Maintenance and Monitoring

Technology with Integrity

TorianGroup

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Summary: Keeping your computers secure and running reliably includes having a good current Antivirus program, patches and fixes from multiple vendors, maintaining security and reliability, and preventing problems. Don't assume the computer will keep working without proper maintenance. Have a checklist. If you can't or don't want to do the needed maintenance, delegate it or outsource it to someone who understands your company.

Background

Maintenance Checklist
Like keeping your car running, there is a long list of things you can do to maintain your computer network. Your IT staff or IT company should create a customized checklist for your situation. Ask us for an example you can use as a starting point.

Managed Service Software
Preventative maintenance can be computerized. Nearly all IT companies provide maintenance by installing some form of software agent on your equipment. This agent provides a way for the IT company to manage the computers, server(s) and other network devices. It allows remote access; provides hardware and software inventory; monitors the system and alerts IT of any problems; provides patch management – installing software updates and patches; runs scripts; and can perform and monitor backups.

The management software is created by one of just a handful of companies, then resold by the local IT company. The IT company differentiates itself not by the software, but by how well they use it to provide service, and how they charge.

Billing Models for Managed Services
Most IT companies now offer some form of "Managed Services". This generally includes preventative maintenance, monitoring, remote support, and can include help desk. Some programs outsource the hardware by providing equipment leasing. Some companies offer complete networks for rent – you remote in to their virtual computers to do your work. Like many industries, there has been a trend in the network support business to try to get people signed up for automatic monthly payments – recurring revenue.

One approach to this is to pay a fixed fee, covering some or all computer support needs, and be assured that you know what it will cost - you don't have to think about it. This is in some ways similar to insurance – you pay regularly, knowing you are covered when there is a need. Generally, there is a contract which determines what is covered and you pay hourly for any other services. You may also get "priority" service, meaning you will wait less time than those not on a service contract.
The drawback to this is that you pay for services you may not need.

Most managed services are tied to a "Service Level Agreement". This is like your insurance policy, telling you what is covered, and how soon you can expect help for different types of service. If you take this approach, read the fine print, and get some referrals -see if the vendor can deliver what is promised.

We take a somewhat different approach. We don't try to bind you with a contract. We earn your good will - that you will want to continue to work with us if we do good work. We don't charge a fixed fee, but instead charge for time spent. We do provide an estimate of the time needed for proactive maintenance and monitoring, and let you know what to expect on average. We leverage the MSP software to deliver the level of service you want at a lower cost. We prevent problems before they impact your business.

Our Pricing
The management agent has a monthly cost of $5 per Workstation or network device, and $20 per server.
Offsite backups are $5 per workstation per month, $35 per server.
Our hourly rate is $130/Hr.
It typically takes 1 hour per month per server for a senior network engineer to check the server and monitor it. It takes about 15 minutes per workstation. It takes somewhat less time (and cost) if we are logging in to a network and checking multiple devices.

We also recommend less frequent onsite visits for maintenance that can't be done remotely. This is tailored to your needs.

In summary, be aware that computers and servers require maintenance, and have a plan to keep them running smoothly.

Reference:
MSP software Vendors https://www.channele2e.com/technology/management/25-rmm-software-tools-for-msps-2018-list-of-options-alternatives/

Tim Torian has his degree in Computer Science, and has been consulting on technology for business for the past 30+ Years. He has multiple industry certifications including Microsoft and Cisco. He has taught computer networking at the College of Sequoias and Cal Poly Extension. He was awarded "Entrepreneur of the year" by the Tulare County EDC in 2008. Torian Group was awarded "Technology Business of the Year" by the SBDC in 2011. He is president of Torian Group, Inc. which provides a full range of Technology Consulting services to local business, including computer services, networking, web design and Internet marketing. www.toriangroup.com