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Supporting Enterprise Networks and Operating Environments

SUPPORT

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VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

IT Data Center “GREEN”

Myths and Realities

Greg Schulz



Big Data Gets Bigger with Business Networks



Message from the President

Greetings and Happy New Year!

It's been an awesome few months with NaSPA signing up hundreds of new members. To all of you, new and old, we hope your holidays went well and welcome you back to work!

This month we have a number of interesting articles. One in particular merits some attention given the fact those Christmas credit card bills are rolling in right about now:

You've probably heard about the recent wave of retailer data breaches – at Target, Neiman Marcus and untold others. Do they represent only the tip of the iceberg? We don't know if or when future breaches will be revealed, but these issues serve as reminders to protect yourself and your customers. Most people know what to do when they lose a credit card. These days, however, there are many other repositories of personal data that require separate and thoughtful consideration. For example, loss of a smart phone or ipad could have devastating consequences if that device contains sensitive or confidential information. In any event as IT professionals, security should always be foremost in our minds. Look for more great articles on these topics in coming months.

Is the Information Superhighway Now the Information Toll Road? On January 14, 2014 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled that the FCC's open Internet rules may not prohibit broadband Internet service providers (ISPs) from blocking or discriminating against Internet content transmitted across their networks. The ruling opens the door for ISPs like Comcast, AT&T, and Verizon to enter into paid-prioritization agreements with content providers like Netflix, Google and Amazon.com. Previously, anti-discrimination rules prevented ISPs from charging content providers for Internet "fast lanes" for traffic. This new decision allows ISPs to make content companies pay for premium delivery service of their services and opens the door for fixed broadband network prioritization. Are you ready to pay more for Netflix? What other issues may surface as a result of this decision? NaSPA published some interesting content on this topic in the past and you can expect more in the future! NaSPA *supports net-neutrality* and a free and open Internet!

Finally, we have exciting news. *Technical Support* is a monthly magazine again! This makes your content and article submissions all the more important. Please send them to editor@naspacom. There is a place for you in *Technical Support Magazine*.

We would like to bring back the print edition of *Technical Support Magazine*. In order to make that happen, we need companies like yours to offer partial sponsorship of our printing costs. If your company would be interested in this type of sponsorship, NaSPA would be pleased to recognize it as well as offer it a full-page ad for their trouble. For more information, you can download our updated 2014 Media Guide for this and other great offers to your company or organization. Remember, NaSPA depends on companies like yours to keep our memberships free. Until next time,

Leo A. Wrobel

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ARTICLES

- 4 Big Data Gets Bigger with Business Networks**
Edited by Dr. Jay Liebowitz
- 6 What Is Networking, and Is It Any Different for African Americans Than Anyone Else?**
By N. Thompson, Michael Lawrence Faulkner, Andrea Nierenberg
- 14 Is Your Organization Prepared for a Flu Pandemic?**
by Sharon M. Wrobel
- 18 How to Prevent Virtual Server Sprawl within the Enterprise**
By Mark Oliver, President of Group Oliver
- 20 IT Data Center "Green" Myths and Realities**
Greg Schulz
- 22 A Major Media Outlet Breached (Again), Employee Credentials Compromised**

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's Letter**

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Big Data Gets Bigger with Business Networks

Edited by Dr. Jay Liebowitz

Digital communities generate unique forms of intelligence, insights and collaboration; new report outlines how companies can leverage to fuel innovation, productivity and profits

There's a new way of doing business. And it's being driven by data. [Big data](#). Through years of technological innovation, companies have amassed vast volumes of information on their business activities; everything from structured data on production, marketing, sales, HR, finance, facilities and operations to transaction-level data on suppliers, customers and partners. But the convergence of major technology shifts like cloud computing, mobility, and social and business networks has sparked a new class of data: texts, tweets, blog posts, web-based videos, and other social postings. And as a new report indicates, companies that effectively harness this information stand poised to achieve unprecedented levels of productivity and profits.

"Today data analytics confer power to gain advantage in ways hardly imagined a decade ago," says Zachary Tumin, Special Assistant to the Faculty Chair and Director of Harvard Kennedy School's Program in Science, Technology, and Public Policy and author of *Doing Business the Data-Driven Way: Pathways to Success in the Networked Economy*, a report that explores the power of big data conducted with support from Ariba, an SAP Company. "As never before, you can see and be observed, talk to and be talked about, sense the present and predict the future."

It's a new way of operating. But as the report reveals, companies that embrace it can ultimately transform their businesses:

- At Cisco, the strategic marketing group mined historic data and social media mentions for customers who revealed both a propensity to buy, and a high readiness to buy. Cisco's sales force converted that insight to sales uplift of \$4.2 billion.
- EMI Music's Million Interview database let the company play Moneyball Billy Beane-style with music hits, scoring home runs for fans and artists.

The result: EMI rises from back-on-its heels to a global music powerhouse.

- Mount Sinai Hospital in New York optimized its patients' first 8 to 12 hours in the hospital, running hundreds of simulations. With improved utilization, Mt. Sinai achieved the financial effect of adding 100 new beds without actually adding one.

Such results aren't easy to come by. But businesses are demanding them.

"Businesses, large and small, want to tap into vast amounts of internal and externally produced information to create competitive insights never possible with the mostly internally focused ERP data

that predominates the contents of the corporate data centers today," says Brian Sommer, CEO of TechVentive, a technology strategy consultancy.

Armed with the right tools, they can. Business networks, for instance, enable companies to discover, connect and collaborate with a global network of partners more efficiently and effectively than ever before. But



networks are about more than just connecting companies, people and processes. Their real power lies in what goes on inside them - all the interactions, transactions, commentary and insights that they generate. It is from this data that the next wave of innovation and business productivity will come. "When you combine the convenience and speed of the Cloud with the connectivity and intelligence of business networks, you can predict the future with accuracy and recommend the best course of action to capitalize on those predictions," says Tim Minahan, Senior Vice President, Global Network Strategy, [Ariba](#).

And when you add in technology to manage big data in real time, you can unleash its full potential. "Big Data presents an opportunity for companies to run better with new real and real-time insights via the end to end acquisition, acceleration and analysis of one or more Big Data sets," says Steve Lucas, Executive Vice President & General Manager SAP Analytics, Database & Platform, SAP.

