



FCS TECH TALK

Your Trusted
Technology Partner Since 1989

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Build a Smart IT Refresh Plan

Page 1

Automation with Power Automate

Page 2

The Smart Choice for Small Businesses

Page 2



Restarting Your Computer

Page 2

Common Support Scams

Page 3

Trivia Question of the Month

Page 3

DON'T LET OUTDATED TECH SLOW YOU DOWN: BUILD A SMART IT REFRESH PLAN

In today's fast-paced business environment, speed, security, and efficiency are more important than ever.

Yet, many organizations—especially small to medium-sized businesses—find themselves stuck using outdated computers, aging servers, and unsupported software. This not only slows down productivity but also opens the door to major security risks.

If you're still holding onto tech from a decade ago, it may be time for a change. The solution? A strategic IT refresh plan—a roadmap to upgrading your technology in a smart, cost-effective way.

What is an IT Refresh Plan?

An IT refresh plan is a scheduled and strategic approach to replacing aging hardware and software across your organization.

Rather than reacting to issues as they come up—like a hard drive failure, sluggish system, or unsupported operating system—you proactively phase out older systems before they become liabilities or points of failure.

Think of it as preventive maintenance for your business: less costly than emergency fixes, and a lot more predictable. A strong plan reduces downtime, improves security posture, and helps your employees work more efficiently with up-to-date tools.

The Cost of Outdated Technology

Sticking with old tech might seem like a way to save money, but it can actually cost you more in the long run. Here's how:

- Lost Productivity: Older devices take longer to boot, crash more often, and don't support the latest applications. This results in hours of lost work time, employee frustration, and slower customer response times.

• Security Risks: Unsupported software (like Windows 10 after October 2025) no longer receives security updates, leaving you exposed to known vulnerabilities. Hackers actively target

- businesses running outdated systems because they're easier to breach.
- Compatibility Issues: New business software and platforms may not run on older operating systems or hardware. This prevents you from taking advantage of cloud applications, cybersecurity tools, and efficiency-enhancing platforms.

• Higher Support Costs: As systems age, maintenance becomes more frequent—and more expensive. Replacement parts are often discontinued, and outdated systems require more hands-on support from IT staff or your provider.

Key Components of a Smart IT Refresh Plan

Creating a refresh plan doesn't have to be overwhelming. Start with these key steps:

1. *Inventory Your Current Technology*
Start by listing all the devices and software in use. Include:

- Computers and laptops used by staff

• Servers, firewalls, and networking gear

• Operating systems (Windows, macOS) and critical software apps

Document the age, performance, operating system version, warranty expiration date, and any known issues with each piece of tech. This gives you a clear view of what needs immediate attention and what can wait.

2. *Identify Critical Systems and Weak Links*
Next, evaluate which systems are essential to daily operations and which are consistently problematic. Prioritize devices that:

- Are more than 4–5 years old

• Run outdated or soon-to-be unsupported operating systems (like Windows 10)

• Show frequent crashes, lag, or application compatibility problems

Also, assess systems that may pose a security or compliance risk, especially if your business handles sensitive data (e.g., customer info, health records, or payment information).

3. *Plan Refresh Cycles*
Develop a phased schedule for upgrading tech. For most businesses:
- Desktops/laptops: Replace every 4–5 years to maintain speed, reliability, and security

• Servers: Replace every 5–7 years to ensure system uptime and performance

• Networking equipment: Replace every 5 years to keep up with bandwidth needs and reduce connection issues

• Software licenses: Audit annually and fully replace or upgrade every 3–4 years to avoid functionality gaps or vulnerabilities

You can stagger upgrades by department or role (e.g., power users first, administrative staff next), which helps spread out the financial investment.

4. *Consider Cloud and Virtual Options*
Not every upgrade needs to involve new physical equipment. Depending on your setup and growth goals, explore:
- Cloud-based apps like Microsoft 365 reduce reliance on local servers. SharePoint is a great solution for businesses looking to store their data in the cloud while allowing for access for all users in their company from anywhere

• Virtual desktops that let staff access work environments securely from anywhere with minimal local hardware needs

These alternatives can boost agility, cut costs, and simplify management, especially for remote or hybrid workforces.

How FCS Can Help

Tackling an IT refresh on your own can be time-consuming, complex, and expensive—especially if you're unsure where to start or how to get the best value. That's where we can help! We take the heavy lifting off your plate while ensuring every step of the process is handled professionally, securely, and with your long-term goals in mind. Here's how we can help:

✓ *Perform a Comprehensive Technology Audit*

- This includes:
- Evaluating every workstation, server, network device, and software license

• Identifying aging hardware, security risks, and performance bottlenecks

• Providing a clear view of what's working, what needs attention, and what must be replaced
- This audit is customized to your industry and business size, ensuring we focus on the tools and systems that impact your operations the most.
- 📌 *Build a Customized IT Refresh Roadmap*

- This includes:
- Prioritizing upgrades based on urgency and business impact

• Spreading upgrades over time to manage costs and minimize disruption

• Aligning technology upgrades with your growth plans, compliance requirements, and security goals

This roadmap gives you a clear, long-term path to modernizing your technology without unexpected costs or downtime.

