

Change in Daylight Saving Time threatens network synchronization

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

A provision in the 2005 Energy Policy Act extending Daylight Saving Time (DST) beginning in March and affecting date and time stamps in network systems has Bellevue-based Network Computing Architects engineers and staff hopping.

“Starting March 11, scheduling or synchronization problems may occur where systems use date or time stamps relating to transactions in other countries,” said Thomas Gobeille, Network Computing Architects (NCA) president and CEO. “It could lead to all kinds of problems. Applications or systems in the U.S. involving calendar notices should be updated before the change in DST. Any time-sensitive functions could be affected by this change. That’s why we’ve had a huge increase in service calls lately,” added Gobeille.

“After building bunkers in the desert for Y2K, we’re not even talking about this, and it’s happening in less than a month,” said Matthew Kozak, information-technology specialist at Rutgers University.

Few people paid attention in August 2005 when Congress extended DST by four weeks “three weeks earlier than usual” to encourage energy efficiency. Large numbers of Americans still seem unaware of the approaching change.

It is now important for users to assess their environments and develop appropriate plans for applying the necessary changes. Professional services are required to upgrade or renew maintenance regimens to avoid time synchronization failures, according to NCA’s Gobeille.

“Many systems can be changed now. There are a number of current product software patches that can be used, but it really isn’t something to ignore,” said Don Flynn CTO for NCA.

Cisco Systems, the leading network equipment manufacturer, is providing a company-wide initiative to supply documentation describing how to update each product. Microsoft also has distributed a warning cautioning consumers that older products will require manual updates.

“Unless you manually check or change the settings on your network, some legacy systems will remain unprogrammed to read the correct time and date,” said Flynn.

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