Time's Up for Windows Server 2003! Here's What You Need To Know

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Windows Server 2003 End of Life Key Points

Windows Server 2003 has thrived as a reliable part of many organizations' infrastructure for years and has served businesses well. It has been succeeded by many newer generations over the past decade, but as of July 14th, the time has come for customers to have carried out their migration plans. If you have not yet done so, here's some key points that deserve your attention:

3 Important Things You Must Know If You're Still Running Windows Server 2003:

- **There are officially NO UPDATES for Windows Server 2003.**
- **Windows Server 2003 WILL NOT PASS A COMPLIANCE AUDIT.**
- **It is NO LONGER CONSIDERED SAFE TO OPERATE A BUSINESS on a Windows Server 2003 platform.**

Key Related Concerns:

- **Lack of patches/updates/non-security fixes** – No-cost, non-security related update support terminated on July 13, 2010. However, support for non-security-related updates was available on a for-fee basis to customers that felt it was important to continue to have access to fixes that could help their system run optimally and perform well. *This is officially past-tense as of this July 15th.*

- **Elimination of security fixes** – Customers see security fixes as being among the most critical fixes for their installed servers. **These fixes will no longer be delivered to customers for their Windows Server 2003 servers**, regardless of how severe a given issue may be. This may be less of a problem with many aging Windows Server 2003 applications, mainly because the applications still in use are increasingly likely to be inward facing rather than outward facing.

- **Lack of support** - Customers **no longer have the ability to contact Microsoft for technical support** in the event of a server problem. This becomes particularly important when a system experiences an outage and customers are unable to restore the system and recover data and applications from the stalled machine.

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- **Application support challenges** – Software vendors dislike having a complex support matrix and typically support current versions along with a finite number of earlier editions of the product. For most ISVs, an 11-year-old application is probably already past its rational support life cycle, and in most cases, these **application ISVs have discontinued support for aging operating system environments such as Windows Server 2003**.

- **Compliance issues** – Customers in regulated industries or handling regulated data, including healthcare and payment card industry (PCI) data, will find that they are *now out of compliance*, which could mean fines or being cut off from key trading partners that seek to protect their own regulatory compliance status.

- **Inability to leverage modern cloud options from Microsoft and other vendors** – Windows Server 2003 can run on virtually every hypervisor in the market, but that does not mean it is an equal player in these modern deployment scenarios. For example, Windows Server 2003 installations cannot be re-hosted in a Microsoft Azure environment, unless it is a 64-bit image, but the vast majority of Windows Server 2003 installations are 32-bit solutions. So even if customers bring the 32-bit image to the Azure cloud, they cannot continue using that operating system instance. When spinning up new infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) instances in Azure, Microsoft provides catalog images only for 64-bit instances of Windows Server 2012 R2. Customers looking to develop a hybrid cloud strategy will find that **Windows Server 2003 will not offer the same level of convenience that Windows Server 2012, along with modern companion technologies such as System Center 2012 R2, brings to the table.**

With the predominance of mobile computing, BYOD, and cloud-based technologies hedging into our day-to-day work environments, we are choosing to see this as an *exciting opportunity to prepare for the next generation in Information Technology!*

Read on for some great migration tips from our Dallas/Fort Worth IT Experts…

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The Fulcrum Group, Inc. 5751 Kroger Drive, Suite 279, Keller, TX 76244
Phone: 817.337.0300 Fax: 817.337.0313 Help Desk: 817.898.1277
info@fulcrumgroup.net   www.fulcrum.pro

A Few Migration Tips

Here are a few tips to figure into your migration plan, from Fulcrum Group VP, David Johnson:

- Migrate or upgrade apps and services from your old Windows 2003 servers to other Windows 2008 or newer servers on your network. *Caveat: If the server is a domain controller, you'll need to migrate your domain to a Windows 2008 or higher Active Directory domain before demoting and retiring the server.*

- Buy new physical servers to replace your old Windows 2003 servers. *Caveat: If the server is a domain controller, you'll need to migrate your domain to a Windows 2008 or higher Active Directory domain before demoting and retiring the server.*

- Invest in virtualization infrastructure – This requires more of an upfront investment, as typically you would need to purchase a Storage Area Network (SAN), 2 or more virtual host servers, virtualization software, and the labor to build it out.

If you'd like assistance with your migration options, please don't hesitate to reach out to us by phone or email – and visit our website at **www.fulcrum.pro** today to find out more about this issue and the solutions we recommend.

We always welcome the opportunity to speak with you – someone's always here and glad to offer a word of advice!

If you're wondering where your technology investments stand, we have several **FREE assessment services** that may align well with your needs - call us today at **817.337.0300**.