■ *Recommend Best-Fit Hardware and Software*

- Our recommendations consider:
- Software compatibility and performance expectations

• Energy efficiency, device longevity, and future scalability

• Licensing options (subscription vs. perpetual) that fit your budget and compliance needs

Whether you need high-performance laptops for mobile teams or simple desktops for administrative roles, we match you with the right tools—not just the most expensive ones.

✓ *We are a Dell Certified Reseller*

- That means:
- Access to exclusive business-class models not available in retail stores

• Preferred pricing on desktops, laptops, monitors, and accessories

• Reliable, business-focused devices with better warranties and support options

Be proactive with an IT Refresh Plan!



THIS MONTH'S PRODUCT
SPOTLIGHT

CLICK TO VIEW A SHORT
VIDEO!



MICROSOFT
365 BACKUP

RESTORE LOST
DATA



INFINITE DATA
RETENTION

STORE ALL M365
DATA



AUTOMATIC
DAILY BACKUPS

SAVE TIME AND MONEY BY AUTOMATING
WORKFLOWS WITH POWER AUTOMATE

From chasing approvals to manually updating spreadsheets, it's easy for your team to get stuck doing time-consuming tasks that drag down productivity.

That's where smart IT solutions come in, and one of the most effective tools available today is Microsoft Power Automate.

What is Microsoft Power Automate?

Power Automate is a tool offered by Microsoft for business automation purposes, designed to assist companies in developing workflows for routine tasks such as notifications, file copying, requesting approvals, and more.

The best part? You don't need to be a tech expert to use it. Power Automate uses a simple drag-and-drop interface that works across desktop, mobile, Microsoft Teams, and the browser.

Why It's a Game-Changer for SMBs

For small and medium businesses, every bit of time saved matters.

Power Automate allows you to build workflows (called "flows") that eliminate manual steps and speed things up, without hiring developers or buying extra tools.

- Key Features That Make It Work**
- **Templates:** There are prebuilt templates that can be used for frequent activities.
 - **Connectors:** More than 300 built-in connectors available for popular applications.
 - **Triggers and actions:** Each flow has a trigger that starts it.
 - **Cross-platform use:** Available via Microsoft Teams, mobile, desktop, and browser.

Getting started with Power Automate is easier than you think. Log into Microsoft 365, open Power Automate, pick a template or build your own, customize, and save. It runs in the background automatically.

Power Automate helps small businesses ditch the busywork. Ready to streamline your workflows? Contact us today to get started.



WHY BUSINESS-CLASS LAPTOPS AND DESKTOPS
MATTER: THE SMART CHOICE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

When it comes to technology, many small businesses fall into the trap of choosing consumer-grade laptops or desktops simply because they're cheaper upfront or more widely available at big-box retailers. But what looks like a great deal at first can lead to more problems, downtime, and expenses down the line.

That's why investing in business-class computers—whether laptops or desktops—isn't just a matter of preference; it's a strategic decision that pays off in reliability, performance, and long-term value.

What Is a Business-Class Device?

A business-class laptop or desktop is designed specifically for professional use in an office environment. Unlike consumer models that prioritize aesthetics, price, or entertainment features, business-class systems focus on:

- Longevity and durability
- Higher security standards
- Manageability and serviceability
- Performance consistency
- Warranty and vendor support

Brands like Dell (Latitude, OptiPlex), HP (ProBook, EliteBook, ProDesk), and Lenovo (ThinkPad, ThinkCentre) all offer lines of hardware designed for business environments.

Why Small Businesses Should Choose Business-Class Devices

1. Built to Last
Business-class machines are engineered with higher-quality materials and more rigorous testing standards. Components such as keyboards, hinges, cooling systems, and motherboards are designed for daily, all-day use and frequent transport (especially for laptops).

Consumer-grade devices, on the other hand, are often built with cheaper plastic components, which can wear out or break more easily under regular business use.

2. Longer Life Cycles
Manufacturers typically support business-class models for several years longer than consumer lines. This means:

- Drivers and firmware are updated for longer periods
- Parts and accessories remain available
- You can standardize devices across teams over time

This longevity reduces the need to replace equipment frequently, saving you money and time in the long run.

