

# datacentrix infocentrix

Second issue  
2016

**Serious about performance,** passionate about value

## Message from our CEO

**Datacentrix** continues to perform as a trusted, responsive business partner to our customers' technology needs. Our service offering enables compute power, more prudent operations, knowledge creation and business insight in an environment that demands flexibility and efficiencies.

### In this issue

This issue of Infocentrix demonstrates some of our technical and execution capabilities and the resilience of our offerings. It showcases a number of our customer successes, profiles some of our technology solution offerings and thought leadership.

We review the three-year contract by Deloitte Africa for the delivery of an end user computing platform into Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Continuing with end-user systems, we look at Datacentrix' end-to-end solution at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), which included the rollout of over 2,000 desktops, laptops, printers, projectors and services. PPS opted to upgrade its storage area network platform with Datacentrix, their long-term ICT partner. And, we review a string of projects at tradebridge, which most recently involved a storage replacement and virtualisation solution upgrade that is helping to improve efficiency, availability and agility within the organisation.

Moving to security, Datacentrix unveiled the recently revamped Security Operations Centre (SOC) that delivers highly intelligent security services. The SOC delivers actionable information that helps organisations to respond to cyber attacks faster and more efficiently.

We shift our attention to enterprise information management at South African National Blood Services. Datacentrix is helping to transform millions of individual records into digital assets, delivering massive cost savings and simplifying the

management of some 30 million paper records per annum. We have also helped Debswana Diamond Company solve a litany of challenges in their accounts payable function with the SAP Invoice Management solution by OpenText. Staying with OpenText, we look at the drastic improvement in reliable service in the Western Cape Government's Department of Transport and Public Works. The department has reduced its average licence turnaround time from 145 to 45 days and improved efficiencies with Datacentrix.

Education continues to be a core focus at Datacentrix. The company announced the introduction of a graduate training programme that is focused on local skills development, which offers valuable training in specific technology solutions as well as in softer business skills.

### Partnerships

I would like to thank AMD, Cisco, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Lenovo and Veritas for their sponsorship and input into this Infocentrix issue. Our technology partnerships are integral to our business, enabling direct access to cutting edge technology using the shortest channels. Datacentrix is one of the most highly accredited technology organisations in South Africa.

With Datacentrix, our customers enjoy holistic, repeatable technology solutions, combined team competencies, consistently high levels of service and an excellent experience. I trust that this Infocentrix will provide you with interesting reading about the enhancements and efficiencies that we have delivered at some of our customers.

**Ahmed Mahomed  
CEO**

## What's inside



Deloitte Africa appoints Datacentrix for three-year Central African workstation rollout



Datacentrix revamps Security Operations Centre, focusing on proactive, flexible offering



Western Cape Government significantly improves reliable service through EIM project



Debswana digitises and automates accounts payable function with Datacentrix

**Infocentrix is an official newsletter for the Datacentrix Group, its partners and customers.**

Datacentrix is a complete ICT systems integrator, providing solutions and services across the full information value chain. The company's value-driven approach and proven execution capability reinforce its position as one of the top ICT players in the local market.

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**We would like to thank our technology partners for their support and input into this issue:**

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## Managed Services

# Deloitte Africa appoints Datacentrix

## for three-year Central African workstation rollout

**Datacentrix** has been awarded a three-year contract by professional services firm, Deloitte Africa, for the delivery of a robust end user computing platform to its offices in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

According to Avi Padayachee, IT Africa integration manager for Deloitte Africa, while the type of workstation technology selected by Deloitte Africa was important, a key consideration for the agreement was the assurance of next business day repair to the 250 Lenovo laptops selected.

“In Central Africa, there is no such thing as a distributor that can provide a three-year service level agreement as well as having access to a broad range of technology. In each country, there are smaller shops that focus solely on one brand, but typically they do not have original equipment manufacturer (OEM) agreements in place and cannot commit to the type of service level agreement (SLA) required by Deloitte.”

It was based on these requirements, Avi explains, that Deloitte Africa approached Datacentrix to see whether a similar agreement as that set up between the two companies in South Africa could be replicated for Central Africa.



**Deloitte has an exceptional reputation for delivering the highest quality of services, and Datacentrix’ understanding of this ethic means that our working philosophies and business value are highly complementary.**

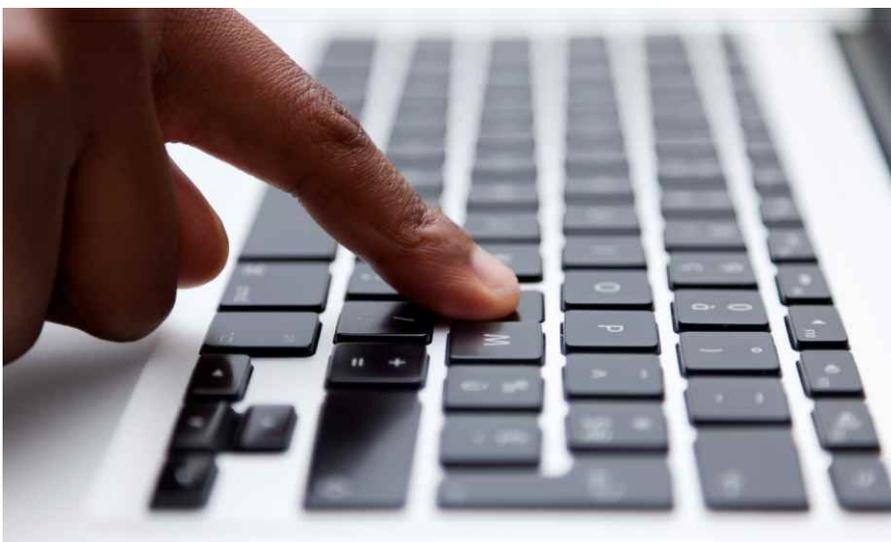
“Deloitte has an exceptional reputation for delivering the highest quality of services, and Datacentrix’ understanding of this ethic means that our working philosophies and business values are highly complementary,” he adds. “Our long-term partnership has meant that Datacentrix has become a trusted advisor of Deloitte Africa.”

