

# SAY GOODBYE TO DO-IT-YOURSELF SERVER MANAGEMENT HEADACHES

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## Get Relief with Managed Colocation

While do-it-yourself server management—or traditional colocation of your servers in a third-party data center—gives your IT team ultimate control over your infrastructure, it can mean a lot of headaches that distract from more important priorities.

This white paper addresses five common headaches of DIY server management:

- Middle-of-the-night breakdowns
- Hidden costs
- Doing low-value chores
- Constant worries
- Strategic misalignment of IT and your business;

Additionally it presents an innovative alternative that can help you reach your IT goals without all those hassles.

### HEADACHE #1: MIDDLE-OF-THE-NIGHT BREAKDOWNS

Server hardware always seems to break down in the middle of the night, on the weekend or worst of all, in the middle of the night on a holiday weekend. Every IT manager dreads getting a late-night call that starts out, “The website is down...” or “My email won’t go through.”

That means having to heave yourself out of bed and head down to your server farm or out to the data center where you collocated your servers... or else asking someone else on your team to do it.

Wouldn’t you love to hand-off all those fixes to somebody else, knowing they will be working on them while your team sleeps?

### HEADACHE #2: HIDDEN COSTS

Once upon a time, it might have been cost-effective to look after your own servers, rather than outsource these chores to a third party. In today’s era of tighter security and compliance requirements, however, you can end up on the hook for some stiff hidden costs.

These can go far beyond the expected costs for your enterprise to provide space, power, HVAC and traditional security for a data center. For example, there’s the high cost of maintaining a team of hardware technicians available 24/7 in case anything breaks. (That’s not a hidden cost; that’s a glaring chunk of your budget.)

Some of these potential hidden costs include:

- Hardware set up and cabling
- Spare parts inventory
- Managing numerous hardware, software and service vendors
- Compliance audits
- Security clearances for staff.

Then there's the CapEx vs. OpEx dilemma. As you know, whenever you buy your own hardware, you make a capital expenditure (CapEx) that starts depreciating immediately. But for many companies, it's actually better for the bottom line to lease this equipment as a monthly operating expense (OpEx).

Wouldn't you sooner have the bean-counters slapping you on the back for saving money—instead of calling you on the carpet for wasting it?

### HEADACHE #3: DOING LOW-VALUE CHORES

Every IT team has a long list of projects on the go, and hugging servers isn't exactly a high-value activity on that list.

The harsh reality is that no one cares that you replaced a server on the weekend; they just want you to get their project done, or help them plan a new service for your customers, or refine your web presence, or whatever other needs should be met.

But have you ever noticed how often these other activities get pushed to the back burner because something more urgent comes up... like fixing a broken server? In time management, this is called an "addiction to urgency." And it's nothing new: This has been known ever since President Eisenhower coined the phrase in the 1950s.

Figure 1 shows the four possible quadrants of activities, arranged on a classic matrix of importance and urgency. Notice how the distractions and interruptions in the lower left can easily pull time away from strategic but less urgent projects in the top right. This tendency is especially common where the DIY culture rules.

But the top right quadrant is where most high-value activities happen. Like everyone else, IT managers need to pull constantly in this direction, away from the routine chores in the lower left and the interruptions in the upper left.

After all, wouldn't you sooner be doing something important instead of something trivial?

	Urgent	NOT Urgent
Important	<i>Daily fire-fighting:</i> most meetings, e-mails, and phone calls	<i>Strategic contributions:</i> improving service, speeding up processing, saving \$\$ and so on
NOT Important	<i>Addiction to urgency:</i> Interruptions and distractions, such as fixing a broken server	<i>Time-wasters:</i> Trivial busywork, such as redecorating the server room

Figure 1: IT Managers Must Pull Against the "Addiction to Urgency"

### HEADACHE #4: CONSTANT WORRIES

DIY server management means that every day, all day, many little worries are nagging at the back of an IT manager's mind:

- Are we up?
- Are we secure?
- What if hackers attack?
- What if Joe quits?
- What's going to break next?
- Who's going to fix it when it breaks?

When you manage your own server farm in-house, or collocate your hardware in somebody else's data center, those worries never seem to go away.

## HEADACHE #5: STRATEGIC MISALIGNMENT OF IT

The worst thing of all about managing your own servers is that it can put IT out of step with the rest of the enterprise.

After all, your company is likely struggling to (pick all that apply):

- Increase sales
- Launch a new product or service
- Fight off competitors
- Retain profits
- Improve the share price.

Of course, every IT manager would like to help out with those challenges. Unfortunately, a big chunk of your IT resources are tied up in making sure your servers are plugged in and cooled down. As we saw in Figure 1, that isn't strategic compared to all the other things your IT team could be doing. And when a manager doesn't use his resources in a strategic way, he risks losing them to other teams that contribute more to the company's success. Wouldn't you sooner make your team an acknowledged cornerstone of your company's success, instead of an expendable bunch of server-huggers?

## CONCLUSIONS: GET RELIEF WITH MANAGED COLOCATION

Today your IT department has the option to move to an innovative form of outsourcing—managed colocation—that can eliminate all those headaches in one fell swoop. In managed colocation, you lease the hardware, networking, and most other devices you need in the data center. Meanwhile, you maintain the all-important control of your software environment, including your OS and apps. Rackspace has pioneered this form of Managed Colocation.

As shown in Figure 2, Managed Colo from Rackspace can bring you relief from all your server headaches.

DIY Server Management or Traditional Colocation	Managed Colocation from Rackspace
Middle-of-the-night interruptions	Sound sleep for you and your team
Hidden costs	Predictable costs
Capital expenditures (CapEx)	Operating expenses (OpEx)
Low-value distractions	High-value strategic projects
Constant worries	Focus on IT innovation for the business
IT not aligned with business priorities	IT a cornerstone of business success

Figure 2: How Managed Colocation Brings Headache Relief

To find out more about how get relief from DIY server headaches, visit [www.rackspace.com](http://www.rackspace.com) and view the webinar "Managed Colocation: Keep the Control and Lose the Headache." You'll see more about the benefits of Managed Colocation such as:

- Having the entire hardware infrastructure maintained for you around the clock
- Leasing your servers for a predictable monthly cost with no surprise hidden charges
- Being able to focus on more strategic, value-added activities because the routine maintenance of your hardware is already handled
- Making your team an acknowledged cornerstone of your company's success, instead of an expendable bunch of server-huggers.

## ABOUT RACKSPACE

Rackspace® Hosting is the world's leader in hosting. The San Antonio-based company provides its customers Fanatical Support® in their portfolio of hosted IT services, including Managed Hosting, Cloud Computing and Email and Apps. For more information, visit [www.rackspace.com](http://www.rackspace.com).

1: Stephen Covey, A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca R. Merrill "First Things First," Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 1994, page 37