

# **An Insider's Guide To Choosing An Honest, Reliable, and Competent Information Technology Company**

**Don't Trust Your Computers, Network  
Or The Irreplaceable Files On Them  
To Just Anyone!  
Hiring The Right Support Company  
Can Save You Thousands!**

**Read this guide and you'll discover:**

- ✓ Computer scams and rip-offs that you MUST be aware of.
- ✓ 5 Costly misconceptions about computer maintenance and repair.
- ✓ Viruses, worms, spyware, and hackers: what you need to know to protect yourself.
- ✓ 7 Questions you need to ask before buying any computer equipment.
- ✓ 5 Critical characteristics you should demand from your I.T. consultant.
- ✓ Why you need to avoid "cheap" or "bargain" computer repair shops.
- ✓ The one surefire sign that you should run – not walk – out of a Network Support Agreement.



**Provided as an educational service by:**

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**Dear Fellow Computer User,**

There are no shortages of horror stories about fly-by-night computer Engineers causing problems as a result of their unethical or incompetent behavior. The problem is by the time you have realised this your usually midway through a project, with an investment of money and an ongoing support agreement to try to get out of.

You see, the computer industry, along with a lot of other industries, has its own share of unethical businesses who will always try to take advantage of uneducated buyers in their greed for easy money. Fortunately, businesses like these are the minority, but we know they exist because we have had a number of customers come to us to clean up the disasters they have caused.

**Another big problem of the computer industry is that it is not regulated like many other industries.** Automotive repair shops, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, realtors, dentists, doctors, accountants, and even restaurants (to name a few) are heavily regulated to protect the consumer from receiving substandard work or getting ripped off. However, the computer industry is still very new and there aren't any laws in existence to protect the consumer.

Anyone who can turn a computer on can market themselves as an engineer or technician. Even if they are honestly trying to do a good job for you, their inexperience can cost you dearly in your machine's performance or in lost or corrupt data files. That is why we decided to offer this report.

The information in this Guide is provided to help raise standards within the computer network and support industry, and to give YOU useful information to help you guard against the unethical or incompetence of some companies and engineers.

Happy Networking,





## The Five Most Costly Misconceptions About Computer Maintenance and Repair

### **#1: If your computer is working fine right now, it does not need any maintenance.**

This is probably one of the biggest and most deadly misconceptions that most computer users fall victim to. Computers are just like cars. If you don't change the oil, change the filter, rotate the tires, flush the transmission, and perform other regular maintenance on your car, it will eventually break down and cost you FAR MORE to repair than the cost of the basic maintenance.

There are certain maintenance checks that need to be done daily (like virus updates and spam filtering), weekly (like system backups), and monthly or quarterly (like checking for and installing security patches and updates, disk defrag, spyware detection and removal, checking the surge suppressor and the integrity of the hard drive, and so on). Your engineer should be adamant that you have regular maintenance done on your machine and should offer to set up automatic virus definition updates, spam filtering (to avoid viruses), and automatic system backups OFF-SITE.

**If your engineer does not press you to let him do this for you, then RUN – don't walk – out of their office.**

Lack of system maintenance is the NUMBER ONE reason most people end up losing valuable files and incurring heavy computer repair bills. If your engineer isn't offering you these services, you need to find someone else to support your network for two reasons:

1. Either they don't know enough to make this recommendation, which is a sure sign they are horribly inexperienced, *OR*
2. They recognize that they are profiting from your computer problems and don't want to recommend steps towards preventing you from needing their help on an ongoing basis.

Either reason is a good one to get as far away from that person as possible!

### **#2: The maintenance tools provided in the Microsoft Operating System and software are all the maintenance you need.**

Again, this is a terrible misconception. Microsoft does NOT include ALL of the security features to protect your data from viruses, hackers, and data loss or prevent your PC from running slowly.

