

Softdent Question

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.med.dentistry/2006-04/msg00466.html>

- *From:* Joel344 <joeleichen@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 19 Apr 2006 12:36:18 GMT
-

Softdent / Hardware question (KEVIN)

My wife is a dentist, and her office needs to upgrade their computer system. The system they are working on is about five years old, and showing the strain. They are exploring a number of things right now. First, they are planning on upgrading to the newest version of SoftDent. OK, I think that's straightforward enough.

Secondly, they need new PC's all across the board, and ideally a server and computers in the operatories. They got a quote from a company referred by SoftDent, and I was blown away by their prices. It seems that they add a gigantic markup for every single item.

The SoftDent people "strongly recommended" that my wife's doesn't buy hardware on their own, because it might not be configured properly.

I guess my question is this: Are there really some secret magical ingredients that are so special to a dental office that you need a special dental hardware company to install everything for you? I totally understand that having a professional install your hardware gives a certain amount of piece of mind, but I feel like they're being played ("Hey, they're dentists, what do they know? We'll up the price and scare them from going anyplace else.")

Have other dentists out there set up a networked system on their own and lived to tell the tale? Or even purchased the hardware personally (like from Dell) and had a hardware guy wire everything together and make the network work?

Thanks in advance,
Kevin

Joel344
[View Public Profile](#)
[Send a private message to Joel344](#)

Softdent Question

Send email to Joel344
Find all posts by Joel344
Add Joel344 to Your Buddy List
#2 12-24-2004, 08:58 AM
Joel344
Member Join Date: Oct 2004
Posts: 5,227

Scroll down for original questions

Roy Brown wrote:

You did not say:
How many computers you were looking at purchasing;

They were given two quotes. Phase 1, which includes 4 computers (2 front desk, 1 office manager, 1 doctor) and Phase 2, which added six more (1 server, 5 operator PC's).

How many users?

There are about 15 people who work there.

What levels of security?

Not sure.

What else you want run with it?

Other than SoftDent? Probably just basic things like Word, Excel, etc.
Nothing fancy.

I've set up my own network, computers being a hobby for me. Spent a couple of

days just getting the print servers configured over the network.

Softdent Question

Then
upgraded

to WinXP and it screwed up all my settings with their wizards. Would
have been

better off doing my own settings manually.

I picked up another laser with a built in EIO print server. Have not
been able

to get it configured due to my lack of time. Could your wife's
office
handle

situations like having a network out of commission for a while?

Not sure. At this point they could, because they're running very
low-tech right now.

Thanks,
Kevin

Joel344
View Public Profile
Send a private message to Joel344
Send email to Joel344
Find all posts by Joel344
Add Joel344 to Your Buddy List
#3 12-24-2004, 09:40 AM
billkatz
Member Join Date: Nov 2004
Posts: 591

Here you go Joel, please pass on to Kevin,

There is no mystery in setting up one of these networks and in fact, if
you have fewer than seven or eight computers, you don't need a dedicated
server. If you were in the business, you'd know just how high of a
markup some of these people tack on to the systems they sell.

Here's a little advice on setting one of these up. Please understand
that larger networks are more demanding but these rules can be applied

Softdent Question

to most small office networks.