In order to meet the stringent SLA requirements, Datacentrix has partnered with a Pan-African IT products and services distributor able to deliver services across 35 African countries, particularly within the Central, East, West African (CEWA) regions.

Through this agreement, says Datacentrix account manager, Venesia Oxford, Deloitte Africa now has access to a number of different vendor brands and as well as a next business day SLA.

“This end-to-end agreement means that Datacentrix is able to provide Deloitte Africa with the hands-on technical skills required for service delivery within these regions.

“Datacentrix has been engaged with Deloitte for a number of years and is a valued customer, so it has been a privilege to expand our mutually beneficial relationship beyond South Africa’s borders,” Venesia adds.



# Datacentrix wins 2,000-seat ARC tender

**South Africa's** Agricultural Research Council (ARC) has awarded a multi-million rand tender to Datacentrix for the supply and maintenance of end-user systems – totalling over 2,000 desktops, laptops, printers and projectors. The contract creates an end-to-end solution for the agricultural research body.

According to Datacentrix account manager, Francois Coetzee, the ARC is a crucial role player within the local agricultural sector, as a premier science institution that conducts research with partners, develops human capital and fosters innovation for its support and development.

“As such, its teams of analysts require powerful, resilient tools to effectively support innovation within agriculture,” he notes.

Datacentrix completed the rollout of the new hardware and software to 13 major ARC sites nationwide, plus several additional, more remote locations, over a period of around two-and-a-half months.

Importantly, the rollout was completed without any disruption to ARC's operations, adds Francois.

“The ARC was at the end of its natural three-year leasing cycle,” he notes, “and was looking for an IT partner that would help guide it through the next three years of desktop technology evolution.”

Datacentrix' solution combines the latest software and hardware, with anytime, anywhere support, strong security, full insurance, and a focus on enterprise mobility. It's a package designed to keep ARC on the leading edge of new technology for the duration of the next three-year cycle.

The ARC's IT service delivery manager, Douw Nel, notes that Datacentrix was selected due to its strong pedigree in managing large and complex end-user environments, as well as its advisory services to help shape the council's IT strategy.

“For a large project like this, it is essential to have absolute faith in our IT partner,” adds Douw. “Due to Datacentrix' professional approach, we really saw a flawless execution of the rollout, which has enabled us to take immediate advantage of the new systems.”



**Francois Coetzee, Datacentrix account manager**

- **Latest software and hardware**
- **Anytime, anywhere support**
- **Strong security**
- **Full insurance**
- **A focus on enterprise mobility**
- **End-to-end solution**





Partner advertorial

## Join the flash revolution:

### Make the move to all-flash storage

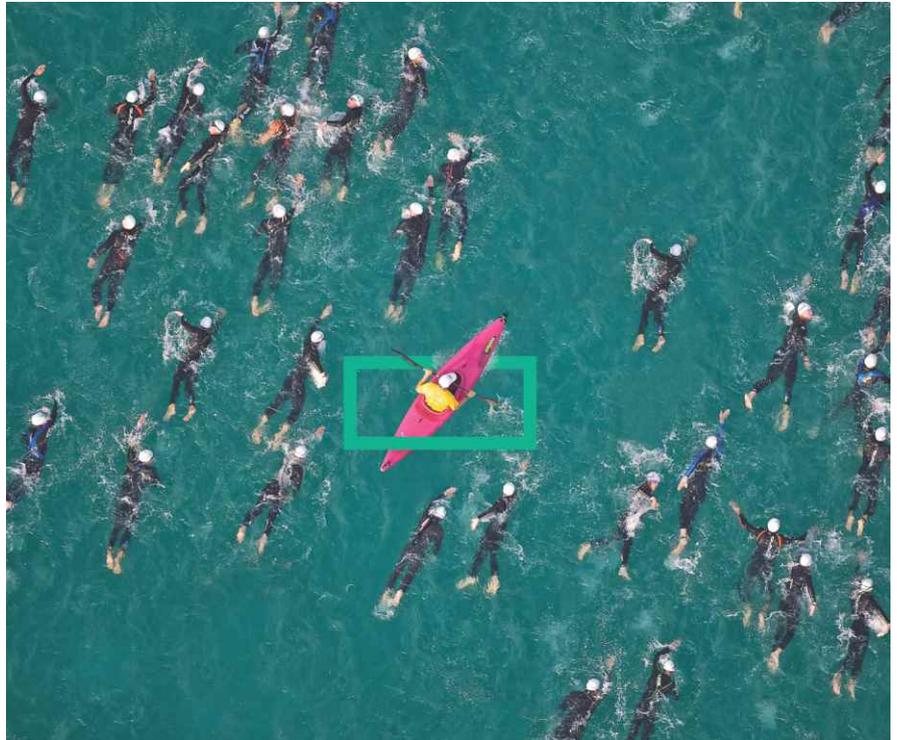
**For most** of us, moving to flash-based storage is as farfetched as taking a commercial flight to the moon. Exploring the humble beginnings of the hard drive as we know it makes it more realistic, more achievable and more necessary.

