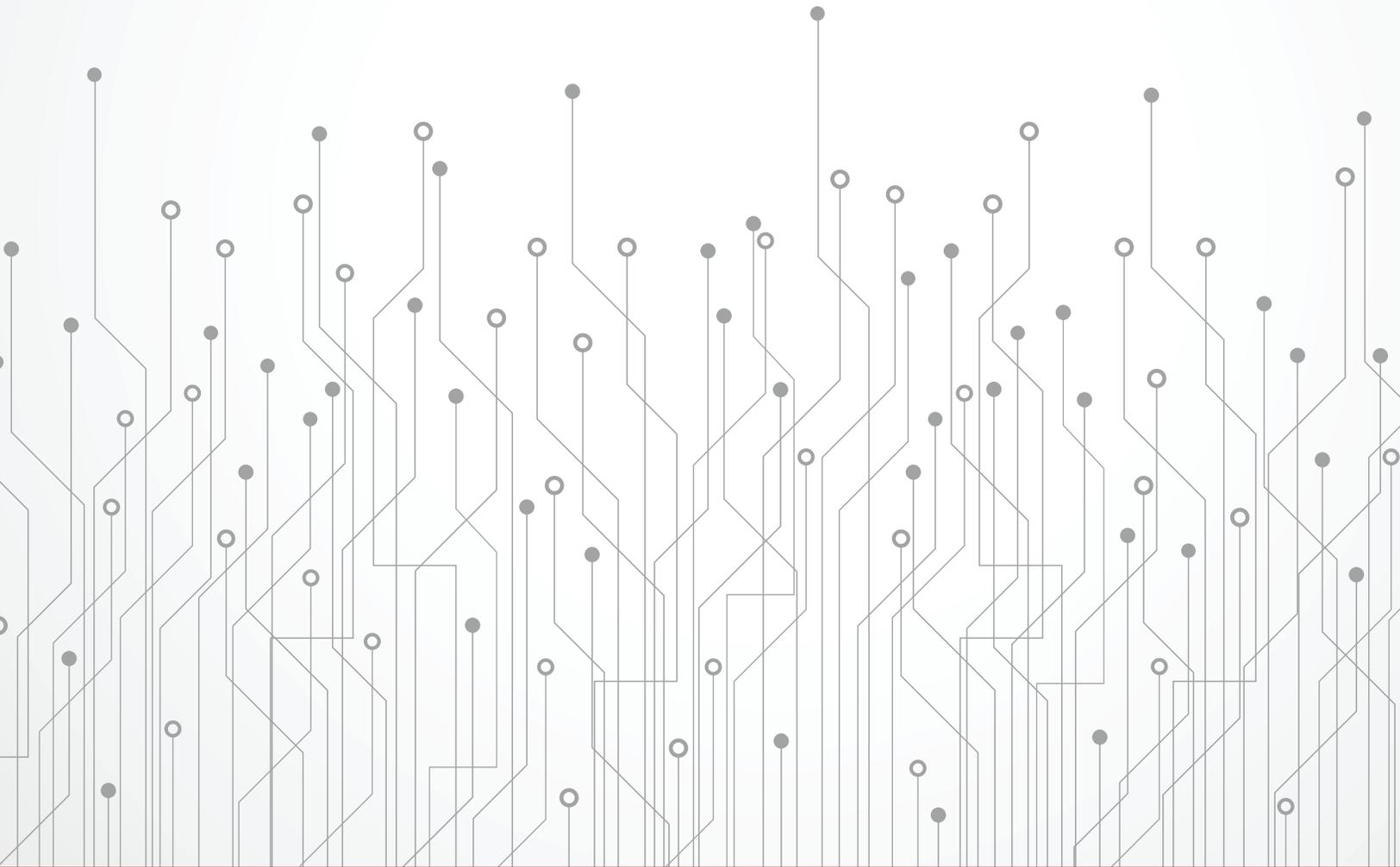


DIGGING DEEP



AN ACTIONABLE IT ASSESSMENT TOOL
For Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Users

UMC INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
SUPPORT 

Performing a general information technology assessment within your ministry and/or organization is crucial. You have data that needs protecting. You can use help in streamlining administrative processes, which gives you more time to concentrate on being with those souls entrusted to your care.

