

No Panic Offers No Worries

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by Robert Dutt

Newcomer No Panic Computing is betting that small business customers will pay \$129 a month for a notebook computer, if that computer includes seamless backup and managed security.

The Markham, ON-based company launched Tuesday essentially as a "notebook as a service" model, with the big message from company president Larry Keating being one of simplicity.

No Panic has heavyweight partners in HP, Intel and Iron Mountain, and as the company's name suggests, Keating said the company is focused on taking worries out of the process of owning a computer, particularly for small businesses without the luxury of an IT staff.

"Our motto is 'Get back to work,'" Keating said with a chuckle. "It's bold, but I think it captures what we're trying to do."

The company offers selected HP laptops on a three-year lease, with the price including a stack of security and system-management software creating what the company calls a "stable platform." That platform includes lightweight antivirus and anti-spam from ESET, automatic online backup from Iron Mountain, and 24/7 remote support and management assistance from No Panic. Other security features include 256-bit encryption of all data on the machine, and the ability to remotely wipe a computer that's been lost or stolen.

It also includes insurance against theft, lost, damage or destruction. If a No Panic-purchased machine goes down, Keating said, the company will ship the customer a new model, with the user's data pre-populated right down to the desktop icons.

"It's not just keeping data from prying eyes, it's protecting the business continuity too," Keating said. "This is a tool for anybody who needs a fully managed, backed-up and secured computer and doesn't want to do it themselves."



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The company offers a choice of two HP laptops, the choice is a 15.4- or 14.1-inch display, and is looking at adding a more-mobile 12.1-inch model and a tablet in the near future. Keating said the lack of choice isn't a problem, and said that in many ways, the company was taking ideas from Apple's playbook. Fewer choices and the promise that the experience will be good, he said, makes up for any limitations when it comes to configuration.

"These aren't people who care what size of hard drive is in their laptop," he said. "They just want to know it's going to work."

Keating said that No Panic's goal is nothing short of changing the way people buy their computers, shifting the discussion away from the machine and towards the data. He acknowledged it's a goal that may take some time.

"It's going to take some time for it to stick, for people to really get what we've done here," he said. "But in the end, we're going to take enterprise-class technology down to SMB customers."

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