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Life without your computer

Many people wait until that fateful day when their computer crashes and then they suffer the consequences. However, it is possible to reduce the likelihood of some common problems occurring, or address minor errors before they turn into major outages or data loss. Many great options exist for ensuring that your computer is maintained, protected and monitored. But why would you pay for that? How reliant are you on technology anyway?

The real test would be to remove a computer or unplug your internet connection for a few hours on a busy day, and see the impact that this has. Not that we are suggesting you actually do this, but most people underestimate the impact of a technology outage. Then, they need their computer guy to turn up immediately and fix everything as soon as possible. Here are a few questions to help you assess your need for proactive computer support and maintenance:

1. A fire consumes your premises and your computer too. How concerned are you about your important files (e.g. customer information, financial records or irreplaceable family digital photos)?

A. Not concerned at all. They are regularly backed up and sent offsite and the restoration process was tested successfully last week. At the most you will have a day or two's worth of records to re-enter.

B. Slightly concerned. Someone in your business is responsible for changing the tape, CD or USB key for your backups and taking it home ... but you're not sure if it is actually being done or when it was last tested.

C. Completely panicked. You either didn't have a backup process in place, or your tapes, CDs or USB keys were stored next to your computer in a drawer, which was also consumed by the fire.

2. A hardware failure has meant that you may be without one computer for up to 3 days while it is being repaired. This will mean:



A. Some lost productivity for one staff member, however you have other computers and all of the files are on your main, shared server. Or, your teenagers will have to find alternative entertainment to the internet.

B. Reverting to a paper-based system for invoicing, ordering etc, and relying on faxes. Data entry will be needed when the computer is returned.

C. A complete halt to your business. That computer held your customer ordering system or other critical program, or it was the only computer that your business has. Or, you will need to find another computer to finish your university thesis on, with your deadline in two days (assuming you can get a copy of the Word document to work on).

3. Your internet access is down and there is no guarantee when it will be restored. The impact is:

A. Minimal. You don't do a lot on the internet anyway.

B. Moderate. You will have to find alternatives to the way you normally work (like now visiting the bank in person and phoning your contacts). Most tasks that you perform on the internet can be done another way or can wait for a while (leaving you with a backlog to catch up on).

C. Severe. This means that your website is down and your staff are without email. You face lost orders and grumpy customers as your business cannot function without the internet.

Mostly As: You may be able to cope with some technology problems, but you could still benefit from preventing 'downtime'. **Mostly Bs:** There are areas that can be addressed now to lessen the impact of technology problems. **Mostly Cs:** Your business is too important to gamble that your computers will work day after day.

Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooter about the real impact of computer problems.

**Contact your local Computer
Troubleshooters**

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