

Top 4 Connectivity Issues That Can Cripple Your IT Deployment

The seemingly small part can have big consequences.

While IT hardware connectivity may seem like a small part of an IT project, it can easily derail the overall success of the deployment. Working with customers in today's complex IT environments, we've identified steps you can take to avoid connectivity issues. Chances are this isn't all new to you, but if they're causing you trouble, StarTech.com can help you navigate the pitfalls.

1. The Hardware and OS Compatibility Nightmare: Are the OEMs that make your laptops and servers really concerned about interoperability beyond their brand?

The hot desk only works until it doesn't. Universal compatibility does not always mean guaranteed compatibility. A common issue is that many docking stations, display adapters, and cables do not always perform as expected due to incompatibilities with the hardware used. Ask any IT shop and they will tell you Apple creates another layer of complexity. Does your vendor provide compliance tests for laptops, displays, and peripheral compatibility?

Who has time for drivers? Drivers can slow down rollouts and lead to future compatibility issues. Common pitfalls include time-wasted tracking down updated drivers or users requiring administrator access for ongoing driver upgrades. It helps to take a driverless-first approach and if that isn't possible prioritize drivers that are native to the OS making it easier to update drivers across departments when new laptops are standardized.

2. Multi-display mayhem: How many of your support calls start with "I can't get my second monitor to...?"

Flickering, screen tearing, and no signal. Just a few trigger words to set the tone here. But wait there's more: How many displays can that laptop, interface, or OS support? 4K, 8K, Ultrawide? HDMI, DisplayPort, VGA? Displaylink? MST? And did we mention Apple adds complexity --M1/M2 MacBooks limit native multi-monitor connections, but not always.

Multi-display environments can be challenging, but they're not impossible to manage. A key step is to work with a supplier who knows their stuff and what works best in different situations. This can help you choose the right tools to ensure users have a positive experience and you and your teammates spend less time on the phone.

3. Standardization that minimizes hindsight questioning. Peripherals can cause disruption, productivity loss and requires time to support if they aren't fit for purpose for your deployment model.

IT Standards for the long haul. Not all products are created equal. There's a ton of not-so-known brands on (insert your favorite retailer here) and their products may not be compatible with your existing systems, may not be reliable, and may not be supported by the manufacturer long term. Will that company take your call? Do they share or offer their testing or validation services?

Look for these:

- Hardware design analysis and verification.
- Protocol testing to validate device interoperability.
- Signal integrity and cable performance.
- Performance benchmarking.
- Lifecycle management and regression testing.

Depth of Knowledge is essential when choosing an IT vendor or partner. In the complex and ever-changing IT landscape, it is important to work with people who have a deep understanding of the technologies and services you need. What's their approach to solving problems and their commitment to customer satisfaction?

Availability is also key. Stock. Lead time. Shipping costs. Regional compliance. Not all brands have a global reach, global distribution, and/or established partners. How do you obtain critical hardware in a timely manner, especially in remote or underserved areas? Having the IT connectivity hardware you need,

when and where you need is just as important as the laptops, servers, and other IT Infrastructure.

4 Nothing like a midstream update. What happens when the supplier's chipset changes, and you don't know about it?

Becoming Future Proofed is knowing if you have the latest rev and up to date on changes in technology. Will your supplier let you keep on ordering the same old cable knowing it won't work with the next monitor? How are you supposed to keep current and aware in a complex IT environment?

What do you mean it's EOL? Does the supplier maintain long lifecycles to ensure you have minimal disruptions in your deployments? What is the IT Vendor's process for notifying customers? Will the product be available 6 months from now with the same chipset? There is no guarantee that a product will be available indefinitely. However, by working with a supplier that is committed to long lifecycles and minimizing disruptions, you can reduce the risk to your deployments.

Conclusion: IT connectivity accessories are the lynchpin of IT Deployments, and we have the experience and solutions to keep your business running smoothly. Save time, avoid the traps, and don't worry about the small stuff because we do at StarTech.com.

We'll take your call. We'll share testing information. Compatibility, build quality, reliability, and testing beyond the spec are what we're known for, and we'll keep you up-to-date and aware of what's coming. We provide the information and products you need, available when and where you need them.

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