

# Refurbished Computers: Major savings or major headache?

Can you really save money by purchasing refurbished computers for your office?

As a small business owner, minimizing expenses is a high priority. But it's also crucial to evaluate how minimizing expenses will affect how your business operates. Whether it is making a change to your cell phone carrier, changing a provider service plan or choosing low cost equipment that looks like it will fulfill your needs, it's important to understand the hidden costs involved when you're trying to save money.

One way to stay within budget is to buy computers on the refurbished market. These are computers that have been returned after a 3-year lease or sometimes recovered after a company goes out of business. Buying a refurbished computer can be a good decision for an individual looking for a discount or to replace a specific model computer. But businesses of any size should consider the implications before purchasing refurbished equipment.

Here's an example of a situation that can occur when installing refurbished computers in an office setting.

Recently, a busy dental office saved \$3000.00 by installing refurbished computers as an upgrade to their practice management environment. The systems came pre-installed with the new release of Windows 10. The staff was excited. Everyone could finally work on their computers after a day of configuring software and customizing desktops.

The following afternoon MS Windows began an automatic update to all of the new computers at the same time, cutting off access to all computers in the dental practice. Most of the staff couldn't work, and the practice management system was not accessible. This update process lasted the entire afternoon. The staff couldn't check in patients. The dentists couldn't view x-rays. The billing system was inaccessible.

What caused all of this? For starters, an incompatible component in the "new" computers stopped the Microsoft Windows updates from installing successfully. Then, there were more disruptions because of Microsoft's major change in the way updates are applied in Windows 10. For this office, the worst part was that the update failed after running for two hours on all the computers, and then the cycle began all over again. This pattern resulted in two full days of disrupted office workflow, as well as major stress to everyone involved.

The office found a temporary fix by disabling Windows Updates. But this would create a long-term issue of exposing the office to any existing security vulnerabilities.

How can an office avoid this type of problem? The final answer is to be very careful before purchasing refurbished computers. Take extra measures to determine if the computers you're considering will handle your office management software, your network, and yes, Windows 10 updates. It is important to compare your budget for purchasing hardware (or any other equipment for that matter) with the cost of productivity disruptions or downtime in case something goes wrong. In the case of the above dental office, any savings achieved by purchasing refurbished computers was lost because of the downtime caused by that same purchase.

**Bottom line: Before you make the decision to purchase refurbished computers, or any other technology or equipment, contact a reliable technology professional to help assess how the new equipment can affect your systems.**