Sommer agrees. "It is the power of analytics, specifically analytic applications that use BOTH internal and external data, which permits companies to gain insights into product usage, customer consumption data, competitor activity, social sentiment, etc.," Sommer notes. "The insights into these kinds of questions give businesses outsized opportunities to widen their profit margins, extend their market share and otherwise disrupt the economic stability and underpinnings of their competitors."

According to Tumin, there is no single, right approach for managing big data or harnessing its power. But as outlined in *Doing Business the Data-Driven Way: Pathways to Success in the Networked Economy*, there are some key strategies for success:

- Have a vision—a non-debatable business goal—around which all can rally. The move to data-driven business is a journey, and every journey needs a goal everyone can rally round, and aim for. Having one gives you a reason to take that first step together, and press on over the inevitable bumps in the road.
- Create a plan that is right-sized for action and gets value in the hands of users fast. You can't do everything at once. With huge volumes of data potentially available,

right-sizing your best next move is especially important.

- Select a platform—a clearing—that can support doing business the data-driven way. Platforms, Harvard Business School's Tom Eisenmann writes, "provide infrastructure and rules that facilitate groups' transactions and can take many guises." Above all they are trusted, discoverable, and usable.
- Align your stars. Like numbers, data doesn't lie. It also doesn't talk. Making the most of big data still requires human intervention. So bring your A-team, know what makes them tick and understand their limitations.
- Manage the politics. Success with data-driven decision-making requires moving the right people toward a non-debatable goal, business-driven, with a feasible plan, well-incentivized, and operating over strong platforms. That takes negotiation and persuasion, the twin arts of political management.

And above all, understand that neither technology nor data are silver bullets and that the move to doing business the data-driven way can be highly disruptive. "It takes time and persistence to make the transformation," Tumin says. "But as leading organizations who have made the leap can attest, it's well worth the effort."

To learn more on big data and ways in which your organization can unlock its potential, visit [Ariba](#) and [download \(registration required\)](#) a complete copy of *Doing Business the Data-Driven Way: Pathways to Success in the Networked Economy*.

Dr. Jay Liebowitz is the Orkand Endowed Chair of Management and Technology, the only endowed chair at the University of Maryland University College. He previously served as a full professor in the Carey Business School at Johns Hopkins University. He was ranked one of the top 10 knowledge management (KM) researchers/practitioners out of 11,000 worldwide and was ranked number two worldwide in KM strategy according to the January 2010 *Journal of Knowledge Management*. He is a prolific author, Fulbright Scholar, Computer Educator of the Year (IACIS), IEEE Executive Fellow, and the founder and editor-in-chief of *Expert Systems with Applications: An International Journal*.

Auerbach Publications
The Final Word in Enterprise Computing and Networking

What Is Networking, and Is It Any Different for African Americans Than Anyone Else?

By [N. Thompson](#), [Michael Lawrence Faulkner](#), [Andrea Nierenberg](#)

This Sample Chapter is provided courtesy of [NaSPA Supporter](#) Pearson Publishing ([Informit](#)).

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The authors of *Networking for Black Professionals* explain what networking is, why networking works, and how it can work for you.

Individually, you are unique and special—just as everyone else is. Everyone has the same choice to make, at about the same time, about whether and how to network. Unfortunately, and this is where you begin to separate yourself, the vast majority of people won't recognize the moment of networking opportunity and, therefore, won't have the same choices that you will. What separates you from them is that you are reading this book and opening your mind to the networking possibilities that await you.

This missed opportunity is so unfortunate for all the others because this is a choice of whether you will have maximum control over your own pathways to life's success via networking. This is one of the few egalitarian moments in life when you have the opportunity to experience near-perfect equality of opportunity for your own future. This is a moment when you decide on the equality of the outcome of your choices.

What's Behind Your Concept of Self

Psychologists call the belief of self-empathy “internal locus of control.” Skeptics and doubters, whom Michael refers to as sheep-like people, are those who prefer to live their lives among flocks of others like

themselves, who dress alike, look alike, talk alike, work alike, think alike, act alike, believe alike, and like alike. They want you to believe that life has a kind of predestined pathway. These people believe that life is like a linear path—certain things are expected of you at certain times, and certain things either come your way or don't. In other words, you have no control over life.

Psychologists sometimes talk about the self-concept theory (SCT), which simply states that many of the successes and failures people experience in their careers and lives are closely tied to the ways they are accustomed to viewing themselves through their relationships with other people, including their parents, teachers, spouses, partners, bosses, managers, and supervisors.

SCT brings up three critical points. First, self-concept is learned; we're not born with it. We learn it through repeated experiences, and it's rooted in our expected outcomes of those experiences, particularly experiences with people in more powerful or influential roles. Second, self-concept is organized. We organize the feelings, beliefs, and worldview of our self-concept because we generally desire order and harmony in our lives. Lastly, self-concept is dynamic, meaning that we view the world not in isolation, but in relation to our self-concept, which is subject to continuous reevaluation as we attempt to assimilate new ideas and get rid of old ones. Individuals try to maintain their self-concepts regardless of how helpful or damaging to themselves or others these self-concepts become. This truth is evi-

Open your mind to the networking opportunities that await you.

denced by individuals who often sacrifice physical and financial comfort and even their own safety to achieve emotional satisfaction and avoid change.

Individuals experience anxiety because of a loss of self-esteem, and anything that negatively impacts self-concept risks depleting self-esteem. You can make SCT work for you or allow it to work against you. Most importantly, SCT is within each individual's control. Some people accept this; some people reject it. If you accept it, you exercise internal locus of control and are ready to make the choices to control your own life.

Some people (not necessarily just the sheep) believe life is full of unexpected randomness and troubles that will continually pop up, negating any preparations or plans we make. These people believe the best we can do is manage these problems and obstacles and live with those outcomes.

By this point in your life, you have probably dealt with a wide range of issues—and you might still be struggling with them, perhaps overcoming obstacles and problems with school and work; dealing with your

fears, loneliness, and career aspirations; coping with concerns about job search issues; worrying about how to meet people; managing your fear of public speaking, making new friends, and joining groups; and navigating many, many other life issues.

