

Guide to Choosing an Honest, Reliable, and Competent Computer Consultant

Trust Your Computer or Network to eSudo!

Working with the wrong computer consultant can be incredibly frustrating and expensive; you could end up losing all of your irreplaceable files, data, reports, customer contacts, e-mails, and other important documents!

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- ✓ Beware of computer scams and rip-offs.
- ✓ 5 costly misconceptions about computer maintenance and repair.
- ✓ 7 questions to ask before buying any computer equipment.
- ✓ 5 critical characteristics you should demand from your computer consultant.
- ✓ Why you need to avoid “cheap” or “bargain” computer consultants.

Provided as an educational service by:

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Dear Computer User:

There are no shortages of horror stories about fly-by-night computer firms causing problems as a result of their unethical or incompetent behavior. If you talk to your own friends and family you will get an ear-full of the unfortunate experiences they have encountered in this area.

The computer industry, along with many other industries, has its own share of unethical businesses which will always try to take advantage of you. Fortunately, businesses like these are the minority, but we know they exist because we have had a number of customers come to us to clean up the disasters.

Another big problem in the computer industry is that it is not regulated. Automotive repair shops, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, realtors, dentists, doctors, accountants, and even restaurants (to name a few) are heavily regulated to protect the consumer. However, the computer industry is still very new and there aren't any protective laws in place.

Anyone who can reboot a computer can market themselves as a computer technician. Even if they are honestly trying to do a good job for you, their inexperience can cost you dearly in terms of your computer's performance or in lost or corrupt data files.

The information in this Guide is provided to help raise standards within the computer support industry, and to give you useful information to help you guard against the unethical practice or incompetence of some companies and technicians.

The Five Most Costly Misconceptions about Computer Maintenance and Repair

#1: If your computer is working fine right now, it does not need any maintenance.

This is probably one of the biggest misconceptions that most computer users fall victim to. Computers are just like cars. If you don't change the oil, change the filter, rotate the tires, flush the transmission, and perform other regular maintenance on your car, it will eventually break down and cost you far more to repair than the cost of the basic maintenance.

There are certain maintenance checks that need to be done daily (like virus updates and spam filtering), weekly (like system backups), and monthly or quarterly (like checking for and installing security patches and updates, disk defrag, spyware detection and removal, checking the surge suppressor and the integrity of the hard drive, and so forth). Your computer consultant should be adamant that you have regular maintenance done on your computer and should offer to set up automatic virus definition updates, spam filtering (to avoid unsolicited emails), and automatic system backups off-site.

If your consultant does not press you to do this, then run (don't walk) out of their office. Lack of system maintenance is the number one reason most people end up losing valuable files and incurring heavy computer service bills. If your consultant isn't offering you these services, you need to find someone else to support your computer or network for two reasons:

1. Either they don't know enough to make this recommendation, which is a sure sign they are horribly inexperienced, or
2. They recognize that they are profiting from your computer problems and don't want to recommend steps towards preventing you from needing their help on an ongoing basis.

Either reason is a good one to get as far away from that consultant as possible!

#2: The maintenance tools provided in the Microsoft Operating System and software are all the maintenance you need.

This is a terrible misconception. Microsoft does not include all of the security features to protect your data from viruses, hackers, and data loss or prevent your PC from running slowly.

Additionally, Microsoft (and other software vendors for that matter) is constantly providing critical patches and updates to their software to protect you from viruses and hackers. If you don't know to look for them, or if you don't know how to install them properly, you could easily end up getting burned.

#3: My nephew/neighbor's kid/brother-in-law knows this computer stuff and can help me solve my problems.

If only this were true. Obviously not all consultants are created equal. Just because a person is good with computer applications does not mean they know how to install a critical security patch, detect and extract a deadly virus, or upgrade your computer.

Most people look for a part time "guru" to help them save money, but this often comes back to haunt them. We get new customers who contact us to clean up a mess that was caused by an inexperienced employee, coworker, or friend who was just trying to help. If the person you have working on your computer does not do computer support for a living, there is a good chance they won't have the knowledge or experience to truly help you. Technology advances at lightening speed and it takes constant learning and practice to master it. If your part-time consultant is not working on PCs and networks every day, they probably only know enough to be dangerous.

