Why? Because professional-grade equipment is designed with performance, reliability, and centralized management in mind.

Professional server computers typically include redundancy in all the key systems — duplicate power supplies, duplicate network ports, duplicate disk controllers, and often even duplicate CPUs and motherboards. So, if one component fails, the server can continue operating.

Professional switches typically include management features that let you pinpoint problems on your network, segment your network for better performance, and monitor your employees' usage of the network.

You may also be tempted to cut costs by stringing inexpensive cable directly from the switches to each computer on the network. In the long run, though, the Scrooge approach may actually prove to be more expensive than investing in a good cable installation in the first place. A professionally installed cable infrastructure will last much longer than the computers it services, and will be considerably more reliable.

Turning Off or Restarting a Server Computer While Users Are Logged On

The fastest way to blow your network users' accounts to kingdom come is to turn off a server computer while users are logged on. Restarting it by pressing its reset button can have the same disastrous effect.

If your network is set up with a dedicated file server, you probably won't be tempted to turn it off or restart it. But if your network is set up as a true peer-to-peer network, where each of the workstation computers — including your own — also doubles as a server computer, be careful about the impulsive urge to turn off or restart your computer. Someone may be accessing a file or printer on your computer at that very moment.

So, before you turn off or restart a server computer, find out whether anyone is logged on. If so, politely ask her to log off.


REMEMBER

Many server problems don't require a server reboot. Instead, you can often correct the problem just by restarting the particular service that's affected.