You don't have to face most of these issues and problems alone. In fact, you shouldn't face them alone. Superman, Batman, and plenty of other superheroes had sidekicks to help them—what makes any one of us think we can handle life alone? Don't be afraid or egotistical enough to think that you don't need the help of other people. You do. Only a fool believes he or she can succeed alone.

The thing is, you might not currently know the people who can best help you, or hire you, or move you forward. You need to reach out to them. That's where networking comes in. Networking is the most successful technique and tool used by the most successful individuals in all walks of life, regardless of gender, religion, industry or profession, level of intelligence and education, age, social situation, and geographic area. This



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isn't the tool of a secret society. Just about everybody has the opportunity to learn the techniques and tools of networking for success. Whether you reach out and grasp this opportunity is up to you. But—and this is the important thing—you have as good an opportunity as anyone!

Defining Networking

Does the word networking scare you or make you cringe? Are you fearful of what it might imply? Does the word imply that you have to meet strange or different people, or introduce yourself to people who might reject you? Or do you feel that networking is just some form of glad-handing or “sucking up,” and that people who network get ahead because of who they know, not what they know? And even if the myth “It’s who you know, not what you know, that counts” were true, why would you ignore this pathway to success? Do you believe there’s something inherently sinister, bad, or unfair about using contacts to help you get ahead?

Networking pioneer and guru George Fraser is known as the “King of Networking.” He proposed effective networking to the black community in 1994 in his book *Success Runs in Our Race*. Fraser defined effective networking as follows: “[E]ffective networking is the identification, building and developing of relationships for the purposes of sharing information and resources.” Fraser said that networking is consistent with garnering information and equated it with a source of power: “[A]ny information flows to anyone willing to receive it. It is not racist, or elitist, or exclusive. That is what makes networking so effective.”

Networking is one of the most overused and misunderstood words in common vocabulary today. When you hear the word, what comes to your mind?

- Getting something from someone else
- Using others
- Coercion
- Manipulation
- Getting something without using your real abilities
- Having a “godfather” or mentor who will smooth the way for you even if you’re not capable or qualified
- Making hundreds of daily short digital contacts on social network sites

Or, do the following descriptions come to mind?

- Enrichment
- Empowerment
- The chance to learn something new
- The opportunity to meet interesting people
- The best method to achieve a professional or personal goal
- The real world—the way most jobs are filled, far more than any other method of job searching

Perhaps you’ve heard the statistics and seen the evidence, or you’ve seen your friends’ networking turn into opportunity after opportunity for them. Maybe you’d like to network but feel that your chances of networking aren’t as great as others’ because you’re a black person, or maybe you feel that you don’t have the experience, skills, or abilities to network properly.

You might even play host to one of those ornery critics who appears every once in a while to sit on your shoulder (invisible, of course, to everyone but you) and criticize you unmercifully, trying to convince you of how unworthy you are because you’re a black person. That character will try to dissuade you from ever trying to network because you’re not worthy. Now is the perfect time to put your fears and uneasiness to rest, bury your concerns, change your beliefs, and ban that critter—that is, if you really want the greatest opportunities for success in life.

If you want the greatest chances for success in getting the jobs you desire and deserve; meeting the people who are ready and willing to assist you in your aspirations; being considered for the career opportunities you dream about; positioning yourself for the best promotions; being asked to serve on exciting committees; and working with the most prestigious, influential, important people in the fields, industries, professions, and communities of your choice—if you want to have control of these choices, then it’s in your hands. It’s your choice.

As a black individual, you might have faced—and continue to face—many challenges on a daily basis that are not overtly racial. You might feel sure that many silent or behind-the-scenes obstacles prevent you from obtaining certain positions or committee spots.

However, you will learn that networking is a crucial component in career advancement. First, you need to learn the networking game and its rules via observation. It pays to watch the players before entering the game. While watching, develop yourself professionally by obtaining the necessary skill set, certifications,

Networking works for those who choose to work networking.

and degrees to be a competitor on the team. No one wants a handout—being qualified gets you in the game. Second, after watching the game, you need exposure. Seek out the invitation to play in the game by attending meetings, seminars, workshops, and work-related functions—after all, you can't get in the game if you're not attending opportunities for networking. Lastly, begin building relationships, and perhaps seek out a mentor to help you navigate the process.

Of course, if you don't want any of these opportunities, or if you think that getting them by having people help you would somehow diminish your character, then stop here. Other people will gladly take the help of those who are willing to assist. A great deal of research proves something you probably know intuitively: Networking works for those who choose to work networking.

By an enormous margin, networking is the single most effective technique for finding jobs (even during economic recessions), building a career, developing personal influence, solidifying leadership roles, strengthening effective management skills, developing personal communication skills, creating and improving organizational skills, learning how to work with individuals with diverse views, developing beliefs and skills, and generally enhancing the quality of your life. Thousands of individuals of every race, culture, and diversity segment can attest to this.

The talent to network is inherent in nearly every individual. Almost anyone can learn how to network. However, only those who have the drive, energy, skills, and knowledge to learn and perfect the network process will be able to use it to their advantage.

Therefore, although most people instinctively know—or can eventually figure out—that networking “works” (which is why we get the myth that it's who you know that counts), only a limited number of devoted individuals manage to reap the huge rewards of successful networking. A study of UCLA graduates found that

nearly 75 percent believed it was who you knew that counted. What's interesting about this finding is that three-quarters of the graduates believed they knew the secret to success, yet they couldn't bring themselves to actually do what it took and become networkers.

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that 80 percent of all the newly created jobs in the last decade were never posted or announced anywhere. Furthermore, 70 percent of the replacement jobs were handled in the same manner. These jobs weren't posted on any website, advertised on any classified page, listed with any headhunter or recruiter, or otherwise publicly posted. These jobs were filled by the hiring managers' use of their social networking. The hiring managers first looked at people they knew and trusted, and if that didn't turn up the candidate they wanted, they asked their network—their own contacts, the people they knew and trusted. Current research by Professors Michael Faulkner and Bruce Herniter at DeVry University on the impact of networking has found that personal networking and focused, direct contact with the hiring manager account for more job hunting success by job seekers than all the other methods combined.