Additionally, Microsoft (and other software vendors for that matter) is constantly providing critical patches and updates to their software to protect you from viruses and hackers. However, if you don't know to look for them, or if you don't know how to install them properly, you could easily end up getting burned.



### **#3: My nephew/neighbor's kid/brother-in-law knows this computer stuff and can help me solve my problems.**

If only this were true. Obviously, not all engineers are created equal. Just because a person is good with computer applications (what we call a power user) does NOT mean they know how to install a critical security patch, detect and extract a deadly virus, or upgrade your machine.

Most people look for a part time “guru” to help them save money, but this often comes back to haunt them. Every day we get new customers who contact us needing us to clean up a mess that was caused by an inexperienced neighbor, friend, or relative who was just trying to help. If the person you have working on your machine does not do computer and network support for a living, there is a good chance they won't have the knowledge or experience to truly help you. Technology advances at lightning speed and it takes constant learning and practice to master it. If your part-time engineer is not working on PCs and networks every day, they probably only know enough to be dangerous.

### **#4: You can always get a better deal on computer software, equipment, or services by shopping online.**

The key word here is “deal”. Sure you can always find a cheaper price if you shop online, but you might actually end up getting the short end of the stick. As with anything in life, you get what you pay for. Companies simply cannot give you dirt cheap prices AND champagne service.

If you are getting a cheap bargain, chances are you will get very little if NO service after the sale. If something goes wrong, or if you just have a question, you might find out that the customer service line only goes to a voice mail box that never gets checked, or that you have to submit questions via e-mail that takes DAYS to return.

**Before you buy ANY computer equipment, make sure you know the answers to these questions:**

1. How long have they been in business? The last thing you want to do is buy a lemon of a computer from a fly-by-night organization. Thanks to the Internet, ANYONE can set up a website and start selling computer equipment, parts, and software. That is why you want to look for a company that has been in business for ten years or more.
2. What is their guarantee or warranty on the equipment or services you are buying? As a standard rule, they should offer one year replacement warranty on all parts at a minimum.
3. How do they handle returns and exchanges? Do you have to ship the defective item back to them on your dime or do they arrange to have it picked up? Do they send the replacement first? What is the guaranteed turnaround time for an item? This is why many people prefer to buy all equipment from a local vendor. If something goes wrong, you can drive to my office, speak to a real person, and get an instant replacement in most cases.



4. What type of help desk support do you offer? If you are like me, you want to speak directly to a knowledgeable engineer when you need help. However, many companies only offer e-mail and web-based support, and charge a hefty fee for anything outside of that. Which brings me to the next question...
5. Is your support free or charged by the minute? Make sure you are very clear on what support is free and what is fee-based.
6. Where is their help desk and customer service office located? Many of the big vendors are shipping their help desk support overseas to save money. While this works out great for them, it can be incredibly frustrating when you are trying to communicate with their customer support representatives.
7. Do YOU really know how to install, configure and troubleshoot this new device? If not, you may want to consider hiring a qualified technician to install it. Quite often, drivers and software can conflict and cause problems and unless YOU have installed this device before, it might be worth the small fee to get someone else to do it for you.

**#5: All Network Support Companies are created equal. Your best option will be the one who offers the lowest price.**

As we stated a moment ago, you get what you pay for. A cheap price usually means a cheap job. Really good engineers do NOT work cheap because they are in high demand. The only engineers that will work cheap are those that are just starting and they are grossly inexperienced.

With your valuable data, precious family photos, favorite music files, and other irreplaceable documents at stake, do you REALLY want the cheapest engineer working on your machine?

We take the view that most people want value for money and simply want the job done right. You will find that we are not the cheapest and we do not apologize for that. You will also find that we are not the most expensive. We simply feel that we should offer a good service at a fair price. That's why we have been able to stay in business for almost 20 solid years.