#4: You can always get a better deal on computer software, equipment, or services by shopping online.

The key word here is “deal”. Sure you can always find a cheaper price if you shop online, but you might actually end up getting the short end of the stick. As with anything in life, you get what you pay for. Companies simply cannot give you dirt cheap prices and quality service.

If you are getting a cheap bargain, chances are you will get very little if no service after the sale. If something goes wrong, or if you just have a question, you might find out that the customer service line only goes to a voice mail box that never gets checked, or that you have to submit questions via e-mail that takes weeks to return.

Before you buy any computer equipment, make sure you know the answers to these questions:

1. How long have they been in business? The last thing you want to do is buy a lemon of a computer from a fly-by-night organization. Someone can set up a website and start selling computer equipment, parts, and software. Look for a company that has been in business for four years or more.
2. What is their guarantee or warranty on the equipment you are buying? As a standard rule, they should offer a minimum of one year replacement warranty on all parts.
3. How do they handle returns and exchanges? Do you have to ship the defective item back to them on your dime or do they arrange to have it picked up? Do they send the replacement first? What is the guaranteed turnaround time for an item? Many people prefer to buy all equipment from a local vendor. If something goes wrong, you can drive to the store, speak to a real person, and get an instant replacement in most cases.
4. What type of help desk support is being offered? You want to speak directly to a knowledgeable technician when you need help? Many companies only offer e-mail and web-based support, and charge a hefty fee for anything outside of that.
5. Is their support free or charged by the minute? Make sure you are very clear on what support is free and what is fee-based.
6. Where is their help desk and customer service office located? Many of the big vendors are shipping their help desk support overseas to save money. While this works out great for them, it can be incredibly frustrating when you are trying to communicate with their customer support representatives.
7. Do you really know how to install, configure and troubleshoot this new device? If not, you may want to consider hiring a qualified technician to install it. Quite often drivers and software can conflict and cause problems and unless you have

installed this device before, it might be worth the small fee to get someone else to do it for you.

#5: All computer consultants are created equal. Your best option will be the one who offers the lowest price.

As we stated earlier, you get what you pay for. A cheap price usually means a cheap job. Really good consultants do not work cheap because they are in high demand. The only consultants that will work cheap are those that are just starting and they are grossly inexperienced.

With your valuable data, precious company emails, customer database, accounting data, and other irreplaceable documents at stake, do you really want the cheapest consultant working on your computer?

We take the view that most people want value for their money and simply want the job done right. You will find that eSudo is not the cheapest. You will also find that we are not the most expensive. We simply feel that we should offer a good service at a fair price. That's why we have been able to stay in business for over six solid years and have experienced and certified engineers from Microsoft, Cisco, Sonicwall, Dell and HP.

5 Critical Characteristics You Should Demand from Your Computer Consultant

- 1. Demand that they have multiple technicians on staff.** If you rely on a “one-man-band” operation, you might find yourself without any help when they go on vacation, get sick, or when they are simply too busy servicing other customers. Having multiple technicians on staff is not a guarantee of fast, reliable service, but you are far more likely to have someone to talk to when you have a problem.

No one computer person, no matter how good, has infinite knowledge about every type of software, hardware, and platform. Multiple technicians mean multiple skill sets and a higher likelihood that your computer problem will get resolved faster.

- 2. Demand someone who has a long-standing reputation.** There are a lot of other computer consultants out there, but most are new or just getting started. You want to make sure you avoid hiring a fly-by-night consultant between jobs that sets up shop one day, and is out of business within a month or a year. Only deal with computer consultants that have a proven track record in your area. eSudo has been servicing customers in the San Jose and San Francisco area for over six years now.
- 3. Demand that they have specific knowledge or expertise on solving your particular problem.** Do not let someone practice on your computer. If they have not worked

on your problem before they should tell you that in advance. There is too much risk involved financially and in your data and equipment. eSudo staff has over 18 years of computer industry experience.

