

IMPROVE YOUR SUPPORT EXPERIENCE WITH DELL PREMIUM SUPPORT WITH SUPPORTASSIST TECHNOLOGY

Hold the phone: Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist has your back.

High-end help

Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist detected a hard drive failure and Dell support called us with the solution.



For anyone who hates spending time on the phone with tech support when you have a problem with your laptop, tablet, or desktop, there's good news. Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology is a proactive automated support solution that lets you avoid the need to contact tech support for critical issues. SupportAssist recognizes when a problem occurs, diagnoses the issue, and automatically creates a case providing Dell support experts the information they need to resolve the problem.

In our hands-on tests at Principled Technologies, we found that Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist cut call time by up to 86.2 percent and the number of support steps by 59.3 percent compared to a Dell Basic Limited Warranty plan when dealing with a hard drive failure. SupportAssist automatically provided Dell support technicians with information about our problem, and notified us of the problem with a SupportAssist in-system alert. A Dell expert called us within one hour of the failure and the support call lasted only 4 minutes because Dell's tech support had all the details ready before they called us. With the Basic Limited Warranty, after we discovered the hard drive failure, we contacted tech support and it took about 30 minutes to troubleshoot the problem to determine exactly what was wrong.

Now, if something goes wrong with your device, there's no need to spend time on the phone going through a lengthy remote diagnosis. With Dell Premium Support and SupportAssist technology, you can go on with your day knowing that you'll be alerted if there's a critical problem, and that it won't be a hassle to fix should something go wrong.



THE PROBLEM: HARD DRIVE DAMAGE

Janice had a long day at work, and is taking her dog for a walk in her neighborhood. After that, she looks forward to unwinding on the couch to check her social media pages and looking at the latest pictures from her daughter’s trip to Europe. Little does Janice know that while she was out, her laptop hard drive suffered a failure, which may prevent her from doing what she wants. It’s going to be a problem. How quickly and easily can she get back to her routine?

How the support teams handled it

If Janice had Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist, Dell technicians would know about her hard drive problem almost immediately thanks to its proactive, automated approach to support. This means Dell support would be at work solving the issue before she even knew about the problem, which adds up to less hassle for her. She could get an email or a call from a Dell Support technician before returning from her walk and avoid experiencing the frustration of opening her laptop to find a critical problem. Then, because the Dell team would already have the information they need, Janice could spend less time on the phone and have her laptop back up and running sooner. With a Basic Limited Warranty, she would discover that her PC was down with a critical issue when she tries to use it. She would then have to call tech support and spend a lot more time going through the lengthy troubleshooting process to get the problem resolved (see Figure 1).

Vendor/support ¹	Call time	User steps	Troubleshooting actions	Resolution
Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist	4 minutes, 5 seconds	11	None necessary	Replacement hard drive will be shipped to us with Windows pre-installed
Dell Basic Limited Warranty	29 minutes, 33 seconds	27	Ran diagnostics test and entered BIOS menu, finding that no HDD was present	We will ship the laptop to Dell, and Dell will replace the hard drive and send the laptop back

Figure 1: Tech support comparisons for a failed hard drive with each support level.²

Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology did a significantly better job of handling our hard drive failure. As soon as SupportAssist recognized the problem, it automatically sent information to Dell Support so they could get started resolving the problem. At the same time, we received an alert in a SupportAssist dialog box that appeared on our display. It let us know there was a problem and that help was on the way. Dell Support technicians called us to confirm the failure, told us how to install a new hard drive, and then sent a replacement with Windows pre-installed on it.

¹ For details on our test systems, see [Appendix A](#). For details on our test procedure, see [Appendix B](#).

² See [Appendix C](#) for the steps we had to take to resolve each issue.

According to Dell, Premium Support also includes onsite service where a technician would come to our location to install the hard drive on qualified systems. With a Basic Limited Warranty, Dell Support addressed our issue, but we had to call in to tech support ourselves, and it took almost half an hour on the phone before they asked that we ship the laptop to them. With that process, the support team replaced the hard drive and sent the laptop back to us, taking even more time.

As Figure 2 shows, with Dell Premium Support and SupportAssist technology, the call took just over 4 minutes, which is 86.2 percent less time than the support call with a Basic Limited Warranty.

