



Going Green in IT

A Checklist of Energy-Saving Ideas for Your Campus

by Ed Nadworny

WHEN COLLEGE OFFICIALS THINK about ways to reduce their environmental footprint, they typically think first about facilities, and then about paper and container recycling programs. But opportunities also exist for colleges to “go green” in IT. For example, one tactic with a big potential impact is server virtualization, which combines multiple systems into one. Doing so allows for better use of server storage, improved efficiency of server administration, reduced energy costs, and overall better use of technology capital.

Virtualization has been referred to as the poster child for sustainable business technology. By employing server virtualization, colleges can significantly reduce energy, weight, and cooling consumption without impacting services to students, faculty, and staff. One of the institutions SunGard Higher Education serves, a two-year college in the Midwest, achieved significant savings by taking advantage of virtualization, including reductions of:

- 4,267 watts of constant energy consumption
- 1,154.3 pounds in constant weight consumption
- 1.2 tons of cooling consumption
- \$37,500 total cost avoidance in replacement hardware
- \$12,400 total cost avoidance in energy

Consultants with SunGard Higher Education recently held brainstorming sessions on the campuses of some of our client institutions to share ideas on how to conserve energy, reduce carbon footprints, and reduce operating expenses by going green in IT. What emerged from those sessions is a checklist of ideas that trustees might want to consider and

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discuss with members of their boards, administration, and IT staff.

- **Decrease travel** between campuses by using virtual meeting tools, like GoToMeeting (www.gotomeeting.com). If you must travel, consider carpooling.
- **Recycle or donate** computers no longer being used. The Electronics Take Back Coalition (www.computertakeback.com) and National Center for Electronics Recycling (www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/conserve/plugin/wv-ncer2.htm) are two good resources to find homes for unused computers, freeing up storage space in the process.
- **Have IT staff monitor the temperature** in server rooms. Since servers generate a lot of heat, server rooms may not require heating during the cold months.
- **Implement power conservation software** for all PCs on campus.
- **Replace CRT monitors** with lower energy LCD screens.
- **Eliminate desktop printers.** Not only will this save energy, but it will greatly decrease the amount of routine printing — and paper usage.
- **Replace older computers** with

newer, more powerful, and more energy efficient machines. On average, a refreshed PC can decrease power consumption by up to 20 percent, resulting in significant cost savings and environmental benefit.

- **Replace copper cabling.** While many colleges removed copper wiring when they upgraded their networking infrastructure to a newer standard, the copper may still be sitting idle in a storage area. Rather than take up precious storage space, the copper can be taken to a recycling vendor, which will issue your college a nice check.
- **Remind employees to turn off their computers** when they go home for the day. One institution estimated that turning off every computer each night will save more than \$100 per computer per year. Another implemented a program that forces an automatic shutdown of PCs left on after business hours.

During our week of hosting these discussions on campus, we saw that most people want to make a difference when it comes to saving energy and protecting the environment. But the issue needs executive leadership behind it before an entire campus will truly start changing its habits. Going green in IT is an excellent opportunity for trustees to take the lead in reducing the environmental footprints of their campuses, as well as to cut costs.



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