

The  
Complete Guide to

# Managed IT Services



# The Complete Guide to Managed IT Services

Your company functions every day, usually without having to worry about downtime. Computers are working, you're able to connect to your email, and your employees have access to all the files they need on the cloud. Things are running relatively smoothly as far as all the technology stuff.

Therein lies the issue: You never really think about all of the "IT stuff" your business has to deal with unless something is wrong, or when it's time to upgrade something. It's not that proactive IT maintenance isn't important to you, it's just that there's a good possibility you and your employees are busy with other things.

*When you're busy doing your job,  
it's easy not to worry about "IT stuff."*

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If you have a solid IT department that takes care of potential problems before they happen, your company truly is one of the lucky ones. Too often, those who work in IT for a company are constantly putting out fires because they're understaffed. Of course, that's if your company actually has an IT department and not just someone who knows a couple of things about setting up networks. If this sounds familiar to you, you're not alone.

With this in mind, it's a good idea to never take your IT team for granted. So, let's discuss some things about managed IT services – the history, the benefits, and the future.



# The History of Managed IT Services

As the old adage goes, if you don't learn from history, you're doomed to repeat it. While computers have been around since 1946 (the ENIAC, invented by J. Presper Eckert and John Mauchly, weighed in at 50 tons), IT services have evolved over the last seven decades. Much has happened, and much needed to be learned.

IT services, as we know it today, really didn't take off until the early 1990s, when the solution was simple – if it's broken, fix it or replace it. This is what has become known as the break/fix model. If you had a problem with a computer, you called someone to take care of it, and they came to your site and fixed the problem for a fee.

There were still a lot of small companies building computers back then, and it wasn't unusual for the person who built your computer to also be the person who came out to service it. Eventually, large companies such as Dell came to dominate computer manufacturing. And like the smaller outfits before them – though on a far greater scale – they provided support for the computers they built and sold.

In the 2000s, early versions of a managed services approach emerged, shifting the industry dramatically away from the old break/fix model. Instead of waiting until customers started having problems, and charging an hourly fee to fix them, managed IT services companies began scheduling regular visits with them to make sure operating systems and applications were all working properly – and making adjustments if not – before problems started.

As automation became more common, the process became even more accurate and effective, because the IT companies could use monitoring systems to automatically detect issues that needed to be addressed.

*Today, managed IT services companies have become a popular way to resolve issues before and after they happen. Over the years, companies have learned that proactive, preventive care beats waiting until something breaks and then fixing it.*

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# The Benefits of Using Managed IT Services

Take a moment right now to think about all the ways your work life is impacted by technology. While sitting at your desk, you can probably see at least four things right off the bat – your computer, your desk phone, your cell phone, and the printer/copier/fax.

These are just examples, as there are many more things your IT staff maintain in and around your office.

Let's look, though, at those four objects for a minute.

It's so much more involved than you might think. Your computer is hooked up to some sort of internet connection, as is your desk phone (as many companies now use Voice Over IP – or VoIP), and don't forget about your cell phone (wi-fi) and the printer (probably also wi-fi, but some have wired internet access).

It doesn't stop there, though. Some of these devices are connected to some sort of server – whether in-house or cloud storage – that gives you access to all of your company's files. Thankfully, your computer and the server are both protected with antivirus and anti-malware software, as well as a powerful firewall.

As long as everything is running smoothly, you don't think about these things. When something happens, though, it's all you can think about. Why? There's a good chance it results in downtime for you and employees at your company. If they can't do their jobs, they can't do work for the company. That doesn't mean they don't get paid, however. Your company ends up losing money on both ends of the spectrum here.

### *Expert IT workers know how to keep the bad things from happening.*

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This is why you surround your company with a good managed IT services team. Expert IT workers know how to keep the bad things from happening. This doesn't mean that bad things won't eventually happen, as nothing anyone can do is 100 percent foolproof. In the event that something bad should happen, however, these same experts know how to fix the issue quickly, making sure that any downtime is minimal.

In this situation, it is very much a “you get out of it what you put into it” issue. If you decide to go the dime store route to IT services, you and your company will not get the full benefit of the support expert IT workers bring to the table.



# The Future of IT Services

Despite what people who believe in the predictions of Nostradamus will tell you, no one really knows what the future holds. While you might not be able to predict the future, you can do a pretty decent job forecasting it based on trends. *A particularly nasty trend is the rise of hackers using a type of malware called ransomware.*

Ransomware has been all over the news lately as more and more governments, hospitals, and businesses around the world over fall victim to it.

Once ransomware is installed/uploaded to your server, it starts to encrypt everything – all of your files, your company’s personal data on employees, other proprietary information, all of it. At this point, your company has two options: you can either pay the hackers a ransom, which is usually in the form of a type of untraceable money called Bitcoin, and afterward they might or might not give you the encryption key.

Or, you can wipe your servers clean and completely start over, losing all the files that might have been on the server.

Sadly, right now, those are the only two options, unless you have full backups of your files and system. The encryption used by hackers is so powerful, it could take years to decipher. Ransomware attacks will continue to happen – and probably increase in number – because these businesses would rather pay the hackers the money to get their files back instead of starting over from scratch. If there’s money to be made, hackers will be there to capitalize.

It’s not just hackers, though. The number of advances in technology, while amazing, are nevertheless a little frightening. Every year there are new cell phones, new computers, new tablets, better software, better hardware, the list goes on and on. Again, these advancements are incredible, but they also pose greater risks for security.

With each new device that hits the market, adjustments need to be made to programs, applications (or apps as they’re more commonly known today), security, etc. Updates and patches from Microsoft and others begin to fly out in mass quantities for installation. And, just as soon as everything gets set up, patched up, and safe, another round of new technology hits the market.

The great managed IT services professionals will be the ones who are able to keep up with not only what is currently happening, but what is likely to happen down the road. These are the ones who continuously train, learn, and prepare – and they are the ones you want working for your company.



**Your True  
Technology Partner**

In the next few decades, we are going to see so many absolutely wonderful technologies – and we're already getting a taste of some of it today with virtual reality, smart watches, smart homes, smart cars, smart just-about-everything.

It's hard to keep up with this ever-changing technological world.

***Hard, but not impossible.***

# From Our History, to Today, and Beyond

We started Swift Systems in 1998 as an ISP, when we just wanted to provide quality, reliable internet access and hosting services to the Frederick community. By the early 2000s, we grew to become a full-service IT company.

As it stands today, Swift Systems is a complete managed IT services company that helps many different types of businesses with whatever needs they might have – from cloud storage, to preventative measures, to protection from ransomware, and more. We've also branched out from Frederick to include the Columbia and Rockville areas as well.

We know there are a lot of managed IT service companies out there that promise companies the earth, moon, stars, and lightning-fast internet connections. At Swift Systems, our focus is on providing our customers outstanding IT services all day, every day. No gimmicks and no pushy sales talk.

*We know how important technology is to your business and the importance of keeping that technology up and running. Because of this, we take a very proactive approach to your IT needs.*

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At Swift Systems, we also make sure the people who work with you are experts, that's why we only hire Tier-II and above IT professionals. This way, we can provide our customers with the highest level of services and support available in Maryland.

If you're looking for managed IT services support, [contact Swift Systems](#) to find out just how we can help keep your company safe and running smoothly.

