

Why Your IT People Need Robots

Automation runs our lives—why isn't it running your IT?

Deck: Learn why automating your IT process is the answer to maintaining, protecting, and improving your enterprise's software.

The early 2000s were a simpler time. Back then, your IT team was just one guy named Jerry who wore the same [Serenity](#) shirt every day and smelled faintly of Diet Mountain Dew. When your computer froze, you called Jerry. When you couldn't configure your Outlook, you called Jerry. Your company had just one server, and it hung out with Jerry in a dark room somewhere below ground level. If the server crashed, Jerry would have it back up and running again faster than you could say, "Han shot first."

But fast forward almost 20 years, and that single server has been replaced by remote mountains of servers so massive, they have their own [water treatment facilities](#). In fact, Microsoft is slated to finish building their new [6.3 million square foot data center](#) within the next two years. In a facility that mind-bogglingly massive, Jerry isn't going to cut it. In fact, hordes of IT professionals wouldn't be able to maintain the sheer number of servers a facility that size can hold. As companies like LinkedIn and Facebook require exponential computational power, server demand is only going to increase (it's analogous to the amount of data you use on your phone now versus the amount you used five years ago), which means even if your company had an entire country of qualified IT professionals furiously maintaining all those servers, it *still* wouldn't be enough. We have passed the ability to maintain our own enterprise software using manual human labor.

Amazon figured this out already. With [64% of American households](#) using Amazon to order everything from toilet paper to tire irons, the manpower required for fulfilling all those orders would have exceeded profit and feasibility. Plus, Amazon scaled faster than new employees could even have been trained. The solution? Robots. Amazon's [army of Kiva robots](#) never call in sick, never need sleep, and never lose track of the warehouse's 21 million items. Automation allowed for Amazon to keep its costs low while still ensuring you get your life-sized Bigfoot statue within 48 hours of ordering.

If the parallel between Amazon's use of robots and your IT team's need for automation remains opaque, consider this: every line of code used by your server is a "product" that needs to be maintained, updated, and protected. If that code were magically transformed into physical products that lived inside the world's largest warehouse, you'd go bankrupt hiring enough employees to handle those products. Without automating your IT's processes, you're bankrupting your productivity and allowing for security vulnerabilities that could very well destroy your infrastructure (not to mention your reputation). It may only take your technician two minutes to write code for a patch that fixes a security breach, but when you have 5,000 servers that need the identical patch, suddenly a two-minute patch morphs into a month's worth of work.

With [intelligent automation](#), that two-minute patch is deployed instantly to all your servers. Sure, it's not as cute as Amazon's robots, but automated IT performs even better without plastic and wheels (especially since it doesn't need to be charged or have its hardware updated). There's no risk of human error or a server being overlooked; it's elegant implementation that eliminates vulnerabilities within seconds. Which, if that were the extent of automation's capabilities, should be enough of a convincing argument. But there *is* no extent to intelligent automation, and that's truly the most compelling aspect for any enterprise. From remote execution to event management to server configuration, your company's needs can be

fully automated at any scale. You can bring back Jerry and give him the power to be the most efficient IT guy on the planet—give Jerry the robots he deserves.

Getting the buy-off from other stakeholders in your organization may be tricky if they don't understand the necessity of, at the very least, protecting against security vulnerabilities. If there's resistance, remind them of [what happens when enterprises don't have a system](#) in place for instantly responding to security threats and deploying meaningful defenses. The old adage of, "We can't afford *not* to," applies here: no enterprise can exist in the modern world without automating its defenses. The robots your IT needs to survive don't look anything like the robots that vacuum our carpets and run our fulfillment centers, but they're no less vital to our lives and no less vital to the future of your business.