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## Terror and telecom: customer backup: outsourced, ad hoc, in extremis. (Network Architecture).

Article from: Communications Convergence | November 1, 2001 | Muraskin, Ellen | [Copyright](#)

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The World Trade Center attack threw a spotlight on companies whose sole purpose is disaster recovery. Their services include the duplication of all incapacitated datacom and telecom infrastructures and end devices. While the scale of loss on September 11 eclipsed anything the two most prominent companies, Comdisco and Sungard, had ever dealt with before, it did show how preplanning had paid off for some of their clients. It also put into action agreements made well in advance between enterprises and long-distance carriers. These included rerouting plans, so that as soon as disaster declarations were made, the new emergency locations were already on file as the destination of rerouted 800 and other phone numbers.

Regular systems integrators and interconnects, under standard maintenance contracts, also took up the task of recovering dial tone for New York City's emergency services and for dislocated -- or, as often, disconnected -- financial and healthcare clients. This required round-the-clock, emergency enlistment of designers, technicians, and installers from offices as far as Maine; the rerouting of trunking switches to New Jersey locations, and even the cooperation of Canadian customs, which expedited the importation of Nortel switches.

Nortel Networks (Brampton, Ontario, Canada -- 905-863-0000, [www.nortel.com](#)), maintains a year-round, 24/7 Emergency Recovery Center in Research Triangle Park, NC, that normally employs over 100 people. When disaster struck, Nortel's ER immediately contacted all customers in the World Trade Center vicinity to determine stability and to analyze any service or equipment requirements. These calls were then escalated to Nortel's service and support organizations (Nextira, see next page, among them).

Tornadoes have taken out central offices before, and Nortel's ER has also responded to floods and fires, but obviously, no previous damage has ever been as extensive as that wrought in the September 11 assault. But having a plan of action, numbers to call, and a recovery center certainly did help dislocated enterprises meet immediate needs.

By Monday, September 17, Nortel Networks reports that 432 orders had been loaded and serviced with a 48-hour turnaround from order to on-site; 34 customers had been serviced, including carriers Focal, Genuity, and Sprint, as well as Goldman Sachs, Bloomberg, and the Pentagon.

In Verizon's heavily damaged, 32-story 140 West Street central office, two Nortel DMS 100 switches, servicing 60,000 of the office's 300,000 lines, went down when power went out and basement power supplies were flooded. Nortel's team was allowed to enter the building on Friday, escorted by security officers and wearing respirators. They worked 18-hour shifts and often had to evacuate over the weekend as fires flared up and areas were cleared from reported bomb threats.

The Nortel switches proved to be fortunate, as they were located near the wall furthest from the damage caused by the toppled neighboring Building Seven. According to ...

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