

IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE: Human Resources Isn't Your Ally; Vendors Bear Some Blame For A Lack Of Change. Please remember to enable the images; the magazine looks a lot better that way!



PACKETPUSHERS

Human Infrastructure Magazine

A Newsletter About a Life in Networking

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The "Who can you trust?" issue.

Thought For The Week:
Keep calm and put on water for tea.

1. Human Resources Is Not Your Friend

by Greg Ferro

The Human Resources department exists for two reasons: To protect the company from its employees (not to protect you from the company) and maintain employee productivity by handling personal problems.

Any protection you get as a person/employee/salary slave is a random byproduct of the department's primary mission of protecting the company.

Do not expect the HR team to protect you, defend you, or stand up for you unless it aligns with the company protecting itself from powerful external forces such as government regulations, the press, and public opinion.

The HR people are probably nice. HR people might say things that you want to hear like "We will fight for you" or "We will protect you from abusive behavior."

But what they really mean is "Our job is protect the company from you."

It's likely that the people in HR are ignorantly well-meaning. They will promise action, they will log your request, they will fill out forms and have meetings. They will have a process. This activity that makes them feel like they have done something.

They will honestly, ignorantly assure you that "something is being done" while conveniently ignoring that nothing will change.

HR is not your friend, but it can be used as an ally if its goals align with yours. If you are cunning, you will approach HR in a way that will trigger its antibodies to protect the company from an external threat and solve your problem at the same time.

Human Resources is a collection of processes that hires, fires and maintains "people" (i.e. human resources) for the benefit of the company that pays for them. When you are under pressure, in a difficult situation, or having a personal crisis it's normal to reach out for help, but HR isn't about what's decent or right; it's about what is best for the company.

Why does this matter? Because the best way to handle any problem with your employer is to move on. Moving solves many career problems and is the best way to achieve promotion, career advancement, and other forms of happiness.



Sponsor: Interop ITX

Where Tech Pros Go For Objective Full Stack IT Education

[Interop ITX](#) takes place May 15-19 at the MGM in Las Vegas. Join Greg Ferro and Ethan Banks for The Future of Networking Summit – a two-day session where we'll take a deep dive into next-generation developments in wide area networks, data center networking, network operations, and software-defined security.

Register for Interop ITX and attend other hands-on workshops like The Future of Data, Container Crash Course, Dark Reading Cyber Security Summit and the Open Source IT Summit. The event's Conference

tracks focus on Security, DevOps, Cloud, Infrastructure, Data & Analytics – all the technologies you need for a successful Full Stack IT strategy. If you're looking to accelerate your career, there are also plenty of sessions on leadership and professional development. Plus, check out over 100 vendors at Interop ITX's Business Hall where you'll have an opportunity to meet with leading and emerging tech vendors.

Join us at Interop ITX this May. Use promo code: **PACKETPUSHERS** when you register, and you'll receive 20% off any pass.

We want to see you in Vegas, so visit interopitx.com and reserve your spot today.

2. Reader Response: Don't Just Blame People

by Nils Kolstein

Editor's note: This post was emailed to the Packet Pushers in response to Ethan's Human Infrastructure article [Enterprise Tech Is Changing. People Aren't](#), which argued that people's attitudes and fears are holding back meaningful change in the enterprise.

Although I agree with your view that change is largely hampered by the human factor, I'd like to defend this behavior by noting that time and time again we are disappointed by the solutions provided by the incumbent vendors.

I work as a vendor-independent consultant/engineer. Most of my customers do see the benefits of modern networking, whether it's L3 fabrics in the data center or automation and orchestration.

But it's hard to come by a real-life implementation that gives actual


operational data to work with. And I'm not talking greenfield here—I'm talking about a diversified IT landscape with all kinds of platforms (Linux, Windows, your occasional z/OS mainframe, and so on).

In addition, I can't blame my peers if some of them have trouble contextualizing new technology when it seems a new "Open" initiative comes to light every day. How are we able to place these new innovations in their right context, stripped off all the fluff? It's hard enough for me to grasp everything new, even when listening to three different podcasts (including yours, of course) and staying up-to-date with RSS feeds of every blogger out there.

I get paid to bring a balanced and independent story to managers and CxOs who are sick and tired of hordes of Cisco sales reps wasting their time. Most of the time, these reps fail to bring a compelling story and to show they understand even a little bit of what the customer's business is about.

Instead, those poor managers are bombarded with slide after slide of marketing fluff, which only obscures the essence of the product (which, most of the time, can be summarized with [RFC1925 rule 11](#)). Contrary to what some might think, managers are not always stupid.

So if people aren't changing, IMHO the vendors bear a large part of the blame for not delivering their promises. That makes most of us very cautious about stepping into a new product. If people are risk-averse it's not out of fear of losing their jobs; it's because most are very dedicated to having their network run as smooth as possible.



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The Network Break



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Where Too Much Networking Would *NEVER* Be Enough

Network Break is a weekly podcast that delivers news & analysis on the networking industry in a fun, fast-paced style. [Subscribe here!](#)

Internets Of Interest

A collection of pre-loved links that might interest you. "Pre-loved" because I liked them enough to put into this newsletter. It's not *true* love.

By **Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray**

Continuous Delusion at the Infrastructure Layer

Randy Bias [pens a scathing essay](#) about the DevOps principles of continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD) and their misapplication to infrastructure. While CI/CD might work for code deployment, the risk profile of infrastructure makes it unsuited to a

CI/CD model.

"Lately I'm seeing more and more magical thinking that CI/CD can be applied equally to the infrastructure layer and it simply can't."

