IT years are like dog years

*Your IT system is **ageing quickly.** Here's how to **keep it at maximum health** for longer*

We're sure you're familiar with the concept of dog years. They say the first year of a puppy's life is the equivalent of 15 human years. And your dog ages the equivalent of five to nine human years every calendar year.

Poor Fido.

Just as an older dog needs to be taken to the vets more regularly, so too must older IT systems get specialist attention and have more preventative work done.

Technology is improving at such a speed that older hardware and software can quickly fall behind. It's not as dramatic as it used to be – when things would just stop working – but there are underlying risks of running an old setup that you must be aware of.

In fact, if your system hasn't been significantly reviewed in the last three years or longer, then it's highly likely that your staff's productivity is at risk – and so is your data. The older your setup, the greater the data security risks.

Here are five signs that your current IT setup is actually a lot older than you think.

01.

It can't update to the very latest operating system

Having an always-on connection to the internet has changed how operating systems are updated. You used to get a small number of large updates every year. Now updates happen all the time – almost weekly in some cases.

Customers are demanding faster, safer operating systems. The pace of change is amazing… and also a strain to keep up with.

Because there comes a point where this speed of update is making hardware obsolete more quickly. If you've ever owned a phone for 3 years or longer, you've probably got more and more annoyed with it as it gets slower and can't do all the stuff newer phones can do.

Operating systems are no different. It's surprising how quickly they go out of date. Windows Vista reached the end of its life in April this year (2017). That means it still works… but it will no longer be actively supported by Microsoft. Windows 7 faces the same fate in January 2020. That's closer than you think.

The older the operating system, the greater the risk it will just fall over and can't be fixed. There's also a much greater security risk…

02.

You're falling prey to cyber attacks

The greatest risk of an out of date operating system is that cyber criminals will use it to try and steal, or lock your data (and hold it ransom).

It's easier for them to find security vulnerabilities in older software, especially if it's no longer being actively supported by the original manufacturer.

Cyber crime has become really big business. Just look at the WannaCry attack on the NHS in May 2017. A recent investigation showed that at least 6,900 appointments – including some operations – were cancelled when many NHS Trusts' computers were locked by hackers. Some of those computers were running Windows XP, a very old operating system that's no longer supported.

Others were running Windows 7. But they weren't totally up-to-date. **It only takes a single vulnerability to let a hacker in.**

Most guard dogs get less ferocious as the years go by. You will get getting more dodgy emails and attempts to steal your data. With cyber crime now the biggest threat to UK businesses, you can't afford to stick your head in the sand about the age of your operating system.

03.

Your system is buggy

You wouldn't let your dog stay infected with fleas, ticks and other bugs. Not just because it's cruel, but because it would make him irritable, unmotivated and generally unpleasant to be around.

Your IT setup is the same. Just like a dog needs a vet to apply wormer and prevent problems from happening, you need an IT specialist to do the same to your computers.

We work with loads of businesses, planning their IT and security, and managing their services for them (this is why we are known as a Managed Service Provider, or MSP). The bulk of the work we do is proactive. We're constantly monitoring systems, applying updates and responding to symptoms of problems before they become bigger issues.

A buggy system is never going to get better on its own. It needs to be brought up-to-date, cleaned, and have preventative attention on a constant basis.

04.

It won't run the latest applications

Nothing ages an IT setup more than its inability to handle the latest applications. Cloud-based applications are normally fine as they run in your browser (so long as your operating system can handle the latest browsers).

It's the apps that run on your computer itself that can be an issue; especially any specialist software.

Again, this is all down to the speed of technology. Change is happening so fast, that what was cutting edge hardware a few years ago, can today struggle to handle the most intensive of new applications.

05.

You're running out of memory

Old dogs get forgetful. And there's only so much knowledge your poor old computers can handle before they start getting doddery too.

A lack of sufficient memory is one of the most common causes of slow computers. It's because your computer struggles to do all the jobs it needs to do in one go. So it starts queuing them up.

Is there anything more frustrating than sitting, waiting, watching a computer slowly finish a task… in the process, stopping you from completing your task? If a member of your staff loses just 10 minutes a day to a slow computer, that can add up over a year to a staggering 40 hours.

40 hours! It's true. 10 minutes a day is 50 minutes a week. Over a 48 week year, that adds up to 40 hours.

Scary. You lose a working week of your staff's time because of silly delays caused by an older computer. How many staff do you have? How many weeks are you losing a year?

Can you see how risky an older IT setup is? There's a lot you can do to prevent these problems from hurting your business

An IT system that's up-to-date, healthy and appropriate for use simply won't cause you nearly as many problems as an older setup.

Our technicians spend dramatically more time fixing problems with older systems than they do newer ones. Of course newer ones need attention – but it's more about active monitoring and preventative work. There is typically less downtime and interruption to staff.

If you suffer from any of the problems we've talked about in this guide, please consider outsourcing your IT to a trusted team of experts who have your best business interests at heart. And if you have these problems, yet you already have an MSP looking after you; then you DEFINITELY need to move to a different partner!

IT is a critical and strategic part of any modern organization. So it pays to hand it over to someone who can take care of everything from upgrades and software updates to cyber security. Outsourcing your IT gives you peace of mind that your setup gets the attention it deserves, as well as providing a cost effective solution that adds real value to your business.

The main driver of IT outsourcing for most companies is the huge reduction in expenditure. According to a recent survey conducted by Information Week, businesses can expect to see savings of as much as 40%, with both capital and operating expenses being slashed.

Outsourcing also allows you to focus on your core business objectives. For most organisations, IT is a support mechanism rather than a core service, so managing a server or data centre yourself is only going to cost you time and money. Passing it all over to a team of people who know their stuff means you and your people can focus on your core business goals instead of struggling with computer issues.

Good MSPs always offer proactive monitoring and in-depth support.

Technology is relatively cheap. But mistakes are expensive. So if you're buying new hardware and software without sufficient experience and knowledge you're likely to get some stuff wrong. Outsourcing means you'll have access to a team of seasoned professionals who understand which tools and services your business needs to thrive. No guesswork, no unnecessary costs and no risks.

Relying on an MSP also significantly reduces your risk of downtime and other disruptions. They take care of all the backups and have robust disaster recovery procedures in place so if the worst should happen, you'll be back up and running in no time with no permanent loss of business critical data.

Outsourcing helps keep your employees happy too. Badly performing IT systems have long been a source of frustration in the workplace, not to mention those who see downtime as an opportunity to do nothing for the rest of the day and go home early. When everything's running smoothly and people are able to power through their workloads with no disruptions, everyone is happier and more engaged.

Using IT strategically allows your organisation to respond rapidly to change.

When you outsource, you pass all responsibility to the MSP. Updates, upgrades, monitoring and data security are all handled remotely and intuitively, thanks to the combination of state of the art software and good old fashioned expert knowledge.

To go back to the dog analogy, think of it as a premium pet health insurance policy. You can benefit from regular check-ups to make sure Fido is in good health, and then if anything does go wrong it's dealt with quickly and without a huge vets bill.

Let's talk

Contact us today for a strategic
IT assessment of your current setup.
There's no commitment to buy
anything. We'll review what you've
got an advise of any vulnerabilities or
early symptoms of future problems.