

the Availability Digest

www.availabilitydigest.com
[@availabilitydig](https://twitter.com/availabilitydig)

@availabilitydig – Our February Twitter Feed of Outages February 2015

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.



South Africa is furious about power outages



<https://t.co/NxJC4MpoNK>

Five years after crash, city still looking to safeguard power

Palo Alto's "Day the Earth Stood Still" was caused by a private plane that crashed into a city's utility tower near the Palo Alto Municipal Airport -- taking out all three of the city's power conduits. All 28,000 customers lost power for 10 hours. But five years later, little has changed. The California city is still looking at alternative power supplies to prevent another disastrous blackout.

<http://t.co/aBH0jgm4jO>

Spark outage: No compensation for customers

It is unlikely disgruntled Spark customers will receive compensation following yesterday's five-hour long service outage. The network failure impacted data, texts, and phone calls for customers in many parts of New Zealand's North Island, including Rotorua.

<http://t.co/Liaqxxxxcz>

Hybrid Cloud Computing SLAs in 2015 Require Customization

For many midsize firms, the introduction of hybrid cloud computing into the business complicates initiatives. To complicate this further, the "canned" service-level agreement (SLA) currently offered by many MSPs may not work for every business. Many organizations have a need for customized hybrid cloud computing SLAs to ensure a better fit with their unique requirements.

<http://t.co/bh6Qud1atZ>

Bank Hackers Steal Millions via Malware

Since late 2013, an unknown group of hackers has reportedly stolen \$300 million — possibly as much as triple that amount — from banks across the world, with the majority of the victims in Russia. The attacks continue, all using roughly the same modus operandi.

<http://t.co/gnsCDdHkRn>

Postal Service dealing with national computer outage - hackers not involved

Friday the 13th's bad luck came a bit early for the U.S. Postal Service this week as a national computer outage hit the agency during a hardware installation on Thursday. USPS spokeswoman Toni Delancey said Friday that the outage, which began sometime on Thursday afternoon, affected the agency's e-mail system and some retail services but that mail delivery, mail processing and tracking and scanning services were unaffected.

<http://t.co/afN4TqM7yl>

First class from London for 50 bucks? Big mistake, says United Airlines

If the thousands of travelers who bought United Airlines' \$50 dollar first-class tickets Wednesday thought the deal was too good to be true, they were right. United announced that it won't be honoring the absurdly cheap bookings, which it said were caused by a third-party software vendor's currency conversion error.

<http://t.co/3mE9Vdq1VA>

Hewlett-Packard buys Cupertino's Voltage Security for data protection

Amid widespread concerns about corporate data breaches, Hewlett-Packard announced in February the acquisition of a Cupertino company that made early strides in email encryption technology. HP said it will purchase Voltage Security and will fold it into HP's security division, HP Atalla.

<http://t.co/l9wfm1sXuP>

Study Reveals State of IT Disaster Unpreparedness, Value of Cloud BDR Solutions

Businesses lose hundreds of thousands of dollars due to IT operation interruptions that cause downtime. Therefore, it is not surprising that companies believe backup and disaster recovery are critical to the business. Yet few are able to recover from a major IT failure within one hour, according to a recent national survey. Furthermore, only seven percent were confident that they could recover operations within two hours; and almost 25 percent said it would take more than an entire day.

<http://t.co/LO3Gva5OtW>

Weather brings down Fujitsu's Perth data center

Severe weather in Australia last week brought down a data center in Perth, Australia, apparently causing outages in the services of an Australian bank as well as of Western Australia health services. During severe thunderstorms, Fujitsu's Perth Data Centre suffered two back-to-back failures that culminated in an outage.

<http://t.co/xw2H1I0Ovg>

What is a Windows Hyper-V High Availability Cluster?

Windows Hyper-V has come a long way since Server 2008. Today it has some of the best features going for high availability and shared storage.

<http://t.co/ID4ZepsuDI>

Our bullet-proof LAN failed. Here's what we learned

An organization with a highly redundant LAN nevertheless suffered a 4-hour outage. From the experience, the company identified three key risks to network continuity and three corresponding remedies.

<http://t.co/AvCgqxHfrO>

"Will the 2015 leap second bite you?" Join the discussion on LinkedIn's Continuous Availability Forum.

The Earth's rotation is gradually slowing. To account for this, a leap second is occasionally added to our clocks to synchronize our time with a solar day. The next leap second is scheduled for June 30, 2015, at midnight. The last leap second occurred on June 30, 2012. That leap second caused many systems to crash, especially those running Linux and Java. Are your systems ready for this year's leap second?

<http://t.co/SIZRq8aFxZ>

Tesco Bank's online glitch fixed after two-day outage

Tesco Bank has brought its internet and mobile banking systems back online following a two-day outage. Customers of the bank were unable to access current accounts, savings and loans services due to a computer glitch. Branch-based services and card payments were not affected.

<http://t.co/03pEiDMDJb>

South Africa's Eskom cuts 4,000 MW from grid after generating units fail

South Africa's cash-strapped state utility Eskom on Thursday, 5 February, imposed its biggest power cut this year in Africa's most advanced economy when more than five power generating units failed. The utility, which supplies virtually all of South Africa's power, slashed about 10 percent of electricity supplies from the national grid as it struggled to avoid a total system collapse.

<http://t.co/uh38Vec7bV>

Delayed €10m Lotto jackpot draw to go ahead tonight following tech glitch

A spokesperson for Ireland's National Lottery confirmed that they made the decision to postpone the Lotto draw for 24 hours for the first time in their 28-year history after problems were encountered with the 3G supply from Spanish communications giants Telefonica, which powers the lottery terminals in stores.

