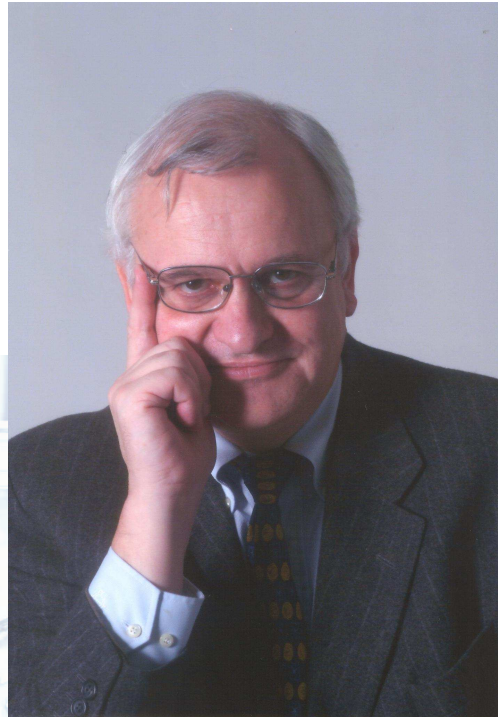


POWER PLAYS

At the start of the 21st Century we take a continuous supply of electricity for granted. Yet, even in our biggest cities and here in central Newbury, power interruptions do occur. What is more, they usually occur without warning and sometimes last a considerable time.

POWER CORRUPTS

Our increasing dependence on electrically powered devices presents businesses with two sets of problems. The first is that even a power-cut measured in milli-seconds can irreparably damage sensitive equipment, especially computer disks with files open. Indeed, even the un-noticed fluctuations in voltage levels that result from simple supply variations, or something external such as lightning, can cause significant damage. Secondly there is the disruption to the operation of a business caused by the non-availability of vital systems.



BASIC PROTECTION

Fortunately there are a few simple steps you can take to give your self some basic protection. Make sure that all sensitive equipment is connected to surge-protected mains outlets. Ensure that analogue telephone lines have protection against lightning strikes (a simple device is easily available). Protect all critical systems with UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). UPS is available from your computer supplier and provides battery backup to ensure continued power in the event of mains failure. They usually include an element of surge protection as well. Cost depends on capacity and complexity but prices start at under £100. Some will enable automatic shut down in the event of a power failure. Ideally, all PCs should be protected in this way.

ABSOLUTE POWER

Sometime you may need more than basic protection. For example, do you need any machines or telephone equipment to continue operating for extended periods during a power outage? If so, for how long? Do you need to be able to print? If so, because laser printers do not work well with UPS, you might need to consider ink-jet.

As ever, the possibilities are limit-less. If extended runtime is required standby generators can be employed. Systems can be set up to notify you via email or text message in the event of failure. Servers can be specified with multiple power supplies and multiple UPS to enable continuous operation, even during UPS maintenance. Monitoring can be put in place to record the operation of devices and to identify any weaknesses in the system.

If you don't want power to corrupt your business, take time to understand your requirements and make a plan to meet those needs, and you can switch off your power worries.

This article was originally published in the Newbury Weekly News Business Review in September 2005.

Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/. For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email lisa@itsolve.co.uk.

This article is © Copyright ITSolve Ltd 2006-7. All rights reserved. You may copy or distribute this article in full as long as this copyright statement and full information about contacting the author is preserved. The author is Charles Zealey, ITSolve Ltd., charles@itsolve.co.uk. Telephone : 01635 869863.

To subscribe to our newsletter, IT in Focus, email subscribe-it-in-focus@itsolve.co.uk. To 'unsubscribe' email unsubscribe-it-in-focus@itsolve.co.uk using the same email address as that from which you originally subscribed.

We keep our subscriber list in confidential. Whilst we aim to ensure that all out-going mail is scanned for viruses we recommend that you ensure that you are fully protected against all forms of malware attack. We only send our general bulletins to those we understand have given their express permission to receive them. ITSolve Ltd never release, sell or give a subscriber's e-mail address to any party outside of the organisation, except when referring business between individual subscribers. Our subscribers only receive email messages that contain requested information, new monthly articles or announcements of new services.

