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Preparing for a New Facility: Desktop Hardware

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Question

Taking into account the changes in hardware, how would you provision the office of the future?

Answer

In provisioning desktop hardware for the office of the future, one clear change would be to move connections from below the desk to above the desk. Machines are becoming smaller, quieter and, in some cases, they are either being built into the displays or remotely located.

The end result from these changes is that you will be connecting the client interface above the desk not below it. By placing the connections at this height, you will be able to move and replace equipment much more quickly, saving both on the related cost and discouraging floor placement, which has been traced to number of system failures throughout the last few years.

Purchasers may also want to provision for flat-panel displays. These provide more flexibility and can be mounted on articulated arms so that the employee can move the display, or in the case of the **IBM X** series, the entire computer wherever they need it. The move to flat panels also frees up needed desk space, and with costs dropping well below \$1,000 for 17-inch models (recommended), the design freedom can easily offset the cost of the displays going forward without taking into account the other advantages. And these costs will be dropping further during the next 12 months.

In addition, enterprises may want to consider the possibility of using desktop blades. Currently, this design has been developed by one small firm, **ClearCube** (www.clearcube.com); however, it is compelling enough that we have been receiving an increasing number of inquiries on it. This technology would require extra space for the racks and an allowance for the extra heat when provisioning server rooms.

Finally, when considering the move to technologies like Bluetooth, which will eliminate wiring, you may want to consider reducing metal-based furniture that could block signals and make the related keyboards, personal digital assistants and other peripherals problematic to operate. This same practice may be wise considering that 802.11a, the newer, faster version of local area network (LAN) wireless technology, does not have the penetration power that 802.11b has and will be more difficult to provision if there is much metal in the building.