

Is Green IT misunderstood?

Herefordshire County Council is expecting to see a power reduction of more than 1 million kilowatts in just 12 months. Here's how...

IT has historically been a rapidly changing area, full of new technologies, new trends and constantly evolving business practices. In many cases, this continuous change becomes a constant consumption of resources, whether this is increased power for PCs and server, growing cooling requirements, resource consumption, due to the procurement of new equipment, millions of miles of cabling or the impact of the disposal of this obsolete technology. IT is normally perceived as a 'cause of' rather than a 'solution to' environmental issues."

So says Mark McGinn, managing director of Verismic Software. Based on this perception, it could be assumed that green IT is difficult, due to the fundamental changes to standard IT practice that it would require. "There is truth in this perception," he agrees, "but what is often overlooked is the fact that IT has introduced new ways to work within organisations that are often less impactful on the environment than previous methods. If we perceive IT as the enabler, rather than just a necessary cost of operating, then we can then see green IT in a different light."

With most businesses now relying on IT in some way, a change to IT practices for green purposes also needs to benefit the business. Herefordshire County Council certainly recognised this imperative and, faced with the requirement from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to reduce carbon emissions, but also to manage its budgets more efficiently, began to work with Verismic on its PC Power management solution.



Herefordshire County Council's headquarters

"At Herefordshire Council, we are committed to reducing carbon emissions and excited to use Verismic Power Manager," says Sandra Dallimore, ICT applications manager, Herefordshire Council. Expectations are that the council will see a power reduction of more than 1 million kilowatts in the first year alone.

MASSIVE SAVINGS

Based on figures from The Carbon Trust, this equates to more than 530,000 kgs of carbon emissions. Carbon emissions are not the only objective, though. "We hope to save hundreds of thousands of pounds in energy costs over the next five years," she adds.

Often overlooked, since IT rarely carries the budget for power consumption, the

implementation of a coherent PC power management policy can save in the region of £30 to £75 per PC per year and more than 250kgs of CO₂. Compared to carbon offsetting where trees are planted to absorb the equivalent CO₂, a single PC can require up to 35 trees.

"At Verismic, we focused on the visibility of data and the granular control over system behaviours to ensure that the greatest benefits could be achieved, without the user impact that some people have historically associated with PC Power Management," states Mark McGinn. "With these abilities, we've enabled organisations to go beyond the simple application of a policy into a place where cause and effect can be truly understood, and the actual savings be made visible for all to understand."