Counter threats of unreliable electricity
Interactive showcase underscores complexities of global business.

When Electronic Data Systems (EDS) decided to build a multimillion-dollar interactive marketing center, “The EDS Experience,” at its corporate headquarters in Plano, TX, it wanted to make certain that power interruptions did not damage the experience of visitors. After all, the center was designed to showcase EDS’ digital business leadership and the innovative technology it has used for leading companies and governments in 55 countries.

EDS provides strategy, implementation and hosting for clients managing the business and technology complexities of the digital economy. The company brings together technologies that best address critical client business imperatives. It helps clients eliminate boundaries, collaborate in new ways, establish their customers’ trust and continuously seek improvement.

Because the EDS headquarters complex sits astride a fast-growing corporate business park, the area suffers from frequent power outages and voltage irregularities that can wreak havoc on sensitive electronics. In order to avoid damaging (and embarrassing) service outages, EDS architects and planners specified that an array of uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) and network management/control devices be installed at the heart of the network to counter the threat of unreliable electric power. In addition, the UPS system chosen had to be upgradable, expandable, and able to manage and control power for the entire network directly from the network’s main control panel, or remotely through secure browsers and telecommunications devices.

The center’s hands-on interactive environment presents EDS’ thought leadership for the new digital economy. Exhibits and demonstrations include examples of multifunctional smart-card and smartchip technology, wearable computers, 3-D GPS geospatial mission planning, and miniaturized high-frequency identification systems, such as the “shoestring” smart-chip data-collection system used to record runners’ finishing times in the London Marathon.

“The EDS Experience must always be completely operational, so we planned to include power protection from its inception,” says Mary Frances Hoover, EDS director of marketing centers. “To help ensure that a supply of clean, uninterrupted power would never be an issue, we turned to MINUTEMAN UPS.”

Six of its products were built into the 10,000-square-foot EDS Experience:
• three Enterprise 2300 UPS units designed for enterprise applications, where pure sinewave output is needed and where line-interactive voltage regulators must provide 24x7 protection against sags, surges, spikes and brownouts.
• three RPM Remote Power Management and Control units, monitored with MINUTEMAN’s CIC SNMP and Sentry II power management and diagnostic software, which supports the most popular IBM AIX, Novell, HP Unix and Linux operating systems, as well as Windows NT/2000.

To enable EDS network administrators to individually control AC power for each of the servers, hubs, routers, modems and telecom systems within The EDS Experience, the marketing center uses three RPM control units. Each unit controls up to eight connected devices directly through the EDS network, or remotely through a Web browser or telephone. To allow for expansion of the center, up to 15 additional RPM client units can be daisy-chained to each of the three RPM master units to control as many as 384 devices from the original three master RPM units.

“Downtime caused by power irregularities and disruptions can lead to productivity and revenue losses,” says Rod Pullen, MINUTEMAN UPS president. “Studies have shown that an unprotected microprocessor will malfunction if AC power is interrupted for even a single cycle, and The EDS Experience is teeming with microprocessors.”

Since last year, the UPS solution has been protecting, monitoring and controlling power for the center’s network infrastructure and electronic devices inside the marketing center.

For more information from MINUTEMAN UPS:
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