



Streamlining PC life-cycle management

By Jack Todd and Natasha Bohorquez

Rigorous management of the PC life cycle is essential for diverse, distributed workforces. Dell offers a comprehensive mix of configuration, installation, ongoing support, and IT asset disposition services for efficiently managing end-user systems.

Time-saving services

Dell ProSupport helps organizations enhance productivity cost-effectively while avoiding potential IT difficulties later on. Download this technical report offering a study of real-world organizations that benefit from ongoing support services provided by Dell ProSupport.

qrs.ly/fn1tuid

End users expect the devices they use in the workplace to provide secure, efficient, on-demand access to organizational resources. IT teams, in turn, need to support end users with well-managed, secure, up-to-date PCs. Members of today's increasingly distributed and mobile workforce want to use the desktops, laptops, smartphones, and other personal devices that they prefer to help them succeed at their jobs. Managing and maintaining this range of devices in the workplace requires providing

comprehensive services for managing the life cycles of these varied end-user systems.

A support life cycle for end-user systems includes configuration, installation, upgrades and management, comprehensive ongoing support services, and resale or recycling services at end of life (see Figure 1). While providing end-to-end, life-cycle support helps ensure the consistency, security, and effectiveness of end-user systems, it can be challenging for budget-constrained IT organizations and time-consuming for busy IT professionals.

Dell Services offers a comprehensive portfolio to help IT organizations manage the life cycle of PCs and mobile devices. By helping to simplify and streamline client system management, Dell Services enables IT organizations to boost end-user productivity, maintain a secure environment, and free valuable IT resources for strategic pursuits.

Configuring systems in the factory

Valuable IT resources can be consumed when configuring and installing PCs for employees and end users. For many IT organizations, receiving a PC from the factory and integrating it into an organizational environment can be a time-consuming undertaking. Ensuring efficient, successful configuration and installation of PCs requires comprehensive planning and preparation.

Many organizations rely on their own IT resources to manually configure client systems, or they outsource configuration. These methods can be inefficient, take IT professionals away from other important projects, and introduce human error. In addition, space must be available to stage systems in a central location, and a massive rollout requires comprehensive logistical planning.

Configuration involves tasks that prepare systems for deployment in an organization's end-user environment. Dell Configuration Services helps organizations create and maintain a master image for laptop and desktop computers to set up the software for end users. Master images often include operating systems and productivity applications, software for a virtual private network or access to a network, and security software for virus and malware protection. These master images are loaded onto the laptops and desktops at the time of the system build, removing the need for secondary configuration touches that can increase cost and time.

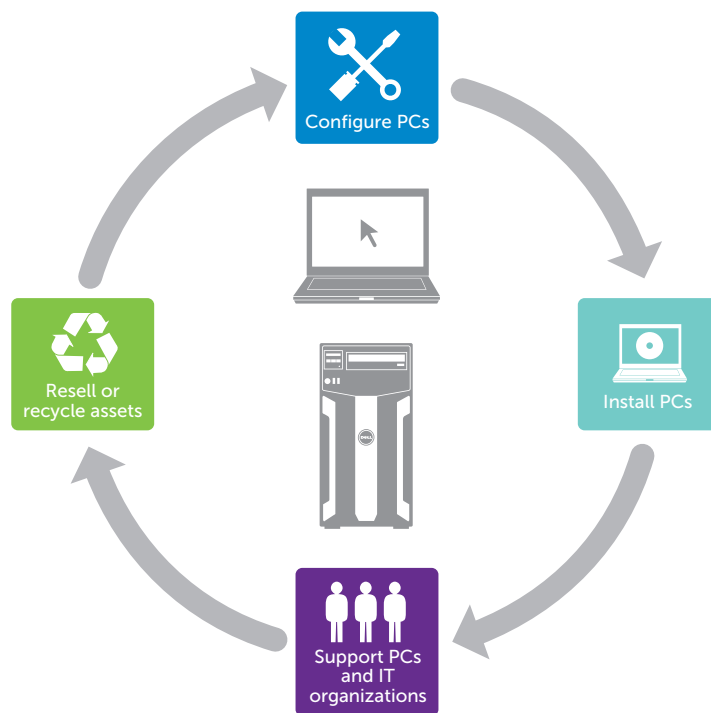


Figure 1. Dell-provided comprehensive management life cycle for client systems

Other configuration tasks can include customizing BIOS settings, installing additional hardware and applications such as video cards or custom software, and applying asset tags for identifying, tracking, and reporting information on the client systems. The PCs are then delivered and ready to be installed, integrated, and put to immediate use.

