

Going Green

Environmental impact and why IT directors need to be aware



IT equipment typically accounts for about 15% of a firm's overall energy costs, rising to over 30% for IT intensive organisations. Therefore, IT directors can deliver major cost-savings and environmental benefits by developing strategies to reduce energy consumed by their IT systems.

*David Vincent,
Technology Director,
Carbon Trust*

Over the past few years, environmental issues have pushed their way ever higher up the list of pressing corporate issues. Only three years ago talking about Going Green would have been considered eccentric and raised a few eyebrows, however, today it is gaining increasing Boardroom attention because of its longer term implications to an organisation's bottom line, as well as garnering favourable perception from customers. As a result the term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) www.csr.gov.uk is definitely one you should make yourself familiar with.

What is CSR?

CSR refers to the voluntary actions that business can take, over and above compliance with minimum legal requirements, to address both its own competitive interest, and the interests of wider society. Whilst further ranging than simply environmental concerns it also encompasses the need to tackle inequalities and deprivation in communities across the UK.

How could CSR affect your business?

Corporate Social Responsibility through evolving environmental legislation is destined to become a significant business driver over the next few years, and much sooner than most predicted. Rising energy costs, uncertainty over power supplies and concerns of global warming are forcing both end-users and suppliers to find alternative ways of using less power and decreasing harmful emissions. While building an environmentally sensitive ethos into working, manufacturing and disposal practices/processes, will become essential, rather than simply nice to have.

IT one of the worse offenders!

As a business there are numerous things to consider, from the consumption of energy for heating, cooling and business travel to the safe disposal of environmentally hazardous business equipment. Environmentalists looking at corporate responsibility widely believe that the Information Technology department has been one of the worst offenders with its typically energy intensive requirements. However, through some recent technologies, IT now has the potential to become one of the solutions.

How IT can help?

A few modest steps today may now make a significant difference in the future, and many forward thinking organisations are already looking at two technologies in particular that can offer substantial benefits. These are Citrix® virtualisation, delivery & access and VMware® virtualisation technologies.

These technologies are mainly used as enablers for:

- **Hardware & Software consolidation, Remote working (Citrix)**
- **Hardware & Software consolidation (VMware)**

in an effort to address today, some of the environmental issues of tomorrow. The principles involved are those which assist in the reduction of power usage and the reduction in travelling time (and need), energy and emissions.

Point to Point Ltd
Mulberry House
Osborne Road
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1TL

T: +44 (0) 118 936 9500
F: +44 (0) 118 936 9501
E: marketing@ptop.co.uk

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In 1999 British drivers travelled a staggering 212 billion miles by motor vehicle, making up 20% of the UK's CO2 emissions.

The Carbon Trust



Remote working

Facilitated through Citrix access solutions, working remotely can provide a multitude of savings:

- Less traffic on the roads lowering both congestion and emissions
- Choice to travel outside rush hour leading to - quicker journeys
- Less fatigue of employees - leading to more productive staff and better work/life balance
- Less international travel through virtual meetings/assistance via Citrix Online
- Fewer office-based staff means hot-desking with a reduction in office space needed and the associated costs such as heating/cooling and rent

Enablers

- Totally secure intelligent access using any PC from any location
- Acceptable performance
- Avoiding hardware obsolescence by extending usable life of existing PCs
- Use of Thin-client devices

Last year a vehicle leasing company calculated that through video conferencing it saved 377,745 road miles and 11,804 gallons of fuel meaning 115 tonnes of CO2 was not pumped into the atmosphere. This also meant that staff spent an extra 7,538 hours at their desks. All in all amounting to a saving of £185,118.

Hardware consolidation through virtualisation

Consolidation through class-leading server virtualisation and desktop virtualisation software companies Citrix and VMware can generate significant benefits:

- Less space needed for server farm - consolidation
- Less associated running costs - such as cooling and electrical power
- Less servers needed to supply same processing power through effective utilisation frees floor space
- Provides a excellent, low cost Disaster Recovery strategy no need for mirrored server site

Enablers

- Virtualisation of physical servers
- Virtualisation of the Desktop
- Virtualisation of physical discs
- Virtualisation of Application

As one of the biggest consumers of power, data centres are also a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

*George Rockett, director
UK Data centre Networking Group*

Bottom line benefits

Few are aware, but even today organisations are being encouraged to re-examine attitudes to energy and waste by government projects such as Carbon Credits and WEEE¹. Becoming Greener has the added advantage that by reducing your power consumptions and therefore emissions, you can also reduce costs and contribute to the businesses bottom line. Who knows how a future (and increasingly likely) Non-Green penalty tax could affect your profitability?

¹ Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment directive



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Some easy wins towards Going Greener now:-

- Turn off your monitor/PC when going to meetings or lunch and at the end of the day
- Print only the relevant part of an email or document
- Travel to meetings in one car
- Use modern video conferencing technologies where ever possible
- Re-use paper from printers for drafting purposes
- Fit timer plugs to equipment that does not need to be on 24x7
- Make staff aware of the benefits of saving energy and recycling
- Choose energy saving devices when purchasing new equipment
- Dispose of unwanted equipment in an eco-friendly way
- A single PC left on all day will cost about £37/year, but if switched off at night and at weekends, this drops to nearer £10/year.

Useful web sites

Energy Saving Trust	www.est.co.uk
Carbon Trust	www.carbontrust.co.uk
Corporate Social responsibility	www.csr.gov.uk
Environmental Transport Association	www.eta.co.uk
Carplus how to set up a car pool	www.carplus.org.uk
Citrix	www.citrix.com
VMware	www.vmware.com
Greenpeace	www.greenpeace.org.uk
Friends of the earth	www.foe.co.uk

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