



# Power protection vs. UPS topology

Power quality (PQ) is a significant challenge to those responsible for the management of electrical networks and Data Centre facilities. The widespread use of and increasing dependence upon electronic equipment - such as information technology equipment, power electronics including programmable logic controllers (PLC) and energy-efficient lighting - have led to a complete transformation in the nature of electrical loads. These loads are both the major root causes of - and the major casualties of - power quality problems. Due to their non-linearity, all these loads cause disturbances in the voltage waveform.

Along with advances in technology, the organisation of the worldwide economy has evolved towards globalisation and the profit margins of many activities have seen a tendency to decrease.

The increased sensitivity of the vast majority of processes (industrial, services and even residential) to PQ problems means that the availability of high quality electric power is a crucial factor in terms of developing competitive advantage across every market sector.

It's widely understood that mission-critical facilities must run continuously, and, of course, that any power interruption, even for a short time, can disrupt business operations and result in significant financial losses.

Although today's Data Centres are all designed with a high level of inherent redundancy in order to minimise downtime, just as important as the mission-critical applications themselves, however, is the quality of the supplied power.

In order to achieve the delivery of consistent, high quality power, it is vital to understand the nature of PQ disturbances and their causes.

## What affects the power quality ?

The most common disturbances that adversely affect the power quality are:

- power sags or outages due to network faults,
- short voltage variations due to the connection of heavy loads or the presence of faults in the network,
- distortion of currents and voltages due to non-linear loads present in the system or in the systems of other utilities, etc.
- flicker due to large intermittent loads,
- asymmetry in the supply voltage system.

## How to ensure the power quality: the UPS

Modern technology offers various solutions to ensure the power quality; static UPS systems are undoubtedly the most versatile and widely used and can be adopted for a very broad range of power ratings.

In response to the need to classify the various types of static UPS systems currently available on the market, the standard EN 62040-3 was developed. It distinguishes between three major topologies, according to the internal schemes adopted:

- VFD "offline"

Voltage and Frequency Dependent - Utilities are normally powered by the mains supply. In the event of power loss the load is automatically switched over to a built-in battery to keep it supplied without interruptions.


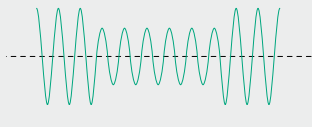
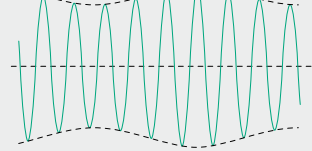

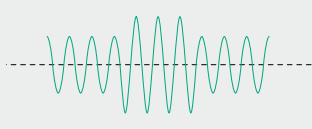
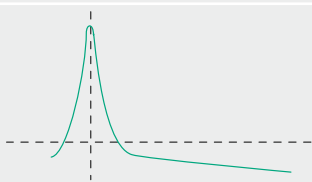
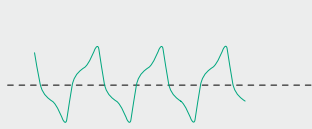
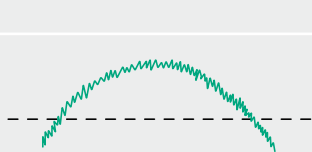

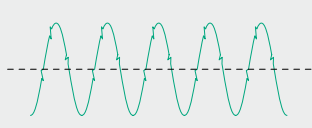
- VI "line interactive"

Voltage Independent - The load is supplied by the mains power supply and protected against under and over voltages by an AVR (Automatic Voltage Regulator) voltage stabilizer. If the mains power is lost, the load is instantaneously powered by the battery.

- VFI "online double conversion"

Voltage and Frequency Independent - This is the only UPS working-mode that assures total load protection against all possible mains quality problems. The power is converted twice (AC to DC through a rectifier then DC to AC through an inverter) to provide high quality voltage, stable frequency and protection against power grid disturbances. If the mains power is lost, the load is powered exclusively by the battery. The internal bypass supplies the utilities in case of inverter output voltage anomalies.

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Disturbance type	Wave form	Possibles causes	Consequence	UPS topology		
				VFD	VI	VFI
Voltage interruption		Mainly due to opening and automatic re-closure of protection devices to decommission a faulty network section. The main fault causes are insulation failure, lightning and insulator flashover.	Tripping of protection devices, loss of information and malfunction of data processing equipment.	•	•	•
Voltage sag/dip		Faults on the transmission, in distribution network, or in consumer's installation. Start-up loads.	Malfunction of IT equipment, safety systems, or lighting. Loss of data. System shutdown.	•	•	•
Voltage fluctuation		Transmitters (radio), faulty equipment, ineffective grounding, proximity to EMI/RFI source.	Most consequences are common to under-voltages. System halts, data loss. The visible consequence is the flickering of lighting and screens.	•	•	•
Under voltage		Increase of consumption, voltage reduction to lower the consumption.	System halts, data loss, stop of sensitive equipment	-	•	•
Voltage surge		Atmospheric, surges are due to lightning; Transient, surges are due to insulation faults between phase and earth or rupture of neutral conductor; Switching, surges are due to opening of protection devices, generated by energizing capacitor banks or caused by variations in inductive current.	Data loss, flickering of lighting and screens, stop or damage of sensitive equipment.	-	•	•
Voltage spike/transient		Lightning, ESD, switching of lines or power factor correction capacitors, utility fault clearing.	Destruction of electronic components, data processing errors or data loss.	-	-	•
Harmonic distortion		Modern sources like all non-linear loads such as power electronics equipment including ASDs, switched mode power supplies, data processing equipment, high efficiency lighting.	Increased probability in occurrence of resonance, neutral overload in 3-phase systems, overheating of all cables and equipment, loss of efficiency in electric machines, electromagnetic interference with communication systems, errors in measures when using average reading meters, nuisance tripping of thermal protections.	-	-	•
Noise		Transmitters (radio), faulty equipment, ineffective grounding, proximity to EMI/RFI source.	Disturbances on sensitive electronic equipment, usually not destructive. May cause data loss and data processing errors.	-	-	•
Frequency variation		Unstable operating of the generator, unstable frequency of the utility power system.	System halts, data loss.	-	-	•
Notching		Fast switching of power components (diodes, SCR, etc.), rapid variation in the load current (welding machines, motors, lasers, capacitor banks, etc.).	System halts, data loss.	-	-	•