## 8 Critical Characteristics You Should Demand From Your Network Support Company

### 1. Demand that they have multiple engineers on staff.

If you rely on a “one-man-band” operation, you might find yourself without any help when they go on vacation, get sick, or when they are simply too busy servicing other customers. Having multiple engineers on staff is not a guarantee of fast, reliable service, but you are far more likely to have someone to talk to when you have a problem.

Another reason you want a company that has multiple engineers is because no one computer guy – no matter how good – has infinite knowledge about every type of software, hardware, and platform. Multiple engineers mean multiple skill sets and a higher likelihood that your computer problem will get resolved faster.

### 2. Demand someone who has a long-standing reputation.

Let’s face it; there are a lot of other engineers out there, but most are new or just getting started. You want to make sure you avoid hiring a fly-by-night technician between jobs that sets up shop one day, and is out of business within a month or a year. Only deal with engineers and repair companies that have a proven track record in your area. Nortec I.T. Solutions has been servicing customers in the Sydney and other states for over eighteen years now.

### 3. Check that the Company you plan to hire is certified and experienced.

Companies that get certified have made a considerable investment in their staff skill levels to meet Vendor requirements. This involves both ongoing training and customer references. Certified companies are required to meet and uphold standards in service and support. Do NOT let someone practice on your machine. There is too much risk involved financially and in your data and equipment.

### 4. Demand that your technician backs up your system BEFORE working on it.

This is just common sense. Don’t let them touch your machine before your entire system is securely backed up just in case something goes wrong.

### 5. Demand that your machine comes back with the same settings, look, preferences, and applications that you had on it prior to the work.

There are a lot of second-rate shops with inexperienced technicians who will end up causing you more problems than you bargained for. Very frequently, these inexperienced technicians will recommend that you wipe out your hard drive and re-install Windows to fix a problem. This means you lose all of your settings and preferences, as well as losing all of the software programs you have installed. This should ONLY be done as a last resort.

**WARNING:** In addition to wiping out your hard drive, some of these shops will put illegal software on your machine using a stolen license. Not only is this illegal and putting you in a position to get fined, but most illegal software (especially Microsoft’s) is locked, which means you cannot download and update critical security patches. This leaves you unable to update your machine and protect it from deadly viruses, worms, and hackers.





#### **6. Always ask for fixed pricing**

There are a lot of companies out there who are not prepared to quote you a fixed price. This is usually due to two reasons

- They are unsure of how to do the job and are using you as a training ground for their staff.
- They are not comfortable in their abilities to deliver the project within a set time frame.

Either way you are likely to be charged for unexpected problems which may arise. Good engineers will be experienced enough to quote the project accurately after investigating your site or doing an audit.

#### **7. Have a written agreement outlining all the deliverables**

Get everything in writing so that there is no confusion. Review the proposal with your consultant prior to signing. This is your chance to ask questions and make amendments. It also gives you a set of deliverables to measure the success or failure of the implementation against.

#### **8. Ongoing Support**

Once the Project or Upgrade is complete what happens next? Does the company have a helpdesk?, do they proactively maintain your network? Or are you left on your own to chase them.

Nortec has a fully staffed helpdesk and by using State of the Art Management Tools we are able to keep your network in good health and run at its peak performance

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## Managed Services Stop Disasters from Happening

### What is Managed Services?

Businesses are constantly challenged by the task of managing the demands of growing their business while coping with continuous technology challenges.

Managed Services focus is to keep your systems operational and available so that you can focus your efforts on the demands of growing your business, managing costs and increasing revenues. It will help you realize the productivity gains and ROI you have been expecting from your computer systems

A managed service platform is an easy way for you to lower your IT support costs while improving the service level and response times for your clients.

The traditional way of support is that of a reactive model, we generally wait for the phone to ring.

Managed Services due to its nature is proactive, work is done to ensure that users have uninterrupted service. This results in more planned work, and will result in reducing operating costs.

It will allow you to generate a reoccurring income which will allow you to budget correctly for company growth.

