

the **Availability Digest**

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@availabilitydig – Our April Twitter Feed of Outages

April 2014

A challenge every issue for the Availability Digest is to determine which of the many availability topics out there win coveted status as Digest articles. We always regret not focusing our attention on the topics we bypass. With our new Twitter presence, we don't have to feel guilty. This article highlights some of the @availabilitydig tweets that made headlines in recent days.



From Stratus Technologies: Is your availability good enough? ---> The High Availability Journey (Infographic)

99% sounds pretty complete in theory, but imagine if only 99% of your orders shipped. For 54% of businesses surveyed, anything below 99.99% availability is unacceptable.

<http://t.co/wpxf3XHeuh>

From the Availability Digest: "911 Systems Experiencing Unacceptable Availability."

The reliability of today's emergency call systems is far from what it should be. Statistics show that the availability of many systems is, at best, dismal. Classic approaches to high availability miss the mark by a wide margin, as do virtualized systems and cloud deployments. All of these approaches result in hours of downtime per year, during which life and property are at great danger.

<http://t.co/kSzkDNyzPN>

900 SINs stolen from CRA online systems.

The Canada Revenue Agency says the social insurance numbers of roughly 900 people were stolen from its systems, which were left vulnerable by the so-called Heartbleed bug.

<http://t.co/nsm58pj4B1>

Network hardware failure behind Commonwealth Bank outage

A network hardware failure is believed to be behind a major outage that crashed most of the Commonwealth Bank's network around the country recently.

<http://t.co/R40O9YMcdg>

911 emergency backup in Thurston County prevented lost calls during system failure

Emergency workers in Thurston County activated a 911 emergency backup system soon after a statewide 911 failure. Not every 911 call center in the U.S. state of Washington has an emergency backup. Those who don't experienced a six-hour interruption in 911 services.

<http://t.co/HGjtzhkLeJ>

Swedbank goes offline in 'technical' crash

One of Sweden's main banks, Swedbank, was hit recently during a routine update by technical failures that saw all mobile and online banking shut down. The meltdown rendered all customer bank cards useless. The bank has two systems. When one goes down, the other should back it up. This time, that didn't happen.

<http://t.co/3RPOjkwUxL>

Fibernet Data Center Experiences Zero Downtime After Strong Winds Cause Power Outage.

Strong winds in Orem, Utah on March 17th caused power outages at the Fibernet data center. Fibernet's backup generators, tested once a week, started powering the data center immediately. The UPS is also tested each month. The data center experienced no power surges, and the cooling systems worked at 100% capacity.

<http://t.co/8MtDmg3EAS>

How to Keep the Lights on after a Superstorm

A planned micro grid in a New Jersey city could be a model for making local communities more resilient to extreme weather.

<http://t.co/Lv5HQQywI>

Map illustrates 'Russian GPS' fault

The April 2nd failure of all 24 GLONASS satellites that make up Russia's equivalent of the GPS system represented an unprecedented disruption of what is one half of the world's operational global navigation satellite constellations.

<http://t.co/dQD1v26Qyv>

Microsoft XP's massive cybersecurity problem

Microsoft cut off support to its 12-year-old operating system Windows XP on April 8th. Doing so left more than a quarter of the world's computers effectively undefended against hackers and cybercriminals.

<http://t.co/YOKhMIK15p>

Dutch government pays millions to extend Microsoft XP support

The Dutch government has followed the United Kingdom's lead, signing a multimillion Euro deal with Microsoft for the company to continue providing support for its Windows XP systems.

<http://t.co/5kc9QhEEcY>

Can the mainframe remain relevant in the cloud and mobile era?

The CICS (Customer Information Control System) application server, which runs on the IBM mainframe, processes 1.1m transactions per second, significantly more than the number of Google searches. Yet the mainframe has remained largely unfashionable. On 7 April 1964, IBM unveiled its first mainframe, the System/360. Today, 80% of the world's corporate data is still managed by mainframes.

<http://t.co/8dW6gooVdn>

When Good Clouds Go Bad

Western Digital WDC has actively promoted its "My Cloud" cloud backup and remote access for their branded external storage products. On March 26, 2014, the server that WD uses to support these services went down. Until midnight on April 2, 2014, many customers experienced problems with their cloud backups and remote access.

