

Green IT

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How Green was My Cactus? You may remember that as the title of Australia's most popular radio comedy. The question often asked in today's environment is 'How Green is Your IT'. I am finding that more and more consumers are asking about the green credentials of products being sold and asking about solutions that ensure they are making their contribution to the environment.

Consumer sentiment is not surprising. A survey was conducted recently across Australia, which revealed some staggering sentiments in relation to the environment. One question asked was 'What would be the first thing you would do if you were PM?' The number 1 response was 'address environmental issues'. Of all respondents, 46% said they were prepared to pay more for their energy and products if it could be shown they were addressing environmental concerns.

There are two ways to look at IT in relation to delivering greener solutions. The first way of viewing IT from a green perspective is not to look at what damage IT products are doing, but how much IT is saving the environment.

The most common method of commuting to and from work in Australia is the humble motor car. Approximately 75% of our residents use the car to travel to work. Another 16% use buses, trains and public transport. That is over 90% of people burning fuel of one description or another every day just to travel to work. The purchase and use of cars causes more environmental damage than any other single thing consumers do. In terms of greenhouse gases alone, 27% of the average consumer's annual emissions (of more than 12 tonnes) are linked to the motor car.

So if we take the approach that we can reduce the use of the motor car by utilising IT in better ways, we have a strong argument for replacing the motor car with the much more environmentally friendly computer. Take as a simple example the idea of encouraging businesses to setup telecommuting in such a way that all employees worked from home just 1 day per fortnight. That would immediately reduce commuter traffic by 9%. That would be 9% less fuel burnt to arrive at the same outcomes for businesses. Not only would that be an environmental boon, but it would reduce pressure on road infrastructure and businesses could even rent smaller premises. Furthermore, meetings can be held via phone conference or video conference and consideration can be given to technicians accessing computers remotely.

So instead of seeing IT as detrimental in the environmental sense, by looking at it from a different perspective, you can actually see ways of showing IT as an environmental saviour.



The second way to look at the issue of green computing is then to drill down and see what specific products and technologies can be used that are friendlier to the environment – and as a bonus, friendlier to the bank account.

AXXIS Technology has just participated in a case study with Intel to demonstrate the power of something as simple as using Intel® vPro™ technology. A simple test environment was setup to compare the usage of vPro™ using all the associated benefits with that technology against a standard PC. The results from one computer were amazing. Power usage was cut by 68% (a reduction of 554kWh per year), power bills were cut by \$120.87 per year and the replacement of one computer alone was the equivalent of taking one car off the road for 37 days. When these numbers were then translated to all 50 computers across the sample client's network, the results were even more amazing. Making one technology change resulted in \$6000 of power savings which would reduce carbon emissions by 27.7 tonnes – the equivalent of taking 5.07 cars off the road permanently. When you add other greener products into the mix, the results just keep getting better. If you replace a single CRT with a LCD (TFT) monitor, you could save \$76 a year in power helping reduce carbon emissions by 272kg a year – the equivalent of taking one car off the road for 23 days. After 3 years they have almost paid for the outright cost of the new monitor in power savings.

Tough economic and environmental times may be ahead. Addressing Green issues with IT can help the environment as well as your pocket.