
JOURNAL CLUB

The Northeast Blackout of August 2003:

The Anatomy of a Cascading Failure

(Why the Official Post-mortem Misses Important Dynamics)

by

David Newman
Physics Department, UAF

ABSTRACT

TWe will briefly survey the cascading failure that was the cause of the large power transmission disruption that blacked out much of the Northeast US in August 2003. We will then discuss a model of the national power transmission network as an interdependent complex system and look at some of the dynamics intrinsic to these types of systems. Then, in this context, we will discuss why some of the steps proposed to reduce the likelihood of future large-scale blackouts are likely to fail, and might even have a counter intuitive effect. Implications for policy and blackout probability will be examined.

Friday, January 23, 2004
Elvey Bldg. Globe Room
3:45 pm