

YOUR GUIDE TO Smarter IT Investments for 2022

IN THIS GUIDE, YOU'LL FIND:



Tax benefit breakdown for purchasing technology before year end



Technology recommendations for workstations, monitors, software, etc.



What an IT partner should provide your business

And much more!



YOUR GUIDE TO SMARTER IT INVESTMENTS

We've all heard the proverb about putting things off 'til tomorrow that could be done today.

In fact, the original quote applies even more to upgrading your IT infrastructure this year:

"No idleness, no laziness, no procrastination: never put off until tomorrow what you can do to-day." - Earl of Chesterfield, 1749

This past year has shown us that a global pandemic can put the worlds of online ordering and overnight delivery into a tailspin. If you're planning to make end-of-year business purchases in 2021, the time is now. Not tomorrow, and not the final week of December. *There is truly no time like the present.*

This technology purchasing guide will help you organize, evaluate and implement the most effective IT solutions for your business in the year ahead. Using this guide and working with Tekmanagement *will* allow you to make smarter IT investments. And the right technology will enable you to make the most of 2022 with increased productivity and ability to be hands-off when it comes to your business's digital tools.



INVEST IN YOUR TECH IN 2021: THE TAX BENEFITS ARE PHENOMINAL

While there are always benefits to new technology, it's especially advantageous to make your technology purchases by the end of 2021.

Temporarily, federal tax law allows businesses to deduct the full cost – up to \$1,050,000 – of certain computer hardware and software from their 2021 income taxes. Even more so, any money you spend after that deduction limit and up to \$2,620,000 is given a one-time “bonus depreciation” of an additional 100 percent.

It's called Section 179, and it's one of the most important tax codes for small business owners. It means you can receive the full tax benefits in the same year as your purchase, instead of waiting to write off the depreciation over your equipment's useful life (for most technology, that's about 5 years).

For example: If you spend \$10,000 on equipment in 2021 assuming a 35% tax bracket:

- Equipment cost: \$10,000
- Section 179 deduction: \$10,000
- Tax savings on purchase (assumes 35% tax bracket): \$3,500
- Equipment cost after tax savings: \$6,500

The kicker? To benefit from this year, you must make your purchase before December 31, 2021.

To be eligible to claim this deduction, you must use your eligible equipment more than 50% of the time for business purposes. This makes your office's hardware and software solutions (that you presumably use daily) prime candidates for taking advantage of this tax code.

When it comes to ordering and delivery, what's the rule for making the end-of-year deadline? You must buy, lease or finance your equipment by December 31st. That makes right now the perfect time to get moving and upgrade your existing information technology hardware and software solutions.



INVEST IN YOUR IT IN 2021 & 2022: YOU DESPERATELY NEED AN UPGRADE

Old technology is not only less enjoyable to use, it can severely impact productivity.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- How often is your business's network down?
- Do your computers regularly crash?
- Do you miss customers' calls and emails because your phone or email system is down?
- Do you still have PCs running Windows 7 or Servers running 2008 software?
- Does the thought of a successful ransomware attack against your business keep you up at night?
- What else about your current information technology set-up is causing lost productivity, unnecessary costs or disrupted customer service?
- Is your hardware nearly five-or-more-years old?



More than likely, you can think of some aspect of your current IT solutions that could use upgrading.

Newer hardware and software solutions offer features and capabilities far beyond those they offered only a few years ago. More intuitive user interfaces, enhanced cybersecurity features and cloud integration are only a few of the improvements upon past versions of commonly used solutions, bringing such gains as:

- Increased productivity
- Less employee and system downtime
- Faster network and internet speeds
- Fewer computer crashes
- Enhanced cybersecurity

Moreover, as you've likely noticed, laptop and desktop computers only have a three-to-four-year lifespan. Five-year-old computers could almost be considered geriatric. If you're still employing such aged workstations, you should seriously consider upgrading now.

A note on purchasing hardware from "big box" stores: Even though a piece of equipment might be new-to-you and fresh out of the box, it doesn't necessarily mean it's running with the latest technology. Beware of devices that have been sitting on a shelf for 2-3 years, and if you can, verify that it's equipped with the latest processor and compatible with newer programs like Windows 11.

A lot can happen in 3-5 years, and it's important to make your technology purchases with an eye toward the future.



TEKMANAGEMENT'S TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

We've put together key technology solutions that you can include in your planning and purchasing. If you've already decided on the technology you'd like to invest in for 2022, perhaps these recommendations will give you more food for thought.

If you haven't yet identified your IT that needs upgrading, this list can help you do so.

Workstations: You use them daily and they wear out fast

If COVID-19 and work-from-home have taught us nothing else, it's that laptops and desktops have a limited lifespan and need to be replaced at least every five years. Laptops may need a refreshing earlier, depending on how much time they spend bounding around in your bag. We recommend evaluating Dell or HP workstations.

Windows 10 Pro operating system is a must for your business PCs. Again, be warned about discounted PCs at the big box stores: you are usually getting slower, older components and Windows Home edition. A few hundred dollars well-spent now may mean an extra year or more of usable life.

Ask us for an honest evaluation of your computing needs, not just "the best," "the cheapest," or "the model we sell the most of." You're unique, and not every PC will be a good fit. You may need to upgrade your laptops' docking stations, as well.



Monitors: More is better, and bigger is better

Many employees are now using dual monitors to increase productivity. Studies vary, but the consensus is that adding a second monitor will increase your productivity from as little as nine percent, up to 50 percent, depending on the task! This is one of the most profitable technology investments you can make.

Increasing the size of the monitor also increases productivity. Studies found tasks could be completed up to 44 percent faster with larger monitors. The take away? You should consider investing in second monitors for your employees.

