

From High Tech to High Touch!

Purchase, Lease or HaaS: Which hardware decision is right for you?



Purchase, Lease or HaaS (Hardware as a Service): These are the options available to business owners when it comes to technology hardware (Workstations, Servers, Routers, Firewalls, BDR and even VoIP). So which do you choose? And what are the differences?

Purchase

Diving right into the purchase option is easy. It's straightforward. You buy the equipment, and you usually pay for it up front. You get the comfort of saying you *own* the equipment and can keep it as long as you want. However, consider some of the risk factors when purchasing equipment for your business:

1. Purchase usually requires the capital up front; and if you're getting quality equipment that will do the job right, it'll be a fair amount of capital.
2. Paring your technology needs with Capital budget restraints. (See #1 above.)
3. Technology obsolescence – much more noticeable in the business realm than it is the residential, unless you're a dedicated video-gamer. Like the gamer, your business can stay more competitive with up-to-date resources.
4. No support. Do you have the skills, or the time, to keep your systems up-to-snuff? How much money might you be losing while you, or your computer-savvy salesperson, fixed a computer problem?
5. Limited tax benefit. Tracking depreciation, paying taxes on business assets, how much can you write-off and for how long?

Lease

This is where a decision to lease hardware comes into play. Leasing preserves capital budget for other expenditures, has a fixed monthly payment, and allows you to obtain new technology now. It also can offer some tax benefits. At first blush, this sounds like a great opportunity for your business, especially a small or startup business, to get going quickly without the overhead costs. However, there are still several pieces that factor in.

Leasing is term based and has limited flexibility.

You have to agree on a payment and term (12, 24, 36 or 48 months), I will get into adding equipment later. And once the term finishes, then what? You get to face the end-of-term conditions which can vary widely from offering a \$1 buyout to providing a fair market value buyout (and you can guess who decides what the fair market value is). Either way you look at it, these leasing terms are just like purchasing the equipment. Eventually you own it.

You may pay penalties.

Another option is to return the equipment. You will have to transfer all your applications and data to the new equipment yourself, wipe the drives on the old equipment (are you sure it's gone?), then pack it up according to the lessor's specifications and ship it at your expense. Once they receive it, you may get a final invoice for damages or missing items (you end up paying to essentially refurbish/replace parts that got old while you were using them).

Adding Equipment

So you purchased the basics of what you needed, but you're a savvy business owner and your growing by leaps and bounds, this is great! However, you need to add more equipment to your lease, which should be easy right? Wrong. You now have to re-apply and go through all that paperwork all over again just to add 1 or 2 systems, unless you refer back to the purchase (again look at the risks).

Service costs extra.

If something goes wrong with the hardware while you are leasing it, you might have support resources at your disposal – they're only a phone call away! (have you tried calling them before?)
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Welcome New Clients

- ABSL Construction
- Aero-Dyne Supply Company
- All Temperature Service
- Christ Gospel Church
- Dreyfuss Construction
- Second Opinion Services
- Zemek Construction

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Hardware as a Service (cont.)

And you typically have to pay extra, per minute, for that support after having been on hold for who knows how long. If you actually expect to see a technician, which will definitely cost you extra, unless, of course, you *bought* the extended warranty on the equipment you're *leasing*.

Hardware-as-a-Service (HaaS)

So, what about HaaS? How is this different from leasing or buying? While HaaS does have some of the same features as leasing, it differs in some rather vital ways. Like leasing, HaaS:

1. Frees up your capital budget for other expenditures;
2. Controls your technology budget with fixed monthly rates;
3. Allows you to treat your hardware as an operating expense rather than a capital expense; and
4. Gives you access to the new technology immediately.

HaaS differs in how it works. HaaS gives you so much more than either purchasing or leasing, especially if you need to stay competitive, focus time and energy on your business, and control costs.

There are several companies that will sell you HaaS, Rubiconn is a HaaS Provider, and not all HaaS models are the same! Let me explain, true HaaS is paired with a complete Managed Services offering provided by the Managed Service Provider (MSP) such as Rubiconn. In this offering

we discuss flat rate services, website services, professional services, vendor management and backup and disaster recovery, and hardware (this is where the HaaS comes into play) and how all these are combined into one easy to manage payment. When comparing a lease to HaaS consider these benefits:

Initial Investment

There is no down payment or initial investment, although there is a monthly service payment and it's for the service provided to maintain your network, not the hardware. This completely frees up your capital expense budget for other projects and needs.

Support and Preventative Maintenance

Service, Support and preventative maintenance are covered 24x7x365. That's right, it's all covered under the "flat rate services" portion of your managed services agreement, all parts, remote labor, and onsite technician visits during business hours are included in your monthly payment (no extra, budget-breaking expenses). Can a lease offer you ALL parts and service with no extra costs?

Flexibility

After the initial startup you've added associates and are in need of more equipment, not a problem. There is no need to re-do any paperwork or re-negotiate terms, it's a simple addendum to add equipment.

Equipment

Yes a lease has equipment also, but what are the limitations to their equipment? True HaaS equipment is not limited, that's right you can get just about everything you need from VoIP phone systems, Workstations, Servers, and Firewalls to Backup and Disaster Re-



covery units. The best part about the equipment, you don't own it, so it's no longer a taxable asset and no more depreciation. Moreover, you could get significant tax benefits because you're paying for a service, not a product.

Hardware refresh

This is where you would look at the end of lease terms and consider what you need to do next. With HaaS, you no longer need to worry about end of lease terms or end of agreement, you automatically renew get new equipment and the HaaS service provider securely transfers all your applications and data to the new systems at no extra charge while your old equipment is taken away.

