

# **Conducting a Year-end Data Center Assessment - IO**



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# IO Blog



## Conducting a Year-end Data Center Assessment

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With 2010 nearly over, now is a great time to step back and evaluate how your **data center** performed during the past year. Many things, both good and bad, can happen to a data center over a 12 month period. A comprehensive analysis and assessment will help you improve reliability, boost productivity and stay in full control over critical data center resources and functions.

A **data center assessment**, even one that's conducted informally, will allow you to identify, evaluate and resolve vulnerabilities before they can develop into major headaches. An annual assessment will also help you determine whether current facility services are being maintained at peak levels and if any changes are necessary to keep operations humming along during the upcoming year.

Here are the areas you should investigate:

**Location.** While data center locations tend to remain fixed for years—sometimes even decades—evolving technologies and business practices gradually build the case for moving to a new location. There are many reasons why you may want to **consider relocating your current data center**, including moving to a safer, more efficient environment, lower costs, better support and enhanced network access. Depending on what you discover, your year-end assessment could turn out to be the launching point for a new and better data center.

**Power.** Increasing equipment density drives the need for more efficient and reliable power delivery. Check to make sure that current energy needs are being met and that your facility's existing power resources are ready for whatever demands you anticipate during 2011. Also, with energy costs expected to rise over the next year, now is a great time to make sure that your data center isn't wasting power. Beyond using energy-efficient servers and related IT equipment, your data center should be taking advantage of

variable frequency chillers, pumps, cooling towers and air handlers to reduce energy consumption.

**Cooling.** Excess heat can take a heavy toll on tightly packed hardware, so check that thermal hot spots aren't leading to premature equipment failure. If your business isn't already taking advantage of heat-beating technologies like efficient high-density racks and thermally-configured colocation cabinets, as well as cool innovations like LED lighting, now is a good time to think about making changes.

**Network Support.** Are you network goals being met in terms of performance and quality? If you're using multi-homed **blended bandwidth**, you're already set for optimal performance. Otherwise, check your logs to make sure that your network provider is living up to its promised performance and quality guarantees.

**Fire Suppression.** Fire risk increases in lockstep with rising IT density levels. With more resources being packed into ever tighter spaces, even a small fire can have devastating consequences. Check now to see if your facility's existing fire suppression systems are keeping pace with the extra demands being placed on them.

**Security.** The bad guys are always working on new ways of outwitting physical and logical security measures. Your assessment should check for any apparent security gaps and whether overall protection measures are still being maintained at state-of-the-art levels.

**Redundancy.** There's a tendency to forget about backup systems until the very moment they're needed. Your year-end assessment should include a redundancy survey of all critical areas, including power, cooling, networks, fire suppression and security.

**Support.** Are you receiving all the support you need from your facility operator? Have you been let down in any significant way over the past year? If you're not satisfied with the operational and/or technical support you're receiving, now is a good time to make your views known.

**Conclusion.** After completing your assessment, be sure to record any discovered deficiencies and note what remedial actions need to be taken. Make sure that your findings are reported to the appropriate individuals both inside and outside of your business.

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