### The Benefits Are Obvious

- **You'll avoid expensive repairs and recovery costs.** Our network monitoring and maintenance will save you money by preventing expensive network disasters from ever happening in the first place.
- **You'll experience faster performance, fewer glitches, and practically zero downtime.** Some parts of your system will degrade in performance over time, causing them to slow down, hang up, and crash. Our preventative maintenance and network monitoring will detect these problems early and prevent them from escalating into more expensive repairs and downtime.
- **You'll feel as though you have an in-house IT department--without the costs.** As a network maintenance customer, you'll have access to a knowledgeable support staff that can be reached

#### Expected Savings

A study by the Gartner Group has revealed the following

- Cost of an unmanaged XP machine over 3 years is \$5309
- Cost of a managed machine over 3 years is \$3335
- So there is \$1974 cost savings in having a managed machine. \*\*

So if you have 20 computers in your business, that is a cost saving of nearly \$40,000 in a three year time period.

*\*as reported in Network Computing magazine  
Page 34, 9/2/2004 issue*





immediately should you have any kind of problem or question.

- **You'll receive substantial discounts on IT services that you are already buying.** Most IT firms will nickel and dime you over every little thing they do. Under this program, you'll pay one flat, affordable rate and get all of the technical support you need. No hidden charges, caveats, or disclaimers.
- **You'll eliminate trip fees and receive faster response to your problems.** Thanks to our remote monitoring and maintenance software, we will have the ability to remotely access and repair most network problems right from our offices. If we cannot fix it remotely, we will dispatch a technician to your office the same day.
- **You'll be able to budget for network support just like rent or insurance.** Wouldn't it be nice to avoid unexpected costs for fixing or restoring your network? Now you can.
- **You'll sleep easier knowing the "gremlins at the gate" are being watched.** Cyber criminals never sleep! But thanks to our monitoring and on-going maintenance, you'll have one less thing to worry about.
- **You'll safeguard your data.** The data on the hard disk is always more important than the hardware that houses it. If you rely on your computer systems for daily operations, it's time to get serious about protecting your critical, irreplaceable electronic information.
- **You'll stop annoying spam, pop-ups, and spyware from taking over your computer and your network.** Not only are these intruders annoying, but they can introduce viruses and jeopardize the security of your network.
- **You'll gain incredible peace of mind.** As a business owner, you already have enough to worry about. We'll make sure everything pertaining to your network security and reliability is handled so you don't have to worry about it.



## We Have A Service Level to Suit All Businesses At A Price To Suit All Budgets

Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Level 1 Response Time	1 day	6 hours	4 hours	2 hours
Level 2 Response Time	3 days	2 days	1 day	8 hour or less
On-site scheduling of technician	2-3 days	1-2 days	Next Day	Next Day
Overnight/ Weekend Support	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included 2x hourly rate	Included 1.5 x hourly rate
Phone and Remote Support Sessions (15minute increments)	NOT Inc.	1 hour included for every \$300 spend	Included	Included
<b>24-7 Remote Monitoring</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Server stability and performance</li> <li>▪ Notification of unusual events</li> <li>▪ Daily back up monitoring</li> <li>▪ Daily firewall monitoring</li> </ul>	Included	Included	Included	Included
Executive Summary Monthly Report	Included	Included	Included	Included
Virus Definition Updates	Included	Included	Included	Included
Unlimited Remote Patch Mgmt.	Included	Included	Included	Included
Online custom client portal	Included	Included	Included	Included
Creation of AUP (acceptable user policy)	NOT Inc.	Included	Included	Included
Daily system status e-mail	NOT Inc.	Included	Included	Included
Quarterly review and planning meeting	NOT Inc.	Included	Included	Included
Unlimited software upgrades*	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included	Included
Spyware monitoring and removal	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included	Included
Monthly on-site audit and network tune-up	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Monitored Acronis Imaging of Server	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Recovery of server in case of complete disaster	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Installation of new hardware *	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Virus REMOVAL and cleaning	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Loaner PC/Server	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Vendor liaison*	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
Shopping and ordering warranty parts*	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included
<b>100% No-Hassle Guarantee</b>	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	NOT Inc.	Included

