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Gartner for IT Leaders

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Toolkit: Age Matters When Considering PC TCO

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Keeping PCs longer saves expense in some places, but adds expense in others. Organizations considering extending their PC life cycles should understand the trade-offs.

Key Findings

- Keeping PCs longer can reduce capital expenditures, but support costs will rise and end-user productivity will decrease with PC age.
- Although the average annual total cost of ownership (TCO) is nearly the same for a desktop PC kept for four years, compared with one kept for six years, for a PC kept six years, the absolute cost in year six is 10% higher than the cost in year four, because support costs rise as PCs get older.
- Extending the life cycle of a notebook to four years results in more than a 14% TCO increase in year four over year three.

Recommendations

- Understand the trade-offs between keeping PCs longer and spending money to replace them more often, so that the balance of overall costs can be optimized.
- Significant money should not be spent on parts or labor to repair a desktop PC after its three-year post-warranty is over.
- Buy notebooks with a three-year standard warranty and retain a three-year life cycle for notebook PCs.