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FOR SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS

Modern Myths: Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster and . . . Intel Servers?

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There is an erroneous belief perpetuated by some computer resellers that Intel Corporation makes network servers. They do not. Resellers that tell clients that are misrepresenting their product.

Let's set the record straight. Intel makes some products that go into servers. They make processors and main circuit boards (motherboards) that go into servers. They even contract with case makers to assemble those components into what is called a barebone. THAT ISN'T EVEN HALF A SERVER!

OK, then what constitutes a real server? To make a functioning server you must add hard drives, memory, network interfaces, CD-ROMS, RAID Controllers and other components that have to be added AND supported. Then they have to be tested rigorously for compatibility and reliability and then guaranteed to work as a complete unit. Intel does not do that.

When HP, Dell, IBM or any other major server manufacturer puts their name on a server, they are guaranteeing the functionality and performance of the entire completed assembly not just a few pieces. Intel will only warranty their parts in your server. If something goes wrong, you wind up contacting several different manufacturers. If you have performance or compatibility problems after the sale, good luck! I can almost guarantee that each component maker will point their finger at one of the other components and blame the problem on them.

Oh and one more little detail. If your reseller uses a component like a hard drive or memory module that is not specifically recognized by Intel, they will probably void your warranty on any of their components that came into contact with that unapproved item.

Why do they do it? In a single word – Price. Using a “barebone” from Intel and sticking in parts from other suppliers allows the reseller to take some shortcuts to lower his cost. If they can mislead you into thinking you're buying a “name brand” product and then build it themselves they can make more money.

The old “Oh don't worry, I'll be around to take care of any warranty issues” sales pitch. I'm sure most of these “Intel Server” resellers actually believe that they will be around. Unfortunately, most do not. In the 20 years we've been in business we've seen at least 50 local competitors close their

doors and wipe out client warranties when they do. Doesn't it make sense to have BOTH your local guy and a major manufacturer to stand behind your server just in case something goes wrong?

Reliability and Warranty. I can't stress enough the importance of these absolute keystones of the server buying process.

Reliability means that your server has been thoroughly tested with all of the components in it by a professional testing process that guarantees certain performance standards and the manufacturer will stand behind it. Untested components can give you all sorts of headaches as they develop problems sometimes months after the original purchase.

A Manufacturer's Warranty should also be a top consideration because your server is the most critical component of your business network. You can't afford down time while you wait for parts to come back from a mail-in warranty program.

Never buy a server that doesn't have a good on-site parts and labor warranty from a major manufacturer. Doesn't it just make more sense to stick with a server from a major manufacturer that stands behind the entire server with on-site service and factory authorized technicians and guarantees that it will work as advertised.

Key questions to ask when buying a Server:

- Who makes the hard drives inside the server? (That's the component that is more likely to fail than any other.)
- Who provides the warranty on those drives if something goes wrong?
- How is warranty service delivered? On-Site or return-to-maker? Who does it?
- What happens to your warranty if something happens to the reseller?
- Are all components in this server protected under a single on-site parts and labor warranty?