To help ensure a consistent, secure, reliable, and streamlined deployment, Dell Configuration Services provides factory-based configuration of Dell™ laptops and desktops. Configuration takes place at the Dell factory in a defined, automated manufacturing process. Automated configuration enables an IT professional to rapidly install and integrate configured laptops and desktops as well as server and storage systems. The PCs are delivered ready for deployment, without requiring any additional on-site configuration prior to installation.

To facilitate factory-based configuration, Dell Configuration Services offers comprehensive image management services. Both self-service management and custom image design help organizations create and manage consistent, up-to-date master images.

Dell ImageDirect provides secure cloud-based access to online image management that enables IT organizations to create, upload, test, and manage corporate images. ImageDirect helps ensure images are consistent and up-to-date with appropriate upgrades and security patches. This state-of-the-art imaging technology is designed to ensure images are validated across multiple platforms including Dell Precision™, Dell OptiPlex™, and Dell Latitude™ computers. IT administrators can use the portal to remove unwanted applications—for example, games provided with an OS—and disable specific modifications such



as preventing end users from installing unauthorized applications or changing particular settings. Administrators can also preload the OS and settings to help ensure security.

For organizations that require assistance creating images from scratch, or working with complex images, Dell also offers X-Image imaging solutions for on-site image build and maintenance. In addition, Image Consulting services provide highly trained Dell imaging experts who work with an organization to design and build images from scratch and integrate them with PCs before they are shipped.

After creation and validation, images can be loaded onto PCs in the factory using Factory Image Load. In addition to loading images, Dell Services can also apply both external and BIOS-level asset tags to facilitate automated tracking and reporting. And because permanent identification can be a deterrent to theft, PCs can also be custom branded using a laser to etch identifying information or full-color custom skins directly onto the device.

Installing systems on-site

After configuration at the Dell factory, PCs are ready for delivery to the intended location and installation. Dell Laptop and Desktop Installation Services provides a range of offerings to help organizations save time and money.

Dell on-site technicians can provide basic install and setup for laptops and desktops, including connecting them to peripheral devices. If the PCs to be installed are replacing existing systems, the technician can migrate end-user data to the new PCs that are replacing them.

Other on-site services can include installing a wireless router or loading images and applying asset tags for tracking and reporting, if these configuration services were not already executed in the factory. These services also include de-installation of a previous PC and removal of all packaging

Hardware support

Basic service

Dell ProSupport with multivendor support capabilities

On-site services

Software support

Dell ProSupport

Software subscription offers and support

Protection services

Accidental Damage Service

Extended Battery Service

Keep Your Hard Drive

Hard Drive Data Recovery

Advisory services

Dell IT Advisory Services

Remote Advisory Services

Proactive Maintenance

Figure 2. Dell Support Services to help simplify the management of end-user systems

waste from the end-user location. Dell Laptop and Desktop Installation Services helps streamline client system installation, minimize downtime and disruption, and enhance overall end-user productivity.

Supporting end-user systems

Providing support for end-user systems—from laptops and desktops to tablets and mobile devices—through their life cycles has grown increasingly complex. Changes in the IT landscape such as mobile workforces and consumerization make these services key to maintaining end-user productivity. The Dell suite of hardware and software support, protection, and advisory services (see Figure 2) allows organizations to tailor support to their needs and make the most of limited budgets.

Dell ProSupport provides a single source for premium hardware, software, and end-user solution support with fast and efficient issue resolution. A single point of accountability and access to highly trained Dell experts around the world enable IT organizations to help ensure end-to-end support for their internal user base. Dell ProSupport also

includes third-party collaboration to resolve issues for commonly deployed, critical software applications—such as the Microsoft® Office productivity suite—on PCs and mobile devices.

