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SERVERS & STORAGE

Server Room Survival Guide

Spot Rack Rascal, score your server room and fix the easy things this week.



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MEET RACK RASCAL

The monster in your server room

Rack Rascal moves into server rooms that have been left to look after themselves.

He feeds on the jobs busy businesses put off: ageing servers, tangled cables, untested backups, expired warranties and unsupported software.

He's very good at hiding. A server that is "still running" isn't the same as one that's supported, and everything can look fine on the surface until the day it isn't. The longer he's left alone, the more downtime, disruption and cost he can cause.

> **This guide helps you spot the signs, score your server room in ten minutes and fix the easy things this week. No technical background needed.**



WARNING SIGNS

Has he already moved in?

If two or more of these sound familiar, Rack Rascal is probably already living in your server room.

Louder and warmer
Fans working harder, or a room hotter than the office.

Slower than it was
Logins, files and apps drag, especially first thing.

Nobody knows its age
No one can say when it was bought or when cover ends.

Warnings get ignored
An amber light or a beeping UPS that “always does that”.

Mystery cables
Nobody knows what each cable does, so nobody touches them.

Backups on faith
They run nightly, but nobody has tried a restore in months.

Storage nearly full
Staff are told to delete files, or space warnings pop up.

One person knows it all
If they’re off or leave, nobody knows how it fits together.

THE RACK RASCAL RISK CHECKLIST

Score your server room

Score **1 point** for every **No** or **Not sure**. “Not sure” counts, because Rack Rascal loves the things nobody has checked.

1 **Do you know how old each server is?**

Older hardware fails more often and parts get harder to find.

Yes | No | ?

2 **Is every server under warranty or a support contract?**

Without cover, a failed part can mean days of downtime.

Yes | No | ?

3 **Is every server on a supported operating system?**

Unsupported systems stop getting security updates.

Yes | No | ?

4 **Are security updates applied at least monthly?**

Most attacks use weaknesses that already have a fix.

Yes | No | ?

5 **Have you restored a file from backup in the last three months?**

A backup only counts if you can get the data back.

Yes | No | ?

6 **Is a copy of your backups kept off-site or in the cloud?**

Fire, flood, theft or ransomware can take both at once.

Yes | No | ?

THE RACK RASCAL RISK CHECKLIST

Questions 7 to 12

7 **Does your storage have at least 20% free space?**
Nearly full storage slows systems and can stop them working.
Yes | No | ?

8 **Is the server protected by a tested UPS?**
A power cut without one can corrupt data and damage hardware.
Yes | No | ?

9 **Does the room stay cool, even in summer?**
Heat shortens hardware life and causes sudden shutdowns.
Yes | No | ?

10 **Are cables labelled and tidy enough to trace?**
Mystery cables turn a quick fix into an afternoon of guesswork.
Yes | No | ?

11 **Would you be alerted if a drive or server failed?**
Without monitoring, users find problems before you do.
Yes | No | ?

12 **Is there documentation someone else could follow?**
If knowledge sits with one person, every absence is a risk.
Yes | No | ?

Your score _____ / 12

Turn the page to see what your score means.

YOUR RESULTS

What your score means

0–2 POINTS

Rack Rascal is locked out

Your server room is in good shape. Keep up the routine and re-check every six months.

3–5 POINTS

He’s sniffing around

A few gaps are opening up. Work through the quick wins this month and plan for the rest.

6–8 POINTS

He’s moved in

There are real risks to your data and uptime. Get an expert view soon, before a small problem becomes an outage.

9–12 POINTS

He’s running the place

A failure is a matter of when, not if. Book a Server Health Check now.



SURVIVAL TIPS

Quick wins for this week

No specialist tools needed. Each one takes away a hiding place.

- [ ] **Make a simple list**
  What each server does, when it was bought and when its warranty ends.
- [ ] **Check operating system versions**
  Flag anything on Windows Server 2016 or older for a plan.
- [ ] **Test a restore**
  Restore a real file to a different folder and open it.
- [ ] **Look for warning lights**
  Note any amber or red lights on servers, drives or the UPS.
- [ ] **Check free space**
  Anything over 80% full needs attention.
- [ ] **Label the important cables**
  Start with power and the main network links.
- [ ] **Clear the room**
  Move boxes, old kit and anything blocking airflow.
- [ ] **Check the temperature**
  A cheap thermometer shows if it gets too warm in the afternoon.
- [ ] **Write down the essentials**
  Admin logins stored securely, who to call, and where backups go.

BACKUPS

Backups that actually work

A backup that has never been restored is a hope, not a plan.

Rack Rascal's favourite trick is a backup that reports "success" every night while quietly missing the files that matter. A good rule of thumb is 3-2-1:

3
copies
Your live data plus two backups.

2
types of storage
So one fault can't take out both.

1
off-site
Safe from fire, flood, theft and ransomware.

THEN MAKE IT ROUTINE

1. Test a restore at least every three months, and after any big change.
2. Check new folders, databases and systems have been added to the backup.
3. Know how long a full recovery would take, and whether the business could wait that long.

KEY DATES

Deadlines to watch

Windows Server 2016 support ends on 12 January 2027.

After that date it stops getting routine security updates, so any server still running it becomes an easy target.



Version	What to do
2012 / 2012 R2	Replace or upgrade now. Paid extended updates ended in October 2026.
2016	Plan your upgrade now. Hardware lead times and migration take months.
2019	Supported for now. Build it into your refresh plan.

Sources: Microsoft Windows Server blog and Microsoft Lifecycle pages, checked October 2026.

FIND HIM BEFORE HE CAUSES TROUBLE

Book a Server Health Check

Scored 3 or more, or ticked “Not sure” more than once? One of our engineers will review your servers, storage and backups, then give you a clear, jargon-free report showing:

- what’s healthy and what’s at risk
- whether your backups and recovery would actually work
- what needs attention now, and what can safely wait

It’s no-obligation, and we work around you to keep disruption to a minimum.

TALK TO A UNIFIER TO BOOK

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YOUR SERVER ROOM LOG

Know what you've got

Fill this in as you work through the quick wins. It's the first step to locking Rack Rascal out.

Server / what it does	Bought	Warranty ends	Operating system	Backed up?

NOTES

Stop Rack Rascal.
Sleep easy.

Book your Server Health Check and find out exactly what's hiding in your server room.

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