<http://t.co/dTcLE2SIUM>

Prison security systems fail during outage

Inmates and staff at the minimum-security portion of Joyceville Institution were left in the dark for six hours because a backup generator that normally supplies emergency power was not connected. None of the security systems that rely on electricity were working during the power failure. "None of the doors were alarmed, none of the windows were alarmed," said a correctional service officer. "Anybody could have walked away from that place, and we would never have known about it."

<http://t.co/85meZZpE4H>

Weather Brings Fujitsu Data Center Down in Australia, Ghana Facility Down After Fire

Weather in Perth, Australia, brought down a data center, while a fire in Ghana knocked out a data center operated by the telco provider Surflin. The Perth data center, operated by Fujitsu, suffered two outage incidents during and after severe thunderstorms. The first lasted 1.5 hours. Despite backup systems responding as designed, a second failure occurred in an undisclosed control system leading to a longer outage. A fire in Ghana caused by a major power outage disrupted network connectivity for Surflin data center users. The telco provides LTE services.

<http://t.co/cjR6T32udW>

National Lottery website goes TITSUP again

The UK National Lottery website was down for the second time in days in early February. The site first crashed for roughly 18 hours due to a technical glitch that lotto operator Camelot Business Solutions discovered during routine maintenance. However, the portal soon hit the skids again, carrying the numbers for last weekend's draw and nothing else.

<http://t.co/aOmyU0THd9>

Millions Of Records Likely Stolen In Insurance Company Hack

Health insurer Anthem Inc., the No. 2 health insurer in the United States with nearly 40 million U.S. customers, announced in early February that hackers had breached one of its IT systems and had stolen personal information relating to current and former consumers and employees.

<http://t.co/otaNb5rDax>

Bigger, meaner, nastier: DDoS attack size increased 50 times in past decade

Arbor Networks, Inc. has released its 10th Annual Worldwide Infrastructure Security Report (WISR) offering a rare view into the most critical security challenges facing today's network operators.

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

Availability Digest recommended reading: "High Availability IT Services" by Dr. Terry A. Critchley

"If you think high availability is expensive, try downtime." With these words, Dr. Terry Critchley paints an exhaustive picture in his book "High Availability IT Services." He explains how we can protect our critical applications effectively and economically from the plethora of faults that can take them down.

<http://t.co/CAYUeRPI13>

Availability Digest: CloudHarmony monitors and compares cloud features, availabilities, performance, and pricing

We have written frequently about whether public clouds are suitable for corporate critical applications. We have published many Never Again stories about massive failures in popular clouds such as Amazon, Google, Azure, and Rackspace. However, these are really vignettes – snapshots in time. What are the real availability statistics for these and other clouds over a long period of time? The web-monitoring site CloudHarmony offers us insight.

<http://t.co/OZblVatSUB>

January's Availability Digest sponsor Crystal Point delivers cost-effective HP NonStop connectivity solutions

For over 25 years, Crystal Point has delivered efficient and cost-effective HP NonStop host connectivity software solutions. With over 100,000 customers, our products are secure, reliable, and modern. Our products include OutsideView 8.1, OutsideViewWEB, and AppView XS.

www.crystalpoint.com

From Availability Digest: Grocery Chain Achieves Continuous Availability with OmniReplicator

A large, privately held grocery-store chain operates 300 supermarkets. It had been using ACI's BASE24 financial-transaction switch on an HP NonStop server to route credit-card and debit-card payments from its point-of-sale (POS) terminals for authorization to the banks issuing the cards.

The BASE24 financial-transaction switch ran on a single HP NonStop server. Should the switch fail, the grocery stores were limited to cash sales only. Following ACI's announcement that it no longer would support BASE24 on HP NonStop servers, the grocery chain opted to move to the OmniPayments financial-transaction switch. Via its replication engine OmniReplicator, OmniPayments implemented an active/active system that guaranteed continuous availability.

<http://t.co/WJG1IV6mWm>

Bad coding leaves developers patching up damaged reputations

Is the pressure on developers to rush new games to market before they are truly ready? Recent reports on major vulnerabilities following the launch of some of the world's most anticipated new titles and upgrades suggest so.

<http://t.co/XbliHT6Lzr>

Blame People for Cloud Downtime Woes

People are among the top concerns for public clouds. People make mistakes, and those mistakes lead to downtime. The findings come from CloudEndure's first survey of IT professionals in North America and Europe, "2014 State of Public Cloud Disaster Recovery." Specifically, the 116 IT pros ranked human error right up there with application bugs and network failures as the primary risks to system availability.

<http://bit.ly/1uy9QWU>

Massive power failure plunges 80% of Pakistan into darkness

[Pakistan](#) was plunged into darkness after a power transmission line broke down early on Sunday in an incident blamed on a rebel attack. Pakistan's electricity distribution system is a complex – and delicate – web. A major fault at one section often leads to chain reactions and breakdowns of power generation and transmission.

<http://t.co/JgBA11ZvXd>

Facebook says it caused fault that sent services offline

Social network Facebook became inaccessible across much of the globe for a time on Tuesday. Millions of users were unable to access their accounts, and users in some countries also had difficulties accessing photo-sharing app Instagram. Facebook said it believed its own engineers had caused the problem, downplaying claims that a hacking group was responsible.

<http://t.co/zxm56YhOwX>

Microsoft Azure was most FAIL-FILLED cloud of 2014

Microsoft's cloud had the worst service reliability of the three main players in 2014, according to annual metrics from uptime experts CloudHarmony. In fairness, however, they were still up for over 99% of the time.

<http://t.co/MAETbR4EO1>