

# Services Guide

Metatron Technology Consulting

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## 1 Why Metatron Technology Consulting?

We believe that being overly dependent on a single vendor for software or services is not good for any business. Yet, with the near-total market power that Microsoft Windows™ and Office™ have achieved, what options are left for most businesses? How can one avoid being dependent on Microsoft or any other single vendor for software or services?

Most software vendors try to lock customers into their products by making it easy to migrate to their software, but hard to move away from it. This is especially true for the basic components of a company's information management infrastructure (components such as office productivity applications, database systems, and operating systems). However, such an approach often leaves customers at the mercy of their vendors. Sometimes vendors go out of business or cease support for widely

used software, or they may find that they can dramatically increase licensing fees or change licensing policies in order to avoid the “problem” of customers choosing to delay upgrades.

For example, Microsoft Corporation recently attempted to lease most of their software on a subscription basis. When a subscription might lapse, the customer would lose *all rights to use the software*, though “free” upgrades would be provided for the duration of the subscription. However, this licensing arrangement makes it impossible for businesses to truly own their IT operations or even their information.

Also, buggy software is inevitable when software companies (including Microsoft) are financially unable to fix or correct every legitimate bug reported. Because the costs per unit go up as the market size goes down, niche software is believed to be even worse in this regard. The economic reality of the proprietary software market simply does not support the creation of high-quality software.

The simple answer to these problems is the use of open source software. Such software comes with the right to redistribute modified or unmodified copies of the software and the right to alter the source code to fix bugs, add features, or even produce other derivative works. With open source software, one is never dependent on a single vendor who may go out of business or change licensing policies or programs. Bugs can be even be fixed by independent consultants, ensuring that one is not required to “just live with it” as is often the case with proprietary software.

Metatron Technology Consulting offers a comprehensive set of services which can help a small to mid-size businesses avoid vendor lock-in and experience the quality, flexibility, and power that open source software brings to the computing environment. Our services help you save money in licensing and lost productivity costs. Our services also bring the power of an enterprise computing environment within the reach of small to mid-size businesses. Hence we can help offer much better security and information management at a fraction of the cost. And best of all, you will not be locked into our services or software because other consultants and programmers can maintain our solutions.

## 2 Consulting Services

We offer a comprehensive set of consulting services to help your small business escape from vendor lock-in and leverage the quality, flexibility, and power of open source software. Consulting services can be used for support, administration, or implementation of software systems for a rate of \$50.00/hr, though they are generally used for projects which are not ongoing. Examples might include:

- Implementation of a firewall and/or VPN solution
- Migration of file and print servers from Windows NT4 to Linux and Samba in order to ensure the availability of continued support.
- Introduction of Linux-based workstations.
- Development of a new software tool to solve a current business problem.

It should be noted that we do offer support for many proprietary products, such as Windows, despite our focus on open source technologies. Our consulting services can be used to support any product with which we are familiar. These include:

**Operating Systems:** Microsoft Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000. FreeBSD, Linux, Solaris.

**Office Suites:** Microsoft Office, OpenOffice.Org, Gnumeric, Evolution.

**Database Managers:** Microsoft Access, MSDE, Microsoft SQL, PostgreSQL, MySQL.

**Programming Languages:** C, C++, Java, PHP, Perl, Python, C#, CSH, BASH.

The list above is not intended to be exhaustive, and we may offer support for a wide range of Windows and Linux applications as well. Please contact us for additional information. Whatever your project is, we can likely help.

### **3 Subscription Services**

Our subscription services are ideal for routine, on-going assistance. These packages are designed for small to Midsize businesses seeking to protect their critical information assets or avoid costly downtime. We offer several levels of subscription services for various needs. We will send out a monthly report detailing how the services of the subscription have been used.

#### **3.1 Basic Administration Subscription**

The basic administration subscription is designed for businesses who need ongoing maintenance for their servers. It includes up to one hour of technical support or remote administration for the covered server each month for a basic rate of \$30.00/month. Additionally, any security alerts will be sent automatically to a point of contact at your business and so we can help you upgrade or install security patches.

#### **3.2 Desktop Maintenance Subscription**

Desktop maintenance subscriptions are valid for up to 5 designated workstations. They include a scheduled virus scan and analysis of the results, as well as other periodic maintenance. Additionally, up to one half hour per month can be used for technical support without incurring additional charges. The Desktop Maintenance Subscription rate is \$30.00/month for up to 5 workstations.

#### **3.3 Data Protection Plus Subscription**

Data Protection Plus offers a comprehensive plan to ensure that your business critical data is safe and secure. In addition to the services included in the Basic Administration Subscription, we also agree to absorb the cost of properly securing the systems and maintaining the security thereof. In the event of a security incident, we will respond to the incident without additional charge. Additionally, we will offer a secure, remote backup for critical information (up to 650MB per subscription, compressed and encrypted). When this limit is reached, the data is burned onto a CDROM and sent to you. This service is available for \$50.00/month. Finally, we will offer a class teaching the fundamentals of computer security to end users. One employee per subscription may attend this course each month.

### **3.4 Service Level Agreement**

Perhaps you have special on-going needs for which the above subscriptions are inadequate. In particular, uptime requirements may be a concern for you. If this is the case, contact us at [sales@metatrontech.com](mailto:sales@metatrontech.com) and we will discuss your options. Service level agreements priced depending on customer needs which may include uptime and availability requirements, and the circumstances under which uptime is both tolerable and expected.

## **4 Training Services**

We also can help train you and your employees to best take advantage of any unfamiliar software. We can train IT personnel or end users at our flat consulting rate, or we can offer classes open to others for a rate per attendee. Please contact us if you would like training on any products we support.

We also plan to offer the following courses on a per attendee basis:

### **4.1 Computer Security for End Users**

This course will offer end users with little or no technical knowledge the opportunity to develop a basic understanding of how to keep their information secure and safe. It will cover basic risk assessment, security risks, and how to avoid “social engineering” attacks where attackers attempt to trick their victims into compromising the security for them. The course will be taught as a series of four one-hour sessions, one per week. The knowledge gained from this course may be useful in spotting other non-computer-based fraudulent activity as well.

### **4.2 Why Centralize? The Business Advantages of Centralized Information Management**

This course will offer department managers and small business owners the opportunity to understand how centralized information management can simplify operations, provide better information for management decisions, and provide a wide range of other benefits. The course will be a single 1-hour session and will also cover the benefits, shortcomings, and costs of various solutions.

### **4.3 Desktop Linux for Windows Users**

Linux still has a reputation of being “hard to use” or “unfriendly to the average user,” though these preconceptions are generally based on older versions. Linux actually has much to offer the end user. This course will teach people who are interested in a Linux desktop to leverage their Windows knowledge to accomplish basic tasks, such as word processing, email, internet access, software installation, getting help, etc. The course will presume that the user has no interest in learning how to be a real system administrator and will therefore only cover those aspects of system administration which are important for home productivity use.

## **5 How Can We Help You?**

Metatron Technology Consulting offers a wide range of services to assist with any IT project. Whether you need risk assessments, custom application development, or network implementation or expansion. Please contact us if we can help you in any way.