

the Availability Digest™

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--- achieving 100% uptime

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The digest of topics on Continuous Availability. More than Business Continuity Planning.
BCP tells you how to *recover* from the effects of downtime.
CA tells you how to *avoid* the effects of downtime.

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Technical
Writing

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Patent Applications

I have been fortunate in being able to write many patent applications, beginning with my own patents five decades ago. I am now the inventor or co-inventor on almost two dozen patents.

Writing a patent application must follow a strict format. Some parts of it, such as the claims, are best left to the patent attorney. In our article about patent applications, we explore the structure of a patent application, what the patent examiner will be looking for, and the role of the patent attorney.

This article and our other stories in this issue are examples of what we write for the Digest and for others. If you have an article, a case study, a white paper, or a patent application that you would like written, we encourage you to contact us. We also provide consulting services and seminars on high- and continuous availability.

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Never Again

Gatwick Airport Reverts to Whiteboards

Gatwick Airport is a major international airport 30 miles south of London in the United Kingdom. It is the second busiest airport in the U.K. and the eighth busiest airport in Europe. It is a single runway airport. In 2017, 45.6 million passengers passed through the airport.

On Monday, August 20th, passengers at Gatwick were forced to get their flight details from hand-drawn whiteboards after Gatwick's information systems went down.

Gatwick had to post flight information on whiteboards after its digital screens failed due to an IT glitch. Personnel updating the whiteboards communicated via walkie-talkies with a control room to get the latest gate information.

The problem was caused by a damaged fiber cable that is used by Gatwick to carry flight information. The airport blamed the outage on Vodaphone, which is responsible for IT support at the airport. Vodaphone confirmed that a damaged cable caused the problem. The airport said that this was an example of ongoing issues with Vodaphone.

[--more--](#)

Best Practices

Using Dark Fiber

The number of Internet-connected devices known as the Internet of Things (IoT) is expected to reach over twenty billion by the year 2020. Cloud usage has been escalating at a similar rate, with Amazon AWS, Microsoft Azure, IBM SoftLayer, and Google Cloud leading the charge.

This is driving enterprises to a level of network independence that is becoming hyper-critical.

How vital is your network? Fiber optic networks are highly beneficial for companies requiring high bandwidth, scalability, reliability, near-zero latency, and enhanced security. The declining costs of dark fiber leasing makes it even more attractive.

Dark fiber is a fiber-optic cable that has already been installed in the ground to be used but which hasn't been taken advantage of yet. A dark fiber network is a privately operated network that is run directly by its operator over dark fibre that may be leased or purchased from another supplier. This is in contrast to purchasing bandwidth or leased line capacity on an existing network.

[--more--](#)

Availability Topics

Napa Wildfires Wipe Out Communications

During a fierce windstorm on October 8, 2017, several wildfires burned uncontrolled in Napa County in Northern California. Almost 11,000 firefighters from seventeen states and Australia worked to control the blazes.

More than 170 fires burned at least 245,000 acres. This is more than ten times the size of New York City's Manhattan Island in New York State (about 21,000 acres).

A majority of Napa County residents lost landline, cell phone, and Internet services during the wildfires. 87% lost cell phone service, 67% lost landline service, and 73% lost Internet service. Many residents also lost power as power poles and power lines were consumed. As a result, they struggled to find the latest information. Many did not receive emergency alerts as the life threatening fire moved toward their homes.

[--more--](#)

The Geek Corner

Writing Patent Applications

One of the things that I do as part of my writing services for my customers is to write patent applications. Patents disclose how an invention is practiced in return for the right (during a limited term) to exclude others from manufacturing, selling, offering for sale or using the patented invention without the patentee's permission.

The patent applications have a fixed format. The first section is an abstract of the patent. This is used by the patent examiner to decide if the patent is, in fact, unique. If he (or she) decides that a similar patent has already been filed, then the examiner will reject the application.

It is important to note that, in the past, patents were given priority based on when they were implemented. A patent that was implemented before another patent was given priority over the latter patent.

However, that now has changed. The patent whose application is first received by the patent office is the one given priority. Therefore, it is important to write the patent application and get it filed as soon as possible.

[--more--](#)

Tweets

@availabilitydig – The Twitter Feed of Outages

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.

Now with our Twitter presence, we don't have to feel guilty. This article highlights some of the @availabilitydig tweets that made headlines in recent days.

[--more--](#)

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