**Don't Take Our Word For It;  
Just Listen To What Our Customers Have To Say...**

**Responsive and Effective .. improved efficiency in the workplace**

"We have found them to be extremely responsive and effective at dealing with issues that we might have relating to our IT requirements. This includes the setting up of communications technology, as well as recommendations on solutions for improved efficiency in the workplace, and the cost effective supply of computer equipment"

**Rob Hardy (Managing Director) - Time Life Australia P/L**

**Effective in saving us money**

"Nortec has always advised our company appropriately for all of our business needs and they are very effective in saving us money on our IT needs"

**Kristin Jorgensin (Company Director) - TriFlex Electrical**

**DRP: Was done within 24 hours and we had a 100% success rate"**

"every year we have an exercise where Nortec executes our DR plan and to get our staff and part of the operations centre up and running again"... "This year's exercise was done within 24 hours and we had a 100% success rate"

**Operations Manager of a Major Sydney Infrastructure Company**

"Nortec have been extremely helpful, assisting us with our network, web development and hosting. [www.murdermysterytogo.com.au](http://www.murdermysterytogo.com.au) **Tikki Durrant - MD**



## Services We Offer

- Managed Services
- Computer and Network Maintenance
- Online Store – For quick ordering of hardware and consumables.
- Online Remote Backup
- Disaster Recovery Services (DRP)
- 24x7 Network, Security, and Backup Monitoring Systems
- Network Documentation/Policies, Best Practices, and Knowledge Management
- Help Desk Support
- Voice Over IP (VoIP) Telephone Systems
- Accounting Software Services and Consulting
- Security – Audits, Firewalls, Anti-spyware, Anti-Spam, Intrusion Prevention, Content Filtering
- Broadband and VPN Links (Remote Access)
- DNS Management Hosting and Web Hosting.
- Wireless broadband (Telstra Dealer)
- Virtualization



## FREE Problem Prevention Audit for All New Customers

As a prospective customer, we would like to offer you a \$495 Problem Prevention Audit of your computer network for FREE. At no charge we will send a senior engineer to your office to conduct a thorough assessment of your network. Upon completion, we will be able to;

- ✓ **Pinpoint any exposure or risk** to potential lapses in security, data backup, power outages, and system down-time.
- ✓ **Outline a powerful and comprehensive line of defense** against even the most evasive and deadly computer viruses, hackers, and spam for your specific network.
- ✓ **Recommend ways to speed up your entire computer network while cutting costs** on your Internet Service bill, e-mail, and possibly even your phone bill!
- ✓ **Create Initial Network Documentation (that's basically a blueprint or index of your entire network).** This document allows any technician to know exactly how your network is configured at a glance, saving you precious consulting time trying to figure out what's under the hood.

We will also provide you with a detailed written report in plain English that outlines where you are at high risk for viruses, down-time, or other problems, and how we can eliminate those risks with our Hassle Free Network Management Plan.

To schedule your **FREE 27-Point Problem Prevention Audit** simply give us a call or send in the enclosed fax-back form. Either way I will contact you immediately to schedule your audit and answer any questions you have about this exciting new service.

Good Networking,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Norris'.

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**Fax this form to 02 9899 8125**

I would like to set up a time for our FREE Problem Prevention Audit Worth \$495	
I would like to receive a copy of the FREE Report: <b>“What Every Small Business Owner Must Know About Protecting And Preserving Their Company’s Critical Data And Computer Systems”</b>	
I would like to receive your newsletter that provides news and information about good technology practices, “how-to” articles, product reviews, and information about free tools, tips, and templates.	

Name

Company

Street Address

City/State/Zip

Telephone #

Email Address

If there is anyone else in your organization that would like to receive our newsletter, list their email addresses below.


Email Addresses


Email Addresses