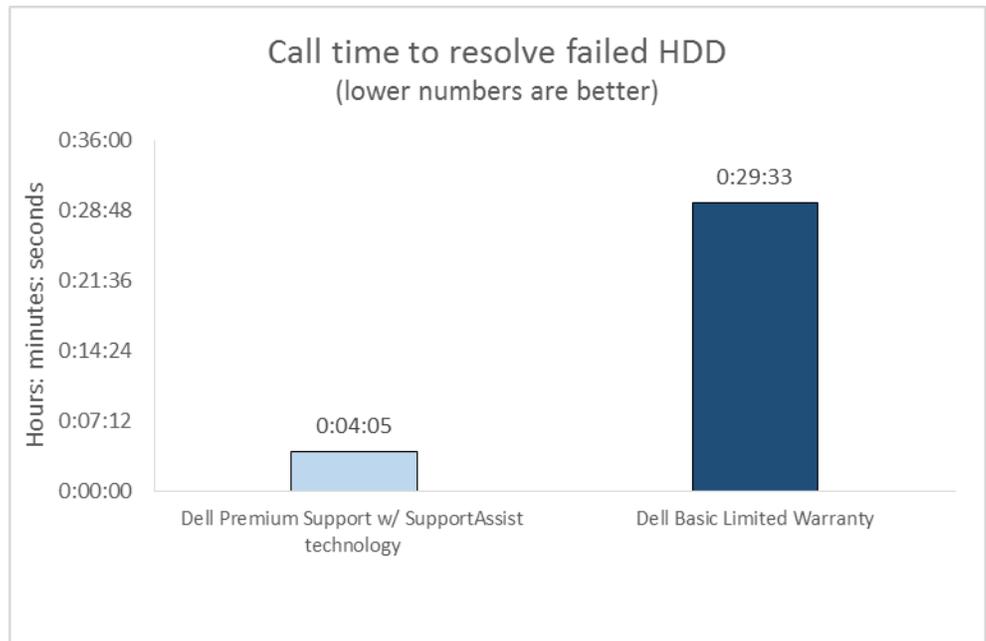
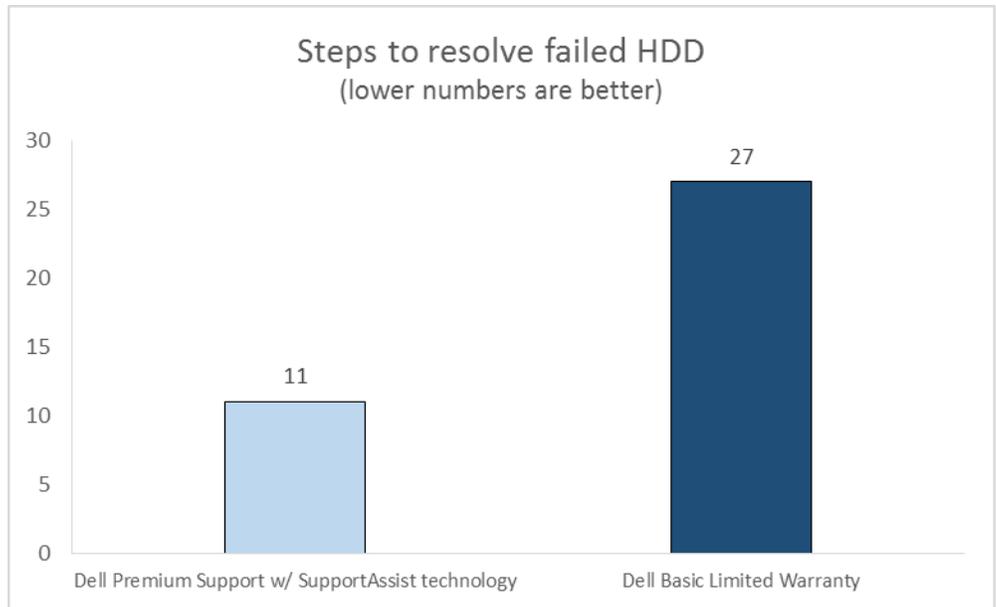


Figure 2: Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology cut call time by 86.2 percent compared to Dell Basic Limited Warranty plan.

Getting the issue resolved with Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology wasn't just faster—it was also easier, taking only 11 steps. That's a 59.3 percent reduction in the number of user steps compared to the Basic Limited Warranty (see Figure 3). See [Appendix C](#) for details about the user steps required.

Figure 3: Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology cut user steps by 59.3 percent compared to Dell Basic Limited Warranty plan.



For techies, there’s an auto-dispatch option

For customers who are comfortable replacing hardware on their own, Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist has an auto-dispatch option that ships certain components automatically after a failure without any support call. With hard drive damage, for example, the SupportAssist prompt pops up. You enter your shipping information and the hard drive is on its way. That means even less effort and downtime before your system is up and running.

CONCLUSION

Even the best-designed laptops, tablets, and desktops can have problems: sometimes hardware simply gives out. That’s why Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology is there. If there’s a problem, SupportAssist makes it easier than ever to get your system running again because of its proactive, automated approach to support. And only Dell Premium Support has support technicians who actually contact you. In our test, the call from Dell support took just over four minutes because it eliminated time-consuming troubleshooting steps. With a Basic Limited Warranty plan, Dell Support eventually resolved our issue, but it required us to initiate the call to the support team, spend time troubleshooting, ship our laptop to Dell, and then wait to get it back.

Through automated detection, proactive alerts, and calls from Dell support technicians, Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist technology gets the jump on solving your issue so you can experience less frustration.

APPENDIX A – SYSTEM CONFIGURATION INFORMATION

Figure 4 provides detailed configuration information for the test systems.

