ARNSEC

Network Refresh Checklist

Key considerations before upgrading your network

Use this list to review your current network before you spend money on new equipment. Tick each item as you go and note anything you are unsure about. It works for an office, a school or a shop, whatever the size.

1 Take stock

- [ ] List every switch, router, firewall, access point and server, with model, age and warranty status.
- [ ] Record firmware versions and mark equipment that is end of life or no longer supported.
- [ ] Draw or update the network diagram and the IP address plan.
- [ ] Note who looks after each system and where passwords are stored safely.

2 Measure performance

- [ ] Check internet usage in busy hours and note when it slows down.
- [ ] Find congested switch ports, uplinks and Wi-Fi areas with weak signal.
- [ ] Ask staff which applications feel slow, and when.
- [ ] Count the devices connected today and estimate growth over the next three to five years.

3 Check cabling and rooms

- [ ] Test existing cabling: category, condition and labelling.
- [ ] Check racks for space, ventilation, power and tidy cable management.
- [ ] Confirm UPS capacity and runtime for the core equipment.
- [ ] Note where fibre between floors or buildings would help.

4 Review security

- [ ] Replace default and shared passwords, and turn on multi-factor sign-in where possible.
- [ ] Review firewall rules and remove any that nobody can explain.
- [ ] Keep guest Wi-Fi, CCTV and office devices on separate networks.
- [ ] Make sure remote access uses a VPN and is limited to the people who need it.
- [ ] Check that network devices and operating systems are up to date.

5 Plan the Wi-Fi

- [ ] Mark where people work and meet on a floor plan.
- [ ] Decide how many access points you need and where, with a wired PoE connection to each.
- [ ] Set up a guest network with its own rules.

6 Protect the business

- [ ] Back up the configuration of network devices and test restoring one.
- [ ] Decide how long the business can cope without the network, and plan a backup internet link to match.
- [ ] Keep spare parts or a spare switch for critical equipment.

7 Plan the upgrade

- [ ] Set priorities: what must be done first and what can wait.
- [ ] Ask for written quotes that list equipment, warranty and support terms.
- [ ] Schedule work outside busy hours and tell staff in advance.
- [ ] Document the new network and keep a copy of every configuration after handover.

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