The question is that at what point did we realise we needed to jump from on-board memory to some form of long-term storage? Well, circa 1978, Seagate Technology was founded as Shugart Technology and released its first hard drive, the ST-506 in 1979. The ST-506 delivered a whopping, jaw-dropping 5MB of capacity, it took another year before it was small enough to fit into a personal computer. You would barely fit an mp3 file on that today. Twelve years later saw a drive with a capacity of 6.8GB, that's about 1,400 times more capacity.

Today HPE is delivering drive capacities in excess of 7TB that when applied to a storage architecture like the HPE StoreServ 3PAR allows us to achieve some unbelievable space and energy savings in the data centre. How you ask? Flash technology is the answer to that.

Solid state disks are more energy efficient than their spinning disk brethren, by about 80% more in fact. This makes it also easier to keep them cooler as they radiate less heat. On the whole, solid state disks are more environmentally friendly.

When you consider the capacities of the solid state disks, at 7TB and beyond, versus the performance of spinning disks that are at about 1.8TB, you quickly see the space savings that are possible. We are able to deliver about 180TB per 2U of data centre space using



the 7TB disks and double that with the newer 15TB disks.

Now, you might be thinking great, we can store a lot in a very small space but at what price? The really great news is that HPE has been working hard to deliver this technology at a price that is pocket friendly, in fact we believe in the all-flash data centre and that everyone should be investing in a flash array. In many cases the cost per TB of a flash array is the same as that of a spinning disk array.

A last question remains to be asked, why haven't you switched to the All Flash Datacenter when the technology has proven itself to be reliable and efficient?

Contact your account manager or a Datacentrix office near you to discuss how this technology could better enable your business and deliver greater user experience.

**Today HPE is delivering drive capacities in excess of 7TB that when applied to a storage architecture like the HPE StoreServ 3PAR allows us to achieve some unbelievable space and energy savings in the data centre. How you ask? Flash technology is the answer to that.**



**Hewlett Packard  
Enterprise**

# Datacentrix revamps Security Operations Centre, focusing on proactive, flexible offering

**Datacentrix** has officially launched its overhauled Security Operations Centre (SOC), unveiling a highly intelligent service that provides actionable information to help organisations respond to attacks faster and more efficiently.

As they adopt newer technologies – including cloud, mobile and the Internet of Things (IoT) – and expand their environments, businesses are becoming increasingly vulnerable to security attacks. So says Wayne Olsen, security business unit manager at Datacentrix, who points out that findings from the sixth annual study by HP in partnership with the Ponemon Institute, revealed that the average time it took to resolve a cyber attack – 46 days – had increased by nearly 30 percent during the past six years.

“When you take into account that the median cost incurred by a company in resolving a single attack totals more than R13 million over the 46-day remediation period – at an average cost of over R284,000 per day – it is clear that a change in approach to security investment is needed.”

According to Wayne, traditional security operation centres have been greatly reactive, providing clients with information on past incidents only.

“Datacentrix surveyed the local market to uncover what South African businesses really want when it comes to a security service. The response brought to light the need for a proactive service that could provide advanced analytics, correlation and threat prioritisation, and this is exactly what we have developed. Testament to this is the fact that we have quadrupled our SOC customer base in the past two months.

“Security data holds many answers, but only if an organisation can easily and quickly collect, understand and prioritise the information,” Wayne continues. “The

Datacentrix SOC provides advanced analytics with the ability to store and quickly analyse massive amounts of data, as well as leveraging a progressive indexing system that optimises threat investigations and forensics. Its integrated log and event collection, along with real-time analytics, swiftly delivers actionable information with the ability to gather information across an organisation's infrastructure.

“Critical to today's CIO, who is under increasing pressure to provide a life cycle of security attacks, the SOC's advanced correlation allows us to uncover the true story of how an incident happened, the rules that were breached, how it affected the organisation and so on, within minutes,” he concludes.

The new Datacentrix SOC delivers a holistic view on a client's security posture, proactive incident response, 24/7 real-time monitoring, vulnerability scanning for both



**Wayne Olsen, business unit manager: Security at Datacentrix**

external and internal threats, functional threat verification, powerful, flexible reporting, security management, real-time governance and compliance statuses, and remote remediation.

**Manage risk and save costs with the Datacentrix Security Operations Centre**

- Real-time security analytics
- Advanced security correlation
- Threat prioritisation
- Governance risk and compliance posture

**Datacentrix speaks to Carte Blanche about online credit card fraud.**  
Watch the video : <http://carteblanche.dstv.com/player/1153884/>



# SA National Blood Service to digitise

## 30 million records annually with Datacentrix

**The South African** National Blood Service (SANBS) provides patients with a supply of safe, high-quality blood products and medical services related to blood transfusion. Operating across nine South African provinces, SANBS collects blood donations from millions of volunteer donors, also providing support to other countries within the SADC region.

With over 800,000 blood donations each year, millions of forms and records are generated. Considering that lives are literally at stake, SANBS is required to follow a rigorous process as documents flow through each phase – from donor, all the way to the patient that benefits from a blood donation.

Hazel Bell, senior manager of quality systems at SANBS, notes that: “Up to 30 million individual paper records are generated each year, creating enormous complexities for SANBS staff.

