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Alert issued as NT4 hits buffers

People using Windows NT are warned that free support for all versions ended on 1 January. Some help and 'critical' security patches will be available for two years, but only to companies paying an extra flat fee.

Support for NT4 Workstation ended in June but continued until 31 December for the server version.

Microsoft is advising people using the server software to upgrade to Windows Server 2003, which it says is inherently more secure and cheaper to run.

Peter Houston, senior director of Windows serviceability, says it runs 160 per cent faster than NT4 as a file server and 345 per cent faster as a domain server. 'Customers need to upgrade to newer Microsoft offerings to be as secure as possible from



Free support for Windows NT finally came to an end on 1 January

today's sophisticated Internet-based attacks.'

As many as eight in 10 UK companies still use NT and many are reluctant to migrate to an

operating system that might be better but could cause glitches in complex systems. But Robert May, managing director of IT consultancy Ramsac, warns that it is a bad idea to underpin an IT infrastructure with unsupported software. 'Not only are firms opening up their systems to possible attack, they are also in danger of contravening supplier guidelines, an increasing number of which require partner companies to operate robust and reliable IT systems.' Ramsac offers a free NT audit for concerned companies and Microsoft has a number of tools to aid migration.

NT (New Technology) ousted Novell Netware as the dominant force in the world's local networks after its launch in 1996 and helped break the dominance of Unix in enterprise systems.