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Going Underground For Ultra Secure Hosting

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A casual observer probably wouldn't guess that The Bunker's high-security managed-hosting and data centre facility exists. But it does, one of the world's most advanced high technology sites, housed in a nuclear-attack-proof former Ministry of Defence command centre deep below the peaceful Kent countryside. The top-secret centre uses the company's sophisticated proprietary Ultra Secure Shield technology to provide the secure IT solutions that ensure business continuity for the UK's most important technology and financial services companies.

The securest possible high technology facilities

The brainchild of entrepreneurial businessmen Steven Joseph and Peregrine Newton, The Bunker ensures 24/7 business continuity and Web-presence for many of the UK's biggest e-commerce proponents. Acquired in 2004, subsequent quadrupling of revenue and trebling of its customer base (clients include Nominet, Towers Perrin and Scottish Widows) bears witness to its success. With this success comes the enormous challenge of providing sophisticated technology and highly skilled security, system and network administration. And, of course, the provision of the securest possible high technology facilities demanded in a world where ever-stricter imperatives and service level agreements are matched only by growing global uncertainties.

It's no surprise then, that in today's online world, demand for The Bunker's services keeps growing. And with expansion comes ever more sophisticated IT hardware with its voracious appetite for clean, uninterruptible power.

The Bunker needs high-quality uninterruptible power

Before The Bunker can meet clients' needs, it must ensure the continuity of its own power supply. Without guaranteed availability of clean, uninterrupted electricity, even a momentary glitch can bring client servers down – with massive operational and commercial implications for IT and Web-reliant enterprises.

The Bunker's Kent facility (a secondary data centre is located in Newbury on the former Greenham Common airbase in Berkshire) has a dedicated direct mains supply, with a redundant mains supply and on-site power generation to provide another level of redundancy. Conditioning incoming electricity and ensuring continuity of power to clients' servers in the event of mains failure also requires advanced uninterruptible power supply (UPS) technology; that's how Riello UPS, the UK subsidiary of Riello UPS Manufacturing srl, came to be part of The Bunker's continuing success story.

Every technology-packed square-metre must earn its keep

Geoff Breed, The Bunker's operations manager, is responsible for the company's data centre infrastructure, physical security and project management. With The Bunker's latest expansion, his team identified a requirement for more UPS capacity.

Aware of Riello's reputation and approach to power management, the company selected and installed the latest parallel-redundant Multi Dialog UPS. The equipment, scalable whilst maintaining the required redundancy, was specified complete with an external bypass and the battery sets needed to give full autonomy runtime. If required, this provides the continuity to get an alternative power source running (either from the redundant mains power supply or from back up generators). The specification also includes an SNMP adaptor for monitoring by The Bunker's Network Operations Centre as well as Riello's TeleNetGuard remote service management package.

Breed takes up the story: "When we needed more capacity, we chose a solution that would give the extra performance, whilst making the best use of space in an environment where every technology-packed square-metre must earn its keep. The Master Dialog offered this, plus the future scalability we required."

The challenge of installation

Once Breed and his team had designed their specification in conjunction with Riello, Slough-based reseller, Specialist Computer Centre Ltd, supplied the UPS for installation in January 2007. Then came the challenge of getting the UPS, and its heavy battery set, to the Kent facility's technology-packed 'upper' floor, some 25 metres underground!

"First we had to get special security clearance for everyone involved from Riello and our electrical contractor. As you would expect for access to one of the UK's most advanced, and most commercially sensitive, IT installations, everyone had to provide full name and vehicle details in advance and wear ID on site. Furthermore, everyone involved was continuously monitored by CCTV for the duration of the work."

By the sound of it, the story could have come straight from the script of a James Bond movie. It's an image supported by The Bunker's bulletproof guardhouse, blast-proof doors and the echoing subterranean corridors leading to chambers full of client servers. This is no scriptwriter's fantasy, however, but a business-essential for the protection of priceless client data and e-commerce continuity.

Installation and commissioning ran smoothly

Once underground, installation and commissioning was completed in just one day.

"I was pleasantly surprised," continues Breed. "Because we planned thoroughly, and had plenty of people available, there was no impact on business. While our electrical contractor got on with cable laying, Riello installed the UPS and battery cabinets. Then, the electrical contractor switched-on and handed over to Riello for commissioning."

Several months later, as business keeps growing for The Bunker, the new UPS is working perfectly so a second parallel-redundant Master Dialog scalable solution has been ordered for the Newbury data centre. Breed sums-up the earlier installation.

Solid solutions and the ever-present reassurance of certainty

"It was a good job all round," he says, "a capable team working well with no fuss or drama – just like our work for our clients."

Aside from the installation itself, there are many other parallels between Riello UPS and The Bunker. No unnecessary 'bells or whistles', just solid solutions and the ever-present reassurance of certainty that keeps large and small companies in business, whatever the vagaries of power supply or world events beyond those massive steel bunker doors.

(911 words)

Related Links

- [The Multi Dialog UPS](#)

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