The important issue is simply that the overwhelming number of jobs in America are filled through the process of networking. If you don't use networking skills, you surrender many job, life, and other opportunities to other people. You deserve the benefits of networking, but you have to reach out and take them.

People already in the workforce who have learned to take advantage of the skills and benefits of networking will confirm that they get many more opportunities than their peers who do not network. Unfortunately, many African Americans aren't aware of the value of networking and thus don't practice the skills; consequently, they can't take advantage of the benefits, leaving this enormous opportunity untapped.

In just one area, jobs, networking can mean the difference between jump-starting your career and spending years working unsatisfying, unfulfilling dead-end jobs. In April 2011, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that the national unemployment rate was 9 percent—and the unemployment rate for African Americans was 16.1 percent (versus 8 percent for whites). Some evidence by economists indicates that unemployment will be a societal problem in America for years into the future. Networking could mean the difference between being part of the pool of African Americans working

in low-level, unsatisfying jobs and moving your career along regardless of the state of economy.

Knowing how the hiring process really works is just half of the benefit of networking. The other half is knowing in advance what hiring managers really want in new hires. In a number of empirical research studies conducted over the past ten years, senior managers of a wide range of businesses were asked about what they were looking for in candidates. The following is what they said they value most, starting with the most frequently cited skills, characteristics, and talents:

- Good communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to find and fix problems
- Enthusiasm
- High energy level
- Strength of character
- Self-confidence
- Motivation
- Leadership skills
- Quick adaptability to change and uncertainty
- Good listening skills
- Commitment to lifetime learning
- Commitment to excellence
- Ability to work as a team player
- Willingness to take some risks
- Willingness to face self-assessment
- Ability to lighten up (to not take oneself too seriously)

In a nationwide study conducted in 1999 by a well-known executive search consulting firm, 27 percent of chief information officers reported that strong interpersonal skills were the single most important quality in job candidates (23 percent listed this as the second-most-important skill).

A major research study conducted for an association of colleges and universities found that a significant majority of respondents cited skills learned and perfected in networking as the most important skills employers look for in new hires. Specifically, those skills are teamwork (44 percent), critical thinking (33 percent), and oral/written communications (30 percent).

In a poll conducted in June 2009, Michael asked business managers and supervisors about the most impor-

tant skills and traits for recent college graduates. A total of 293 respondents provided the answers in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1

Skill/Trait	Percent of Respondents
Potential to learn or be trained	40%
Interpersonal/team skills	23%
Communication skills	13%
Proven achievement/experience	12%
Technical/technology knowledge	9%

Michael Faulkner–LinkedIn, 2009

This poll reaffirms employers’ high regard for the soft skills and talents—the ability to learn, the ability to get along, and communication skills.

So if the idea of networking scares you or puts you off, or if for some reason you think that networking isn’t for you because you’re black, there’s something important for you to know:

- First, you’re not alone. Believing you’re on your own might be a reason you’ve shied away from the very skill that can help you professionally and personally.



- Second, you don't have to wait and try to learn the benefits of networking as you mature or advance in your career. The earlier you overcome the fear or obstacle that hinders you, the sooner you will start gaining the benefits of networking. This is the skill that can begin helping you.

Let's deal with the negative and inaccurate impressions of networking right now. In some of the negative impressions we listed, some people express a dark side of networking. It really isn't even networking they're discussing—it's the dark side of human characteristics. Some individuals abuse networking, so it can be easy to confuse that abuse with networking itself. We've said that networking is the most powerful tool individuals can use in their careers and lives. It shouldn't come as any surprise, then, that some people out there aren't benevolent, gracious, nice, friendly, kind, fair, and helpful individuals. Sure, you'll find the occasional malevolent, malicious, spiteful, wicked, nasty, mean, power-hungry, self-centered, egotistical, narcissistic jerk. These bad seeds can just as easily master the understanding of body language and fake networking techniques to fool some people for a short period of time; those rotten apples can use their genes, money, power (not influence), and even evil to get ahead.

Other people advance solely on the coattails of a godfather or mentor. But they're quickly seen as empty suits and frequently are abandoned or exiled. They eventually fail or wither away in ignominious insignificance. All these examples show how networking gets an inaccurate and even bad name. But these people aren't networking—they're power brokering and using power tactics instead of influence.

Why Networking Works: You Already Have the Resources You Need—You Just Have to Put Them to Work

Scientist John Milgram developed a theory called the small world theory that suggests that everyone in the world is separated from everyone else by just six contacts. Dr. Milgram did a series of famous experiments that proved his theory. More recently, Dr. Nicholas Christakis and Dr. James Fowler wrote a book called *Connections*, in which they thoroughly investigate the small world theory and others on human social connections. They reaffirm the important influence a person's network can have on job searching. If you use the social Internet site LinkedIn, you can see how the six degrees connection is possible by the raw numbers of

third-level contacts or what Christakis and Fowler call "friends of friends." For example, in 2010, Michael had 183 LinkedIn contacts. These 183 contacts give him the potential to reach all those contacts' individual network contacts, and all of those contacts/friends give him the opportunity to reach all their network contacts (friends, friends of friends). That totals more than 2,530,000 third-level contacts, more than anyone could ever contact in a lifetime. The implication for networking is profound, even if you were to actively network with only a tiny fraction of the potential you're capable of reaching. Each network contact you have is likely already networked, which, given the proper approach, care, and feeding, means your contacts should grow by some multiple.

The key phrase here is "proper approach, care, and feeding." Your network is available for you to enrich your professional and personal life, but in return, you must enrich the lives of others.

Michael and Andrea get very upset when they hear someone say, "It's time to start looking for a job. I'd better start networking." Or they might say, "I only network at certain meetings or events." Unfortunately, a great deal of the research shows that most of the success from networking comes to white workers who are 24 years of age or older and moving into their second or third job. This doesn't mean this is the only group that can successfully network; it simply means that, up to this point, it's the only sample group researchers have chosen to examine.

