

## I run a business. Do I need a server?

Many people at home have a network setup where they can share files and a printer between 2 or more computers. While this may be sufficient for small home based businesses and networks, a business outside of the home with 5 or more employees may benefit from upgrading to a server rather than using a desktop computer as a "pseudo-server."

There are many advantages to having a server, although the hardware/software tends to be more expensive.

For one thing, servers were designed for file sharing and other similar activities. A regular desktop computer with more than 2 or 3 people accessing it at the same time can be slowed to a halt. On top of that, a business can have its employees work from home or other remote areas, which increases productivity if an employee wishes to finish up at home during the evening, and can even save money on office space by letting some employees work at home on a regular basis. This scenario is becoming more common as commutes grow longer, more costly because of fuel prices, and more aggravating; workload increases beyond the standard 40 hours, and employees' desire to spend time at home with family increases.

Keeping everything (or almost everything) in one place simplifies life. Backups become easier, and so does implementing security: it's easier to keep anti-virus programs up to date. One can also manage and monitor employees' Internet access, control and/or restrict employee access to certain files (does HR really need access to accounting documents???), restrict log on hours, block spam, etc.

Custom Computer Solutions can help determine if your firm or business can benefit from a server (we are, after all, consultants), which type to buy, and perform the set-up and configuration.

## Some common questions with answers...

### **Do I have to worry about burn-in on my display?**

Back in the day, when CRTs (the big bulky monitors) ruled the world, you did. Now with LCD monitors you don't. Beware though, because plasma TVs do have this problem.

### **What about that memory effect thing batteries have?**

Nickel cadmium (NiCd) batteries suffer from this deficiency, nickel metal hydride (NiMH), lithium ion (Li-ion), and lithium polymer batteries do not. Laptops were meant to be portable; let the battery discharge to about 10% and recharge it every now and then.

### **I want to scan a picture in. Should I use the print or the negative?**

If you can, use the negative with a resolution of 2000 dpi (dots per inch) for a better quality scan. Some scanners may not support this.

**How can anyone remember all those darn passwords?**

Good question. Download password safe (Google it) and you'll only need to remember one.

**Should I go 64 bit or stick with 32 bit systems?**

64 bit is the wave of the future, and 64 bit versions of Windows also support 32 bit applications. With a 64 bit system one can add much more than 4GB of RAM thus increasing performance even more.

**Should I turn my computer off when I'm not using it (i.e. night time)?**

I wouldn't. Leaving it on allows updates for your antivirus program and OS to be downloaded, and you can set your antivirus to scan while you're sleeping so it won't slow you down during the day. Plus, the continual heating and cooling of the motherboard and processor can stress these important components over time. Want to save money on your electric bill? Play with the power and standby/hibernation settings. Have your monitor turn off after a few minutes of inactivity, and have the hard drive do something similar to save money and be environmentally friendly.

**I'm really tired of manually updating my iTunes library. What gives?**

Perhaps Apple will get the message some day. Meanwhile, do a search for iTunes folder watch and let that free app handle it .