

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. I've had a few questions on upgrading computers, so I'll address some of them in this month's article.

You may be planning some computer and network upgrades for this year and you may be wondering what the priorities for upgrading are. You should be aware that Microsoft stopped First Level support for Windows NT on Dec. 31, 2004 and will be stopping support for Windows 98 and ME in the middle of this year. This means that computers running these operating systems should be a priority for replacement.

If you are using Windows NT servers on your network you should definitely think about upgrading them to Windows Server 2003. One thing to note here is that while some computers running Windows NT server may be able to run Windows Server 2003, it is best to replace the computer. The hardware is relatively inexpensive and all vendors are giving a great price break on the software when purchased with a computer. The same can be said for Windows NT Workstations, they should be upgraded to Windows XP Professional computers.

If you have computers running Windows 98 or ME, they are your next candidates for upgrades. While it is possible to upgrade a Windows 98 computer to Windows XP Professional, this is not the case for Windows ME. So you need to look at the Windows 98 computers and see if they are upgradeable to Windows XP or not. This will depend on CPU speed, available RAM, hard drive size and available ports. While it is not possible to upgrade a Windows ME computer, it is possible to do a full install of Windows XP Pro on them. There are the same requirements for this as Windows 98 except a full version of Windows XP Pro is needed.

There is one main factor in your decision to upgrade your computers and that is the requirements of applications that you're currently using. You need to check those business or production applications to make sure that they're supported for running on the new operating systems and computers. Most applications have newer versions that support the new equipment and operating systems. But there are some that do not or have not yet supported them. One main factor is Service Pack 2 for Windows XP, which you'll get when you order a new computer, may still cause problems with some applications.

Hopefully, you'll be able to determine your upgrade priorities. But if you need assistance, let me know.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.