Networking is a skill—and like any personal skill, it needs to be practiced to be perfected. You can't just sit down at a piano once a month and play Bach concertos like they are supposed to be played—nor can you network properly on demand whenever the need might arise. Networking is a five-step process that's simple to define but involves hard work:

- Step 1: Meet people. Some people you know; some you don't at first. You have to mix it up and get to know them. In Chapter 4, "Creating Connections: The People You Will Need in Your Network," we introduce examples of "breaking the ice" phrases that you can use or adapt to your own style.
- Step 2: Listen and learn. All people like to talk about themselves and/or their company. When you actively listen, you learn about what's important to other people, who they are, how you could help them, and how they could help you. In Chap-

ter 5, “Characteristics of Great Networkers,” we discuss the difference between real empathetic listening (when you engage in active and responsive listening) and listening in which you’re just “hearing” what someone said.

- Step 3: Make connections. Help people connect with others you know can help them. When you help your contacts get what they want, you can’t help but be successful yourself.
- Step 4: Follow up. Keep your promises; keep your word. If you promise to do something, do it in a timely manner. In Chapter 8, “Keeping Your Network Alive and Growing,” we show you an easy-to-use method for following up with contacts.
- Step 5: Stay in touch. After an initial period of contact, if a result doesn’t materialize, most people just move on. Here’s where your own networking system will make you successful. These folks find ways to stay in touch and continue to build relationships. Why? Because their goal is to build a network of long-lasting, mutually ben-

eficial relationships, not just to get an immediate “result.”

This five-step system works because it’s based on building long-lasting relationships—not just immediate relationships, but lifelong ones.

Networking is lifelong and beneficial to everyone who participates. It’s a win–win proposition. On the other hand, power brokering, by its nature, is a zero-sum political contest in which someone must win and someone must lose. In the long run, an individual who practices power brokering creates a long list of enemies who will do anything they can to bring down that person. Unlike net workers, power brokers have few friends. Real net workers gain the positive benefits listed earlier because they gain the help and assistance of an ever-growing number of people.



The graphic features a dark green rectangular background at the top with the text "Insurance savings start here." in white, sans-serif font. Below this, on a white background, is the Liberty Mutual logo, which includes a blue silhouette of the Statue of Liberty's head and crown, and the text "Liberty Mutual." in a blue, serif font.

Is Your Organization Prepared for a Flu Pandemic?

by Sharon M. Wrobel

This is the time of year that the flu is constantly in the news. Even though vaccines are not in short supply as in years' past, many people are nonetheless neglecting to get their flu shots.

In past years, companies developed contingency plans for an influenza pandemic as part of the disaster recovery planning process. Employees were encouraged to stay home and telecommute if they even felt feverish or ill. Thankfully, the worst did not transpire and there was no pandemic. This does not mean that we are out of the woods.

Influenza viruses are notable for their resilience and adaptability. While science has been able to develop vaccines for many infectious diseases that threaten public health, acquiring appropriate and current vaccines is an ongoing challenge when it comes to the influenza virus. Changes in the genetic makeup of the virus necessitate new vaccines every year, which hopefully target the strains that are likely to predominate.

Despite the availability of vaccines, the U.S. sees 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations each year attributable to the flu. The annual economic toll due to influenza is \$10 billion in the U.S. alone. Such an outbreak would overwhelm health and medical capabilities, and result in hundreds of thousands of deaths, millions of hospitalizations, and hundreds of billions of dollars in direct and indirect costs. Therefore, even though the hysteria of past years is behind us, it pays to be vigilant and keep your plans for this contingency up to date in your disaster recovery plan.

What Should You Watch For?

Pandemics happen when a new virus emerges that can be easily transmitted between humans. Animals are a common source for these emerging viruses. Bird viruses played a role in the last three influenza pandemics in 1918, 1957 and 1968 that killed 40 million, 2

million and 1 million people respectively. Although the exact time for the next one cannot be predicted, previous pandemics suggests one to three pandemics every 100 years. In 2009, the H1N1 flu pandemic spread with 6, 250 deaths reported.

Common flu strains expected to circulate in any give year are identified by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. These include but are not limited to the A/H3N2 strain, a B strain, and the H1N1 pandemic strain. This year's flu vaccine provides protection against all three strains and unlike last year vaccines are in abundance. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get vaccinated this year.

Regarding the debilitating H1N1 virus, it is extremely difficult to predict how the virus may or may not change this season. The severity of illness that the H1N1 influenza flu will cause or the amount of illness that may arise during the 2013–2014 flu season cannot be predicted with certainty. Therefore, your organization should prepare to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of severity by taking the following additional steps if a pandemic flu develops early in 2014.

1. Make arrangements for widespread telecommuting, just in case.
2. Brief employees on sick leave policies and any employee assistance covered under any employee-sponsored health plans.
3. Document extraordinary sick leave policies that are flexible, non-punitive, and well communicated to employees, stressing that workers who have the flu should stay home and away from co-workers.
4. Allow workers to stay home, within reason, if they have to care for sick family members.

Employees should know what preventative measures and business policies are in place for managing sickness in the workplace.

5. Allow workers flexible schedules or other accommodations in the case of school or day care closures so they can mind their children and keep them safe at home.
6. Determine who will be responsible for assisting individuals who become suddenly ill in the workplace.
7. Update your present business continuity plan so that if there is significant absenteeism during a major flu outbreak you can maintain operations or make a determination of a company wide shut down; if feasible.
8. Establish an emergency communications plan identification of key contacts for tracking and communicating business and employee status. Consider an outbound notification system or recorded "help line." There are also systems like those offered by companies [like Teleria Inc](#), which can actually redirect inbound work calls to cell phones and stay-at-home workers, transparently to customers. Take a look at them.
9. Do everything you can to create a corporate culture that encourages sick workers to stay at home without fear of any reprisals from the boss.
10. Promote personal hygiene in the workplace by providing tissues, no-touch trashcans, hand soaps and hand sanitizers, disinfectants, disposable towels and antiseptic wipes for employees to clean their work surfaces.