Which do you choose?

At the end of the day Hardware as a Service is not a fit for every situation. A traditional lease or straight purchase may fit the need of specific clients in certain environments. The advantage for Rubiconn is the choice to have multiple options to choose from when providing our clients' solutions. With this, Hardware as a Service is another tool in an ever growing tool belt of options and should be looked at and evaluated as such.

If you need new equipment, contact Rubiconn before you make any decisions. Let us help you determine which option might be best for you.

WHERE THE HECK
IS MY DATA?

ITS THERE, UP
IN THE CLOUDS.



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iPhone Location Tracking Confusion: Key Facts

There are reasons to be concerned about the ways Apple, cellular carriers and third-party software developers handle your personal information, including location data. But how big a threat is the iPhone's penchant for holding on to a database of your locations for as long as a year? In a word: small. The chances of someone actually getting their hands on that data and finding a way to use it are remote. Here's what you really to know about the issue:

What data are we talking about?

Like any cell phone, the iPhone needs to know where you are to make and receive calls or to upload and download data. It does this by deriving your position from the location of nearby cell phone towers, or through GPS applications. In either case Apple stores that data on your iPhone and then backs it up via iTunes. Although Apple won't confirm it, the researchers who made news last week — Alasdair Allan and Pete Warden — believe the data comes from the cell towers.

Why is the data being stored at all?

Apple isn't saying. Andrew Storms, director of security operations for nCircle, a security vendor, says it would make sense to have some of that data available so the phone always knows where it is. Having the data in hand speeds up the process in much the same way your browser caches data so it can quickly call up a page you've already visited. What's more, it saves battery life since the device isn't

working as much to determine its location. But keeping a year's worth does not make sense, he says, adding that Apple owes users an explanation.

Does anybody else have access to this data?

Yes and no. The data files that have everybody in a twitter (pun intended) are not leaving your computer, as near as anybody can tell. However, as numerous criminal defendants have learned, the carriers know where you've been because the cell towers log that information. Various law enforcement agencies use that data for criminal investigations, says Rebecca Jeschke of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, or EFF.

What can I do to avoid having my location hacked or tracked?

It's easy to encrypt the data your iPhone backs up. Click on your device within iTunes and then check "Encrypt iPhone Backup" under the "Options" area. Turn your phone off when you're in a location you'd like to keep to yourself. Turn off location services by going to "Settings" and then "General." You'll notice that if you drill down one more level, there's a list of applications that use locations services; you can switch off the ones you don't use or trust. But remember, if you turn off locations services, things like mapping will not work.

Are other types of mobile applications grabbing my data?

They sure are. When Zscaler's Michael Sutton

looked at the iPhone backup data on his computer, he discovered that various passwords were stored in plain text by an app that he uses fairly often. It's called JotNot Scanner Pro and it turns your iPhone into a mini-scanner for things like travel receipts. JotNot itself doesn't require a password, but if you use it in conjunction with Google Docs or Evernote to store the documents you scanned, you need those passwords — and all of them were stored in Sutton's iPhone data. Although apps are supposed to get permission from the user before accessing information on the iPhone, some do not, and there's no way to know what data is being harvested.



Again, the latest information leak is probably not something to be terribly worried about. But as we increasingly rely on mobile services of all types we may well be giving up some privacy in return for the convenience the apps offer. I honestly don't know if that's a bargain we really want to make. But vendors like Apple and Google have the responsibility to let their customers (that's us) know exactly what's going on so we can make up our own minds. "People have the right to know if they are carrying a phone or a beacon in their pockets," says EFF's Jeschke. (Courtesy of www.cio.com)

RUBY-LICIOUS RECIPES

Turkey Meatball Stroganoff



A favorite recipe from Sarah Ruby

My father found this recipe. I think stroganoff is always good but I am convinced this recipe is better for you than the regular beef and sour cream based stroganoff. After being punched into the Weight

Watchers Recipe Builder this recipe came up as 15 points per serving (including the noodles). My kids love meatballs in all forms. Bill doesn't like dill so I leave it out. The things I do for that man. Enjoy!

This recipe makes 2 servings, I always double it for my family of 4.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup ground turkey (93% lean)
- 1 small onion, chopped fine

- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 TSP olive oil
- 1/4 lb. mushrooms sliced thin
- 1/4 cup medium-dry sherry
- 1 cup low-salt chicken broth
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 TSP softened butter (not melted)
- 1 TSP flour
- 1 TSP minced fresh dill

Accompaniments: egg noodles, Sour cream

Put water on to boil for noodles.

Mix the tablespoon of flour and the tablespoon of softened butter together with a fork and set aside. This is called a buerre manie and it will be used to thicken the sauce later.

In a bowl, stir together well turkey, 2 table-spoons onion, garlic, salt, pepper, bread crumbs, and egg yolk and form into meatballs about one inch in diameter.

In a heavy skillet, heat oil over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking and cook meatballs, shaking skillet, until brown well, about 4 minutes. Transfer meatballs with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. To skillet, add remaining onion and salt and pepper to taste and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until onion is softened. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring, until liquid mushrooms give off is evaporated. Add sherry and boil until almost completely reduced. Add broth and Worcestershire sauce and bring to a boil. Add beurre manie, a little at a time, whisking, and boil two minutes. Add meatballs and simmer, covered, 5 minutes. Stir in dill.

Serve Meatball Stroganoff with accompaniments.



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