<http://t.co/SaSYTJ39DB>

Stratus Technologies Acquired by Siris Capital Group, Plans Fault-Tolerant Software, Cloud Push

Fault-tolerant hardware and software developer Stratus Technologies has been acquired by an investment firm, paving the way for the company to reduce debt and invest in new ways to bring its technology to software and private cloud environments.

<http://t.co/EA3odbsZDb>

Mainframes clock up half-century

The IBM mainframe is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The first System 360 mainframe was unveiled on 7 April 1964, and its arrival marked a break with all general purpose computers that came before.

<http://t.co/4AE5MKcOIM>

Eaton Unveils 2013 Power Outage Data

Eaton recently released its Blackout Tracker Annual Report for 2013. For the fifth consecutive year, California topped the list of U.S. states with the most power outages. The average length of an outage was 86 minutes. The average cost per incident was approximately \$690,200.00 USD.

<http://t.co/yBMBQev8a6>

A data center migration checklist to mitigate risk

Data centers consist of complicated, densely populated racks of hardware running all kinds of software, connected by oodles of cabling. So when a firm plans to migrate an application, a business group or perhaps the entire IT infrastructure to a new platform, it can cause a panic.

<http://t.co/2Dh9yEZexz>

Cooling system outage shuts down DWP website, impairs call center

A cooling system outage shut down the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power website, crimped the capacity of its customer call center, and prevented people from using a new feature to leave their number and get a call back. Both primary and backup cooling systems went out.

<http://t.co/fQfRVZVETe>

HealthCare.gov Malfunctions on Last Enrollment Day

Twice on the final day of open enrollment in 2014, the U.S. federal website where consumers sign up for medical coverage under President Obama's health care law unexpectedly stopped taking applications.

<http://t.co/h1xzoBSuHq>

Off-topic but great article: "Tsunami Warnings Improved since '64 Alaska Quake but Unlikely to Help Those Closest."

The number of deaths from 1964's Great Alaska Earthquake exceeded 135. The majority of fatalities were caused by water. Tsunami early-warning systems have improved since 1964, especially for populations far from where an earthquake strikes. But for those near the epicenter, the best warning remains the earthquake itself. Don't wait for a tsunami alert. Move immediately to high ground.

<http://t.co/AWpnInYEc1>

Learn all about bitcoins, bitcoin exchanges, and wallets in "Mt. Gox, Largest Bitcoin Exchange, Goes Belly Up."

This Availability Digest article describes different bitcoin wallets, bitcoin exchanges, the liquidity of digital currencies, and their volatility. It examines the founding of Mt. Gox in 2010, its meteoric rise to prominence, and its rapid demise at the hand of skilled hackers. Buyer beware.

<http://t.co/cXA40k64cZ>

Coping With a Cloud Outage

Cloud computing presents enormous opportunities for the enterprise, but it is critical to proactively prepare for cloud outages as well as outright provider failures.

<http://t.co/nN3no3Tm4L>

Punishment vs Rehab: Will Bank IT Glitch Investigation Make a Blind Bit of Difference?

Bosses at the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) and Lloyds Banking Group are probably checking their blood pressure and soothing their sore, freshly face-palmed foreheads as they face an inevitably costly and laborious probe into their technology particulars.

<http://t.co/mgGCIIQ0Qn>

An Availability Digest Article: "Casa Ley Upgrades to Active/Active OmniPayments."

Casa Ley, one of Mexico's largest, privately held grocery-store chains, upgraded its transaction authorization switch to Opsol Inc.'s OmniPayments and acquired in the process a modern, active/active solution providing continuous availability at an attractive price.

<http://bit.ly/1gy2Y9g>

Google Turns Up The Heat On Amazon with a plan for more robust cloud services to compete with Amazon Web Services.

Google cloud architect Urs Holzle has a plan for more robust cloud services to compete with Amazon Web Services. But Google's cloud to-do list remains long.

<http://ubm.io/1eKzGSV>

Electronic medical records: preparing for the inevitable crash.

A recently completed study of EMR system failures concluded that not only are system crashes common, they are pretty much inevitable. The public is probably unaware of this, one researcher suggested, because news of a crash tends to escape a hospital's walls only when a ticked-off patient calls a reporter.

<http://www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2014/03/24/cmaj.109-4719.full.pdf+html>