1. **Cabling.** Cabling is probably the most ignored yet most crucial part of your network. In computer network terms, the cabling system is similar to the arteries in the body. A professionally run and category 5e or better tested and certified cabling system is critical with a modern network. The older versions of Softdent may have worked well enough with non compliant cabling but the new version will bomb. This is because the new version of Softdent (or most any other PMS) will pump huge amounts of data over the cabling infrastructure. Wireless is not approved by any of the major PM systems. Verifying (having your infrastructure tested) is probably the best first step. Look in the yellow pages under Computer/Network and you'll see a bunch of resources there.
2. **Network Switch and Network Interfaces.** The data being pumped over your network is driven by the network interfaces on the computers and the network switch is the "traffic cop" that directs it all. Brands like Intel, 3Com and Cisco make the best quality switches and interface cards. Cheap knock-off equipment won't provide you with good results. They may work well for "surfing the net" but they don't work well in high demand environments like a database. In this case like in any other, the adage of "you get what you pay for" really holds true. You'll notice this when shopping around companies like Dell. Their cheapie systems use Broadcom adapters while their high end Precision units use Intel or 3Com.
3. **Processor.** One should look the guidelines published by Softdent. They suggest that you use the Intel Pentium4 line of processor and not the Celeron. AMD processors are not in the certified use list. See <http://www.practiceworks.com/Hardware/Softdent.pdf> for more details. I personally like the new 64bit processors that AMD sells but none of the PM companies have yet certified them for use. If you decide to go that route then understand that support might blame a software problem on your hardware
4. **Other Front Office Stuff.** On systems with nine or fewer workstations you can get away with using a peer to peer network even though I sometimes lessen those numbers to seven or eight for performance reasons. On systems with ten or more you'll need a dedicated file server. In either case, the machine holding the data should have enough memory and a quick hard drive. Serial ATA hard drives are the way to go with the main machine. I like to use mirrored drives (RAID1) so if one burns up, the other one still keeps the data. If you're planning on going digital then you'll need at least 120GB serial ATA. 200GB is even better for storing things like digital radiographs. The server machine should also have one gigabyte of RAM. Front office workstations can use the lower end 40GB hard drives with no problem and they should have 512 RAM.
5. **Clinical Stations.** Softdent requires their clinical stations to have a gigabyte of RAM if you're planning on going digital. A small 40GB hard drive is enough. High quality 17" LCD's are also a good idea in operatories. Don't buy the cheap ones. Look at brands like NEC or Samsung. Again, you get what you pay for?

Softdent Question

6. Operating System. Never and I mean Never use XP Home with Softdent. It is not supported. Use XP Pro for the workstations and Windows 2000 or 2003 Server if you need a dedicated server.

7. Stay within the published hardware guidelines if possible. Things like print servers, remote storage devices instead, non approved or tested printers, etc may work but they're not supported and you'll be handling your own quality control. IMHO, not a great idea.

8. Deployment. Find someone who's savvy with PM systems in your town. Ask your colleagues and they'll tell you. Things like opportunistic locking, sharing and files permissions, etc should be addressed when setting one of these networks up. Don't use someone's "computer whiz kid" unless they've set a PM system up before.

Regards,

-b

billkatz

[View Public Profile](#)

[Send a private message to billkatz](#)

[Find all posts by billkatz](#)

[Add billkatz to Your Buddy List](#)

#4 12-24-2004, 10:04 AM

billkatz

Member Join Date: Nov 2004

Posts: 591

I personally prefer Dentrix and Softdent over Eaglesoft but that's an opinion and you know what opinions are like. I like Dentrix because of the support staff, Softdent because of the accounting capabilities.

I recently upgraded an office from Dentrix to Eaglesoft. Well...

You know how I am about quotes...

Here's a quote from the office manager...

"Doc is going to have to give me a raise if he expects me to use this."

billkatz

[View Public Profile](#)

[Send a private message to billkatz](#)

[Find all posts by billkatz](#)

[Add billkatz to Your Buddy List](#)

#5 04-09-2005, 04:16 AM

mbrock5532

Member Join Date: Apr 2005

Location: Tucson, AZ

Age: 45

Posts: 1

Softdent Question

Softdent Question

SoftDent and AMD Processors

I recently built 9 workstations and a new server for a dental client using SoftDent.

The workstations are AMD 2600+ with 512MB RAM and 40GB Hard Drives.

The server is an AMD64 3400+ with 1GB RAM and 4 200GB SATA drives.

I talked with SoftDent technical support as well as their Senior Software Engineer, and all said there were no problems with AMD processors. Their engineer said they have AMD64 servers in house as well as customers with them, and there have been no more problems than with systems using Intel processors.

These systems are very fast and reasonably priced. I built them all from scratch, but you can get good pre-built ones as well.