11. Provide education and training materials to employees. The CDC web site for H1N1 is a good inexpensive source as well as other sites like <http://www.flu.gov>.
12. Instruct employees who are otherwise well but have a sick family member to go to work as usual, but be able to monitor their health every day. They should be instructed to notify their supervisor and stay home if they become ill.
13. Encourage everyone to get a flu shot. If it is not covered in the company medical plan, reimburse employees the \$30. In the long run it's a good investment.
14. If an employee does become sick while at work, quarantine the employee in a separate room or area away from other workers until they can go home.

In addition, instruct employee to follow common sense measures, such as:

1. Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
2. Avoid touching nose, mouth and eyes.
3. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your upper sleeve. Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles.
4. Keep frequently touched common surfaces clean. For example, telephones, computer equipment, door handles, etc.
5. Try not to use other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment. If necessary, consider cleaning them first with a disinfectant.
6. Get plenty of sleep in the wintertime. You are most likely to get sick when you are tired, stressed, worn out or just working too hard.
7. Be especially vigilant if you or someone close to you is in a "high risk" group. According to the CDC:



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Those at high risk of serious flu-related complications include: children younger than five years, pregnant women, people with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, adults and children who have a weak immune system, residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities as well as persons aged 65 years or older.

Last flu season, for example, 80 percent of adults and 65 percent of children hospitalized from flu had a long-term health condition or were pregnant.

Symptoms of seasonal flu can include fever, runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. The CDC recommends that sick workers stay home if they are ill with influenza-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. This would require employees to stay home for 3 to 5 days in most cases regardless of whether or not antiviral medications, like Tamiflu®, are used.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar and include fever or chills, cough and sore throat. In addition, symptoms of H1N1 flu can also include runny nose, body aches, headache, fatigue, diarrhea, or vomiting. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Summary

Remember, it is extremely difficult to predict how the flu virus may change from year to year, therefore, the severity of an outbreak in the 2013-2014 flu season cannot be easily predicted in advance. Your organiza-

tion should keep a watchful eye and prepare to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of severity, yet still be prepared to take additional steps if a pandemic flu develops early in 2014. Make sure that you have a plan.

Sharon M. (Ford) Wrobel is a Director at NaSPA and Managing Editor for Technical Support Magazine. She can be reached at sharon@b4ci.com.



How to Prevent Virtual Server Sprawl within the Enterprise

By Mark Oliver, President of Group Oliver

The adoption of server virtualization has increased to include almost all industries and businesses. And for good reason, increased hardware utilization, reduced utility costs, faster deployments and improved disaster recovery make server virtualization a good choice. However like any tool, technology or skill, just because you can does not mean you always should.

Not long ago, many information technology (IT) departments were overwhelmed with service requests and limited budgets making it nearly impossible to meet financial and service goals they were tasked with. Fortunately, those working in the IT field which I'd like to consider myself part of, are creative problem solvers. As part of the problem solving, organizations like VMware, Citrix, Cisco and NetApp to name a few, developed ways to reduce the amount of hardware required, while improving user services. This was done while meeting budget and personnel labor constraints. A win for all parties involved.

Unfortunately, virtualization can become a challenge to manage. This is further compounded by the relative ease in deployment and tendency to ignore and mismanage once a server is deployed. The key steps frequently overlooked during the planning stage are: (i) succinctly assessing organizational needs, (ii) determining the length the solution is required, (iii) and properly documenting the deployed systems to enable proper future management.

As a person who has been referred to the head of the "No" department, I understand management's desire to provide services or technology when requested, particularly when it is relatively easy or does not require outside resources. For example, creating a secure database on a server with limited access to facilitate a need the marketing department has for an event they are hosting. With the use of server virtualization, the hero in the IT department spins up a server, gets the database running

and connects the users from the marketing department and everyone is happy. The marketing department is happy as now has the tool they need for the project, the system administrator is happy because he provided a solution that will help the company grow and profit, and management is pleased because company personnel are able to effectively execute initiatives.

The illustration above exemplifies how virtual server sprawl can occur. Let us consider the following matrix or process for considering, planning and deploying a server. Yes, the "bit twiddling propeller head" in me likes a standardized procedure or matrix because it forces us to follow methods which give consistent results.

Set forth below is a decision tree to help you determine whether server virtualization makes sense or not for your organization.

- **Is the requested service needed for business purposes?** In the example, it sounds like the marketing department has a need which will help the company expand their customer base or satisfaction so we can assume yes it is needed.
- **Are their existing services that will meet the need?** In the example, we don't know with the information provided. However, chances are good that there is some sort of database running somewhere within the organization that we could use instead of creating an entirely new one.

Just because it is relatively east to spin-up a new server and get a database running, does not always mean that this is the best course of action. In our example, we may have been able to use existing technology services which would save company resources and potentially licensing expenses and prevent the start of virtual server sprawl.

- **What is the time frame for the need or project?** It sounds like the marketing department is involved with some sort of event which they are trying to capture information about. The resulting data may or may not be relevant in the future.

How many times have you noticed a server running that's on the domain but have no idea if it is still needed or used? Asking around, no one can tell us who needs the services running on it but since we are averse to causing negative feedback, we leave it alone, ignoring the labor and costs associated with maintaining it and move on. "Kicking the can down the road" isn't too challenging for one small instance but this habit can create an unwieldy situation (virtual server sprawl) if the habit becomes standard operating procedure.

- **Include the system in the IT documentation or Network Map.** Documentation is probably the least sexy task an IT professional does, short of washing monitors. When documenting, it does not look like anything is being solved, fixed or prevented other than making everyone's life easier in the future. Proper documentation takes time and when completed is typically not decipherable to individuals outside the IT profession. Consequently, it is frequently not done or done poorly simply because it's not a task that's valued by management.

The negative statements above regarding documentation hold true until it is needed. As a rule, when solid documentation is needed is during an emergency or when a key person isn't available. Then the document is the Holy Grail providing the light and the way to the system's salvation. Enough said; make sure the documentation is through and usable by others not as familiar with the systems.