“Considering the total costs of paper – including purchasing, printing, processing, ink costs, transporting, storing and retrieving – this causes a massive financial drain on the organisation.”

Errors in the way some forms were completed hindered SANBS’ ability to collect certain invoices, causing revenue leakage. There was also no simple way to analyse the data on record: surveys were a very time-consuming and laborious process. And then, to compound these issues, a fire in SANBS’ Pinetown warehouse resulted in the destruction of many records.

Hazel explains that, as a non-profit organisation committed to making a positive impact on the lives of all South Africans, the principles of sustainability and environmental awareness have been firmly entrenched by the SANBS board. These principles extend to every area, including the likes of medical waste.

In this spirit of “going green”, and with the goal of enhancing efficiencies, SANBS looked to Datacentrix, a provider of high performing and secure ICT solutions, to implement an enterprise information management (EIM) solution that would consist of digitising its operations, migrating away from paper-based processes, and enhancing information management. This project became affectionately known as “Project Impilo” – a Zulu term meaning “health”.

Lidia Basson, training manager for EIM at Datacentrix, notes: “Following a thorough assessment, the first phase of the programme kicked off with the digitisation of donor forms, crossmatch forms, and various business records currently filed on paper.”

The second phase, she adds, is now in full swing: transforming millions of other records relating to blood donation, testing and quality control into digital assets.

“The solution is capable of managing a wide variety of document formats as they’re transformed from paper to digital,” notes Lidia. “In addition, rich Application Program Interfaces allow for integration into other line-of-business systems and existing SAP modules.”

SANBS will see a number of immediate benefits of the solution, including:

- Storing and retrieving information efficiently;
- Maintaining accurate document audit trails;
- Improved interoperability and efficiencies of systems/processes;
- Enhanced collaboration across departments;
- Timely disposal of records;



- Automatic document version control; and
- Powerful search capabilities to assist in finding documents.

As Project Impilo gains momentum, the initial pilot group of 120 users should be extended to all 2,500 SANBS staff nationwide.

“Paper consumption and costs will decrease dramatically, creating not only a positive environmental impact, but also improving the working conditions for SANBS staff,” notes Hazel. “In addition, the system will assist SANBS in its strategic focus on compliance to the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act.”

As the organisation looks to move towards a fully-digital environment, it expects the user experience for donors and beneficiaries to improve – spurring greater levels of donation, and greater impact in fulfilling its mandate of saving the lives of South Africans in need of transfusions.

“Ultimately, the cost savings will mean that budgets are funnelled into more valuable areas like research, performing big data analysis on our records, and increasing the size of our donor base,” concludes Hazel.

# It's time data worked for you and not the other way around

**The** exponential growth of data and the resources needed to manage it is one of the most pressing issues facing business today. And it's not just the amount of data. It's where it lives and how it travels between private clouds, public clouds and back to on premises. In these increasingly complex IT environments, it's important to focus on what's constant: THE DATA.

Veritas enables organisations to harness the power of their information, with solutions designed to serve the world's largest and most complex mixed environments. Veritas has the privilege to help the world's organisations – including 86% of the global Fortune 500 – collect, protect, analyse and optimise their data, even in the most demanding environments.

Get industry-leading solutions that cover all platforms with backup and recovery, business continuity, software-defined storage and information governance.

Every one of our information management solutions is designed around the principle that information is more important than infrastructure.

## **Backup and recovery**

You need scale without complexity. Veritas Backup and Recovery solutions enable you to protect, locate, and recover more information in less time across any combination of platforms, storage environments, or hybrid-cloud architectures. You can use the same tools across environments to ensure simplicity and consistency in protection.

## **Business continuity**

Keep your business running, always. Defy disasters and outages with Veritas Business Continuity solutions that work across applications, no matter what they're running or where they're running, even across hybrid clouds. Veritas helps you to design a proactive strategy that is built on predictability, automation and simplicity.

## **Storage management**

Your storage should be doing more. Now you can manage your storage environments regardless of hardware platform, hypervisor, or vendor. Veritas Software-Defined Storage solutions enable faster application deployment

and the appropriate quality of service with the level of visibility you require.

## **Information governance**

Gain visibility. Expose risk. Veritas Information Governance solutions simplify and automate the management of unstructured data by allowing you to clearly see who's using your information, where they're using it, and how – so you can ensure compliance, limit liability and focus on the information that matters most.

**It's time to transform data from freight to fuel. To let it power decisions instead of impede them.**

**It's time to rise up against the scourge of junk data. To seize what is rightfully yours.**

To shape it into something that's no longer a costly burden, but an always on, always available source of insight.

**VERITAS™**



## Skills development

# Datacentrix and OpenText collaborate

## to boost local skills development

**Datacentrix** has announced the introduction of a graduate training programme focused on local skills development, working closely with OpenText, a global leader in Enterprise Information Management (EIM).

Datacentrix, the only OpenText Platinum Partner in southern Africa, has selected ten graduates from Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban for the year-long programme, which includes intensive

training in OpenText solutions as well as in softer business skills, such as business etiquette and correspondence.

The graduate group, which is split equally between men and women, was chosen following a rigorous selection process based on their tertiary studies and one-on-one interviews.

“This will be the first foray into employment for many of the selected graduates,” states Matthew Cook, business unit manager: EIM at Datacentrix. “It is therefore crucial that they also gain a proper understanding of skills, such as meeting etiquette and business administration, to complete the year as well-rounded professionals within the local technology space.”

