the *Availability Digest*

@availabilitydig – Our February Twitter Feed of Outages
February 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.

Can Stratus Redefine Cloud Datacenters Through Its High Availability Technology?

Companies like Stratus Technologies, who pioneered the early days of always-on computing as "Stratus Computer," are starting to deliver always-on solutions for redundancy through software running on off-the-shelf cloud hardware.

http://t.co/mI7M0ODsuy

Power Protection: The Fifth Element of Converged Infrastructure.

The correct power protection solution is essential for the successful implementation of converged infrastructure platforms. To maximize converged infrastructure performance, selecting the appropriate combination of uninterruptible power systems (UPSs), power distribution units (PDUs) and integrated power management software is key for a number of reasons:

http://t.co/dwjJYpazVE

Intel's new Xeon server chip pushes Itanium closer to death's door.

The end-of-life writing is on the wall for Intel's high-end Itanium chip, with the recent launch of the high-performance usurper, the chip maker's 15-core Xeon E7 v2 chip.

http://t.co/A8Jetq1zJ2

The ten most spectacular software failures in 2013.

More and more energy suppliers and manufacturers are being hit by spectacular and far-reaching software failures. This is reflected in a recently-conducted survey by SQS Software Quality Systems AG for 2013. Every year, the world's largest software quality specialist asks its consultants to name the top 10 software failures from the last 12 months. Here is the list from 2013.

bit.ly/1bSUcl9

Nasdaq to roll out 'kill switch' to help catch trading errors.

Nasdaq plans to offer kill switch functionality by March 1. Firms can use the tool to set limits on the sizes of positions they can afford to take on. The tool will send email warnings as the limits are neared. If they are breached, the kill switch will be triggered, trading will be prevented, and the firm's open orders in the system will be canceled.

http://t.co/YBOK5LXLiQ

Moving to the cloud? Learn from CBP's mistakes.

Customs and Border Protection was one of the first federal agencies to adopt cloud computing, and the Homeland Security component responsible for protecting U.S. borders has plenty of lessons to share with the rest of government.

http://t.co/twXVNGCLFL

Why Does Gmail Go Down?

Given the breadth of Google's data center infrastructure and its focus on reliability, it's amazing that a widely-used app like Gmail goes down. There have been a number of Gmail outages over the years, usually involving software updates or networking issues. Or in some cases, a software update causing a networking issue.

bit.ly/1bsmXPs

A power outage shut down servers for U.S. State of Iowa. Backup failed, it grew hot, fire suppression was activated.

A power outage at a state office building on the Capitol Complex in Des Moines shut down state data servers. The battery backup failed next. The result? Enough heat was generated to set off the building's fire suppression system, further complicating system restoration.

dmreg.co/MzMOQ6

Nationwide Credit Card Failure Stokes Israeli Fears of Cyber-Attacks.

On Thursday, February 13th, Israelis reported credit card failures across the country. While the glitch was resolved, it exposes a national vulnerability that has security officials worried

ti.me/1gB3FLu

How to keep your Linux-heavy data center up and running.

Linux is a flexible tool for creating the IT environment you want. However, this also means that if something does go wrong, it's up to you to ensure your business operations can continue without disruption.

http://bit.ly/1h802RM

Cloud availability trumps security concerns when it comes to Shadow IT.

With the cloud movement a foregone conclusion, how can IT leaders ensure the requisite availability standards are met — and that their investments in availability are the right ones?

bit.ly/1h7WFu9

Availability Digest Oldie but Goodie: "Ring-of-Fire Bank Beats Earthquakes with Active/Active."

A bank located on the Pacific Rim *Ring of Fire* lost its data center for several hours during an earthquake. When the failover to the backup system did not go as planned, the bank started on the path to move its data center operations to a continuously available active/active environment.

bit.ly/MGnQ0Y

U.S. Social Security Administration plans a 62-hour maintenance shutdown of computer system.

The computer system for the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) was shut down for 62 hours in February in order to perform scheduled maintenance.

reut.rs/LQJ2ke

Experts: Sniper attack on PG&E site points to power grid's vulnerability to terrorism.

A sophisticated sniper attack in April that riddled PG&E's Metcalf power substation in South San Jose with bullets may have been an act of domestic terrorism

bit.ly/1bz4Gne

Security breaches, data loss and outages cost U.S. hospitals $1.6B.

A survey of healthcare IT executives quantifies the organizational cost associated with security breaches, data loss, and unplanned outages for healthcare providers, at more than $1.6B a year.

bit.ly/LQGumd

HP to begin charging for firmware updates and service packs for servers.

Beginning in February, HP is restricting access to firmware updates and service packs for its entire ProLiant server line.

zd.net/1chBo9q

"Target Compromises Millions of Cards" & "HP Serviceguard Cluster Arbitration." Also in latest Availability Digest.

Target discovered on December 15th that point-of-sales (POS) systems in its U.S. stores had been infected with malware that captured the magnetic-stripe information of millions of cards. Also, HP Serviceguard cluster for HP-UX as well as for Linux supports many mechanisms as arbitrators.

http://bit.ly/1glCq8M

Availability Digest's January issue includes "Flywheel UPS Systems" and "Going Prices for Personal Information."

Recent flywheel-based UPS systems are virtually maintenance-free with MTBFs measured in years. Also, hackers don't steal your card information anymore for their own use. They steal it to sell on the hacker's black market.

http://bit.ly/1glCq8M

For our NonStop friends, here (finally!) is one-click availability to all NonStop documents on the HP website.

It's about time that HP paid attention to the countless complaints from its NonStop customers. NonStop's enormous collection of almost 1,500 externally-accessible manuals now can be retrieved easily without having to spending a lifetime searching for them on the HP website.

http://www.hp.com/go/nonstop-docs

CME Group relocates backup data center to New York

CME Group Inc, the world's largest futures exchange operator, has moved its primary backup data center to New York from Chicago to make its backup facilities more secure and reliable.

http://reut.rs/1cJkqjo

Metro-North Outage Caused by Workers Disconnecting Power

A two-hour service outage on three busy lines of the Metro-North Railroad was triggered when workers disconnected a power supply to the railroad's control center.

http://on.wsj.com/1eYkclb