



Hands-On Computers

IT support services

Hands-On Computers support and maintenance service

In the past an IT support company worked on the basis of “Break Fix” which simply put means should you have a problem then you contact the IT support company and they fix it either remotely or by sending an engineer onsite.

The approach of a modern support company should be different as they shouldn't be waiting for problems to arise before doing anything. It is the responsibility of your support company to be working continuously to prevent problems from happening and ensuring that your IT is at its maximum efficiency all of the time; thus making sure your business can get on with the things that make it money rather than wasting time and valuable resources with disruptions from computer systems.

The service provided by Hands-On Computers is designed to be simple to understand but comprehensive in what it provides and the following sections give full details and explanations of the terminologies used.

Scope of cover

The support cover is designed to provide a single point of contact for any IT related problems so that in effect we can either become your complete IT department or for larger companies an additional resource to be called upon as and when required. Telephone support provides a first line of contact to try and resolve an issue immediately with a large number of problems being resolved remotely in the first instance. In the event that we are unable to resolve the problem remotely we would arrange for an engineer to come out on site.

Contract

Our support service ranges from a simple 1-month rolling agreement with no long term contract to sign (we do ask you to read and sign a copy of our terms and conditions) through to a 12 month or longer contract which would give you up to a 10% discount on the 30 day agreement prices shown later in this document. In all cases the monthly charges must be made by standing order on the first day of each month.

Cost

This document provides all of the prices for the services but in essence the total monthly cost is based upon the number of PC's and servers you have and the level of support you require e.g. remote service with pay as you go labour or an unlimited “all you can eat” service that includes all remote and onsite labour relating to keeping your IT running at its optimum capacity.

For those customers that opt for a remote only service they have a choice about how to pay for any onsite labour ranging from pay as you go where any onsite hours are invoiced at our standard Ad Hoc hourly rate immediately after the job is completed or by purchasing hours each month which if they are not used will roll over and accumulate indefinitely (If you opt for the 30 day agreement and decide to leave then any banked hours would be lost). The benefit of purchasing hours each month is that you get a discounted rate depending on the number you buy and secondly any spare hours you have can also be used for project work thus allowing you to “save up” for upgrades and system changes.

In the event that you use more hours than have been banked these will be totalled at the end of the month and an invoice will be issued for the excess hours at the discounted rate.

Response times

Support hours are between 9.00am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday. The following figures are an indication of the longest time that you could expect to wait for a response to your problem.

Telephone	4 Hours
Emergency Call outs	Next Day

Note: - With fully managed contracts, response times can be tailored to fit your requirements

Travel Time

With the premium service all reasonable travel expenses to and from the premises where the main computer equipment is kept are included however should we be asked to attend a different site then it may be necessary to bill for mileage at a rate of 40pence per mile.

For customers on the standard service each onsite call will incur a fixed amount of travel time that is booked to the job, which will depend on your location. The amount of time booked is not intended to cover the full amount of travel time but to cover the cost to the company for the engineer's time & mileage charges. Generally the amount of time booked to an area will be half of the average round trip travel time but to make things easier areas will be banded into quarter hour, half hour, three quarter hour and 1-hour travel charges. Anything that is outside of our normal working area will be billed at the full travel time plus mileage at 40pence per mile.

Explanation of Managed services

Managed services have been around for some time in the IT industry but until more recently the technology and communications links required for a managed service to work well have not been available to smaller companies at a reasonable price. Today nearly every business has a good broadband link and the market leading software programs that are used as the backbone of a managed service have had many years of real world experience under their belts and are being made available for support companies to use with their customers.

Below is a definition of a managed service provider from Wikipedia:-

A managed service provider (MSP), is a company that manages information technology services for other companies via the internet. An MSP is a "company that offers continuous outsourcing of an IT function it works on a recurring revenue model; it monitors and fixes things proactively; and it does all this over the Internet, rather than having to work hands-on at a client's office."

How will a managed service help my business?

By outsourcing the day to day management and monitoring of your network you remove the need to waste any of your own or your staffs time in keeping track of and dealing with daily IT tasks (such as making sure the backup has completed successfully) and by having a professional company handle it you will improve the performance and reliability of your network which in turn will allow your staff to perform their jobs with less interruption.

Clearly you may feel that if you have someone in house that is prepared to do these daily jobs then why would you want to pay someone else to do them? In reality if you don't have a full time IT manager then it is very difficult to expect non IT people to assume responsibility for making sure on a daily basis that the backup has completed successfully, the antivirus software is up to date, people are not installing programs onto their machines that they shouldn't be, all of the machines have the latest updates and security patch's installed, there are no errors on the server indicating an up coming problem and many more similar basic IT jobs.