“The advancement of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills in South Africa is a subject that is of great importance to OpenText,” explains Lenore Kerrigan, country sales director for Sub-Saharan Africa at OpenText.

“Our young talent must be nurtured in order to succeed in the digital world, and it is for this reason that we are pleased to be involved in the initiative.

“All of the students selected have earned a BSc or equivalent degree and have already built skills across a number of programming languages, including Java C++, C# and HTML, to name a few. Importantly though, they also embody other strategic qualities, such as being results driven, analytical and enthusiastic.”

The new recruits will undergo four OpenText-sponsored “boot-camps” over the next year, along side an extensive e-learning component, providing a deep understanding into



**Matthew Cook, business unit manager: EIM at Datacentrix**

**Our young talent must be nurtured in order to succeed in the digital world, and it is for this reason that we are pleased to be involved in the initiative.**

the technical and business benefits of OpenText's Enterprise Information Management solutions.

Matthew continues, “This programme represents the start of an exhilarating journey for these graduates; providing them with the right tools to embrace this opportunity and forge ahead.”

# 10

Graduates from Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban

# 1 year

programme including intensive training in OpenText solutions, as well as in softer business skills.

# 50%

Equally split between men and women.

# 4

OpenText-sponsored “boot-camps” over the next year, along side an extensive e-learning component.

# Why hyper convergence is the only option

**Hyperconvergence** is a term that's being heard more and more frequently across the IT landscape, renowned for enabling the integration, or convergence, of highly reliable server platforms, with storage, networking and virtualisation resources. Simply put, hyperconvergence is swiftly becoming the data centre of the future, and the sooner companies align to this strategy, the quicker they will be able to take advantage of simplifying operations while also deriving true business value.

## Addressing CIO challenges

### 1. The clear and present danger of rogue/shadow IT

With the advent of cloud computing, IT empowered youngsters – who are used to an always on, always connected world – are entering the workplace. The new danger that IT departments are facing is if they cannot deliver services at the same rate that they can procure them, these youngsters will find a way to provision the services themselves. The expectation that one can employ technologically advanced employees and assume that they will wait for days for IT services to be provisioned is a dangerous one. And within large organisations – with their bureaucratic processes and resultant long lead times for IT services – technologically savvy employees will seek solutions that lead to rogue IT practices, security breaches and potential reputational damage.

### 2. Cloud – public, private or hybrid ... argh!

There is a massive disconnect between what customers are hearing about the cloud from OEMs and what they hear from the system integrators. Cloud is

being hyped as the “silver bullet” that will solve every IT challenge – present, legacy and future state. However, the reality is that while public cloud providers are shouting from the rooftops that this is the best solution for all enterprise customers, customers are resisting due to a number of complexities:

**Challenge 1:** Public cloud is expensive. All public cloud providers work on a basic cost model. They operate using a cost per hour/per GB on memory compute and storage, and each component is charged at a seemingly nominal charge. An often overlooked cost metric is the cost of egress data – ingress data that goes into the cloud attracts a zero cost amount, but egress data attracts a charge that can very quickly break the TCO model. Consuming services that are USD priced adds additional risk to this model.

**Challenge 2:** Connectivity is expensive. Most solutions that enterprises deploy are over architected. This means that the customer builds resiliency across the design, often going down to a level where they even build redundancy across telco providers. Connectivity is not cheap in South Africa and this again blows the cost model out of the water, as the only ones benefitting are the connectivity providers.

**Challenge 3:** An investment in cloud services means a disinvestment in assets. Public listed companies list their data centres as a fixed asset on their balance sheets. Moving to the public cloud means disinvesting in traditional brick and mortar and in so doing, reducing stockholder equity.

**Challenge 4:** With public cloud, you either need to be all in, or all out. And, in a world where accountability is often lacking, it could so happen that the public cloud provider and the



**Alan Browning, hyper converged leader: Data Center Group, Middle East Africa**

internal IT staff both declare their innocence when a problem arises. The critical issue would be to diagnose the problem and get the services back online quickly, which may become complicated when two IT service providers are involved.

### 3. So how does hyperconvergence solve these challenges?

While the flexibility and scalability that public cloud offers is definitely the way IT departments should go about provisioning services to the business, why would a client not look to put down a resilient infrastructure that provides the same benefits of public cloud, but manage it from within their own data centres?

A good example of this is how Supercell handled the growth in popularity of its online game called Clash of Clans. The game was launched entirely on a public cloud platform, but as it gained status it also became increasingly expensive to run on a public cloud platform. To





## Why hyper convergence is the only option (continued)

maximise profits, Supercell started to invest in internal infrastructure while also bursting to the cloud every time it launched a new update, allowing it to use the scalability that could be gained from a public cloud provider. This is a great way to consume public cloud services, and while most enterprise customers are not game developers, so this business model doesn't make sense for them, the web 2.0 architecture absolutely does seem right.

Typically when customers procure new infrastructure, it is generally architected to a point where future capacity is catered for in order to last over the depreciation lifecycle, be it storage, compute or networking assets that are required. Should the architect miscalculate the capacity requirements, scaling the architecture without incurring downtime becomes incredibly expensive.

