There is always something cropping up that requires a bundle of cash. So, what can you do to cushion the blow?

Consider a HAAS device. You don't have to outlay thousands of dollars to have the latest and greatest technology. HAAS firewall solutions generally offer built in upgrades, service, patching and monitoring. It is a set it and forget it type of capital investment with a small monthly fee. Interested? Give us a call today.



Buying Hardware Shouldn't Be Like A Box...

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tions with high-end components that can withstand the wear and tear of heavy daily use.

Business solutions for businesses.

When you think of IT solutions, you probably play a game of tag. Most companies only replace items that appear to be failing, tag you're it! What if we could tell you what would be coming up next for replacement and offer you a full support solution to help? For example, have you thought about a remote access controller for your server? A remote access control card is a business solution that allows you to have physical access to your server even when you are a million miles away. This tiny piece of equipment allows you to view the equipment errors in an instant, power on, power off, or reboot the hardware at will. It is truly a lifeline if your server goes down. Often times, we are able to serve our clients even in the middle of the night without hands on the equipment. When there is an outage we can start work immediately and have their servers back up and running before they even wake up in the morning. This type of solution is a perfect example of a business class piece of equipment you just won't find at Wal-Mart.

We have tested specific vendors and hardware solutions for companies just like yours.

Most business environments require high-end hardware to operate efficiently. We won't lie, these components do have a higher price tag, but ultimately offer a more reliable and robust environment for your work. Most importantly, they come with a support system to help you get back up and running when there is a failure. Backing from large vendors like Dell or SonicWALL can mean the difference between a three hour repair and a three week ordeal.

Warranties and support agreements.

IT companies often partner with large vendors like Dell that bundle ongoing support and warranties for their business grade equipment. If you have some ob-

scure piece of equipment that breaks down on your server, it will take a lot of time to replace that one broken piece. Having additional vendor support ensures you access to qualified support technicians and certified replacement parts you need when you need them.

Why should you invest in new hardware?

Ultimately, human capital is the most expensive commodity for your organization. Imagine if each of your employees have to wait a few minutes to access the files they need to work. Now multiply that by the number of days they access that data each year, and multiply that by their salary. How much money are you losing due to your unproductive equipment? Can you afford to wait?

What do you need? Many businesses struggle to know what is needed and if they are getting the best bang for their buck. Generally, companies look for hardware that is easy to use, offers security features and enhances their employee and customer experiences. Keep in mind, IT equipment is a very large investment for your business. While there is a plethora of hardware that could help your organization, a set infrastructure can give you the versatility you need to build the perfect atmosphere for safe, scalable, and efficient operations.

Who can help? Equipment replacement costs can seem overwhelming, but not replacing what you need most can cost even more. Are you on a path for growth? Is your infrastructure ready? Can you current hardware solutions support a double in data, daily operations, business in general? If you really don't know, give us a call. We will run a full assessment of your current IT infrastructure to see what you need and offer you solutions that will keep your operations running smoothly.

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Fall In Love With Your Furniture

IKEA has set new trends in the furniture industry around the world. Their new Qi-friendly wireless charging furniture is sure to be a huge hit.

What is Qi-friendly wireless charging?

Qi wireless charging allows you to wirelessly charge the battery on compatible devices using induction transfer. It's quick and easy. Simply place the device on top of the charging station and it juices up.

You're sure to love IKEA's new pieces. Say goodbye to all those messy cables hanging around your home. IKEA offers single and triple wireless charging stations. Just plug them in, place your phone on the "plus" symbol and you're all set. IKEA even offers nightstands and lamps with built-in wireless charging capabilities.

Compatibility. These new charging stations are compatible with most of the newer HTC, LG, and Samsung phones. However, some phones like iPhones or older models may require a special phone case receiver to use these charging stations. Check the abilities of your phone with your wireless carrier before you jump in.



The True Meaning...

(Continued from page 1) birds mating on St. Valentine's Day around the same time period. A trend was born.

Fast forward a few hundred years...

and the history reveals the earliest valentine written by a duke for his wife. By the 1600's, Shakespeare took off with mentions of love and Valentine's Day

Modern times traditions. By the early 19th-century, paper valentines became popular and were being manufactured in bulk with lace and ribbon. By the 20th-century the practice of exchanging cards was extended to gifts too like flowers and candies. In the 80's the diamond industry pushed jewelry into the equation too.

It's the thought that counts? Don't feel pressured by the hype. There are about 190 million Valentine's sent every year. Valentine's Day has evolved from a religious celebration of life into a commercialized celebration of love. Your honey will undoubtedly love whatever you choose. Just don't forget, it's the thought that counts.



Let's Get Physical About Your IT Security

What comes to mind when you read the words, "IT Security"? Most people's minds go right to passwords, biometrics, two factor authentication, firewalls and antivirus protection. What if I said, "Physical IT Security," anything?

