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November 14, 2005
Hardware Today: Year-End Server Room Wish List
 By [Drew Robb](#)

Encrypting the Wish List

Security comes in many forms. For some it may mean having a nice home, money in the bank, or perhaps a decent burglar alarm system. For system managers, however, it is more likely to manifest as dreams of more secure backups, freedom from voltage surges, or a system to eliminate worries about environmental threats.

[Decru DataFort](#) (Decru just acquired by Network Appliance) appliances encrypt all data before it goes to a SAN or to backup tape. For SAN quality appliances from Decru, expect to pay around \$25,000 per unit.

"DataFort storage security appliances secure data at rest using wire-speed AES-256-bit encryption, secure access controls, authentication, and secure logging," says Michele Borovac, Decru's director of marketing. "They can be deployed transparently, with no changes to applications, servers, desktops, storage, authentication, or user workflow, and negligible impact to performance."

Encryption alternatives are available from [Vormetric](#), [Neoscale](#), [Kasten Chase](#), and others. Each has a slightly different approach or architecture.

This technology is gaining traction because of the publicity surrounding a spate of thefts and losses of backup tapes heading to offsite "secure" locations.

"If you are sending your backup tapes by UPS truck, please stop," pleads W. Curtis Preston, vice president of data protection services at GlassHouse Technologies, a storage consultancy and services firm. "And if you really must ship tapes offsite, make sure they are encrypted."

Powering Up

When server room staff thinks power supply problems, they typically consider an uninterruptable power supply (UPS) or a surge suppressor. Recent studies by Bell Laboratories, however, indicate fewer than 4 percent of power-related problems would be addressed by such devices. Bell Labs found that small surges accounted for more than 80 percent of problems.

"Power problems caused by small surges, spikes, and sags in the electricity supply result in screen lock-ups, time-outs, and delays," says Bahram Mechanic, CEO of SmartPower Systems, a maker of power protection and conditioning equipment. "Servers, workstations, and networking gear can best be protected by using transformer-based filters [TBFs]."

Recent technological advancements in the field of power conditioning have now yielded devices that provide "computer grade" power at the same price as simple surge protectors and a fraction of the price, weight and size of isolation transformers. TBF units provide basic protection against massive spikes up to 6000 volts as well as tiny spikes. [SmartPower Systems'](#) Computer Guardian, for example, is a TBF that is available for \$110. For server grade UPS, the SmartPower UPS costs an additional \$250.

Monitoring the Festivities



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METRO Group worked with Intel, IBM, and SAP to set up an RFID system that automates product identification—from production through shelf stocking, sales, and more. [Read the whitepaper.](#) >

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Thawte

Guide:
[Step-up Encryption With Thawte SGC Supercerts](#)

Monitoring the Festivities

For those who want to stay on top of the server room environment, the [Netbotz Monitoring and Management Appliance](#) could come in very handy. This IP-based server room device monitors temperature, humidity, water, smoke, airflow, decibel levels, amperage, dust, and motion. The Netbotz 500 base station costs \$2,199. Additional modules are available — camera (\$509), fluid detector (\$99), and temperature sensor (\$99). The Netbotz 500 pilot pack includes two appliances, two camera pods, two sensor pods, and a water detector for \$13,429.

"Netbotz appliances are designed to protect data centers, IT closets, or remote locations from damage," says Tom Chomicz, a system engineer at CDW Government. "By providing early warnings via e-mail, PDA, phone, pager, or SNMP trap, minor issues can be prevented from becoming big disasters."

And one side benefit is that if you're too busy to attend the office party, you can strategically place your server room cameras to keep an eye on the festivities.

Go to page [1](#) [2](#)



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