Hyperconvergence solves this challenge by allowing the IT infrastructure to scale in almost a "Lego block" type approach, where enough capacity can be procured as needed in a simple, modular manner. This matches IT budgets really well, as often vendors or OEMs want to sell a "Rolls Royce" product when the client is saying that their budgets dictate that they want "just enough IT". This new way of architecting a solution allows customers to scale as their business requirements grow or decrease, which mirrors a public cloud solution model.

The second challenge that hyperconvergence solves is that it fundamentally tears down silos within a business. As with any disruptive technology, its implementation is no longer a technology-only discussion it becomes a people and process transformation, and sadly people resist change when they feel threatened. Hyperconvergence demolishes the silos that are often created within a company's IT department and empowers the virtualisation administrator to become the "network guy" and the "storage guy". This means that the business can consume the virtual machine at the same speed that they could procure it from a public cloud provider.

Concepts such as RAID, LUN masking and zoning of the storage inside the device no longer exist, so these resources within the business can be redeployed to alternative projects which greatly reduces operational costs within a business. This is a fundamental shift as the software is driving the hardware, making the solution infinitely scalable. This now enables companies to reach the nirvana state of deploying a software defined data centre.

As a rule, managing infrastructure can be boring and quite unfulfilling, but fortunately hyperconvergence addresses this issue as essentially the form factor has been condensed from

the traditional three tier architecture into a single 1U or 2U appliance. This means that the software can now interact directly with the underlying hardware without ever needing to leave the chassis - the virtual machine performance is operating at a speed that has never been experienced before.

In the past when virtualisation was developed in the traditional way of deploying infrastructure, it didn't take into account the legacy NAS and SAN storage subsystems, something that became the bottleneck of any virtualised deployment, especially in the deployment of a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI).

The general solution to this poorly performing environment was to throw more fabric interconnects at it, or deploy a full flash array which proved to be complex and expensive. This also didn't bring a permanent solution to the problem either and so the cycle of deploying larger flash arrays just kept repeating itself.

Looking at the traditional "cloud pyramid", the foundation of this is Infrastructure-as-a-Service, the middle part is Platform-as-a-Service, and the very top part is Software-as-a-Service. As one moves up the value chain of the pyramid, so business value is increased. Cloud only makes sense at the PaaS and SaaS layer, but they are reliant on the underlying IaaS layer. Hyperconvergence once again leaps to the fore as it provides a robust foundation in a self-healing, easily scalable way.

The question of the moment is, if you are not deploying hyperconverged systems in your own data centres, what are you doing? The recent listing of one of the major hyperconverged companies was met incredibly well by the market, showing that it is ready to embrace the technology and that now is the time to jump onto the wave.

**Hyperconvergence demolishes the silos that are often created within a company's IT department and empowers the virtualisation administrator to become the "network guy" and the "storage guy".**

# Western Cape Government significantly improves reliable service through EIM project

**The Western Cape** Government's Department of Transport and Public Works has reduced its average licence turnaround time from 145 to 45 days, improved compliance with mandated deadlines for supplier payments, and also empowered staff and clients with visible, predictable processing; all due to its rollout of OpenText enterprise information management (EIM) software with Datacentrix.

The Department of Transport and Public Works, one of 13 departments in the Western Cape Government, builds and maintains roads and buildings and works to ensure safe, efficient transport.

The department opted to implement a pilot EIM project in 2005, starting with document management and digitising documents.

"Since then, the entire Western Cape Government has latched onto this solution and I've seen the benefits based on how it has positively affected the work in our department," explains Yasir Ahmed, chief director for transport regulation at the Department of Transport and Public Works.

## Overcoming challenges

The Department of Transport and Public Works manages large projects and serves a diverse community, granting licences to all public transport operators, from taxi drivers through to touring coach operators. "These are often small businesses," explains Yasir.

"If they don't have operating licences, their vehicles could be impounded. They are dependent on my department to process applications within 60 days."

Historically, paper-based processing at the department was inefficient and costly, with the average turnaround for licences stretching closer to 145 days. "Applicants would submit paperwork and the documents would be misplaced or lost," he adds.

In addition, the department did not have a precise way of measuring the turnaround time for individual applications. "We had received numerous complaints from clients saying that applications were in the system for up to a year, so that was a challenge for us. As a government department, we needed to ensure that we listened to our clients and provided a service they would be happy with."

As operators waited for licences, paper-based processing hold-ups also meant suppliers waited for payments. "Suppliers really struggled," Yasir says. "They are completely dependent on the cash flow."

## Encouraging adoption

"We have around 30,000 users that would have to be served by the system. The EIM system that was put forward provided the scalability we needed for the volume of documents, data, even media that would need to be managed.

"Auditability is also very important. In my department, I needed to ensure that the system we procured would allow me, as a senior manager, to check documents and know how long an application, for instance, has been in the system," highlights Yasir.

To encourage widespread adoption, the Department engaged Datacentrix, a provider of high performing and secure ICT solutions and the only OpenText Platinum Partner in southern Africa, to implement a multi-faceted change management programme.

"As a government department, it's easy to instruct: 'This is the system we are using'; but, that's not the approach we took," Yasir says. "We worked to have our staff understand what value the system would add to their day-to-day business. As a result, the user uptake was phenomenal."



**Yasir Ahmed, chief director for transport regulation at the Department of Transport and Public Works**

- **Reduced average licence turnaround time from 145 to 45 days**
- **Improved compliance with mandated deadlines for supplier payments**

Since the introduction of its new system for the processing of operating licences, the Department has not misplaced a single file, according to Yasir. Applicants deliver paperwork, including identification, tax documents and other supporting material, which is then digitised, scanned and uploaded to the



## Western Cape Government significantly improves reliable service through EIM project (continued)

EIM system by department officials. "In just that first step, we achieved significant time savings," Yasir says. Replacement copies are unnecessary, reducing filing work for both clients and staff.

