

# Solutions

## Technology Planning & Budgeting

It's Sunday night and you are getting ready to go before a Judge in the morning. You have been at the office all day working and as you go to save your final document, you realize that your cursor is frozen on the screen. You cannot exit, you are frozen and you must shut down your pc. When you power your pc back on, your login to the network says "network connection cannot be found." You decide to venture into the room where the file server is located and you realize that all of the lights are off on the file server. Your file server is 5 years old and you have been trying to get your money's worth out of it. You go to the file server and nothing you do will get it back on. All of your documents are stored on the file server and now your pc cannot access the file server and the file server will not start. Your computer consultant has been recommending a new file server for the past 6 months, but you told him that you didn't want to replace it...

Technology planning and budgeting plays an important role in making sure that your computer network stays functional and operational. Every year you should make a technology plan and budget for the upcoming year. Sometimes this technology plan and budget will only be for maintaining hardware and software, and other years, it will include a budget for replacement of hardware and software.

For planning purposes, you must first consider the life expectancy of your computer hardware and software. Software life expectancy is determined by how often the software manufacturer releases new versions of software. Many software manufacturers release a new version every year. When software manufacturers release a new version every year, most firms will upgrade their software every other year. If you do not practice this method, then you should not be more than two versions behind the latest version of software. If you have any problems or issues with your software, you will want to be able to get technical support and most software manufacturers support two versions behind the latest version. The current problem with running one or two versions behind the latest version of software is Microsoft's Windows Vista Operating System. Firms are being forced to upgrade software since the introduction of Windows Vista in February 2007.

Many Windows Vista compliant software applications have been released only within the past 9-12 months. If you are not on a Windows Vista compliant version, the software will not run properly on a Windows Vista pc. It is important to take a look at your software applications and start upgrading them to Windows Vista compliant software, since it is just a matter of time before you will have to install a Windows Vista pc in your office. If something happens to an existing pc and you have to install a Windows Vista pc, it will cause a snowball affect, because all of your software applications will also need to be replaced at that time. This is a very important reason to plan your software upgrades and to start upgrading to Windows Vista compliant software versions. Also, in a business environment, you should not buy a pc with Windows Vista Home Edition. You should purchase a pc with Windows Vista Business Edition or Windows Vista Ultimate Edition.

Computer hardware has different life expectancies. Your Pc's, notebooks, and file servers, all have a life expectancy of 4 years. Although pc's and file servers will perform longer than 4 years, typically within a 4 year time period new operating systems have been released and the new versions of software will require more RAM and more hard disk space than your current pc has installed. Also, processor speeds on new pc's and file servers typically double every 4 years. Therefore, software manufacturers write their new versions of software for faster pc's with more RAM and newer operating systems. There is a constant battle between hardware and software. Your laser printers, computer monitors, surge protectors and UPS's (uninterruptible power supplies) should have a life expectancy of at least 6 years or more. The Firewalls/VPN devices you use on your network have a life expectancy of four to six years. Even though they will continue to work, you will need to replace them because you will not be able to put the latest security updates on your older model. You will know when it is time to upgrade, because you will not want your computer network's security to be compromised.

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Planning for the replacement of pc's and file servers is extremely important. The implementation process and installation of new equipment goes much smoother when it has been planned and scheduled. If you wait until an emergency arises; such as, a failed file server, the installation will be rushed and you will definitely experience a greater amount of down time, since you will have to wait for equipment to be ordered, delivered, and prepped before the installation. Plus, it can be difficult to retrieve data files from faulty equipment.

Every firm should develop a yearly technology budget. Some firms replace all of their pc and file servers every four years. These firms will sign a 48 month lease for all of the hardware, software, and services. The first two years of a new network's life, there are very few maintenance costs, since everything is new. Another approach to budgeting is to replace the file servers every 4 years and every year in between, replace one third of the pc. Also, do not forget that there is a cost to maintaining your computer hardware and software. You will have to budget for annual renewals of software; such as, virus scan software, anti-spyware software, and spam filtering software. Also, budget for just general maintenance of your pc.