It is an unfortunate fact that many companies that rely upon an in house member of staff to deal with these tasks end up finding out the hard way when they loose data. A common situation is only realising when trying to restore some lost information that the backup hadn't worked properly for the past month and thus the data is lost. Under these circumstances is it reasonable to discipline the staff member because they hadn't realised that something was wrong?

Are there different levels of managed service?

Yes there are. It is very important to understand that the term managed service is an umbrella term for what is essentially the outsourcing of elements of your daily IT management, maintenance and support and thus some companies will require more than others. To make it easy for people to understand we have packaged our service into a

standard and premium offering but it is not a problem for us to break out and supply individual parts of our service and we would be happy to discuss your exact requirements further.

What is a fully managed service or an "all you can eat service"?

A fully managed service is where you pay a fixed monthly fee which covers all aspects of keeping your IT running efficiently and covers any issues you may have be it a hardware or software problem. By taking a fully managed service you remove any responsibility of the daily running of your network and have the comfort of knowing that what ever happens you will not have to find any further money in the event of a problem occurring.

How is a managed service provided?

To be able to provide managed services you need to have the correct software tools plus the right hardware and communications infrastructure in place. One of the leading managed service products on the market is by a company called Kaseya (www.kaseya.com) and Hands-On Computers have invested the appropriate time and money to implement this as our Managed Service Provider (MSP) solution.

The following list is taken from Kaseyas website and shows the main product features:-

- Computer Inventory / Audit
- Remote Desktop Management / Remote Support
- Patch Management
- Network Monitoring / Alerts
- Windows Event Monitoring / Alerts
- Software Deployment / Update
- Help Desk / Trouble Ticketing
- Network Policy Enforcement
- Anti-Virus and Spyware Detection
- Integrated Reports
- Maximum Security
- Flexible Web Based Administration
- Fast and Easy Deployment
- User State Management
- Cross Platform Support

What isn't covered?

The information in the rest of this document should show that our support service will cover everything required to keep your IT working efficiently, manage the day to day operation, provide support for any problems that arise and generally assume responsibility for the smooth operation of you companies IT setup.

What isn't covered is anything that we would class as a project or the cost of any parts that are required (software or hardware) to either keep your IT working or upgrade it.

We recognise that one persons interpretation of an all inclusive service may not match with our intended service level and thus one option would be to create a long and complex contract that listed every item that is and isn't covered but this sort of document would be difficult to produce and subject to change and would also likely lead to dissatisfaction as being told that "it isn't in the contract" can also be very annoying.

To keep our customers happy there are often times when we have to go above an beyond what our service includes but it does have to be a two way street as should we find that we are constantly being asked to do things that are outside of our intended service then it could

cease to be financially viable to continue providing the service which, if a mutually acceptable solution could not be found may lead to us having to “resign as your IT support company”.

A good example of this is the age of your equipment. The stated life span of a server is 3 to 5 years and in reality larger companies will change their servers at 3 years where as a smaller company will look to get closer to 5 years. From our perspective it is not financially viable to be looking after a server that is over 5 years old as it would be difficult to source parts for it thus causing us to spend excessive amounts of time in keeping it running. In this situation we would have to advise our customer that they needed to purchase a new server which we would then quote as a new project. If following our quote the customer did not wish to take our advise and they carried on asking us to keep their old server running we may find ourselves in the position of having to re-negotiate the support agreement.

This sort of situation is rare as in nearly every case the customer can easily see that the cost of down time and disruption to their staff and business far out ways the cost of supplying and installing the new equipment.

For us the key to a successful relation is the application of common sense to any situation and as it is in our interest to keep the customer happy we are likely to lean in the direction of the customers interpretation of common sense but there will always be limits to this and thus we would assess each situation on its own merits rather than relying on a firm contract to dictate the outcome.

Managed Services prices

Our aim is to keep the pricing of our service simple and easy to work out for your own network. For any company with 5 or more PC's and a server the cost of support is based on selecting either our Standard or Premium service and then multiplying the cost per PC and server by the number you have in your network which gives you your recurring monthly charge. For those companies that don't have a server or have less than 5 PC's it may not be possible for us to offer the same fixed charges based on the economies of scale.