The department further improved communication with clients through document-centric workflows in the new system. When an application is received, an automatic SMS or e-mail is sent to the client, and each step of the process is communicated with similar updates improving overall service delivery within the department.

As a government entity with thousands of users at all experience levels, the department credits Datacentrix with skilled support and change management. Adoption was encouraged through friendly competition, awards to internal champions and other initiatives, which formed part of a broad change management programme that centred on attainable results. "With the process and training Datacentrix implemented, our staff very quickly understood how their lives would be made easier, how the system would benefit them, and how it would benefit our clients," Yasir says.

### Consistency is key

With its new EIM system, the Department of Transport and Public Works has managed to cut turnaround time for licence applications by more than two-thirds, from an average of 145 days to 45 days. "It allows us to track the document from the point of receipt to the point of

issuing and we can see where officials are involved in every step of the process," Yasir says. "Furthermore, we are able to say confidently to enforcement authorities that any operating licence that was meant to be issued has been issued."

Not only does reliable processing establish order and predictability, it also fosters relationships of trust between department personnel and clients. "Every applicant who walks through our doors now understands that they will be treated equally. Their documents will not go missing," Yasir says.

"Our staff members can now answer questions more effectively and they are more confident in dealing with clients," he states. The result: less complaints and improved service delivery. "We have less of a need to respond to client complaints, which allows our management team to focus on further improving service delivery to our clients."

As the department extends the EIM solution to other areas within the institution, additional process efficiencies are gained. For example, invoices are now handled within the system using a supplier invoice tracking application. "We've managed to improve the turnaround time, in terms of paying our suppliers, within 20 to 30 days. That's been a big achievement," Yasir notes. "At the national level, our president instructed

government must pay suppliers within 30 days, and I'm glad to say that our department complies."

### Achieving recognition

Since rolling out the new system, the department has received a number of accolades. It has received an award from Productivity South Africa for improved turnaround times in the management of operating licence applications and it was also honoured with the prestigious 2015 Enterprise Champion Award from OpenText.

The global OpenText title took note of the department's colossal strides in optimising its operations and transforming to a digital environment, and recognised Datacentrix for its role in the technical deployment and change leadership.

Datacentrix managing director: coastal region and EIM, Juane Peacock, notes that the international recognition is a perfect reward for the teams that worked tirelessly to move forward with the department's EIM programme.

"It reflects the strong vision, close partnership, and quality technology that came together – transforming the department into an efficient, digital entity," he explains, adding that improving service delivery in the public sector is particularly rewarding for Datacentrix. "We're passionate about using technology to improve the lives of all South Africans. Being involved in partnerships like this one brings us closer to that vision."

The awards follow other similar successes over the past couple of years: in 2015, the Western Cape Government's Egsaan Samaai, won the local OpenText "Think Big" Award, and in 2014, the Western Cape Government's Jan du Plessis won OpenText's "Enterprise Champion Award", while Datacentrix took home the "Fast Growth Markets Partner of the Year Award".

**Our staff members can now answer questions more effectively and they are more confident in dealing with clients. The results: less complaints and improved service delivery.**

## Strategic collaboration

# Datacentrix and Pfortner target

## African financial services market

**Datacentrix** has established a strategic collaboration with Pfortner, a local developer of secure communications solutions. The partnership will see the two companies join forces to bring data protection to Africa's financial services sector.

Says Aubrey Swanepoel, Pfortner founder and MD: "Pfortner's secure end-to-end solutions are used by numerous multinational financial services firms across a current base of 15 African countries. This is excellently complemented by Datacentrix' strong implementation and service capabilities as well as its established footprint.

"As a small technology-focused setup, our partnership with a services-oriented organisation like Datacentrix will provide Pfortner with a tremendous opportunity to increase our traction within Africa's financial services market," he states. "Aside from its strong local presence and skills, Datacentrix can also assist and support customers throughout their entire technology lifecycle."



**Aubrey Swanepoel, Pfortner founder and managing director**

### Secure redundant connectivity (M2M & IoT)

Secure all point-to-point or server-to-client traffic using our SRC devices. Firewall, failover, routing, authentication and provisioning in a easy to use web management console. Add to that our STEALTH layer to hide your network devices and you have security, resilience and connectivity all in one device.



### Secure communications platform (Person2Person & IM)

SCP is an integrated team solution incorporating elements of instant messaging, file transfer and email into one platform. Encrypt, own and control all instant messages and secure file transfers for your corporate environment. SCP integrates seamlessly into the user's workflow through IM & email notifications and plug-ins for common email clients.



Aubrey explains that, in the future, Datacentrix will be the go-to-market vehicle for Pfortner's solutions and have input into product development. "Pfortner provides two innovative solutions to the African market," he says.

"The first is secure communications in the machine to machine/ Internet of Things (IoT) space, using Pfortner Secure Redundant Connectivity (SRC) devices. Incorporating Pfortner's patented STEALTH technology, these devices are cloaked on the network, providing greater security, resilience and connectivity all in one."