This weekend I am upgrading the server from Windows XP to Windows Server 2003. Such joy fills my heart!

mbrock5532

[View Public Profile](#)

[Send a private message to mbrock5532](#)

[Send email to mbrock5532](#)

[Visit mbrock5532's homepage!](#)

[Find all posts by mbrock5532](#)

[Add mbrock5532 to Your Buddy List](#)

#6 04-09-2005, 09:50 AM

jshafer817

Member Join Date: Oct 2004

Posts: 98

I want the AMD64. I currently have the AMD XP 2600+, which finally died about a week ago. I ran it for almost 3 years straight, and its still under warranty. Right now I am using a Duron 700 (grrrr), waiting for my RMA processor.

Its almost time to upgrade to the AMD64, but I am waiting a little bit longer.

The XP 2600 is fast enough for me anyways, until I play far cry.

That is one fast server you built. Congrats.

Softdent Question

A+ N+ MCP2000 Microsoft Certified Professional and Red Hat Linux Certified Technician
Justin Shafer
Onsite Dental Systems
Fort Worth, TX.
8179094222

jshafer817
[View Public Profile](#)
[Send a private message to jshafer817](#)
[Find all posts by jshafer817](#)
[Add jshafer817 to Your Buddy List](#)
#7 04-17-2006, 02:26 PM
computerguy
Member Join Date: Apr 2006
Location: Eskridge, Kansas
Posts: 1

Quote:

Originally Posted by Joel344

My wife is a dentist, and her office needs to upgrade their computer system. The system they are working on is about five years old, and showing the strain. They are exploring a number of things right now. First, they are planning on upgrading to the newest version of SoftDent. OK, I think that's straightforward enough.

Secondly, they need new PC's all across the board, and ideally a server and computers in the operatories. They got a quote from a company referred by SoftDent, and I was blown away by their prices. It seems that they add a gigantic markup for every single item.

The SoftDent people "strongly recommended" that my wife's doesn't buy hardware on their own, because it might not be configured properly.

I guess my question is this: Are there really some secret magical ingredients that are so special to a dental office that you need a special dental hardware company to install everything for you? I totally understand that having a professional install your hardware gives a certain amount of piece of mind, but I feel like they're being played ("Hey, they're dentists, what do they know? We'll up the price and scare them from going anyplace else.")

Have other dentists out there set up a networked system on their own

Softdent Question

and lived to tell the tale? Or even purchased the hardware personally (like from Dell) and had a hardware guy wire everything together and make the network work?

Thanks in advance,
Kevin

Hi I'm a new user on your forum! Two years ago I visited a Dental office here in Topeka, KS and ended up being their new Computerguy. They had a dysfunctional Peer to Peer that had the Softdent Software setup with Licensing Key on just one of their Peer to Peer computers and then the other computers would of course have full control of the Softdent folder on the main Peer to Peer computer. Needless to say they were always disconnecting from each other on the Peer to Peer network. While getting my teeth cleaned I became their Computerguy and immediately stated they needed a Server and they needed to go from their Peer to Peer to a Client Server Relationship. I made them a deal they couldn't refuse and immediately converted them to a fully functional computer system and have remained their Computerguy for over two years now. There are computerguys out in the real world that would gladly take on your computer tasks without you having to go to a company that specializes in Dental computers to rake you over the coals. If your in Topeka, Id be more than happy to become your new Computerguy and convert your system over for you. I have over 15 years experience in IS and PC's. BTW – Now Softdent has the 11.0.1 Version that supposedly isn't compatible with NT Server 4.0 and I'm once again upgrading their Server to Windows Server 2003 Standard and making them a deal they can't refuse and am in the process of the upgrade as I post. The only problem I've found with any upgrade is being able to get a hold of Softdent support long enough to get the job done within 2 nights. Otherwise, your at the Softdent Support mercy and it takes a while.

computerguy
[View Public Profile](#)
[Send a private message to computerguy](#)
[Find all posts by computerguy](#)
[Add computerguy to Your Buddy List](#)

Â« Previous Thread | Next Thread Â»

Currently Active Users Viewing This Thread: 1 (1 members and 0 guests)

Joel344

--

Joel344

Softdent Question

Joel344's Profile: <http://dentalcom.net/forum/member.php?userid=12>

View this thread: <http://dentalcom.net/forum/showthread.php?t=4249>