

# Information Technology

## “My Accounts Aren’t Over-sold, but They’re Not Under-Machined!”

### Part 3: Computer Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategy? Who needs that? “We have our new machines; don’t we just hook them together and turn them on?” OK, but what about all the programs, data, e-mail, Internet favorites, and the all-important picture of your pet on the desktop?

In the last two columns we discussed needs and purchasing strategies. This time we’ll discuss implementation, how to introduce new technology, and training, focusing on the issues faced by small and mid-size organizations installing up to 10 machines at once.

The two critical questions are where the data is and whether the new machines need to be individually tailored. In a small office (fewer than 5 users), I’ve seen that PCs are usually very different, so a new machine has to replicate the old one as closely as possible, with the same programs, data and settings. Doing this by hand, reinstalling all the programs, copying data and e-mail, and recreating the settings is tedious and difficult. Fortunately, there are tools to help. I’ve had success with a program called PC Relocator, which largely automates this process. It’s not perfect: there are always some programs to be reinstalled or settings to be recreated, but it does about 60-80% of the work. Note that you are still required to have valid licenses for software. Windows XP includes a “Files and Settings Transfer Wizard”, which works quite well, but doesn’t move programs. (Make sure that everything you need was copied before letting go of the old computer.)

If several new computers are for users with similar needs, then they can be set up in one location and then delivered to users. Making careful notes when setting up the first one will save time with the others, even if tools are not used. If you’re putting in more than 10 systems at once or 20 in phases, then investing in the sophisticated tools that are available to automate much of the work will pay off quickly. Again, tools do not relieve you of licensing requirements.

Finally, don’t forget that fancy hardware and software won’t help people unless those people know how to use them. Investing in training may well produce a better return than the new equipment alone.

*This column by Denis Williamson of MacLamor Computer Consulting aims to help readers maximize the value of information technology. You can reach Denis at 845-357-1877 or [denis@maclamor.com](mailto:denis@maclamor.com). Past columns are available at [www.maclamor.com](http://www.maclamor.com).*