Dell ProSupport also covers multivendor hardware, enabling organizations to help simplify the management of support contracts and leverage consistent processes throughout the environment. Support is made easy with a single phone number to call for access to Dell expertise across all systems and a single support contract to manage.

The easy-to-use Dell TechDirect portal—previously, Dell Online Self Dispatch—empowers IT administrators to manage their support, parts, and labor needs. This global portal enables IT technicians to log and track service calls, order and dispatch parts internationally, and access advanced technical training and certification.

Employees rely on their PCs, tablets, and mobile devices as well as the data stored on them to be productive. As workforces become more mobile, organizations find themselves increasingly at risk of PC damage and data loss.

To help alleviate end-user downtime and associated escalations, Dell offers protection services to help mitigate that risk. Dell Accidental Damage Service can restore damaged systems with minimal cost and downtime. Laptops can be repaired or replaced if they are accidentally damaged from drops, liquid spills, or power surges. Additionally, the Dell Hard Drive Data Recovery service can recover sensitive data from failed hard drives, helping save time and frustration.

End users enjoy the mobility of their laptops, and that mobility depends on a reliable battery. Dell Extended Battery Service allows organizations to plan for replacement battery needs in advance, to help ensure uptime and manage PC life cycles cost-effectively.

An organization's data is critical and sometimes requires specific data destruction processes based on regulatory requirements or customer commitments. Typically, vendors require a failed drive to be returned in exchange for a replacement, but with the Dell Keep Your Hard Drive service, organizations can retain failed hard drives and dispose of them according to their internal processes.

IT organizations face new challenges in effectively supporting a wide array of end-user platforms because employees are increasingly demanding to use their own personal devices in the workplace. Dell ProSupport helps ease those challenges by extending business-class support to Dell consumer devices. End users who procure a Dell XPS™ or Dell Alienware™ system, and the IT administrators who support them, can benefit from the expertise, global availability, and scale of Dell ProSupport. These systems can also be protected with Accidental Damage Service to minimize downtime and maximize productivity.

Decommissioning systems safely and securely

Often, a PC upgrade for an end user means a replacement for an existing system. IT administrators have several considerations

when decommissioning an asset including its environmentally responsible physical disposal, protection of sensitive data on the hard drive to help prevent identity theft and intellectual property loss, regulatory compliance, and asset resale options. Dell Asset Resale and Recycling services are designed specifically to facilitate safe, secure disposal of systems including those from vendors other than Dell.

Asset Resale and Recycling services begin with asset removal, which includes auditing, packing, and planning as well as data destruction and pick up and sorting of systems. For many organizations, a key part of the decommissioning process includes destroying data stored on hard drives before the systems leave their site. The Dell Data Destruction Policy specifies a three-pass wipe¹ of all sectors of the hard drive. After this process is complete, the drives are then tested to ensure that all data was deleted. If the data wipe was not successful, the drive is destroyed. Data can be destroyed at either an on-site or off-site location, depending on organizational requirements. Dell also offers options for equipment resale, if the asset has residual value, or equipment recycling, donation, or lease return.

Managing the end-user system life cycle

Today's IT organizations are tasked with supporting diverse, distributed workforces using a broad range of systems and devices. Configuring, installing, deploying, managing, and supporting laptops, desktops, tablets, and mobile devices can tax IT resources and divert them from key strategic initiatives.

Dell Services offers a comprehensive array of services for the life cycle of end-user systems from configuration and deployment to ongoing support to asset decommission. In providing these support services, Dell Services functions as an extension to IT teams in organizations that are looking to support end-user productivity and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of IT operations. 

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Learn more

Dell Configuration and Deployment Services:
dell.com/services/deployment

Dell ProSupport:
dell.com/prosupport

Dell Services:
dell.com/services

¹ No data removal process leaves a hard drive or computer as free from residual data as a new product. Dell makes no recommendations regarding the security needs or representations regarding the effectiveness of one method of data removal over another for an organization procuring data removal services. The organization has the responsibility to protect any confidential or sensitive information contained on its hard drives recovered by Dell.