4. **Demand that your consultant backs up your system before working on it.** This is just common sense. Only let them touch your computer after your entire system is securely backed up just in case something goes wrong.
5. **Demand that your computer comes back with the same settings, look, preferences, and applications that you had on it prior to the work.** There are a lot of second-rate shops with inexperienced technicians who will end up causing you more problems than you bargained for. Very frequently these inexperienced technicians will recommend that you wipe out your hard drive and re-install Windows to fix a problem. This means you lose all of your settings and preferences, as well as losing all of the software programs you have installed. This should only be done as a last resort.

WARNING: In addition to wiping out your hard drive, some of these shops will put illegal software on your machine using a stolen license. Not only is this illegal and putting you in a position to get fined, but most illegal software (especially Microsoft's) is locked, which means you cannot download and update critical security patches. This leaves you unable to update your machine and protect it from deadly viruses, worms, and hackers.

Your Customer Bill of Rights

Here is what we promise to deliver if you choose eSudo Technology Solutions to service your computer or company network:

1. When you call us with a computer problem, we guarantee that your phone call will be either answered immediately or returned within 60 minutes or less by an experienced technician or engineer who can help.
2. You should not have to wait around all day for your computer to be repaired. We understand how important your computer is to you; that is why we remotely work on your computer when you contact our helpdesk. In most cases, we can fix it within 60 minutes or less.
3. You deserve to get answers to your questions.
4. You deserve complete satisfaction with our products and services. We only do our best to make you happy.
5. Expect that no damage will be done to your computer or your data. Before we start working on your computer or network, we will evaluate the problem and alert you to any potential risks involved. Any risks will be explained in full, and your

authorization and agreement will be obtained before the work commences. You can also choose to have your data backed up before we start any work on your computer.

A large portion of our business comes from referrals from happy, satisfied customers. We know you will recommend us because you are happy with the services we provide. Our commitment to high quality service empowers you to focus on running your business while we run your network.

Don't Take Our Word for It; Here is What Our Customers Have to Say...

"Using eSudo Technology Solutions to support our computer network has turned out to be one of the smartest business decisions we've made. They have designed and implemented the latest technologies, eliminated the bottleneck in our network that was affecting our services to our customers, and helped lower our I.T costs by 20%. We recommend eSudo to anyone who needs a knowledgeable and professional I.T. service firm."

Marvin Choi, Technical Service Lead
Humber College, School of Media Studies



"eSudo provides Daley's Drywall with the expertise necessary to address all our computer needs. Since working with the experts at eSudo, we have seen a positive change in our workplace resulting from a significant reduction in email spam plus a network that now runs smoothly and problem-free. Prior to eSudo, Daley's Drywall experienced constant computer issues that diverted the attention of our staff, which in turn cost us in the form of lost productivity.

I would definitely recommend eSudo to my colleagues who are looking to create a trouble-free I.T. work environment."

Craig Daley, President
Daley's Drywall & Taping, Inc.

"eSudo Technology Solutions (eSudo) provides us with a trouble-free network which in turn enables us to enjoy peace of mind. I am confident that with one phone call, our problems will be taken care of expeditiously. In one instance our service provider was experiencing problems and we had no Internet connection, a critical issue for a church that thrives on communication to our members and outreach programs. We were grateful when eSudo

arrived immediately, diagnosed the issue and resolved a very complex problem with the provider so that we could be up and running in no time.

eSudo is also very aware of our role as a 501c3 religious corporation and our objective of keeping costs down. I appreciate their efforts to always ensure that we are receiving the best deal for products and services.

For these reasons and more, eSudo deserves my highest recommendation!"

Bruce Friesen, Parish Administrator
Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church



"eSudo Technology Solutions has helped us develop and implement solutions that adapt to our changing business needs. The I.T. consultants at eSudo understand how we work and have established a strong relationship with our people which makes them part of the team at Pearson. They respond to our problems quickly and have been instrumental in building a stable I.T. environment that allows us to focus on our business."

