

Summer vs. computers: Heat always wins

Every summer we hear from a client that has turned off the air conditioning over a long weekend to keep the electricity expenses down, only to find the server room equipment is 'frozen' and unresponsive.



CATHERINE WENDT

High temperatures can be a death sentence for your electronics. A server that becomes overheated usually costs more in energy to run, has a shorter life-span, and is more likely to crash. For most companies, a server crash can mean hours or days of downtime, unproductive employees, and a great deal of unnecessary stress.

There are seven steps every business owner should take to prevent a heat-induced server crash.

Here are a few simple things you can do to prevent your server and network equipment from overheating and crashing this summer:

- Tidy up the server room; a neater room will increase airflow. Remove papers or other items that have been stacked on top of, or right next to computer equipment.
- Make sure cold air reaches all the equipment;

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this area has to have air conditioning, 24/7/365!

- Keep the doors to the server room closed and seal off the space.
- Consider a server room thermostat that can send temperature alerts directly to your email. Get some help from a quality IT group as you consider where to set the thermostat and what levels to set for the alerts.
- Buy a rack enclosure so the air can flow all around the equipment rather than having the computers stacked on a table top, or even worse, stacked on top of each other. Server racks are designed to keep air flowing above and below the equipment and can include your APC units.
- Keep the temperature at no more than 77 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Look into managed services to monitor the

health of your server equipment. Proactive monitoring can identify negative events sooner, giving you more time to address any unexpected events; a great example, what if the AC fails over a long weekend?

- Consider virtualization of physical servers, or cloud computing, so that you have fewer pieces of equipment producing heat in the first place.

Electronics are sensitive to heat, and your computers are an integral part of running your business, as well as a sizable investment. Taking care of the equipment can help you get the most out of your computers, now and in the coming months and years.

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