3. Better Security Features
Security is non-negotiable in today's threat landscape, especially with phishing,

ransomware, and data breaches on the rise. Business-class devices often come with:

- Hardware-based encryption (like TPM chips)
- Biometric login (fingerprint readers, facial recognition)
- BIOS-level security and lockout options
- Remote management capabilities

Many consumer-grade machines lack these features entirely—or only offer watered-down versions that are harder to manage and less secure.

4. Reliable Warranty and Support
Business-class computers typically include:

- Next-business-day on-site support
- Proactive diagnostics and management tools
- Longer, customizable warranties

This is crucial for small businesses that can't afford extended downtime or can't wait days for a mail-in repair. With brands like Dell and HP, you can get on-site service and expedited parts delivery for faster recovery when issues arise.

5. Improved Performance for Business Use
Business-class systems are optimized for real-world productivity tasks:

- Running multiple applications (email, CRM, spreadsheets, cloud apps)
- Handling remote work tools (VPNs, video conferencing, file syncing)
- Managing virtual desktops or server environments

You'll often find more power-efficient processors, upgradable components, and higher RAM capacity than what's offered in consumer counterparts.

6. Easier to Manage and Standardize
If you manage multiple computers across a team, standardization is key. Business-class devices make it easier to:

- Use the same model across departments for consistency
- Deploy updates and security patches using management tools
- Replace components and accessories (like docking stations or batteries) across multiple devices

This greatly simplifies IT support—by having all devices standardized troubleshooting can be streamlined.

Final Thoughts
Using the right tools is key to running an efficient, secure, and scalable small business. While consumer-grade devices may seem like a bargain, they're not built for the demands of the workplace.

Business-class desktops and laptops are designed for what you do every day—and they're built to keep up with your goals. Don't cut corners on the technology that powers your business. *Choose wisely. Invest in business-class.*

THE HIDDEN POWER OF RESTARTING YOUR COMPUTER:
WHY IT MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK

In the world of IT, some of the most effective solutions are also the simplest. One of the most common phrases you'll hear from a technician is, "Have you tried restarting it?" While it may sound like a tech cliché, restarting your computer regularly is one of the easiest and most effective things you can do to maintain system health, security, and performance—yet it's often overlooked.

Many employees leave their computers running for days or even weeks at a time, relying on sleep or hibernation modes to save time. While convenient, this habit can quietly contribute to a range of issues that build up over time—affecting everything from performance to security to the success of your updates.

Let's break down why restarting your computer regularly is so important, and what actually happens behind the scenes when you do it.

What Happens When You Restart?
Restarting your computer isn't just about turning it off and on—it clears out temporary memory, finishes installing updates, and resets background processes. This helps fix slow performance, stuck applications, and connectivity issues. It's like giving your computer a fresh start to run smoother and more reliably.

Security Benefits of Restarting.
Regular restarts help apply critical security patches, activate antivirus updates, and remove temporary threats like malicious scripts or hijacked browser sessions. Without a reboot, your system may appear updated but still be vulnerable to known exploits.

How Often Should You Restart?
We recommend restarting at least once a week—or more often if you run multiple apps, work in the cloud, or experience slowness. You should always reboot after updates, antivirus alerts, crashes, or network issues to ensure full system functionality.

Why Sleep Mode Isn't Enough
Sleep mode saves time but doesn't clear memory or apply updates. Over time, this can cause slowdowns, app glitches, and connection problems. Restarting fully is the only way to refresh your system and avoid these hidden issues.

Restarting Isn't Just Routine—It's Preventive Maintenance
Restarting your computer may seem like a minor task, but it's one of the simplest and most impactful habits you can build into your weekly routine






HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN SEARCHING FOR HELP ONLINE: BEWARE OF FAKE SUPPORT

When your software isn't working or your account is locked, your first instinct might be to search Google for a support number. But in today's digital world, that simple search could open the door to scammers who are ready to take your money, steal your identity, or infect your device.

Scammers know that when people are frustrated and need help fast, they're more likely to act quickly without double-checking where they're getting their information. That's why fake tech support numbers for popular companies like Microsoft, Intuit QuickBooks, Amazon, PayPal, and Norton are all over the internet—often listed on shady websites, fake ads, or even made to look like official pages. If you're not careful, you could end up calling a scammer instead of a real support agent.


Here's what you need to know to spot the fakes and stay protected.

 **What Are Fake Support Scams?**
Fake support scams involve fraudsters setting up phony websites or ads that claim to offer customer service for major brands. When a person calls the number, the scammer:

- Pretends to be a support agent for Microsoft, Amazon, QuickBooks, etc.
- Uses technical jargon or fake error messages to sound convincing
- Gains remote access to your computer or device
- Requests payment for fake services, extended warranties, or software
- Steals sensitive data like credit card numbers, login credentials, or tax info


These scams are highly organized and can be very convincing—especially because they often



show up at the top of search results thanks to paid ads or SEO tricks.

