

Green Networking

Green is not just a color anymore. Nowadays, everyone is hopping on the environmentally, eco-friendly “green” bandwagon. Some companies are quick to tout their “greenness” but don’t have the hard evidence to back up their claims – instead they have massive marketing campaigns. While many others are working swiftly to find ways to be kinder to the environment without losing financial ground, without eco-efficient policies and procedures, they’re just playing catch up.

With social responsibility comes a cost. How can companies go green while balancing the bottom line?

Look at the infrastructure of any company. It’s only as efficient as the hardware and software being used. An outdated or inefficient network uses more energy, wastes more power and generates a bigger carbon footprint than an eco-efficient one.

Scott Scherer, a research analyst with In-Stat who authored the report, entitled “Green Networking Equipment: Who Leads and Who Lags” reports that companies like 3Com, Force10 Networks and NetGear have been in the forefront producing green networking products, some of which are up to seven times as energy efficient than their non-green counterparts. Says Scherer, these companies have focused on improving the quality of the materials and components used in their products, and redesigning them to better dissipate heat.

One of the companies noted in the In-Stat report is 3Com. They cite several powerful reasons for replacing their older switches with new eco-efficient switches. According to their web site, by replacing 100 old Ethernet switches with a particular line of new eco-efficient ones, an organization could realize savings equivalent to lighting 62 homes for a year, saving 78 percent per year on electricity costs, reducing 56 tons of CO2 from entering the atmosphere or planting 15 acres of trees. Force10, another company noted in the report, is incorporating chips into its products that consume less power and promote intelligent power management.

Scherer remarks that Cisco is looking at more intelligent power adapters that are “currently only 70 to 80 percent efficient with much of that waste being dissipated as heat, which then requires more energy to cool down.”

While many companies realize the need to go green, there’s also little doubt that the demand for energy, as well as its cost, will continue to grow. While the majority of businesses can’t do everything at once, they can begin using more eco-efficient networking products, putting green practices and processes in place and instilling the mantra of intelligent power consumption in every area of their organization. Though it appears a time-consuming and expensive haul, in the long run it will pay off by saving not only money but the planet from the ravages of climate change.

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