System	Dell Inspiron™ 15 3543	Dell Inspiron 15 3543
Processor	Intel® Core™ i5-5200U	Intel Celeron® 3205U
Processor frequency	2.70 GHz	1.50 GHz
Processor cores	2	2
Memory	8 GB	4 GB
Storage	1 TB	500 GB
Graphics	Intel HD Graphics 5500	Intel HD Graphics
Battery capacity	40 Wh	40 Wh
Display	15.6" 1,366×768 Touchscreen	15.6" 1,366×768 Touchscreen
Wireless	802.11 a/b/g/n	802.11 a/b/g/n
Bluetooth®	4.0	4.0
Weight (lbs.)	5.29	5.29
OS	Windows 7 Professional 64-bit	Windows 7 Professional 64-bit
Support	Dell Premium Support with SupportAssist	Dell Basic Limited Warranty

Figure 4: Configuration information for the laptops we used in our tests.

APPENDIX B – HOW WE TESTED

Simulating a hard drive failure

Dell installed a beta version of the SupportAssist service on the Dell system with Premium Support. Using a tool provided by Dell, we simulated a hard drive failure that produced a hard drive failure alert in Dell SupportAssist. Dell SupportAssist technology gathered information on the issue and sent that information to Dell Support. In the non-automated dispatch scenario, Dell Support preemptively called us to fix the issue. In the automated dispatch scenario, Dell Support emailed us to inform us that a replacement hard drive was on the way.

For the Basic Limited Warranty system, we removed the hard drive that came with it, covered the SATA connection with electrical tape, and reconnected the drive to the system's motherboard to simulate a hard drive failure. We then called tech support to troubleshoot the problem over the phone.

The differences in hard drive failure methodology between the Dell system with Premium Support and the other system do not affect the tech support data, because the cause of the failure is irrelevant to the tech support teams. Support staff works only to resolve the issue for the customer, and are not concerned with why the failure occurred. We measured the time to resolve the issue and nothing concerning drive failure simulation.

Running the hard drive failure test

On the Dell system with Premium Support and SupportAssist technology

1. Navigate to the desktop, and right-click the Create HDD Alert shortcut.
2. Click Run as Administrator.
3. Allow SupportAssist to capture the failure details.
4. Click through the screens in SupportAssist, providing contact info when prompted, until you get to the final screen that displays the details of the issue.
5. When Dell Support calls, start the stopwatch and video camera.
6. Stop the stopwatch when the tech support call ends. If the issue is not fixed, and requires an additional tech support call, record additional call times, and add these times to the total.
7. Stop the video camera when all tech support calls have completed.

On the Dell system with Basic Limited Warranty

1. Attempt to boot the system.
2. Start the stopwatch and video camera, and call tech support.
3. Describe the problem. Note any unusual issues that arise during the call.
4. Stop the stopwatch when the tech support call ends. If the issue is not fixed and it requires an additional tech support call, record additional call times, and add these times to the total.
5. Stop the video camera when the tech support call is complete.

APPENDIX C – STEPS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE

Figure 5 shows the user steps required to resolve the hard drive issue in the support scenarios.

Steps by user	Dell Premium Support with Support Assist	Dell Basic Limited Warranty
1	Click Next when SupportAssist GUI appears.	Call 1-800-624-9897.
2	Select Use existing my Account login, and click Next.	Tell phone menu the general reason for calling.
3	Sign in.	Tell phone menu to use your service tag.
4	Provide contact info.	Tell phone menu your service tag.
5	Click Next.	Tell phone menu you are calling about a laptop.
6	Enter shipping address.	Describe problem to support technician.
7	Click Next.	Provide service tag.
8	Click Finish.	Describe troubleshooting attempts.
9	Answer phone call from Dell support technician.	Provide name.
10	Confirm shipping address.	Provide phone number.
11	Walk through finding the hard drive bay.	Provide email address.
12		Confirm billing contact info.
13		Power off computer.
14		Power on computer, pressing F12.
15		Select Diagnostics.
16		Click Yes.
17		Click Yes.
18		Provide vendor from which the laptop was purchased.
19		Provide shipping address.
20		Click No.
21		Click OK.
22		Click Exit.
23		Click OK.
24		Press F2 while rebooting.
25		Find "Fixed HDD – 'None'" in BIOS menu.
26		Write down Ticket Number.
27		Write down Dispatch Number.
Total	11	27

Figure 5: User steps required to resolve the failed hard drive issue.

ABOUT PRINCIPLED TECHNOLOGIES



Principled Technologies, Inc.
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Our founders, Mark L. Van Name and Bill Catchings, have worked together in technology assessment for over 20 years. As journalists, they published over a thousand articles on a wide array of technology subjects. They created and led the Ziff-Davis Benchmark Operation, which developed such industry-standard benchmarks as Ziff Davis Media's Winstone and WebBench. They founded and led eTesting Labs, and after the acquisition of that company by Lionbridge Technologies were the head and CTO of VeriTest.

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