Client Advisory - Power Outages

May 18, 2004

The great blackout of summer 2003 exposed business continuity vulnerabilities in IT systems and the facilities that support them. It also refocused attention on the ongoing instability of the power system which has presented businesses with operational challenges. Many businesses are poorly prepared to meet such challenges. Global Data Vaulting offers the following tips to deal with power problems which may occur this year.

A rolling blackout occurs when a power company turns off electricity to selected areas to save power. The blackouts are typically for a specific period of time, then the power is restored and another area is turned off. These blackouts usually occur during peak energy usage times but they can happen at any time of day. Blackouts may affect the same area more than once a day.

To find out more about potential rolling blackouts listen to local television, radio, and check the web sites of Toronto Hydro Corporation (www.torontohydro.com) or Canada News Wire. (www.newswire.ca)

Tips for Blackouts or Brownouts

Global Data Vaulting recommends that all staff be informed immediately of the policies you are adopting to minimize exposure to power problems which may occur this year.

1. Use autosave features in your software whenever possible. Programs such as Microsoft Word (tools, options, save) and Excel have a feature that allows you to save your work automatically, every few minutes. A power failure at the wrong moment could cost you hours of work.

2. Check the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units that supply temporary power to your computer equipment in the event of a power disruption. Computer equipment is adversely affected by power fluctuations. Blackouts and brownouts (low voltage) place undue strain on power supplies and other components, forcing them to work harder in order to function.

3. Perform a proper power down sequence when a computer has not been shut down for a prolonged period. Many applications create temporary files for data that you are working on. If you turn off your computer without properly exiting your programs you may lose initialization instructions that are required to retrieve your data.

4. Turn off all computers, monitors, printers, copiers, scanners and other devices when they're not being used. That way, if the power goes out, this equipment will have already been safely shut down.

5. Have flashlights and ensure emergency lighting is functioning.

Global Data Vaulting will be happy to assist you by determining whether your current UPS systems are in proper working order and will provide adequate protection. If your UPS protection is not adequate, we will recommend appropriate equipment and assist you with instillation and configuration of the equipment. For assistance please contact GDV at 416 425 4880.