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POSTED Tuesday, 17 March 2009 by CeBIT Australia

Green IT broadens to corporate sustainability

INFORMATION technology departments are at the forefront of corporate response to sustainable operations, with the Green IT movement key to a far broader range of sustainable practices, according to new analysis from Sydney-based Connection

More than most other corporate functions, IT has risen to the challenge of finding ways to reduce energy consumption and the carbon footprint by the use of innovative technologies and business practices, Connection Research says. Research Director Graeme Philipson, who will present some of the findings of a landmark primary research study of Australian Green IT and Sustainability practices at the CeBIT Australia 2009 Enterprise conference, says the Green practices in IT departments acted as an enabler for a much broader response to reducing a company's carbon footprint. The Connection Research "Green IT and Sustainability in Australia in 2009" report, to be released this month, was based on a interviews with a broad cross section of 250 CIOs and IT managers from companies of different sizes and from different industries.

The report's finding represent the first in depth study of Australian practices, and includes benchmarks and Australia's first Green IT readiness Index.

Connection Research says while Green IT tended to be used to describe the reduction or minimising of power within data centres or by end-users – through technologies like low-power screens, virtualisation, thin-clients and the like. But Green IT also incorporates broad opportunities for the IT department to act as an enabler for further corporate energy reduction practices.

Connection Research details a "Green IT Pentagram" in which five primary areas within IT can be addressed to produce sustainability goals.

While the first two, End User Energy Reduction and Data Centre Energy Reduction are straight forward, the less travelled road includes Procurement and Lifecycle management; Measuring and monitoring, in which IT tools are used to ensure a company meets statutory requirements or corporate goals; and Enabling the Business, in which IT plays an active role in reducing the carbon footprint of the organisation as a whole

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