

NTRLS IT: Real Stories
Importance of having an Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS)

Issue / Problem:

Procuring consistent power to your PC or other computer networking equipment, computer peripherals or equipment such as printers etc.

Background Information you should know about:

What is an Uninterruptable Power Supply or also known as a UPS for short? A UPS is a device that supplies power to a computer, server or any other computing equipment that you need to stay powered in times of power outage. They also protect from power surges as well, in case of a lightning strike, etc. UPS's have built-in surge protection and of course what makes it able to be called a UPS is the fact that they also provide power for your devices because they have a battery in them for when you lose power. The more expensive UPS's also can tell your computer or server to shut down after a certain amount of time if power is not restored in a timely fashion.

Resolution / How we solved the problem:

Having a UPS can help protect against the unforeseen power outages that might occur because of your power company, weather or in our case our office neighbors during an important meeting we had. During our meeting everyone was using laptops and our internet connection was hooked up to a UPS. Our neighbors were using a paint compressor and when they plugged it into their wall it blew the circuit which we shared with them causing, most of our wall power outlets to cease functioning. Luckily all the people in the meeting were using laptops which have a built in battery and our internet connection was hooked into the UPS which also had a battery. We ran on battery power for the meeting for about 20 or so minutes before power was restored.

Here are some items I would recommend to have a UPS hooked up to in case of emergencies:

1. All servers in your organization should have one to keep the data and operating system (o/s) protected should you lose power. You don't want to have a server shut off without shutting down properly or you could risk losing data or corrupting your o/s so that the server no longer functions properly.
2. On any computer you feel that needs to be protected for the same reasons as the server.
3. On your network devices such as the DSL/Cable modem, network hub/switch or any other network device that needs to stay powered until the servers or computers using them get shut down properly.
4. Maybe you need to keep a printer or scanner powered during a possible outage.

UPS's can be purchased just about anywhere that they sell computer equipment such as Best Buy, Office MAX, Staples, Fry's Electronics and just about any online computer vendor or store. The average life span for a UPS's battery is about 2-3 years; after that it would be a good idea to have the battery replaced or replace the UPS all together with a new one. UPS's come with a variety of options, such as features and battery run time, so make sure you talk to a professional when selecting one for your needs.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at abeatty@ntrls.org.