A Glimmer Of Light Against Dark Silicon

[The Next Platform](#) looks at an alternative approach to designing processors, called asynchronous design, that may address power constraints that chip makers are running into as dies continue to shrink.

"...chip and system designers, faced with the growing challenge of dark silicon, will be forced to adopt new architectures and designs."

Browser Fingerprinting Tech Works Across Different Browsers for the First Time

[A post in the IEEE Spectrum](#) reports on a researcher at Lehigh University who has developed a mechanism to identify users across different Web browsers. The mechanism uses scripting languages that can extract system information from the computer to create a unique fingerprint.

"Cao's method allows third parties to reliably track users across browsers by incorporating several new features that

reveal information about their devices and operating systems."

While browser identification can be useful for things like online banking and shopping, it's also used to serve targeted ads, which makes me wonder who's sponsoring this person's research.

The Relentless Pace Of Automation

Debates about the role of automation in the networking industry, and its impact on network engineers, mirrors a larger conversation about the impact of automation and artificial intelligence on middle- and working-class employment. [This article from MIT Technology Review](#) does a good job of outlining the parameters of the argument: will AI and automation create new types of jobs (which we've seen with other technological innovation) or is there a fundamental difference this time around?

"In the past, new technologies have greatly expanded overall employment opportunities. But no particular economic rule dictates that this will always be true."

Warren Buffett's Best Investment

Bill and Melinda Gates [outline some of the gains](#) that have been made in reducing global poverty, increasing access to vaccines, and other advances, due in part to philanthropic investments from Warren Buffett and others.

*"If we could show you only one number that proves how life has changed for the poorest, it would be **122 million**—the number of children's lives saved since 1990. "*



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Product News

We don't often get new products worth talking about, so that makes it nice to have something to say.

Avaya Surge IoT – Microsegmentation For The Internet Of Things

Surge IoT is microsegmentation for your physical IoT devices. Surge works with any sort of wired IoT device, which is crucial for many different organizations with devices that can't be retrofitted with software shims or agents. For example, health care organizations have many network-connected devices like this.

[LINK](#)

Netronome NICs Notch New Support For OpenContrail, Mirantis

Netronome has announced that its Agilio CX SmartNIC, which offloads and accelerates network functions on x86 servers, now supports OpenContrail and Mirantis OpenStack. The company has also announced integrations with Nuage Networks' VSP, a demonstration with Barefoot Networks, and new deployment options.

[LINK](#)



Recent Podcasts

The last five podcasts published on Packet Pushers

PacketPushers.net - The Last Five

[Datanauts 073: Inside The Software Engineering Silo](#)

[Network Break 124: Arris Buys Brocade Parts; HPE Takes A Hit](#)

[Show 328: Wire Data Analysis With ExtraHop \(Sponsored\)](#)

[PQ Show 105: Will 5G Improve Rural Broadband?](#)

Watch This!

Where we collect some videos that make us reflect, think about our inner lives, or just entertain us.



Some breathtaking footage of waves (above and below the water) and surfing.
Makes me want to go to the beach.



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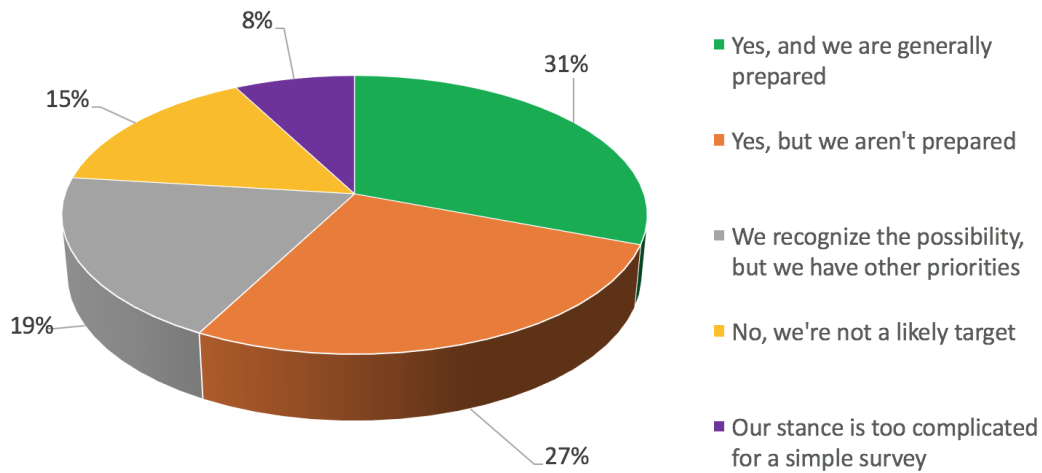
Quick Survey: Cloud Outage Reponse

An outage of Amazon's S3 service caused widespread disruption this week. When a major cloud outage occurs, how do you react?

- [A. Tweet smugly about architectural dependencies](#)
- [B. Check your own architectural dependencies](#)
- [C. Remind angry executives that you warned this could happen](#)
- [D. Sacrifice a goat to appease angry sky gods](#)
- [E. All of the above](#)

Last Issue's Survey Results

Are you concerned about DDoS attacks against your company?



Source: Packet Pushers Human Infrastructure Survey, February 3, 2017. 26 respondents



Did We Miss Something?

Got an link or an article to share? Email it to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net

The End Bit

Sponsorship and Advertising - Send an email to humaninfrastructure@packetpushers.net for more information. You could reach 5,013 people.

Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from PacketPushers.net. If you'd like to contribute, email Drew at drew.conrymurray@packetpushers.net.

We don't give away your email address or personal details because that would suck.

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