Server Room Management

Is your server room a disaster waiting to happen?

Organisations are continually being reminded of the need for disaster recovery planning. But even as they plan, they can unknowingly be laying the foundations for future problems.

That's because their servers, the hub of their IT data processing and storage, aren't given the day-to-day protection they require. These busy boxes may appear robust, but it doesn't take much to trip them over and when they go down, so too will many of your business operations.

The best way to manage a server failure is to stop it from happening. Overleaf we share some top tips for keeping your servers sweet, based on the premise that prevention is always better than cure!

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Prevention is better than cure

1 Give your servers a room of their own Even in today's open plan office culture, your servers are so important they deserve their own space and ideally an entire room. It doesn't need to be huge, particularly if you're running just a single server, but it should be somewhere that protects against the obvious risks from water and fire.

When choosing a home for your servers, think about the chances of water getting in, either from outside or through leaks in internal pipes. A splash of water can kill a server, so it's best not to take any risks.

2 Create the right environment Servers operate most effectively at around 20 degrees Celsius. Allow them to get too cold or too hot and you increase the risk of a failure. Cooling in summer can be a challenge because as they process data, servers generate their own heat, pushing up the temperature.

Ideally a server room will have thermostatically controlled air conditioning that keeps a constant temperature all the time. While this may seem expensive to organise, it can be cheaper than your business going down for hours because overheating caused a server to fail or perform less efficiently.

3 Keep it clean and tidy Rubbish and wires are two common hazards of a server room. Rubbish accumulates when the room becomes a convenient place to dump boxes of surplus stock, spare brochures or redundant equipment.

Unlike rubbish, wires are a necessary feature of a server room. Metres of cabling are usually required to connect all the IT equipment together. If it's not kept tidy or labelled, it's easy for the cabling to become confusing, running the risk of equipment being disconnected by accident.

Combine rubbish with messy cables and you've got an accident waiting to happen.

4 Lock the door The strongest digital security devices can't keep your network and servers safe from someone accidentally, or worse, maliciously, physically damaging your servers. A simple lock and a culture of respecting the server room can help protect you from serious problems.

5 Upgrading to a schedule Both hardware and software have a shelf life. Old devices and old code can appear to rattle along fine without any apparent problems, but the further you push them, the bigger the risk of something going wrong.

Even when they seem to be working as you'd expect, it's almost certain that old software and hardware is not performing as effectively as their more up-to-date equivalents. Inefficiency carries its own hidden costs, in the time taken to get the job done and the extra resources required to bolster out-dated processing power.

6 Monitoring the situation It's easy to shut the door on the server room and assume everything is okay. Basing your IT strategy on the wisdom 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' may work up to a point, but eventually something will break, and almost inevitably, it'll be at the least convenient moment.

Today's monitoring technology makes it very easy to keep an eye on almost every aspect of your hardware and software, from any-where with an internet connection. It's highly efficient, with human intervention only required when a problem, or potential problem, trips an alert.

Proactive monitoring allows you to spot issues before they have any impact on business processes, giving you time to fix them with little or no interruption to day-to-day commercial activity.

Protect your server by talking to us

As specialists in supporting IT networks for businesses across the UK and further afield, we're proactive in helping our clients develop and maintain their strategies for business continuity and disaster recovery. By keeping ourselves up to date with current best practice, we're well placed to advise our clients on the latest trends.

If you would like to know more about protecting the IT systems that manage your critical business systems and data, give us a call on 0808 168 9135 or email enquiries@itsupport365.co.uk. We would be pleased to have a no-obligation conversation with you.

Alternatively, you can follow us as we share news on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn.

How well would your business cope with going back to pen and paper? That's the reality facing firms hit by unexpected server failures and IT outages that result from poor planning. Act now to protect your IT infrastructure from the hazards of weak hardware and software management.

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