Tom Pearson, President
Pearson & Co.

PEARSON & C^o.

"eSudo Technology Solutions provides reliable, knowledgeable and dependable support services to American Medical Systems (AMS). We can depend on eSudo to respond promptly to resolve our issues quickly."

Kelly Weston, IT Manager, Global Service & Support
American Medical Systems Inc.



Services We Offer

As a Microsoft Certified Partner and Small Business Technology Specialist, eSudo have the knowledge, skills and commitment to help you implement solutions that match your exact business needs.

eSudo can:

- ✓ Resolve your current network, server, and desktop issues
- ✓ Help your organization regain lost productivity through our unlimited Help Desk Support and Vendor Management Services
- ✓ Minimize your downtime through our continuous Network Monitoring Service 24/7/365
- ✓ Make sure your company data is backed up and secure
- ✓ Develop the best IT strategy for your business or nonprofit organization

eSudo offer a comprehensive range of IT services to designed to reduce costs, increase revenue, and mitigate your business risks through productivity and efficiency.

- **TotalCare IT Plan** - eSudo delivers proactive maintenance services through our flat-rate TotalCare IT Service Plan. Designed to reduce your costs, increase your profits and mitigate your business risks, we partner with you as your Virtual CIO and IT Department, allowing you to focus on running your business, not your technology. Our comprehensive PC, Server, and Technology Management services are designed to keep your systems and personnel productive.
- [Networking and Mobile Computing](#) - Our comprehensive IT services will get you the efficiency, speed, and connectivity you need to work in today's business environment. Our solutions are based on technologies from Microsoft (Windows Server, Active Directory, and Exchange Server), Cisco (router, switch, firewall, and intrusion detection), Blackberry Server, HP and Dell hardware.
- [Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Planning](#) - Our proactive disaster recovery services mean that the most extreme circumstances are an inconvenience, not a total loss.
- [Web, Application and Database Development](#) - Our software application experts can develop the customized solutions to increase efficiency and the bottom line for your business.
- [Hosted Services](#) - We offer hosted services for Exchange, Small Business Server, Spam and Virus filtering, E-mail and Website.

Complimentary Technology Audit for All New Business Customers

For qualified prospective customer, we would like to offer you a complimentary (value over \$600) Technology Audit of your computer.

During this audit we will do a comprehensive technology audit of your computer to look for potential problems, security loopholes, spyware, and other computer problems that will cause your computer to run slow, act funny, crash, and lose data.

We will:

- ✓ Scan for hidden spyware, malware, and viruses that MOST anti-virus tools and software can't detect or won't remove
- ✓ Check for security updates
- ✓ Review your firewall and security settings
- ✓ Check the integrity of your hard drive
- ✓ Audit your virus definitions and protection
- ✓ Review your system backup and restore
- ✓ Remove unwanted programs and ad-ware that slow down your PC

Please note that this offer for a **FREE Security Audit won't be around forever**. While we would love to be able to give these away to everyone, staff and time limitations simply won't allow it.

That's why we can only give away 5 of these audits during the period from October to December on a first come, first served basis (sorry, no exceptions). There are zero obligations for you to do or buy anything when you sign up - so do it now while you're thinking about it!

I would like to sign up for a Complimentary Technology Audit to make sure I am doing everything possible to secure my network. Customers requesting this service can qualify either by having five or more PCs and at least one server, or must be considering the possibility of installing a server. I understand that I am under **no obligation** to do or to buy anything by requesting this audit. I further understand that these audits are being made available on a **first-come, first-served basis**. If I am not one of the first 5, please put me on your stand-by list and notify me if a spot becomes available.

Please Complete and Submit:

*Name: _____

Title: _____

*Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

*Phone: _____ Fax: _____

*E-mail: _____

*Number of
PCs: _____

* Operating
System: _____

***Required**

Please submit completed form via fax to 408.404.6960
or complete the online form at www.esudo.com or
e-mail to contact@eSudo.com