Hands-On Computers are more than happy to look after smaller businesses that don't have a server/less than 5 PC's and thus following our initial assessment of your network (see below) we will quote you a fixed fee specifically based on the amount of work we feel would be needed to maintain it (this cost would not be higher than the cost of a 5 PC/1 server network).

Initial IT assessment

Hands-On Computers provide a free IT survey service where we come to your site and review your existing system to make sure it is running as it should be. In a lot of cases the reason we have been invited for a meeting is because the IT is not working properly and thus the purpose of our survey is to provide you with a summary of your IT systems and our opinion of where the problems are, and how we feel these would be best resolved. Our quotation will also include proposals for the resolution of these issues. Should you decide to join our support services any outstanding issues noted on the survey need to be resolved prior to commencement of the contract.

The following page provides the pricing for our main support services but to get a better understanding of the items shown in each section please look at the Explanation of managed service terms on the following pages.

PC/Laptop

Standard service		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlimited remote support • Microsoft patch management • System house keeping • 24/7 System monitoring of system status • Real time hardware and software auditing • Access to the central ticketing system 		Cost per PC/laptop per month
		£20*
Premium Service		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The premium service is the same as the standard service but includes unlimited onsite support to deal with any problem relating to the smooth running of your IT. 		£30*

Servers

Standard service		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlimited remote support • Unlimited remote administration (addition of new users, changes to server configuration etc.) • Microsoft patch management • System house keeping • System monitoring of the Backup routine, AV system, Disk space, critical performance indicators • Real time hardware and software auditing 		Cost per Server per month
		£80
Premium Service		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The premium service is the same as the standard service but includes unlimited onsite support to deal with any problem relating to the smooth running of your IT 		£130

Managed Disaster Recovery service

PC's/Laptops		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full PC imaging on a daily basis • Provision of a loan machine if necessary while the original is being repaired/replaced • 4 hours onsite response 		Cost per unit per month
		£10
Servers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For full details of the managed server DR service please see the explanation later in this document 		£70

* The price per PC shown is based on a network with between 1 and 10 PC's and prices decrease the more PC's you have down to £10 standard and £20 premium for companies with 50+ PC's

Labour

For customers who take the standard service any onsite work is chargeable either on an ad-hoc basis at our standard hourly rate or by purchasing regular hours each month in exchange for a discount on the standard hourly rate. Any hours purchased on a monthly basis that are not used roll over and accumulate indefinitely and can be used for anything including project work.

Monthly hours	0	1	2-4	5+
% Discount	0%	10%	20%	25%
Effective hourly rate	£75	£67.50	£60	£56.25

Explanation of managed service terms

The following section provides an explanation for each of the items shown in the tables above.

Unlimited remote support for server/PC

As the name suggest this covers any work that is carried out remotely to deal with an issue

MS Patch management

Microsoft are continually updating and patching their operating systems to fix problems that are generally brought to light from people or companies that are either looking to obtain information about your system usage or more increasingly to use your computer to carry out some sort of illegal activity. This is a constant and ongoing problem that is very difficult to manage manually. Kaseya has a section dedicated to patch management that is kept up to date with the newly released MS patch's and will then monitor all of the network to make sure that all of the approved patch's are issued out and installed in the back ground. Information on the current patch status of your network is incorporated into the monthly executive summary report allowing us to quickly know the patch level for an entire network.

System House keeping

Over a period of time PC's will slow down due to factors such as fragmentation of the filing structure and a build up of un-necessary programs running in the background. To reduce this effect there are a range of tools and utilities that can be run which if done regularly will maintain the highest level of operation for the computer. Our house keeping service will run through a pre determined list of operations and are scheduled to run over night once a week. On the day of the house keeping all users will receive notification that they need to leave their PC's on over night.

System monitoring

This is the process of interactively watching your network 24/7 so that many of the major causes of problems can be spotted and prevented before they occur. The following list shows the key items that are currently monitored however it is important to note that we continue to add items to this list as we come across situations that could have been prevented if a particular item had been monitored: -

- Backups

In the event that a backup does not complete 100% successfully an alert will be sent to us and a ticket will be raised. An engineer will log in remotely and find out why the backup has not occurred and take what ever steps are necessary to resolve the problem or in the case of a tape not being inserted we will contact the site and provide relevant instructions

- Anti virus

It is essential that your Antivirus system is constantly kept up to date and thus by monitoring it we are able to spot any issues and deal with them before a problem can arise

- Critical event logs

This is a key area of the monitoring as when a problem occurs on a windows server it will put an entry in the event log which via monitoring can be flagged to us at the time of the event. Where this is very useful is that a critical event will often signal the onset of a problem but as it is not possible to physically sit and watch many event logs at the same time it has only ever been practical to review the event logs after a problem has occurred to gain an understanding of what caused it. By specifically telling Kaseya to look out for the highest level of Event warning we will automatically

be emailed should one occur which will trigger us to raise a ticket and investigate the problem.

