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# Ongoing Shift to Remotely-Managed Services

Today, on-premise network equipment is becoming physically smaller, with less power consumption and is less interoperable across manufacturers products as the functions listed above are layered inside single boxes instead of filling an entire room. The historically separate network hardware and software are also merging into virtual options that rely on stable high-speed internet connectivity with no data charges, something not yet 100% available throughout the Province of BC. Increasingly, functions that were provided within the devices are actually being done "over the wire" via the network. The benefit can be solutions which are instantly kept up to date and harness network-scale effects (for instance detecting bad actors or spam can often be much more effective done at scale than it can be individually.) However there are downsides - not only do these kind of network-enabled services depend critically on the network to be fast and stable, they can also introduce privacy issues if they are centrally managed by servers outside of Canada.

Unfortunately, buying an already complicated technology that we all completely rely on is about to become even more opaque. Manufacturers often sell these products online with little technical support through the life cycle of the products. For most small and medium businesses this is not a good route to take. Network technology does not come out of the box and deliver a secure network service without expert configuration. Selection of network solutions will rely more than ever on vendor partners with high experience and knowledge levels in this area.

Internet-centric remote tools and functions are only of use to organizations if the internet service itself is both fast and completely reliable. Choosing internet-dependent services (such as remote data backup, office software or antivirus products) is currently only recommended for libraries with fast, dependable external connections.

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