What to Expect During a Power Outage at Headquarters

In 2022, NLLS migrated our firewall from being physically held at our Headquarters to being virtually held by our ISP provider. This was a big success that addressed several issues regarding power outages in Elk Point affecting Member Libraries; however, it did not address all the issues, and power outages in Elk Point still affect our Member Libraries.

Public Computers

Public computers will not be affected by a power outage at headquarters and will continue to have internet access throughout power interruptions. This is because of two reasons:

- Unlike the staff computers, our public computers are not on the domain - the functionality of which is dependent on our servers at headquarters having power.
- Through the firewall migration project, the public computer's internet connection route was changed to bypass headquarters and communication directly with our internet services provider, meaning that a power outage at headquarters no longer results in an internet outage for public computers.

If there are connectivity issues with public computers during a power outage, they are abnormal and the TSI Department will address them on a case-by-case basis.

Staff Computers

While the firewall migration project resulted in monumental steps towards Member Libraries internet and computer systems no longer relying on power at headquarters, there are other factors that contribute to outages, and these primarily concern our domain.

The NLLS domain is the tool that holds all staff member's login information and authenticates that information as staff log into their desktop profiles and Polaris. This tool is hosted on our servers at headquarters, and when there is a power outage the computers at Member Libraries are no longer able to authenticate with it, as they can't find it.

This results in two scenarios, which explains why some libraries continue to have internet on their staff computers during at outage, and some do not:

1. **Staff members are logged into their desktop profiles before an outage** have already passed through the authentication needed during log in. Therefore, they are able to continue using their computers through the duration of the outage, and continue accessing the internet.

2. **Staff members who are not logged into their desktop profiles before an outage** are stopped during login as the computer is not able to authenticate with the domain, resulting in the computer and internet not functioning during the power outage.

If you find that a different scenario occurs during a power outage at headquarters, please reach out so that the TSI Department can investigate further.

Polaris

The Polaris desktop client will not function during a power outage, even if a staff member is able to access their desktop profile on a staff computer. This again is due to the authentication needed with the domain; however, Polaris authenticates at greater intervals than our desktop profiles leading it to be unusable during a power outage.

In light of this, it is our strong recommendation to use LEAP during a power outage at headquarters. Be sure to use the External / Off-line link, found below:

https://leap.tracpac.ab.ca/LeapWebAppExternal/login

What is NLLS doing to alleviate the effects of power outages on Member Libraries?

Power outages at headquarters are frustrating, especially as they often come without warning, and often don't coincide with power outages of Member Libraries themselves. Through our pursuit of the Network Enhancement Plan and firewall migration project, we've made huge strides in alleviating the effects of power outages by ensuring public computers are no longer affected during at outage and by ensuring internet access is continued after authenticated desktop logins.

However, we realize that we can do more.

In order to make further progress towards alleviating the effects of power outages, we need to make changes to our domain infrastructure and remove its dependency on power from headquarters. We have already begun investigating the possibilities that are available to us and can say with confidence that this will not be a quick undertaking, and instead one that is likely to take until at least 2024. In the meantime, we will continue to do our best to support Member Libraries during power outages at headquarters.

Questions?

If you have any questions, contact the TSI Department at ask@nlls.ab.ca.