Executing information technology (IT) assessments can aid in documenting the network, identifying security vulnerabilities, and ensuring proper performance. Your reviews can also help find ways in which technology can improve productivity and your bottom line.

Here are some suggestions on how to do an assessment.

BASIC ASSESSMENT: FOR THE BEGINNER

Conducting an organization's technology assessment ideally involves evaluation by an IT professional in conjunction with employees and management. When evaluating technology concerns, list items that are currently most needed or desired. Maybe it is addressing the employee's concerns about slow PC performance or wi-fi connection issues. List what technology concerns the ministry might have in the future as well.

Also, list technology components that are most crucial to the organization. You will want to double-check these components and draft backup plans if they fail, or design these essential components for redundancy.

Examples of questions:

- 1. Do you have an IT Strategic Plan?*
- 2. From a technology standpoint, what processes would you like to improve?*
- 3. What is the current state of your Web site, your local network, your Internet connection and other key technologies? Are there any weaknesses or threats that need to be addressed?*
- 4. What are your current technology challenges or concerns?*
- 5. Are you currently working on any new technology projects or services?*

DIGGING DEEPER: FOR THE INTERMEDIATE USER

One way to do a general assessment is to list items that apply across all or most of the technology components and then evaluate each component on them. Here are some items and questions your assessment may want to answer:

Asset tracking: Do you utilize a PC or Mac platform, or both? Is it a hybrid model? What is the number of workstations/laptop computers required for your staff? What and how many peripherals are in place/required/desired?

In addition to computers, you should track

- *Printers – Color, Black and White, Ink Jet, Laser Jet?*
- *Fax Machine / Scanners*
- *UPS – Uninterrupted Power Supplies*
- *Multifunction/Copier Units*
- *Audio Visual*

Is there a labeling and tracking system put into place to track hardware and commercial software?

Maintenance: Is there a plan for regular upkeep, like operating systems, firmware, and other software updates, hardware upgrades, and software-based and physical cleaning? What is the current status or need of these?

Access control: Are the physical access and access security of devices acceptable? Are secure passwords or methods used? Is there a password maintenance plan?

Security protection: Is there an acceptable anti-virus or security solution installed and active?

Security vulnerabilities: Are there any obvious security concerns or risks? Do additional security vulnerability scans need to be made? Do you have security testing procedures in place to prevent or fight against data/cyber security attacks?

Redundancy: Is there a backup plan if a device is down?

Data control: Is the data on the device secure? Is sensitive data encrypted and/or accessible only to those authorized?

Monitoring and logging: Are there monitoring and logging systems in place to keep tabs on status and employees?

System or configuration backups: Is there a practice in place to keep a current backup of configuration files of network devices or a hard drive image of the computers?

File or data backups: What is your backup system? How important is it to be able to backup and recover certain business files/data and systems? What backup system regimen do you follow – daily, weekly? Is backup media stored at an offsite location? What is the physical security for all hardware and software? (e.g. Locked areas, air-conditioned, well-ventilated.) Have you considered, or are you using, cloud backup? Is there a disaster recovery plan? Do your backups include sensitive/regulated data? Is your data segmented by sensitivity/critical level? Do you have any data/system that requires continuous data protection (CDP)?

A/V System: Should we upgrade our equipment? Is it okay to buy “used” equipment? Do you need to set up a digital mixing console? Does your wireless equipment have a lot of interference? Are you on the correct channels for your area? Are your projector's brightness, resolution, and aspect ratio correct for how and where they are being used? Is your presentation software adequate to your needs?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER: FOR ADVANCED USERS

For a more thorough assessment, consider an in-depth evaluation and report on the individual technology components, such as:

Network connectivity and components: What sorts of networking equipment (routers, switches, firewalls) do you have? What type of network are you running? Is cloud infrastructure an option? Can the network be accessed remotely? Is it secure? Do you have or need a virtual private network (VPN)? Do you have network redundancy to ensure maximum uptime? Who is the internet provider and what type of service is provided? Do the routers, switches, access points, and other components have up-to-date firmware installed? Are the default passwords changed? Are the advanced settings optimized? Are the configurations backed up? Any old or legacy components that should be updated?

Servers: Do the servers have the latest operating system updates and security patches? Are there any old or legacy hardware and software that should be updated? Do you have a server maintenance program? Is the administrator of your network an external IT professional or in-house staff?

