



“Best Practice” in IT

Introduction

I am often asked; “What paperwork do we need for our IT?” The following is a list of information and documentation that is a minimum rather than the definitive list of all the information you should have regarding your IT.

Ownership of IT is like that of any other resource within an organisation. Essentially you need to know what you have and where it is. You need to take care of it, comply with any legislation and set out how it should be used.

Not all the information will apply, for example, you may not have a wireless network or a website. Simply omit the irrelevant.

You need to keep all of your IT related information together in a file or handbook. The list is not in any order of priority.

Information to Include

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|------------------------|---|
| Organisational details | Roles, responsibilities, qualifications of key personnel, IT budget and strategy (see also Mission Statement and organisation description). Key contacts and availability. |
| Compliance documents | Health & Safety (plus Risk Assessments) policy, Data Protection Act details, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), copyright, Insurance policy. |
| Inventory | A list of serial numbers, locations and users of all IT equipment. Include software licence keys and expiry dates of warranties and subscriptions (e.g. Anti-Virus, database). |
| PC System Information | Details of age and supplier, specification (processor speed, memory, Hard Disc size, CD/DVD) work undertaken, connected devices. Admin ID and password

Also include independent devices such as cameras, removable hard drives, etc. |
| Network details | IP addressing scheme, router and server admin id and password. Network diagram, WEP key and details, location of networking hardware (switch, router, ADSL, etc).

Server information (users, groups, security) |

Internet information	Internet Service Provider (ISP) details – username, password, renewal date, support contacts.
Website/Email details	Host. Domain name registration and renewal, support contact, control panel username and password. Email host (if different), Email accounts, passwords, server details (e.g. POP, SMTP). Anti-Spam arrangements. Other details e.g. FTP, fixed IP(s) Web designer/support/management contact details
Contracts/Ext. Support	Contract details, support contacts (inc. name, email and telephone numbers), service call log.
Policies	Acceptable Use, Internet/Email use, Disaster Recovery (see Backing Up), Data Protection/Security, IT Purchasing, Password,
Procedures	User induction, Backing Up, Business Continuity (see H&S),
Other Documents	ICT healthcheck, contacts (including web links), Permission forms (Data Protection), PAT testing records, records of consumables usage, Training Needs Analysis.

A record of each individual's username and password should also be kept. This needs to be regularly updated and should be kept *SEPARATE* and *SECURE*.

Having all the above information ready to hand will make any interaction with internal or external support agencies easier.

Regular review of procedure, policies and the information contained in your file will also greatly assist the management of your IT resources.

If the information is not kept up to date it will rapidly become of little use and hence any organisation must devote management resources to its IT systems in line with other functions of its day to day running.

It is also prudent to keep an eye on your use of consumables.