The most overlooked issue for businesses when evaluating IT solutions is physical security.

If someone can walk up to any of your equipment, you're vulnerable. Where is your server located? Who can touch it? Is it locked up? If it's in a closet, is it properly ventilated and surge protected?

Keeping your server physically safe.

Prying eyes and physical harm may seem like elementary concerns, but they are often the most common breach point for businesses. One of the first things we do when we enter a prospective client's office is begin our FREE Network Evaluation. We seek out the server room and more often than not, we find that it isn't locked, properly ventilated, and the server or firewall are not even password protect-

ed. In cases like this, we can usually plug in a cable between the server and our laptop and access all the company data.

Check for vulnerabilities in your office.

Look around your office right now. Do you see any computers left logged in without an employee right in front of it? Do your public visitors have access to your tower computers, server or firewall? Do you have a Wi-Fi access point that may leave your network open?

Our recommendations for proper hygiene for your equipment. We all like to appear properly groomed. So, why not keep your IT equipment up to par too? It needs physical maintenance just like we do. For example, things like UPS testing, cleaning the dust off of the equipment in your server room, making sure the room is 100% sealed from annoying rodents, and checking the air flow can help prevent overheating and downtime from physical harm.

Bluetooth Technology: Cut The Cords

Bluetooth is one of the most efficient ways of connecting electronic devices. Bluetooth connections are often automatic and offer some amazing features.

What is Bluetooth? Bluetooth technology eliminates the need for those annoying cables, cords, or adapters. It also offers a very effective method for transferring data between electronic devices. Bluetooth technology is cheap, uncomplicated, robust, and consumes very little power. However, the distance to transfer data is small compared to other wireless communication methods.

Types of Bluetooth devices.

There is a good variety of devices available on the market today that use Bluetooth technology. From headsets and radios to dongles and PC cards. You can also use a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard with your laptop or other inter-

net-enabled equipment. Some Bluetooth headphones make it comfortable for you to use music players like iPods or MP3's while you are on the go.

Applications. The most useful application of Bluetooth technology for businesses is the invention of wireless headsets. These handy devices allow you to use a softphone on your computer and eliminating the need for bulky desk phones. This could significantly reduce the costs for your business phone system. In short, it can be said that the usefulness of Bluetooth technology knows no bounds.



"I've always said you can tell a lot about a man by the way he dresses."



“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...

Amazing Biometric Alternatives To Using Passwords

The smartphone has become an essential part and parcel of modern life. We can't even think of a single day without using our devices. Hence, the necessity of ensuring mobile security has also increased. However, the traditional systems of safeguarding your mobile phone using passwords and PIN numbers is gradually being replaced by state-of-the-art biometric technology that is more secure.

Types of biometrics. By biometrics, we mean recognizing a particular person through different methods like fingerprints, voice or facial recognition, retinal scans, etc. As these technologies are quite new and very unique, they tend to be particularly safe from thieves.

The uses of biometrics today. Today, the popularity of using mobile devices for payment purposes is increasing by the minute, and biometric technology can be hugely beneficial for ensuring the peace of mind while making mobile payments. In some cases, it's even better than using debit or credit cards, so people from all over the world are gradually replacing their debit or credit cards with biometric systems. Popular places like McDonald's, Whole Foods, and Walgreens have already started to accept mobile payments using biometric sensors. More and more retail outlets have started to adopt this technology as well. Using fingerprints-

based payment systems like Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, or Android Pay you can easily use your mobile device for payments in thousands of locations without keeping track of your debit card.

There are always new challenges. Still there are many shops who do not have the technology to allow transactions through mobile devices. Furthermore, this is a relatively new technology, many consumers are not confident about its security yet. According to a recent survey by InfoScout, 85% of iPhone 6 users haven't yet started to use Apple Pay. However, the confidence level among the customers about biometrics-based payment systems will definitely increase over the coming year as more and more merchants accept this new way of business.

Happy Valentine's Day! From our team to yours, we wish you a very happy Valentine's Day. Here are our hopes and dreams just for you:

May all your plans go off without a hitch.

May there be just one reservation left for you at your favorite eatery.

May the very first valentine you choose be the best one for you.

May your loving gestures be well received.

May your day be filled with love and happiness.



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Dump Your Old Ball and Chain Server Before It's Too Late!

The average lifecycle for a server is just 4-6 years. If your hardware is older than that, you may be lugging around a ball and chain that is just slowing you down. We understand, many companies try to squeeze as much life out of their equipment as possible, but if you've been having issues with slowness, unexpected crashes, or strange noises you may be sitting on a time bomb.

These are sure signs that your server needs attention. Give us a call today for a [FREE 47 Network Security Assessment](#).

We will review your entire network and work up a plan of action to either maintenance or replace your aging equipment. Don't wait until it's too late, call today!

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