

New Emergency Plan for Brisbane

Brisbane now has a published Emergency Response Plan for the CBD. The Plan will help government agencies and emergency services to identify procedures and responsibilities for a variety of events, for example terrorist attacks and earthquakes.

The Queensland Premier Peter Beattie encourages everyone to learn more about the Plan, which can be found at: <http://www.police.qld.gov.au/Resources/Internet/programs/er/documents/Brisbane%20CBD%20Emergency%20Plan%20VERSION%201.0.pdf>

Companies asked to disclose climate change risks

150 of the largest companies in Australia and New Zealand have been asked by investors to disclose investment-relevant information about risk and opportunities faced by the company in relation to climate change. The initiative has been coordinated by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP - www.cdproject.net) whose aim is to provide the investor community with standardised information on this topic from companies worldwide. Last year 72% of FT500 companies answered the CDP information request. All responses and the CDP reports can be downloaded free of charge at www.cdproject.net (Source: www.continuitycentral.com)

British Standard 25999

A draft of part 2 of the British Standard 25999 is available for consultation at the British Standards Institution website www.bsi-global.com. Comments on this draft are welcome to assist in the preparation of the consequent British Standard. The target is to publish the final version within a few months. A presentation on this topic has been delivered to our June Member Meeting in Auckland by Ian Clark FBCI, the New Zealand representative of the Business Continuity Institute.

Exercise Cumpston 2006

The Australian Department of Health and Ageing has released a report about the Australian national pandemic influenza exercise, Exercise Cumpston 06. Twelve recommendations are made in the report, following what was the first major event of its kind in Australia. The report can be found at: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/FA080A821420BB98CA2572F10081078A/\\$File/exercise-cumpston-report.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/FA080A821420BB98CA2572F10081078A/$File/exercise-cumpston-report.pdf)

BC EYE: A PERSONAL VIEW ON BUSINESS CONTINUITY

“Getting more Business Bang from the IT DR Buck”

It is unlikely to cause much controversy to suggest that business users should be involved in IT Disaster Recovery (IT DR) tests. It is fair to say that most organisations today request or require staff from the business to participate at some stage in the annual IT Disaster Test. I have participated in a few of these over the years myself, and I am increasingly of the view that organisations are missing a chance to get more out of these events, especially from the business perspective.

IT DR tests are almost always arranged by the IT Team, so it is understandable that IT will address their technical concerns as a priority. After all, the IT budget usually pays for the event, and it is the IT Department who will be called to account if the test is not a complete, undisputed success. The business is invited to get involved at the tail end of the test to verify that everything that has been recovered is as it should be.

Yet, there are other costs involved in making an IT DR test happen, some of which are borne directly by the business, including the cost of staff time and expenses. It is reasonable then that the business could also aim to get something tangible out of the process. One way would be to set some clear business objectives for the test, in addition to any IT goals based on recovery timeframes. For example, the business might set measurable goals around these three criteria:

- **Accessibility** - could I access all the critical IT systems I needed?
- **Data Integrity** - could I access all the correct data for the critical IT systems and servers I use, and was the data complete and correct?, and
- **Functionality** - did all the critical IT systems work correctly without noticeable performance degradation at the alternate site?

Considerations of site functionality are often overlooked, smothered by the focus on technical issues. However, given the reality that most alternate sites are capable of accommodating just a small percentage of the normal staff numbers, the impact on business productivity over time is rarely assessed in detail. And we are talking about productivity over days, weeks and months, not the few hours spent at the site completing the IT DR test.

In addition, it is not uncommon for the hardware at the alternate site to be of a lower specification than used in the office, which can affect system performance and response times. Limits on the number of available printers, faxes and other office devices can also reduce productivity.

Another goal should be a close alignment between the IT DR test and other parallel business continuity or crisis management exercises. One way would be to build the results, good and bad, of the last IT DR test directly into the scenario used for subsequent business continuity exercises. For example, what will the business do if the recovery of system X takes twice as long as expected due to a tape drive failure?

Why not get the Crisis Management Team to conduct the next exercise at the alternate site, rather than in the company board room. At least they will then know where the site is.

Ultimately, the organisation may set a goal of conducting a co-ordinated crisis management, business continuity and IT DR exercise, based on a common scenario and shared communications.

Of course, there are some organisations that already do all these things, and they are ahead of the game. For the rest of us, perhaps there are opportunities to rethink the usual approach taken to the next IT Disaster Recovery exercise.

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