

March is IT-Be-Green Month!

© 2018 by [Nick B. Nicholaou](#), all rights reserved
President, Ministry Business Services, Inc.
Reprinted from [MinistryTech Magazine](#)

March is the month of St. Patrick's Day, whose modern-day associated color is green. When we think 'green', we also think of doing things that are friendly to the environment. What are some quick tasks we can do to make IT more 'green'?

Why the Green Focus?

Many in our congregations and ministry constituencies want us to be good stewards- not only of our financial resources, but also in the way we consume resources to accomplish ministry. I live in California, and folks- especially millennials- esteem homes, businesses, churches, and more as 'better' if they're more environmentally sensitive. There are many in your congregation or ministry constituency that would be all the more pleased with associating with your organization if they knew that there are initiatives underway to help protect the environment. And that makes cost-effective green initiatives a win-win!

Green Server Rooms

A common issue we see in server rooms is that they become storage areas for all kinds of things. That happens mostly because team members don't understand the need to keep the server room clean, cool, and secure; many perceive the space as 'available' even though it isn't. Defending the space can be exhausting.

March is a great month to go through the server room and remove anything that shouldn't be there. In addition to boxes of things others have deposited there, consider what IT-related items are stored there too! Churches and ministries sometimes have a hard time letting go of retired technology that still worked when it was retired, even though they'll never use it again. "But what if...?"

When I visit clients, I often offer to clean out all those old CRT monitors, Pentium computers, keyboards, roller-ball mice, and cords that are gathering dust (a fire hazard) and are taking up space. Seriously, if you haven't used it in a couple of years, it is probably trash. It's actually good stewardship to let them go! Here are just a couple of reasons why:

1. There are many electronics recyclers that are willing to help, and usually for free! If they're certified electronics recyclers, you can even trust them to erase hard drives, etc as they do their recycling! And recycling is a good thing.
2. The more things that are stored in a server room, the less cool air is available to absorb the heat exhausted by your servers and other electronic gear. That can contribute to running hotter and consuming more electricity, and cause a shorter life for some equipment. Clean server rooms are always best.

Green Systems

There are a few things worth considering and doing that will help make your IT systems more 'green' in general.

1. *Virtualize your servers.* Virtualization is a software technology that makes it possible to reduce the number of physical servers in your organization. It uses an app called a *hypervisor* that allows you to install more than one *virtual* server on each of your *physical* servers, which we then call *hosts*. In addition to saving money by not having to purchase a bunch of physical servers, virtualization reduces the amount of electricity consumed because the number of physical servers is smaller. It also helps reduce electricity consumption by reducing the amount of heat in a server room that must be overcome by air conditioning systems because there are fewer electronic devices exhausting heat!
2. *Move Servers to The Cloud.* In addition to virtualizing your local servers, consider going a step further by determining whether their roles can be moved to a hosted cloud service provider. In recent years my firm has moved many clients' entire group of local servers into our cloud infrastructure, dramatically reducing electrical consumption while also outsourcing the responsibility to maintain those servers. The cloud is a terrific way to make your systems more green, while also reducing capital expenses.
3. *Clean Dust from Inside Computers.* It's amazing how much dust accumulates in computers. For those computers that remain on-site (servers, workstations, etc), consider cleaning their cooling fans. Perhaps organize a volunteer work party that goes to each workstation and cleans their insides! Cleaning them out every March as part of your 'green' initiative will reduce their electrical consumption and may extend their life because they'll run cooler!

St. Patrick's Day! What a great time of year to clean up server rooms- or maybe even eliminate them by moving into the cloud! And a great time to clean the dust from inside your servers and workstations (before the weather begins to warm up).