- **Periodic reviews of the network, server farm and systems are critical.** By periodically reviewing the network along with the servers ensures the documentation is accurate, there are no orphaned systems running, and that the organization has a complete understanding of the systems in place and their disaster recovery processes. Additionally, this will help keep software licensing organized. It also enables the organization to be aware of the condition of the hardware. Avoiding technology debt isn't always easy, but ignoring it

guarantees it'll be large and painful when it has to be addressed.

Inevitably, when an audit is done there are most likely going to be some systems in place happens in which no one understands or remembers why they are even there. However, by addressing audits in a timely fashion, organizations can more successfully limit server sprawl. In a virtual or physical situation sometimes the only way to check on usage is by the "pop up" method; disconnect the server and see whose head pops up because something quit working. This isn't the most elegant method but it works. Organizations know exactly what was done and services can be quickly restored if needed.

By following the outlined methodology, organizations can more effectively and efficiently manage and prevent virtual server sprawl from taking hold within their organization.

For over 15 years Mark Oliver has owned and operated Group Oliver. Group Oliver is a technical support organization that focuses on managed services. As a service provider, Group Oliver provides a full spectrum of support including physical cable work, managed services, networking and virtualization.



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IT Data Center "Green" Myths and Realities

Greg Schulz

Is "green IT" a convenient or inconvenient truth or a legend? When it comes to green and virtual environments, there are plenty of myths and realities, some of which vary depending on market or industry focus, price band, and other factors. For example, there are lines of thinking that only ultralarge data centers are subject to PCFE-related (power, cooling, floorspace, environment) issues, or that all data centers need to be built along the Columbia River basin in Washington state, or that virtualization eliminates vendor lock-in, or that hardware is more expensive to power and cool than it is to buy. The following are some myths and realities as of today, some of which may be subject to change from reality to myth or from myth to reality as time progresses.

Myth: Green and PCFE issues are applicable only to large environments.

Reality: I commonly hear that green IT applies only to the largest of companies. The reality is that PCFE issues or green topics are relevant to environments of all sizes, from the largest of enterprises to the small-medium business, to the remote office branch office, to the small office, home office or virtual office, all the way to the digital home and consumer.

Myth: All computer storage is the same, and powering disks off solves PCFE issues.

Reality: There are many different types of computer storage, with various performance, capacity, power consumption, and cost attributes. Although some storage can be powered off, other storage that is needed for online access does not lend itself to being powered

off and on. For storage that needs to be always online and accessible, energy efficiency is achieved by doing more with less, that is, boosting performance and storing more data in a smaller footprint using less power.

Myth: Servers are the main consumer of electrical power in IT data centers.

Reality: In the typical IT data center, on average, 50% of electrical power is consumed by cooling, with the balance used for servers, storage, networking, and other aspects. However, in many environments, particularly processing or computation-intensive environments, servers in total (including power for cooling and to power the equipment) can be a major power draw.

Myth: IT data centers produce 2% of all global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

Reality: This is perhaps true, given some creative accounting and marketing math. The reality is that in the United States, for example, IT data centers consume around 2–3% of electrical power (depending on when you read this), and less than 80% of all U.S. CO₂ emissions are from electrical power generation, so the math does not quite add up. However, if no action is taken to improve IT data center energy efficiency, continued demand growth will shift IT power-related emissions from myth to reality.

Myth: Server consolidation with virtualization is a silver bullet to address PCFE issues.

Reality: Server virtualization for consolidation is only part of an overall solution that should be combined with other techniques, including lower power,



faster and more energy-efficient servers, and improved data and storage management techniques.

Myth: Hardware costs more to power than to purchase.

Reality: Currently, for some low-cost servers, stand-alone disk storage, or entry-level networking switches and desktops, this may be true, particularly where energy costs are excessively high and the devices are kept and used continually for three to five years. A general rule of thumb is that the actual cost of most IT hardware will be a fraction of the price of associated management and software tool costs plus facilities and cooling costs.

Regarding this last myth, for the more commonly deployed external storage systems across all price bands and categories, generally speaking, except for extremely inefficient and hot-running legacy equipment, the reality is that it is still cheaper to power the equipment than to buy it. Having said that, there are some qualifiers that should also be used as key indicators to keep the equation balanced. These qualifiers include the acquisition cost; the cost, if any, for new, expanded, or remodeled habitats or space to house the equipment; the price of energy in a given region, including surcharges, as well as cooling, length of time, and continuous time the device will be used.

For larger businesses, IT equipment in general still costs more to purchase than to power, particularly with newer, more energy-efficient devices. However, given rising energy prices, or the need to build new facilities, this could change moving forward, particularly if a move toward energy efficiency is not undertaken.

There are many variables when purchasing hardware, including acquisition cost, the energy efficiency of the device, power and cooling costs for a given location and habitat, and facilities costs. For example, if a new storage solution is purchased for \$100,000, yet new habitat or facilities must be built for three to five times the cost of the equipment, those costs must be figured into the purchase cost. Likewise, if the price of a storage solution decreases dramatically, but the device consumes a lot of electrical power and needs a large cooling capacity while operating in a region with expensive electricity costs, that, too, will change the equation and the potential reality of the myth.

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A Major Media Outlet Breached (Again), Employee Credentials Compromised

Compromised credentials are often used for initiating attacks on targeted organizations. Stolen login credentials enable the attacker to gain the initial access into the network or system. In a recent blog hosted by NaSPA Partner IT Today (an Auerbach Company, see [NaSPA Sponsors](#) for more info on Auerbach), our friends discussed the methods hackers typically use to [steal user credentials](#). The blog also included an informative [infographic](#) on the topic. Because credentials are often easy to get a hold of and to use, so they are very popular among cyber-criminals.

This isn't the first time The Post has been breached and user credentials have been exposed. In fact, this breach is the third that they've disclosed in three years.

In 2011, the news organization announced that its network was infiltrated. The hackers targeted the main IT server and several other computers. The hackers gained initial access as early as 2008 or 2009, but the malware was disabled only in 2011. The malware was communicating with a known Command and Control server, associated with a Chinese hacking group. At the time, some Post journalists expressed concerns that the hackers may have had access to their emails or sensitive documents kept on their computers.