Wired network: Are the ethernet runs/outlets and their corresponding switch ports labeled? Any additional runs/outlets needed?

Wi-Fi network: Is there adequate coverage and performance? Any interfering networks?

Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) Battery Backup: Are crucial components protected by a UPS? Is the battery capacity sufficient? Do older batteries need to be replaced?

Registration: Is the registration software up-to-date? Is that information backed up?

Software: What operating system software is used for computers? What operating system is installed on the servers? Are purchased licenses tracked? Are new software updates or versions available? How many licenses are required for each software program utilized by you? Do you allow for staff growth in the number of licenses purchased? Do you have ...

- *Virtualization software (VMware, Citrix)*
- *Server/Database software (SQL Server)*
- *Antivirus software (Ingram, Norton, McAfee)*
- *File-sharing software (DropBox, SharePoint, Google Apps)*
- *Microsoft Office application?*
- *Accounting software?*
- *Database software/church management system?*
- *Specialized software?*

Email: How many email accounts do you have? What size/storage do you require for your emails? Do you use cloud-based email or a more traditional Microsoft Exchange? If traditional, is it hosted in-house or with a third-party manager? Do you integrate, or would you like to integrate email with a third-party software? Do you need archive, backup and recovery services for your emails? How are email addresses and security profiles setup for staff?

Website: Does a third-party provide hosting services for your website? Do you have or need instant messaging capability? Do you have a secure/log-in section of the website? Secure socket layer (SSL) certificate/encryption? Do you have domain name(s) purchased through a registrar (e.g. GoDaddy, etc.)? Who performs your regular website maintenance? How important is end-user experience with regard to your website (page load time, redirect, content load)? Do you have or require File Transfer Protocol (FTP) access to the web server? Is SPAM filtering in-place?

Collaboration: Is there a convenient way for employees to communicate with each other? Is there a VPN for remote workers and offices?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER: NETWORK TOPOLOGY AND DOCUMENTATION

After you have done all that, one last item you can work on is network documentation. This includes a network map, or graphical representation of all the computers and devices on your network. It will show the interconnection of the network components and a list of all the basic details, including the following:

- *Internet connection*
- *Network infrastructure components*
- *Cabling*
- *Servers*
- *Workstations and laptops*
- *Printers and copiers*
- *Mobile devices*
- *Software*

The documentation should include the model and serial numbers of equipment, IP and hardware addresses, and other basic configuration details. It should provide enough information that any IT professional can come in and set up the basic network from scratch. It can help when you bring on a new IT team member or if an outside IT provider comes in to help. Additionally, it can help the existing staff identify security vulnerabilities and other issues.

ASSESSING POLICIES

During a broad technology assessment, take advantage of an excellent opportunity to evaluate IT-related policies for your ministry. For instance, general policies covering computer, internet, wi-fi usage and policies for data control and security. You might also evaluate internal IT

policies covering maintenance schedules, backup and security measures, and user training and education. Do you have any written policies relating to staff and public use of technology? Are there any informal, unwritten policies?

SUMMARY

Remember, a good technology assessment is done with the concerns of IT and non-IT members of the organization. Though all technology components should be evaluated and considered, knowing the concerns and components that are most crucial to the ministry is vital. Always be on the lookout for technology that can help increase productivity and support the organization's ministries.

Though there is no real right or wrong way to perform your assessment, it should however always provide a written report at the end. This could include a checklist of the items evaluated and written recommendations.

WE CAN HELP!

As part of our ministry of administration, the General Council on Finance and Administration deploys professional staff to local churches, affiliated organizations, and annual conference offices, at their request, to perform independent assessments on Information Technology for all types of ministries.

As our Managed IT Service offerings and customers have grown, our experience and knowledge in working with affiliated organizations have also developed. We combine our IT administration expertise with our knowledge of the business practices of affiliated organizations, resulting in an objective and comprehensive analysis of an organization's IT status. The IT assessment intends to assess the infrastructure sustainability within the organization to ensure that IT infrastructure is planned, managed, and maintained to support operations, now and in the future.

Call today to discuss your IT Assessment by the professionals at GCFA. 866-367-4232



Contact us at ConnectionalRelations@gcfa.org for all the information technology needs of your ministry.