



Battery Backups – Data Life Savers

By Greg Zavitski

It's deadline time, five minutes to the finish line. Your work report, project, presentation, homework, month end, year end (and the list goes on) is almost complete and the power goes out or a brownout crashes your computer and all is lost. Sound familiar?

With the state of the power industry, demand for power and the severe changes in weather brought on by our changing environment, adequate power protection is the key to maintaining computer, server and network uptime and customer or family satisfaction. Gone are the days of the surge protector for systems that are considered mission critical for your business or life savers for your home or student use.

Surge protectors provide basic protection against power surges but offer no protection for power loss. Most surge protectors are created equal with higher priced models offering additional status lights indicating correct function. As well, higher priced surge protectors tend to offer insurance protection from the manufacturer that will cover equipment loss for equipment plugged in to their product that fails due to power surge. If a brownout or blackout occurs you need a battery backup to protect your data and give you the chance to shut your system down properly to prevent hardware damage.

Battery backups or uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) as they are more commonly know act as a buffer between your computer equipment and your power company. If the UPS detects a change in your power, it acts to make up for the loss. No break in power. A UPS will also shield your system from voltage irregularities – too much or too little power.

Sudden changes in the quality or amount of power can cause damage to computer components and can even cause severe data loss or corrupt data on hard drives. Older computers with surge protection will likely survive minor power spikes however newer computers are more susceptible to power spikes and power hazards and often require a steady 120 volt supply to maintain the highly sensitive chips and circuits. A UPS is now just as important as the data on the computer.

There are many types of UPS available today however the two most common types are Standby and Line Interactive. Standby type UPS provide power in the event of power loss and provide some limited voltage conditioning. Standby UPS are most commonly used on desktop or workstation computers and offer a value price point for consumers. A common brand name of a good standby UPS is American Power Corporation's Backups series of UPS.

Line interactive UPS offer the same power supply in the event of power loss however they tend to offer better voltage conditioning and are recommended where voltage irregularities exist. A common brand name of a good standby UPS is American Power Corporation's Smart-UPS series of UPS.

A UPS can provide you with the extra time to save your data files, shut down your system properly or continue to work through a power outage. As customer satisfaction plays a more important role in our business and home computing realms, consider a UPS for peace of mind, peace of data and fewer repair visits to your computer shop.