According to [Krebsonsecurity](#), a former employee came forward with information suggesting that a Chinese hacker group had broadly compromised computer systems within The Post's newsroom and other operations throughout 2012. According to the blog: "Attackers compromised at least three servers and a multitude of desktops, installing malicious software that allowed the perpetrators to maintain access to the machines and the network." The blog also mentions that The Post used Symantec's antivirus and security software to protect systems from malicious software, but that detection clearly failed.

In addition, in August 2013, the Syrian Electronic Army briefly succeeded in redirecting readers of arti-

cles on [washingtonpost.com](#) to its own website. They were also suspected in a "phishing" attack aimed log-in information of the e-mail accounts of Post journalists.

The breaches into The Post and exposure of user credentials is not a unique incident. We wrote about the series of attacks targeting media organizations in a blog titled [Spear-Phishing, News and Twitter Accounts: Why Corporate Credentials Must Be Protected](#).

These breaches highlight the fact that corporate credentials are valuable and therefore a top target for cybercriminals. Organizations must implement controls to secure corporate credentials from malware, phishing attacks and exposure through 3rd party hacks.

NaSPA thanks its longtime supporter Auerbach for this article. Did you know that NaSPA members receive a 15% discount on Auerbach and CRC press publications? Visit <http://www.ittoday.info/catalog/NASPA.htm> and find some GREAT content!





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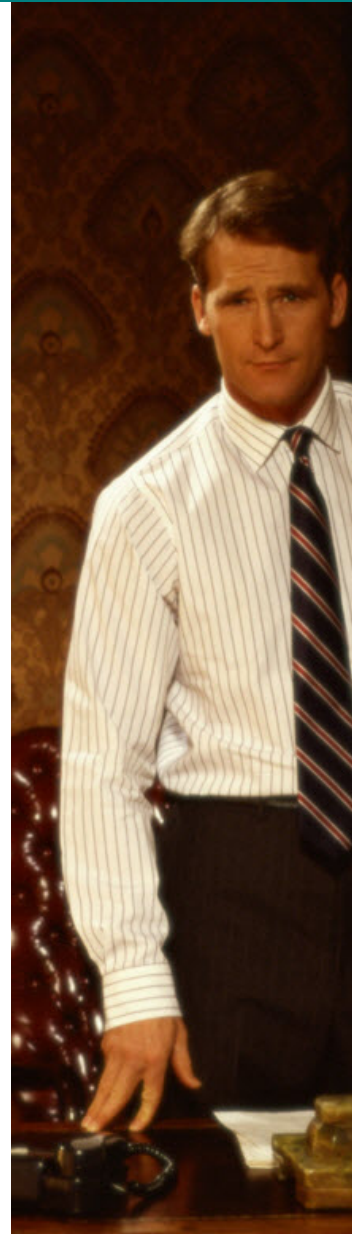
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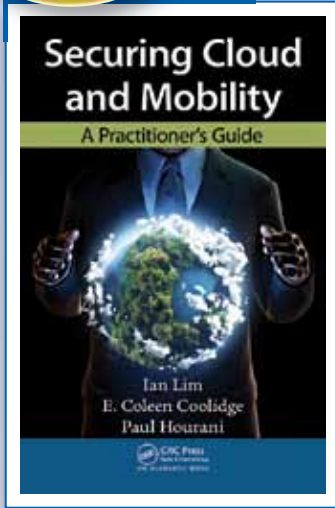
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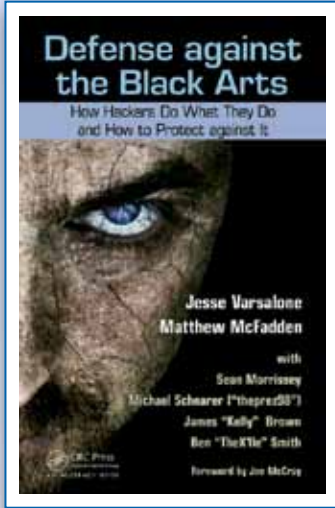
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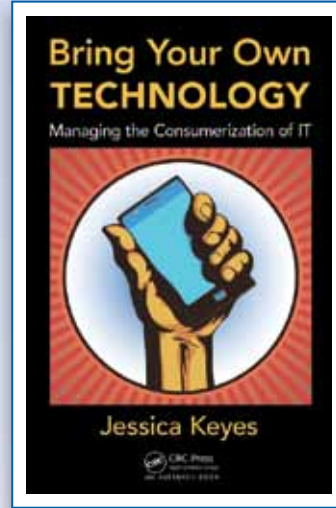
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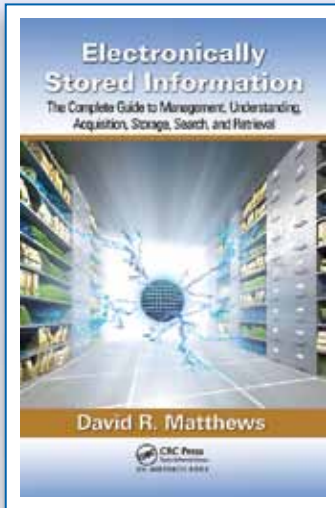
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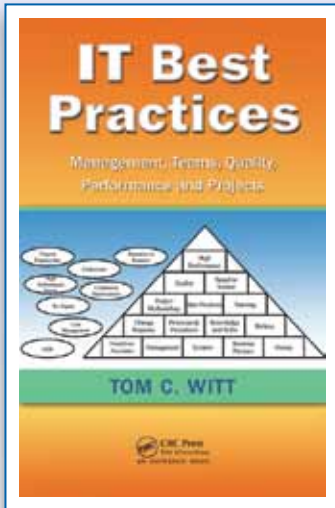
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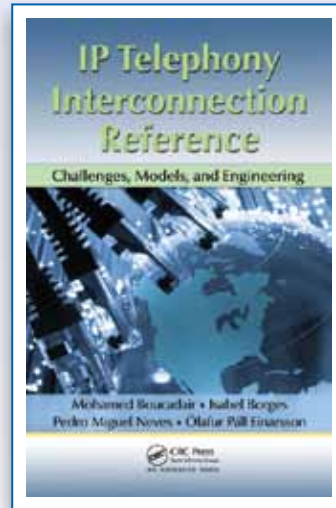
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