Wind down the windows

On April 8, 2014 Microsoft ceased support for their hugely successful Windows XP operating system. This means there will be no new security updates, no new patches and no active support. The effect of this is that XP will become insecure, unreliable and incompatible with most newly released IT hardware.

Security issues are the most urgent consideration: The target-rich landscape of industrial IT is already under an unprecedented and sustained assault from malicious agents, so the cessation of XP security updates is a very serious matter.

Further, most hardware manufacturers have already stopped supporting Windows XP, so there will be no XP drivers for new hard disks, printers, graphics cards, network equipment, etc.

There are compliance issues too: Businesses that are governed by regulatory obligations may find that they are no longer able to satisfy compliance requirements. With so much personal and private data now stored on servers, this is a very significant concern. The recommendation made by Microsoft and all cyber security companies is to upgrade to Windows 7 or 8. ABB offers solutions to the XP situation that help customers better protect their plants and personnel while ensuring safe operations and continuous production.

Decathlon® for Data Centers turns cost centers into profit centers

Insight into data center performance helps businesses better understand their profitability. Because a modern data center resembles a small town in terms of its energy budget, monitoring and control requirements, understanding when, where and at what rate energy is consumed from data center assets has become a key performance indicator of business health.

ABB Decathlon for Data Centers provides the visibility, decision support and controls for capabilities – like energy management and capacity planning – that these behemoths of the IT industry need in order to run efficiently. Telx, a major provider of data center colocation services across the United States, has delivered an exceptional example of how Decathlon can transform operations. Telx uses Decathlon for Data Centers to optimize energy consumption and cooling, and in a sophisticated approach unique in the data center business, they also exploit data center performance metrics to help other business functions. For example, the finance department incorporates power consumption data to more accurately analyze profit; the sales department uses data center operational costs to adjust pricing when it’s time for contract renewals; and the product marketing department uses data center performance information to better understand how products and services are sold to and used by customers. Moreover, because they are using a single data source, there is less room for error in business and operational analyses. The ease with which Decathlon enables data to be integrated, normalized and fed into all the company’s business tools means that business profitability can be analyzed from a power and energy standpoint. With this integrated approach and focus on both business and operational metrics, even enterprise data centers – which are often viewed as a cost centers – can become profit centers, too.