



The Mentora Practical Solutions Series

Mentora "Practical Solutions" papers provide insight and concrete suggestions to address technical issues of installing, maintaining and supporting high-availability web-enabled production applications, developed from our *hands-on real-life experience* providing 24/7 uptime for our managed application hosting customers.

Our goal is to help other IT operations teams by sharing lessons learned. Our focus is on practical solutions from an operations perspective – things you can do today, not things that "should be" or that require product enhancements by third-party vendors. We share "what works to make it work".

Practical Solutions: Data Center Location Selection

The Challenge

Our customer wanted to move their business-critical applications to a top-tier third-party Internet data center. The IT management team was charged with making the first recommendation - the geographic location where they would "shop" for vendors. They were dealing with competing priorities and needed help: there are two company offices, should they locate to be near one of them...Internet connectivity is critical to customer access...and what about the risks of natural or human-induced disasters?

We developed an evaluation checklist with broad criteria and objective reference data to guide their decision-making.

Lessons Learned

1. The "right" answer is specific to the organization and its priorities.
2. The value of the tool we developed is as much in using it -- the process of assigning relative weights/priorities to the decision elements -- as in the result. The tool certainly aids objectivity, but what it does best is to make clear and document the assumptions and values behind the decision.

Issues and Solutions

Issue: Understanding the objective criteria to consider.

Practical Solution:

The model incorporates best practices gathered from a wide range of industry experts.

Issue: Vested interests with a preference for specific locations, not necessarily aligned with best interests of the organization – sometimes in spite of the individual's desire to 'do the right thing'.

Practical Solution:

The model does not guarantee that decisions won't be "slanted", but it helps contributors focus on objective criteria and clearly documents the decisions.

Contact us at 866-mentora with questions or for help using the model!



ABOUT Mentora www.mentora.com

Mentora is a pioneer in the new generation of managed application hosting providers, combining support of Linux and the newest technologies, system performance testing and a complete menu of managed services for networks, servers, operating systems, databases, and storage, with our exclusive, personalized ***named-engineer-on-call*** and ***Application Availability SLA***. Headquartered in Atlanta, Mentora has offices in Boston and Washington DC, and delivers services nationwide.