10 steps to Heaven !

Problem = Inconvenience = Lost time = MONEY !

Most inconveniences can be avoided by following my current recommendations below.

1. Your computer is a *business critical tool* – just like all the tools you use in your business it can make you money but it can loose you money too !

2. The *life of a computer* in YOUR environment is about 3 years ! If you get 3 years without a breakdown then you should change your computer because a breakdown after 3 years is about 100 times more likely and you'll be amazed at the improvements in the last 3 years.

3. **ALWAYS** buy the latest and most powerful computers you can afford – *never secondhand*. An extra £100 spent when buying your computer will mean that it is better able to run your software without interruption for the life of the computer. Over a 3 year life this is about 10p per day – what's the cost of a business interruption ?

4. **ALWAYS** use the latest operating system. If you are running anything other than Windows XP Pro SP2 you should upgrade now. It's security and convenience is FAR superior than anything we've seen before and it will save you hours of doing what you least like – looking after your system. Win98, Win98, WinME, Win2000 are all very old and now lack facilities.

5. **ALWAYS** use an anti virus program and keep the virus definitions up to date. I recommend AVG who do have a free version for you to try but the bought version is so cheap it's worth having. The reason for recommending this one is because it is the least intrusive that I have come across – all others in this price bracket interfere with the running of your computer too much and slow down database applications too much.

6. **ALWAYS** use a firewall. If you have a network then your router should also be a firewall – Netgear D834 is recommended for it's ease of configuration. If you do not have a router then WinXP Pro has an in built firewall otherwise I recommend ZoneAlarm.

7. **ALWAYS** use AntiSpy software. Microsoft have their own which is currently free and is their number 1 download (www.microsoft.com).

8. Subscribe to **broadband**. It transforms anything you have to do on your computer. A computer set up as above with "always on" broadband keeps itself up to date without you having to do almost anything. You can set it and forget it !

9. Proper use of computers No recommendation can save your system from a user who opens a virus infected file after being warned or a user who browses dubious sites. Make the proper use of your business computers a **disciplinary issue**.

10. How much computer **training** have you done. Yourself ? Your staff ? Often this is half an hour on the first day which is totally inadequate.