Memory and Hard Drives: Where you won't get pulled over for going too fast

We highly recommend upgrading your workstations' traditional hard drives (HDD) with solid state drives (SSD). They offer much faster speeds than HDDs, and can speed load times by 5x! Dollar for dollar, upgrading your older PC to an SSD can breathe new life into it and stretch its usable life another year or two.

In addition, this SSD's can dramatically speed up technician's tasks and let you get back to work quicker. If PCs are running slow, a memory upgrade may be in order. Ask us if this is something you need to consider - it's what we're here for.

1- <https://blog.codinghorror.com/does-more-than-one-monitor-improve-productivity/>



Internet, WiFi and Networking: Let's get this show on the road

Reviewing your IT infrastructure, you will likely find that your network speeds are being slowed by old networking devices you often overlook – routers, network switches, wireless access points and other key pieces of the technology keeping you connected.

Did you know that networking equipment 3-6 years old could actually be bottlenecking your internet speed? This means that devices inside the office are moving data around slower than your connection to the outside world. Are those web pages loading slow? Slow printing? Large delays in web page loading?

This could be why!

Software: You can't avoid updates forever

It seems that just when we figure out where all the menu items with which we need to do our tasks live, there's an update that moves them all around again. We'd all love our software to stay put, but sometimes a big move is forced upon us.

Support and weekly security updates for Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 were ended in January 2020. Windows Server 2012 has some incompatibilities with newer updates, too. For those who haven't upgraded to the latest software, those PCs are now a vector for cyber intrusion and security attacks.

Upgrading these should be on the top of your list.



Unified Communications: Feel like you're still using a party line?

The big telecommunications companies have their place, but in business, more application is needed than the ability to make a phone call. Unified communications allows you to not only make phone calls using Voice over IP (VoIP), but also gives you various other options for office communications - such as chat, video-conferencing and voicemail to email.

Furthermore, unified communications provide mobility solutions that ensure your employees receive their phone calls even when away from their desk (for a fair share of businesses, this became the norm in 2021). Unified communication really shines when employees are working from home; easy, streamlined and integrated communications.

Nothing beats an in-person meeting, but we know that's out of the question right now. A quality video conferencing setup like Microsoft Teams can eliminate travel and make it enjoyable to stay at home or the office. There is a lot of information and even more choice in today's telecom than ever before. Leverage Tekmanagement to help choose a solution that's sized right for your needs, infrastructure and growth.

Infrastructure: Building a solid foundation

The infrastructure upon which your information technology operates is essentially ground zero. COVID-19 found all the holes in weak infrastructure, and if connecting people to your data is still a topic of conversation, you haven't plugged the hole yet.

You should be regularly assessing your IT infrastructure to ensure it's adequately meeting your business's needs. This can include everything from network cables to servers.

Tekmanagement can help you keep your infrastructure up-to-date and working properly.



Cybersecurity: Anti-virus is no longer enough

If you are solely relying on anti-virus software or Windows Defender to protect your business from a successful cyberattack, you're setting yourself up to be low-hanging fruit for hackers.

Anti-virus is no longer enough in a world where hackers have evolved far beyond signature-based attacks. Further, there's no option to "set and forget" your business's cybersecurity solutions. Your information security solutions must be regularly monitored and updated, if needed.

Added to this is the complexity of work-from-home. We recommend taking a layered security approach, where you employ multiple methods to deter and defend against cyberattacks. You can prevent cyberattacks and greatly limit your exposure to a ransom attack, but there is no silver bullet.

Here are a few cybersecurity solutions to consider:

- Two-Factor Authentication/Multi-Factor Authentication
- Firewall security appliance
- Advanced Endpoint Protection
- Email Filtering
- Web Filtering
- Backup and Disaster Recovery Plans
- Cybersecurity Awareness Training
- Mobile Device Management
- Data encryption
- Cyber insurance

You may also consider outsourcing your cybersecurity protection to a managed IT security provider like Tekmanagement.



DO IT. DO IT NOW.

Tax breaks.
Upgrading old technology.
Enhancing your communications.
Investing in modern cybersecurity solutions.
Faster workstations and networks.
Solid IT infrastructure.

There are far more reasons to regularly and intelligently upgrade your IT infrastructure than we can reasonably fit into this guide. But it's important that we work together to ensure your current solutions are meeting your needs. If they aren't, there's no better time than today to improve your office's effectiveness and productivity through educated IT purchases.

TEKMANAGEMENT: THE IT COMPANY THAT HAS YOUR BACK

We can help you develop a comprehensive IT strategy, perform expert implementation and deliver world-class customer service.

We build relationships, not systems.

Our clients receive personal attention from our account managers to ensure our clients are receiving the technology advantages they need to succeed. Further, our technical support staff are always available to help your employees with any technology-related issue.

We help you find a solution that works long-term.

We help our clients make smart technology investments with an eye on the horizon. Businesses change and grow, and we're prepared to provide the services and support our clients will need in the future. If you need more storage space, we can make that happen – quickly. The same goes for rapidly onboarding and off-boarding employees, adding phones and so much more.

We're the IT partners for our clients – making sure their technology helps them meet their business goals.

We know, not everyone needs a Ferrari.

Making profitable IT investments requires knowing what your business needs and purchasing it – no more and no less. Not everyone needs the Ferrari of laptops. We know that. Thus, we offer our clients the solutions they need to reach their goals – no more and no less. We don't try to sell them extraneous products. Our reputation is built upon providing our clients with the technology they need while respecting their budgets.

We work with small- and medium-sized businesses across industries and are prepared to take on your business's information technology challenges. In fact, we love challenges. Contact us today.

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