

# Vista's Top Tips For Restarting Your Tech After Lockdown

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**Retail technology has been put through its paces throughout 2020 and early 2021.**

**Never before has equipment been shut down and restarted on mass, cleaned so rigorously, or been mobilised to accommodate social distancing requirements.**

**The team at Vista thought it would be useful to share our experiences and data insights relating to how our customers' technology was impacted by the regional and national lockdowns, how it performed post lockdown, and how the changing customer demands and dynamics of physical trading environments affected the performance of these systems. We specifically analysed the data relating to our customers in retail, hospitality and cinema environments who unfortunately were forced to close their doors during the lockdowns. We have also monitored the trends in technology failures experienced by those who reopened in the summer of 2020, and the data relating to technology failures for customers that have continued to trade throughout more recent lockdowns.**

**We believe that the data insights collated by Vista is relevant to businesses that have remained open, as well as those business that have had to close and are contemplating reopening in the next month.**

# 1. Cleaning of equipment

As businesses started to reopen, the single largest issue encountered was due to the cleaning of the electronic equipment. As staff headed back to stores, hotels, restaurants and bars they were obviously anxious about the spread of COVID-19 and did all they could to protect themselves, their colleagues and customers by intensely cleaning their technology.

The most common problems experienced were the cleaning of the chip and pin devices and EPOS touchscreens. We found that these devices were particularly impacted by liquid ingress or repeated rigorous movement with chip and pins triggering their built- in security feature to protect the device from compromise. Consequently and for certain customers, faults relating to “alert interruption” or “tamper detect” increased by 150% in comparison to pre-lockdown failures.

In addition, other PoS components were also affected by cleaning such as the touchscreen with “intermittent touchscreen issues” reported. The primary cause was found to be as a result of cleaning fluid being trapped between the touch panel and the front plastic bezel.



## Our advice

**Our advice to prevent these issues is for businesses to provide clear guidance on how to clean your IT. There has been a notable reduction in incidents where businesses have issued advice to their employees in advance of opening; a simple one page guide can be very effective.**

**Cleaning should always be in line with a manufacturer’s guidelines: never spray cleaning agents directly onto the equipment, do not use any abrasive liquids, bleach, alcohol or hand sanitisers. If using an antibacterial fluid, spray onto a dry cloth (so that it is slightly damp), never use wet cloths to clean the equipment.**

**Finally, clean gently as aggressive rigorous movement of the device can cause issues and dislodge cables. Avoid pressing multiple buttons at the same time.**

## 2. Moving of equipment

The second largest impact as businesses reopened was due to store, hotel and bar employees moving equipment themselves. Whilst it is appreciated that social distancing requirements need to be adhered to, disconnecting IT and EPoS technology in an uncontrolled manner can cause a major headache to businesses. As a result, Vista experienced an influx of incidents relating to cabling incorrectly plugged in, corrupt software and incorrectly configured print networks.



### Our advice

**The only advice we can offer on this subject is that technology should never be moved unless you are trained to do so. If any of our customers require equipment to be relocated we will always be happy to help.**

## 3. Powering back on

Many businesses that were forced to close their doors also powered off their equipment to reduce the energy consumption whilst they were non-trading. Although sensible, the problem is that many electronic devices are not designed to be powered off for long periods; many system boards have built-in batteries such as raid cards, motherboards, chip and pin and plug in digital signage media devices. These batteries may already be reaching the limits of their usable life and being powered off for a long period of time can cause issues such as loss of settings and firmware corruption.

Electronic equipment does not perform well in cold and damp environments. The first national UK lockdown was during a period where the UK enjoyed warm weather. The recent lockdown has occurred when the weather has been wet and cold, therefore, there is a lot more moisture in the atmosphere. Businesses that have been closed may also have turned off or turned down their heating systems to save money which could also add to the problem.



## Our advice

Our advice would be to plan reopening in advance, warm the building prior to switching on the technology in a controlled manner. It is also key to allow the technology to fully warm up before powering off once more. Power supply units are particularly vulnerable to being powered on from cold and then powered off and on again in a short space of time.

## 4. Charge all devices

With an increasing number of mobile devices such as HHTs and RF scanners used within businesses, again these devices may have been powered off for a long period of time.



## Our advice

Batteries will be discharged and will need to have a full charge before use; this does not just apply to mobile devices but also to the Bluetooth devices that are connected to them. It is key that all devices are charged and paired before they start to be used.

## 5. Laser and inkjet printers

Another impact of the changes implemented by businesses as a result of COVID-19 was the increased use of laser printers. These were used more by those companies looking to adapt quickly to the demand for click and collect, home delivery and takeaway services. Ensuring that there is sufficient



stock availability of consumables for these printers will be key to avoiding an influx of issues when these businesses reopen. Companies using inkjet and gel cartridge printers saw a significant increase in issues where ink cartridges and print heads had dried up and become locked.

**On behalf of the entire team at Vista, we hope you found this guide helpful and that you are able to open your doors to your customers again very soon.**



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