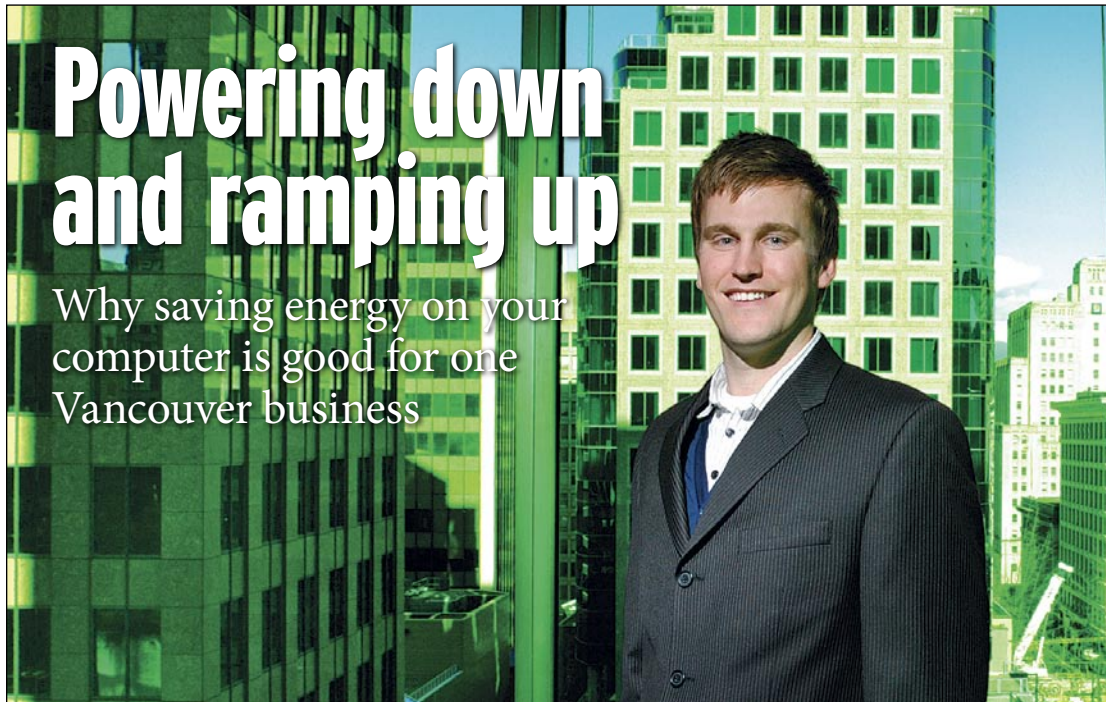


Powering down and ramping up

Why saving energy on your computer is good for one Vancouver business



Luke Aulin: Faronic's energy conservation outreach manager

DOMINIC SCHAEFER

KRISENDRA BISETTY

As Canada's largest credit union fetes its new "carbon neutral" status, it's already working on new ways to fight climate change – with a little help from a locally developed solution that's getting much attention across the U.S.

Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (Vancity) said earlier this month that it had met its voluntary 2010 goal for its group, which includes **Citizens Bank of Canada**, two years early through a rigorous emissions reduction program focusing on energy use, staff travel, paper consumption and waste.

Now the credit union wants to power down its computers at its 59 branches to avoid unnecessary power wastage and help reduce its emissions even further.

When Vancity installs the software, **Power Save** – it confirmed it's in the middle of beta testing – to make its computers switch off automatically after a period of inactivity, it will be a major scoop for local software developer **Faronics Corp.**

The Vancouver-based company, co-founded in 2005 by **BIV** Top 40 under 40 winner **Vik Khanna** and entrepreneur **Farid Ali**, is known for its top-selling **Deep Freeze** software which has blazed a trail through

schools, universities and businesses across North America and abroad.

Almost seven million user licences for that product, which restores a computer to its initial configuration with a simple restart, have so far been

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– Luke Aulin, energy conservation outreach manager, Faronics Corp.

sold, said **Luke Aulin**, Faronic's energy conservation outreach manager. "Deep Freeze has been a huge hit for us," said Aulin. "But there's very hot market demand for [Power Save]."

Faronics introduced its newest product a year ago – a second version has just been released – and has sold almost 100,000 licences so far.

"It's rapidly ramping up, and we expect to blow that out of the water this year," said Aulin, who confirmed forecasted product revenues of about \$2 million for 2008.

Its biggest and most recent order was from **Boston Public Schools**, a department that runs 144 schools.

The user licences for 14,000 computers will save the department an

estimated US\$300,000 on its annual energy bill.

Faronics' customers are typically larger organizations managing tens of thousands of computers that are often on 24 hours a day to run security updates. It claims the \$14.40 software (there's a 50% discount for educational institutions and non-profits) will enable annual energy savings of about 200 kilowatt hours per computer – which equates to up to \$50 per computer.

It tracks for inactivity, and then puts the computer into a lower-powered state: hibernate, standby or even a full shutdown, thereby dropping the energy pull from 135-150 watts on average down to three to five watts in an "off" state.

While a standard, built-in energy management tool does basically the same thing, it does so only by monitoring mouse and keyboard inactivity. However, Aulin said there was a "countless number of examples" when a machine should be running, despite the fact that a user was away from it. He cited as examples an IT department running a patch, carrying out an anti-virus update or a defragmentation on a computer.

"If they set Windows power management, and that user leaves the machine, those processes are going to be cut off and disrupted," he said.

"The core technology and the key problem we solve is that we do it in such a way that's non-disruptive to end users and non-disruptive to IT processes."

Power Save monitors not just keyboard and mouse activity, but also that of the computer's central processing unit and hard disc.

In the U.S. alone, college students could save more than 2.3 billion kilowatt hours per year of electricity by enabling power saving features on their desktop PCs, according to U.S.-based non-profit group, the **Climate Savers Computing Initiative**, which was started in 2007 by Internet giant **Google Inc.** and silicon chip maker **Intel Corp.**

That, it says, equates to an annual saving of more than US\$200 million in energy costs and a 1.8 million-ton reduction of CO₂ emissions from the operation of computers – equivalent to taking more than 350,000 cars off the road.

Aulin said the non-profit had "validated" **Power Save** as an energy efficient product, as had **Energy Star**, a joint program of the U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency**, the U.S. **Department of Energy** and several utility companies.

That has helped drive its market success, along with the fact that some utilities were offering rebates to customers who buy the product.

Locally, **BC Hydro** offers a rebate of \$3 per licence. But the heaviest incentive, and where Faronics is doing most of its bigger business, is in California, where several power companies offer a 100% subsidy for the software.

Aulin said the **University of British Columbia's** Sauder School of Business recently completed a small pilot spearheaded by **Offsetters Climate Neutral Society**, a local non-profit that assists organizations, including Vancity, in reducing their carbon footprint.

The study, he said, showed computer energy savings of approximately 70% when using **Power Save**. "But I think what was most compelling was that the data shows that the cost for **Power Save** will actually save more carbon than spending on a carbon offset." ■

kbisetty@telus.net