

How Server Monitoring Prevents Costly Downtime in a Dental Practice

by Darby TechForce



Your server is the workhorse of your dental practice. If you think of all the networked devices in your office as a wheel, the server is the central hub that each computer connects to. Your server also hosts all the software applications you need for day-to-day operations. It allows you to see upcoming appointments, charge credit cards, submit insurance forms, and view a patient's health history. In other words, your server enables your dental practice to function smoothly. If it crashes, business operations can (and will) come to a screeching halt.

As any dental practice owner knows, downtime leads to a loss of production – which directly impacts your bottom line. Practices can lose over \$10,000 a day when they're unable to see patients. If your server is down for several days, the consequences can be catastrophic. Rather than have an action plan for *when* your server crashes, the smart idea is to prevent downtime from occurring in the first place. This can be achieved with a service called server monitoring.

What is server monitoring?

Server monitoring is the process of analyzing a server for performance, security, storage availability, and other processes critical for peak performance. It involves using manual techniques and automated software to keep an eye on a server 24/7/365. The goal of server monitoring is to make sure a server is performing as expected and to address problems as they come up to prevent server failure.

One way to think of server monitoring is to imagine a nurse looking after a patient in intensive care. He has electrodes on his chest to monitor cardiac activity, a pulse oximeter on his finger to measure oxygen, arterial lines to check blood pressure, and other various monitoring devices. A nurse doesn't stand at the patient's bedside all day to make sure he's stable. She goes to her desk and views all of the patient's vitals from a single monitor. If his heartbeat flat lines or his blood pressure drops, the nurse is alerted so the doctor can run into the room and save the patient.

Like people, computers don't typically go from completely healthy to dead. A server will show symptoms of distress. Paying attention to these signs is important for preventing a system failure and protecting your practice from costly downtime.

How does server monitoring work?

For server monitoring to work, a service provider must install an agent on your server. This permission allows the provider to see the status of every computer in your dental practice and make sure each is secure and HIPAA compliant. By viewing your server remotely, a service provider can also keep tabs on all of the software applications your office uses every day in addition to warranties and their expiration dates. If something goes wrong, the server will send your provider a message so the problem can be caught and addressed before it crashes.



The benefits of server monitoring in a dental practice

Server monitoring catches small issues before they become big problems. This empowers practice owners to be proactive, rather than reactive, in keeping their businesses running.

Server monitoring allows dental practices to plan for the future. With a professional monitoring your server, you have someone keeping an eye on how much data you're adding every day. This is extremely valuable information to have, as a server can crash if it runs out of space. At Darby TechForce, we send a performance report each month to help you plan server updates and stay on top of your technology. This allows for good budgeting and fewer surprise expenses.

Another benefit of server monitoring is that it keeps your patients happy. If your server crashes, you're going to have a lot of angry patients. Adults have to take time off work and kids need to be pulled out of school for dentist appointments. If they're told they can't be seen for their scheduled cleaning or root canal, they might not want to come back. What's worse, these patients may tarnish your reputation by writing a negative review of your practice online.

With server monitoring, you get the peace of mind that all of the workstations in your practice are up-to-date and secure. When your network is protected, you're safe from cyberattacks that could compromise patient data and put you at risk for pricey HIPAA fines.

Keep your server up and running with ServerSecure

The costs of a server crash go far beyond getting your hardware back up and running. A loss of production can cause a dental practice to lose thousands of dollars in production every day patients can't be seen. Server monitoring can prevent costly downtime and keep your business running smoothly.

At Darby TechForce, we offer dental practices two levels of server monitoring. With ServerSecure, we monitor your server 24/7/365 to make sure it is running properly, that backups are successful, and to protect it with HIPAA compliant AntiVirus software. When something goes wrong, we work with your existing IT provider to prevent downtime and keep patients in your chair.

ServerSecure Plus includes all of the services offered in ServerSecure in addition to remediation. We not only alert you to server issues, we remotely access your server (or visit your practice if necessary) to resolve the problems as well. This is the best solution for a practice looking for a dental specific IT team to be responsible for all of its technology needs.

To learn more about how Darby TechForce can help keep your server performing at its peak, give us a call at 800-886-2093 or send us an email at connect@darbytechforce.com.

