

Hidden Costs in Using Old Hardware

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Desktop PCs aren't dead. They play significant roles in most of our businesses and organizations. Although written from a Hewlett Packard point of view, this article's message is relevant regardless of the brand of equipment in use.

In today's era of notebooks, tablets, and smartphones, mobility is a high priority—making small businesses more dynamic and responsive in an on-the-go world.

That reality, however, should not detract from the important role desktop PCs still play in today's business environment, delivering more power, more robust upgrade options, and more functionality compared to their portable counterparts.

While large enterprises typically refresh their desktop PCs once every three years, small businesses tend to hold on to their PCs for five to seven years [1]. Older hardware, however, often slows operations and sparks hidden costs. In fact, PCs more than four-and-a-half years old are estimated to cost 50 percent more to support and take 50 percent longer to perform many tasks [2].

So while retaining those still-functioning workhorse PCs purchased during the early-2000s might seem a prudent move, their continued use could be costing you more than you think. Here's how:

Hidden cost #1: Slow performance

As a PC ages, it slows and struggles to keep pace with current technology and business needs. Applications take longer to load, heat buildup causes Windows, the mouse, or keyboard to be unresponsive. Compatibility issues between older PCs and new software and printers all drain time, frustrate the user, and undermine productivity.

Modern desktops respond to today's multitasking, collaborative, and fast-paced business environment with productivity-driving features that allow workers to create rather than wait. New features include: touchscreens, fast-charging USB ports, and solid-state drives that reduce wait times when opening files or switching applications.

Hidden cost #2: More maintenance

On average, 42 productive work hours are lost each year while an older computer is being repaired—two times that of a newer model. Annual maintenance costs for an older PC, meanwhile, sit at \$561, about the cost of a new, mid-range desktop [3].

New desktops deliver a greater value in the present and the future. Their longer lifespan, platform stability, and increased durability stretch your budget further, and reduce the burden on your IT department.

Hidden cost #3: Lower efficiency

Today's desktop PCs reflect the modern age with space- and energy-saving features unmatched by their older, bulkier peers, some of which have limited ports or require adapters to

accommodate modern needs.

New form factors, such as All-in-Ones and mini desktops, embrace sleek, streamlined construction, reduce wire clutter with integrated components, and adapt to the task at hand. In addition to more efficient use of space, modern desktops also require less energy, as the power needed to perform a task requiring a fixed number of computations continues to fall in half every 18 months [4].

Hidden cost #4: Security vulnerabilities

Hackers continue to view small businesses as easy targets, even more so following Microsoft's end-of-support for Windows XP in 2014. According to Microsoft, existing XP users are "five times more vulnerable to security risks and viruses," which makes moving to a new PC that can support a current operating system like Windows 8.1 the safest play [5].

Some new PC designs include built-in hardware and software security to help protect your devices, identity, and data. A solution such as **HP BIOS Protection** offers security from the start, with enhanced protection against virus attacks and other security threats, and is designed to help prevent data loss, and reduce downtime [6].

Doing the math

While those existing desktops had their time and place, the older hardware may now be hampering your team's performance. Running a quick cost-benefit analysis addressing issues such as maintenance and lost productivity against the cost of new desktops might prove eye opening and inspire action.

With modern business-oriented desktop PCs, your small business can reap the benefits of technology's rapid innovation with improved productivity, reduced costs, heightened efficiencies, and stronger security to keep the business running at an optimal level.

[1] Intel, [How much is it costing your business to run old PCs?](#), 2013

[2] The Legislative Budget Board, [Review of Replacement Schedules for Information Technology Equipment](#), January 2013

[3] Techaisle.com, [The Ageing PC Effect--Exposing Financial Impact for Small Businesses](#)

[4] MIT Technology Review, [The Computing Trend that Will Change Everything](#), 2012

[5] Microsoft, [Windows XP support has ended](#)

[6] HP Tools partition with an HP BIOS required for automatic recovery. Business Desktops do not support this HP BIOS Protection auto-recovery feature.