 **How They Trick You**
Here's how most people fall into the trap:





- You search online for "QuickBooks support number" or "Microsoft help desk."
- A sponsored result or unofficial site appears in the top few links.
- The website looks legitimate—with logos, support pages, and even chat bots.
- You call the number listed, not realizing it's a scam.
- The scammer asks to remote into your computer or install "fixes."
- You end up giving them access, money, or personal data.

The worst part? These scammers often leave your system compromised—planting malware, stealing files, or setting up future fraud attempts.

 **How to Stay Safe When Looking for Support**
Here are some practical steps you or your employees can take to ensure you're calling a legitimate support number:

-  **Go Directly to the Official Website**
Always type the company's official website into the address bar (e.g., www.microsoft.com, www.amazon.com, www.intuit.com). From there, navigate to their Contact Us or Support section.
- Never trust the first number that pops up on Google—scammers buy ads to appear at the top of the search results.
-  **Avoid "Support" Phone Numbers from Forums or Blogs**
Even well-meaning forums or blogs can accidentally post incorrect or outdated numbers—some of which may now belong to scammers.

Stick with official sources only when looking for contact information.

-  **Be Cautious of Pop-Ups or Urgent Warnings**
If you ever see a pop-up that says something like:
 - "Your computer is infected! Call Microsoft now!"
 - "Your QuickBooks has been locked—call this number immediately!"...that's a scam. Microsoft, Intuit, Amazon, and other real companies will never display phone numbers in pop-ups or warn you this way.
-  **Don't Let Anyone You Don't Trust Remote into Your Computer**
Real tech support agents from legitimate companies will never ask to remote into your machine unless you initiated the call through an official support channel. And even then, you should know who you're talking to and exactly why they need access.
-  **Never Pay in Gift Cards or Wire Transfers**
Scammers often request payment via gift cards, PayPal, or Zelle—methods that are hard to trace or reverse. A legitimate company will never ask for payment this way. If you're being asked to buy gift cards, read the numbers to someone on the phone, or send a wire transfer—hang up immediately.
-  **Real-World Example: The "QuickBooks Support" Scam**
Let's say you're having a problem with QuickBooks and search for "QuickBooks customer service phone number." One of the top results is a sponsored ad that looks like it's from Intuit. You call the number. The person on the line tells you there's a licensing error on your account and says they

need remote access to fix it. Then, they:

- Install remote control software (like AnyDesk or TeamViewer)
- Show you fake "errors" in the system logs
- Request payment to "fix" the problem or renew your license
- Ask for your Intuit login or financial details

Many businesses have lost thousands of dollars this way—and their data has been compromised in the process.

Best Practices for Businesses
If you're a business owner or manager, you should:

- Train staff to recognize tech support scams and know how to verify official contact methods
- Bookmark official support pages for vendors you regularly use (Microsoft, QuickBooks, Adobe, etc.)
- Partner with a Managed Service Provider (MSP) like Ferguson Computer Services—so your employees always have a trusted resource to contact when tech problems arise

When your staff has an IT issue, they should never be left to Google for help. Having a known, trusted contact point (like your MSP) can eliminate most of the risk.

Final Thoughts: Be Alert, Not Afraid
When in doubt, go straight to the source—and if you're not sure whether a number is real, contact us first. It only takes one mistake to compromise a device or lose money.

We are here to help you avoid these traps every day. If you or your staff ever feel unsure, call us first. We're here to help—no Googling required.

WE LOVE REFERRALS

The greatest gift anyone can give us is a referral to another business in need of IT services. Referrals help us keep costs down so we can pass the savings to our clients.

If your referral ends up becoming a client - we'll gift them their first month of service at no charge AND we'll gift you a \$500 Amazon Gift Voucher.

Simply introduce me via email to stan@fcskc.com and I'll take it from there. I personally promise we'll look after your referral's business with a high level of care and attention (just like we do with all our clients).

-Stan



We Want Your Feedback

Here at Ferguson Computer Services, we value your feedback greatly and would appreciate if you took time from your busy schedule to leave us a review. These reviews let us know what we are doing well and what we might be able to improve on in the future.



 [Leave a Google Review](#)  [Leave a Facebook Review](#)

TECHNOLOGY TRIVIA TIME

Technology Trivia Question of the Month! Send the correct answer to winner@fcskc.com to be entered to win a \$50 gift card to Amazon.

Here is July's question of the month:

True or False?
When searching for support, the 1st number that pops up for a company is always the best to use.

