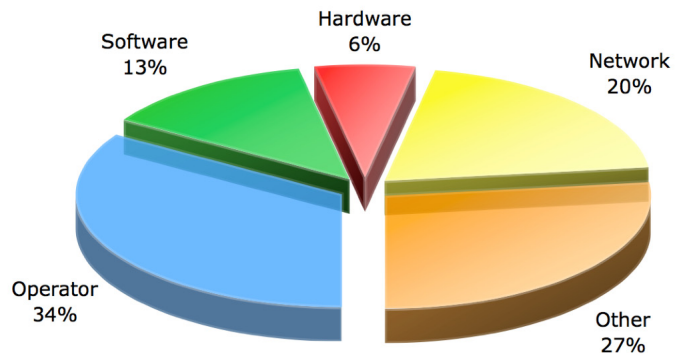


Sidebar: Got Downtime? Don't Blame the Operator

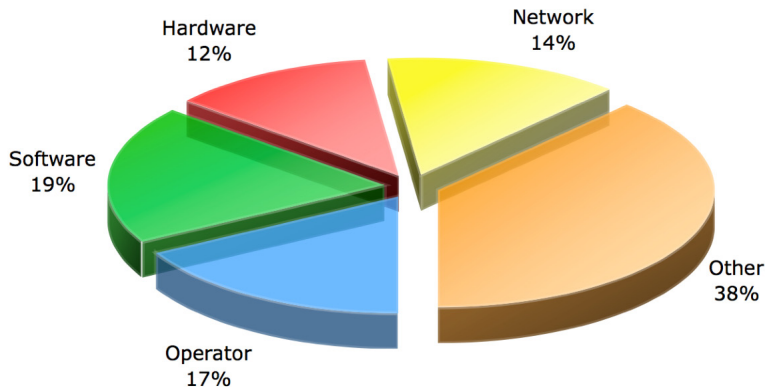
Recently two Standish colleagues were disputing the origin of the quote, “There are three types of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics.” One said it was Mark Twain; the other thought it was Winston Churchill. As it turns out they were both wrong, but with elements of “rightness.” The quote came from Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), a British prime minister. Mark Twain in his autobiography stated that Benjamin Disraeli said this phrase to him. So while it was a British prime minister who said it, it was not Winston Churchill. And while Mark Twain did write the words down, it was Disraeli who said them first. In the end it is Benjamin Disraeli who owns the quote, even if he rarely gets the credit.

Many people believe that operator error is the leading cause of downtime. Are they right, wrong, or partly right? Chart SB1.0 shows the percentage of downtime incidents by their type. In 2005, Standish Group collected almost 50,000 downtime incidents as reported in our monthly CENTS survey. As we can see, 34% of these incidents are attributed to operator error. This makes it the leading cause of system downtime. Right! Case closed. Or is it?



[Sidebar Chart SB1.0]

It is clear that 34% of incidents are caused by operator error, but how does that equate to minutes or hours that the system is unavailable? If we look at it from a time point of view (Chart SB2.0), we see that during peak hours the number bumps down to three. The leading time of a system outage cause is “Other” at 38%. “Other” comprises the environment, hackers, viruses, planned downtime, and the biggest part of this segment which is simply unknown. If the respondents do not know what caused the downtime, or if it has multiple causes and they do not know the percentage of each, they choose “other.” So, now we know the leading cause of downtime is “other,” followed by software. So, they are wrong! Right! Case closed! Or is it?



[Sidebar Chart SB2.0]