

**April 2007**[PDF Version](#) [Email to a Friend](#)

Beware of Hidden Costs When Purchasing Workstations

Purchasing new workstations for your school can be a very exciting but costly decision for a school district. The apparent cost to most Superintendents and Business Administrators is the price of each new workstation when purchased. However, there can be a variety of hidden costs associated with the purchase of a new workstation that do not become evident to many Superintendents and Business Administrators until it is being installed.

Let's look at some of these hidden costs so you are aware of them and can plan for them with the purchase of each new workstation.

Hidden Cost 1: New Software

One important question that you will want to ask before purchasing a new workstation is: Will the existing software operate on the new workstation?

Let's say for example you are planning to purchase 100 new workstations with the Windows Vista operating system. The first question you should ask prior to such a purchase is: Will my current software work with Vista? With the release of a new operating system such as Vista, your older software may not work or possibly perform poorly. Find out from each software vendor directly if the version of software your district owns will operate as intended.

More than likely there will be applications that you will need to either upgrade or eliminate entirely during the implementation of the new workstations. Price out the cost for replacement or upgraded software ahead of time to avoid unpleasant budget surprises.

Hidden Cost 2: Data Migration

Many school districts often save data locally on its individual workstations rather than its school's file servers – though this is not recommended, some school districts operate this way.

If this is the case in your school district, take into account the additional cost incurred in the migration of this data set, along with each user's local profile information, to the new workstation. In many cases this can add one to two hours of engineer time onto the price of the new workstation. Multiply this by the number of workstations (20, 50, 100, etc.) and you can see how this can severely impact your school's technology budget.

Hidden Cost 3: Cabling, Access Point and/or Network Switch Upgrades

Is there a cable run installed for the new workstation? Are there enough jacks in your network switch to plug it in? If you are running a wireless network, will the additional bandwidth impact performance in a negative fashion? These are all questions that you will need to look at prior to your purchase to insure you are not hit with a hidden expense.

These are three common budget items that are often never taken into account before purchasing and implementing new workstations. Keep these items in mind and you can save yourself and your district a lot of time, energy and dollars when it comes to rolling out new workstations for your school.

Enjoy your spring,



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