

interview with Richard Lanyon-Hogg, CTO, IBM (UK) GTS

the big green yonder



Innovators and fast-thinking engineers are applying their skills to the problem of climate change and in doing so, changing their company's processes, altering staff behaviour and creating new business channels to boot. Richard Lanyon-Hogg explains how IBM reboots on carbon management.

Where does carbon impact most on business? How do you see the impact of carbon affecting business?

That's the question everyone is asking. To answer it, IBM has developed a holistic framework to help organisations develop action plans to address carbon across their entire operations. We refer to it as 'The House of Carbon'. It works in two dimensions:

1. It helps identify where carbon is being generated across the business. For example, their supply chain, product development, property management, employee activity and of course, IT infrastructure.
2. The framework then guides organisations to carbon management solutions that help to deliver the carbon reductions in priority operational areas.

The impact on businesses is coming from a variety of sources: cost, regulation, stakeholders and even new business development. Under these pressures, organisations are increasingly finding that they not only need to act, but are seen to act.

What is the role of IT in this? How large a part of corporate footprint does it consume? Where is that most prevalent? What are the pressure points?

It's difficult to be precise at the topmost level, but according to energy industry analysts, IT now accounts for between 3 to 4% of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To put that in perspective, they often quote the aviation industry as being responsible for 2%. When we examine IT more closely, the carbon impact is broadly 60% distributed around the office and other work-related