- Hard drive space

If a server or PC runs out of hard drive space the result is a loss of service. By setting limits on the monitoring we can be alerted as soon as the limit is reached and take appropriate action

- Exchange server

The exchange server is the key to an organisations email system and thus we monitor key elements of this to make sure that it is running correctly. A key example of this is when a server is compromised and used to send out spam mail. The normal point that the customer knows there is a problem is when their ISP cuts them off or they are black listed. By monitoring for excessive quantities of outbound email we are able to spot this problem very early and in doing so we can resolve the root cause before the servers is flagged as a problem and you do not end up being blacklisted/cut off.

- Hardware changes

This is important from a support perspective as if a user is making changes to the hardware this could affect the overall performance of the network.

- Security log

By monitoring the security log on the server (or a particular sensitive PC) we are able to keep tabs on who has logged on and of and when this occurred.

- RAID status

Hard drives in a server are configured in a RAID array which means that if one drive fails the others carry on so that there is no interruption in the service. It is very important that in the event of a hard drive failure we are alerted of this immediately so that we can make arrangements for a new drive to be delivered and installed as during the time that the drive is not working the server has no fault tolerance.

- Installation of applications (specifically for PC's)

A common reason for problems occurring on a computer is when a user installs a piece of software. In many networks the PC's will be locked so that users are unable to install new programs however this can cause problems for organisations that have programs which require regular updates as under these circumstances each machine would need to be logged off and back on again as an administrator to simply install an update. When a PC is left open for installation, being able to identify the addition of a new program is very useful in fault finding a problem and also for keeping tabs on what a user is doing

- Application installation blocking (face book, MSN etc)

Social networking is extremely common and staff will often install the software onto their machines so that they can stay in touch during the day. The down side of this is that often a staff member will spend more time online than they do working. If a problem like this is perceived then we are able to block the installation of specific programs while still allowing users the independence to install programs that are necessary for their daily work

Hardware and software Audit

Having a clear understanding of what hardware and software is in your organisation has become important for not only understanding the technical make up of a network but also for making sure that the software loaded onto the machines matches the licenses that have been purchased. In some situations it is possible to identify over licensing which in turn can lead to reduced ongoing costs.

Ticketing systems

The ticketing system is where all customer problems are logged whether from an email, a phone call or directly from the users computer. By using the ticketing system we are able to see when a problem was raised, its current status (open, closed, in progress etc), who is working on it and what has been done. By using the ticketing system we are able to capture everything that happens with a customers IT and can subsequently produce detailed reports should they be required. Another useful feature (soon to be introduced) is a client portal which will allow the customer to log in and view the status of their own tickets, previous work and other information relating to their business.

Onsite labour

As suggested this covers any work that requires an engineer to come out to any of the sites that has equipment which is included in the support service.

Managed Disaster recovery service

The managed DR Service we offer is designed to work with a range of different solutions that we are able to offer (please see our separate Disaster Recovery solutions sales literature) and indeed may well work with solutions that we have not supplied ourselves (subject to survey).

Servers

Having implemented a DR solution for your server/s it is absolutely critical to make sure that it is monitored, maintained and tested as without these elements you may as well not have a DR solution in the first place and thus the disaster recovery package we offer provides you with the required service to make sure that your DR solution is fully managed on an ongoing basis with the following benefits:-

- Guaranteed onsite response times of 2 hours
- 24/7 monitoring of the DR solution to make sure that it is working correctly
- Unlimited remote support to resolve any issues that are either highlighted through the monitoring or any other means
- Unlimited onsite support to deal with any issues that cannot be resolved remotely
- Regular testing of the DR solution to make sure that it will work as it should when it really needs to.
- Short term loan of a suitable server or PC should it be necessary

PC's/Laptops

For PC's and laptops the service is more straight forwards than with servers as we use an Acronis agent (included in the £10 monthly charge) which is loaded onto the PC and set to take daily incremental images (monitored to make sure it is working) and then store them to a location on the network which needs to be backed up and taken offsite. Onsite response times for PC's is 4 hours and should it be needed we will provide you with a loan machine until the original can be repaired or a new one is purchased.