Meet with your computer consultant or IT person at least once a year to discuss the age of your equipment and to decide whether or not you will be able to get another year out of it. Discuss the latest versions of software and whether it is time to upgrade your software. Also take this opportunity to have your consultant educate you about new technology so that you can think about whether or not it will be beneficial your firm.

You wake up Monday morning and realize it was just a horrible dream. You smile. You replaced your file server months ago!

*For more information contact Alicia Slade at ext. 202*



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## Time Matters Service Release 3

Lexis Nexis, the manufacturer of Time Matters and Billing Matters, has made Service Releases (SR-3) for Time Matters 9.0 and Billing Matters 9.0. The SR-3 release contain the following new features and enhancements:

- Time Matters now supports Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro link.
- There is now an option to enhance conflict of interest report-list format only, the report now uses a landscape orientation instead of a portrait orientation.
- With SR-3 release of Time Matters 9.0, users now have the ability to set a default extension (i.e., .doc, .docx) that will be used to identify the document type.
- There have been Synchronization enhancements between Time Matters and the applications and/or databases that have been enhanced to add additional options for Event, ToDo, and Contact records.
- Email attachments can grow very large over time. Often, it is desirable to delete attachments that are out dated or no longer necessary, but keep the message.
- Users can now move legacy email attachments from a file system to the Time Matters database or from the database to a file system to minimize the database size.
- Using TM Connect, you can select multiple email items in Microsoft Outlook and import them to Time Matters as a group. You can specify a Contact and Matter to associate with all the emails and a Classification Code to apply to them, and set rules for handling files attached to the emails.
- Time Matters 9.0 supports the BlackBerry Operating Systems 4.5 and 4.6. There is no documentation updates required to reflect this support.

Please contact Plummer Slade's Time Matters Certified Consultants for assistance with the installation of the Service Release. ☎

*For more information contact Leslie Hennessy at ext. 228*



## Timeslips Service Release 1

Sage Software, Timeslips manufacturer, has made available Service Release (SR-1) for Timeslips 2008. The SR resolves the following issues with the Timeslips 2008 Software:

- When the timekeeper summary table is included on a pre-bill or bill the correct hourly total and billing rate will appear for each time keeper.
- Invoice numbers are now able to be displayed in the bill's header.
- Bills will follow the appropriate hour format and date settings from each client's bill layout.
- Bills that use layouts that include the slip selection will show hours in decimals (i.e. 1 hour and 15 minutes = 1.25 rather than 1.15:00).
- Abbreviations will no longer add extra carriage returns and will expand properly regardless of spelling preferences or newly created abbreviations.
- Text is no longer cleared when new abbreviations are created.
- Formatting buttons are available within the *Abbreviation Entry* dialog box. This allows for bold, italicize, underline, or to add private text to abbreviations.
- Creation of new abbreviations can be prevented through security settings.
- Capitalization will be applied to abbreviations depending on how they are typed in (i.e. tc = telephone conference, Tc = Telephone conference).
- Latest edits to abbreviations will display when the abbreviation list is opened.
- Text is no longer reformatted when it is entered for an abbreviation prompt.
- The location for personal abbreviations now defaults to the installation folder.
- Incorrect bank codes are no longer added to bank account descriptions when abbreviations are used.
- The abbreviation list no longer includes additional codes.
- The location of spelling and grammar issues now displays at the top of the dialog box when the spell check is run.
- The buttons at the bottom of the Purge dialog box will always be available.

Please contact Plummer Slade's Timeslips Certified Consultants for assistance with the installation of the Service Release. ☎

*For more information contact Leslie Hennessy at ext. 228*

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N E W S L E T T E R

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<b>WHAT'S HAPPENING...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remember Daylight Savings Time will begin on Sunday, November 2, 2008. Be sure to turn your clocks back one hour. If you need assistance with the DST patch so that your PCs will automatically update for the time change, do not hesitate to contact us.</li></ul>