

## PCs in deluge, the truth in Murphy's Law

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ICT officers, probably more than anyone else in the Organization know the truth of at least 2 of Murphy's laws. The one that says If anything can go wrong, it will....and the one that says Things left to themselves go from bad to worse....

ICT Zimbabwe is in gear-up phase. This phase is intended to enable the CO systems capacity cope with the increased demands coming upon it from the end of September 2007 as the CO increases food distributions. All systems are being beefed up, from power generation capacity to the number of extensions PBXs in the field offices can handle. Meanwhile Zimbabwe is facing significant economic difficulties the effects of which are felt throughout the different services sectors. One such service is flowing tap water which as a result of poor rainfall is not predictably available in taps. A staff member in the Mutare Sub office on the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border goes to the bathroom to wash and finds no running water. In frustration at the whistling sound he encounters, he does not turn the tap back off.

As true as Murphy's laws are, water services were restored in the night when there was no one in the office. Normally it would be days before the service is restored. The sink overflowed and left to itself, things went from bad to worse. The volume of the flow exceeded the overflow management mechanism and the water filled the bathroom floor. Soon the entire top floor was filled with water. Tower PCs sitting on the floor as well as power extension cables were soaked.

The next morning the boys stroll into the office to the news of what has happened in Mutare. The plan for the day did not include taking the 3-hour drive to Mutare. In fact our focus was on providing reliable power to the loading conveyors in Beit Bridge (Zimbabwe/South African border) and Bulawayo, the largest sub office and warehouse complex in the operation. Immediately we put Blessing Dzambo (ICTA) on a vehicle to Mutare with spare PCs and other minor electrical accessories in case the damage took out critical systems. At the same time Whitney (NICTO, Zimbabwe) advises that all active power circuits be deactivated at Floor Mains level and that a local Mutare-based electrician called to check out the potential fall-out.

Upon arrival in Mutare, Blessing, an electrical engineer by training first assess the extent of the electrical damage. He arrived in Mutare before the local electrician arrived there. After ascertaining that the electrical status of the floor was OK, attention was turned to the PCs that got wet. Gladly only 2 PCs were affected and whereas the other PCs on the floor had come water touch them, they were OK. In the space of 5 hours all systems were back online and Blessing on his way back to Harare, to continue with our focus on providing electrical stability to Beit Bridge and Bulawayo and with a stronger conviction that things left to themselves go from bad to worse, and that if anything can go wrong, it will.

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