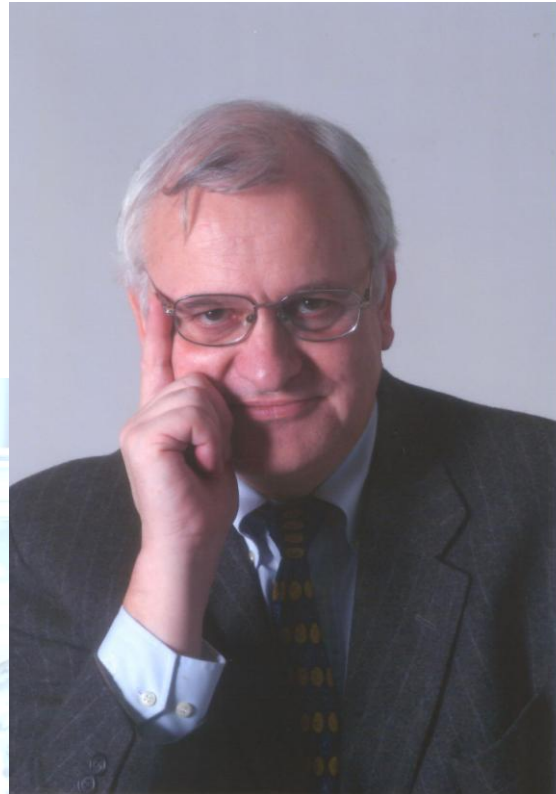


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ITMatters

In this regular column Charles Zealey of ITSolve covers all aspects of business and personal computing. If you have a question about IT matters, email it to Charles on itmatters@itsolve.co.uk



THE CASE FOR A SERVER

Growing businesses need to invest in their IT Infrastructure. And at some point it makes sense to centralise some or most of the computing functions in one place. This is a server. As a rule of thumb ITSolve recommends that any business with five or more computer users should consider a server. Why?

FILE STORAGE

Mainly because it centralises file storage. A dedicated server makes it far easier to have a single filing system that everyone accesses rather than individuals having their own files on their own PCs stored in a way understood only by them. And, by default, the central version must be the latest.

DISK PROTECTION

Most modern servers also make use of several disks (RAID) meaning that in the event of one disk failing the system will continue to operate, with no loss of data, until the faulty disk can be replaced.

BACKUP

Servers also play a vital role in simplifying data backup. Once a common storage is established it becomes far easier to arrange backup, and make the business and its data much more secure.

USER MOBILITY

A server provides a central place for all users and defines their access rights, or settings. When correctly set-up this means that users can use any free PC, rather than being tied

to the one on their desk. Thus, if a particular PC should fail the affected person simply uses another available machine while the broken one is dealt with: no work lost, and no time lost either. What's more, a replacement or new PC is simple to join to the network.

OTHER SERVICES

You can also choose to use the server for a range of other services such as email, shared facilities such as calendars, a database, or enable it to function as a web server either for internal use (intranet) or grant wider access via the internet.

And, as your needs develop you may find external access to the server is required by home or workers who are out and about. With an appropriate server all these can easily be accommodated.

A significant number of businesses will benefit by moving to a server-based system. Are you one of them?

Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/. For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email lisa@itsolve.co.uk.

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