The second solution falls within the person-to-person/ instant messaging (IM) space, where an integrated

Secure Communications Platform (SCP) incorporates elements of instant messaging, file transfer and e-mail into one platform. "This provides a powerful tool, enabling organisations to encrypt, own and control all instant messages and secure file transfers within its corporate environment. It protects companies against email phishing, impersonation fraud and can also avert third party data breaches."

Says Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO: "Pfortner's excellent technology solutions will round out Datacentrix' existing information security offering, while allowing the two companies to deliver on their joint vision of providing customised, secure connectivity solutions and services to the continent's financial services sector."



## Storage

# PPS simplifies SAN environment, boosts performance with Datacentrix

**PPS**, the only mutual financial services company in South Africa that focuses exclusively on graduate professionals, has successfully upgraded its storage area network (SAN) platform with Datacentrix, creating a redundant environment that is less complex, easy to use and high performing. PPS provides tailor-made insurance, investment and healthcare solutions to its members.

Denny Ferreira, senior IT operations manager at PPS explains that the company has grown quickly over the past two years. "From a technology perspective, PPS's Parktown-based head office provides support for an expanding head count at head office, as well as for our subsidiaries. We had been running a particular type of SAN for several years and wanted to see what else was available in the marketplace to address our Tier 1 application requirements. The objective of this project was to simplify our infrastructure environment, at the same time as improving performance.

The organisation shortlisted a number of vendors based on cost effectiveness, and ran several proof of concept projects – for a few weeks each – before selecting Datacentrix' Tintri storage offering.

"The Datacentrix PoC, which was a combination of flash and normal spinning disk storage, worked well for our environment. We also performed existing site visits prior to our final decision," explains Denny.

Says Venesia Oxford, account manager at Datacentrix: "PPS required a storage platform that could support superior performance at a cost effective price. The proposed solution by Datacentrix was suggested specifically as it is 'application aware', ideal for this environment, and enhances the performance of applications running in a virtualised environment.

**Datacentrix has been a PPS partner for several years now, managing our service desk, desktops and some networking. Through this ongoing relationship, we know that this is a solutions and services partner that will remain accountable, is easy to deal with, and always goes the extra mile.**

"As a long standing partner of PPS, Datacentrix is well aware of the criticality of its applications – should the company's Tier 1 applications ever go down there is a direct business impact and serious repercussions to the PPS services delivered to its approximately 140,000 members worldwide," she adds.

PPS clients are given direct access into this environment and can pull information on their policies. The company is also planning on launching a public PPS mobile application soon.

"Since going live with the new solution in October last year, we've managed to overcome the frequent data corruption issues experienced



**Venesia Oxford, account manager at Datacentrix**

previously, and have seen improvements in both visibility and performance on our new system, as well as stability, simplicity and user friendliness," states Denny.

"We installed one disk solution within our production environment, and the other at our disaster recovery (DR) site and this solution has already proven its complete redundancy in case of a production failure.

"Datacentrix has been a PPS partner for several years now, managing our service desk, desktops and some networking. Through this ongoing relationship, we know that this is a solutions and services partner that will remain accountable, is easy to deal with, and always goes the extra mile," he concludes.

# AMD:

## Powering the products you love

### AMD inspires innovation everywhere

The world's top companies depend on AMD. AMD powers everything from the Microsoft® Xbox One™ and the Sony PlayStation 4, to powerful desktops and Windows 10-based laptops, 5K displays, the MacBook Pro and beyond.

HP's newest ProBooks, EliteBooks and EliteDesks are powered by the latest 6th generation AMD PRO A-Series APU. It is specifically designed to support growing business, delivering outstanding reliability, security, and performance at incredible value.

### Technology leadership

AMD is a leader in innovation and has a long history of firsts:

- First to break the 1GHz barrier.
- First 64-bit ARM based SoC in the industry and the first server APU built on HSA.
- First to develop the APU by putting the CPU and GPU on a single piece of silicon.
- First to have native dual core and quad core x86 processors and the first x86 quad core SoC.
- First to release an x86 64 bit CPU and first to release an x86 CPU with integrated memory controller.
- First performance APU in a single chip SoC and the first HEVC hardware for mainstream notebooks.

### Performance

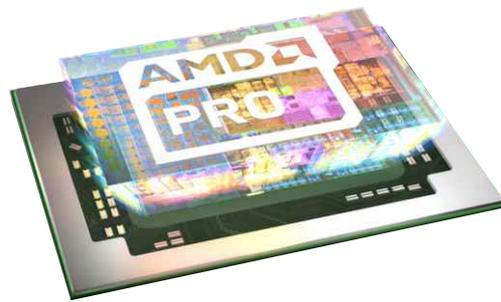
- Up to 12 compute cores (4 CPU, 8 GPU) drive efficient performance.
- Exceptional power efficiency delivers all-day battery life.
- APU architecture optimised for real-world collaboration and connectivity-driven productivity.

### Reliability

- 18-month platform stability empowers smarter, simpler IT planning and investment.

HP Elite PCs offer the latest AMD PRO A-Series APU, designed specifically to support your growing business, delivering outstanding reliability, security and performance at incredible value. That's what you call a smart investment.

### REDEFINING THE PROCESSOR What is an AMD PRO A-Series APU?



Radeon GPU



Multi-core CPU



AMD Pro A-Series APU with up to 12 compute cores

### Accelerated processing unit

- Unmatched graphics and compute processing experiences on top of the features you need and expect.
- Accelerated performance of today's most popular applications such as Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, Firefox and Photoshop.
- Reduced power consumption and long 'all-day' battery life.

- 24-month processor longevity and 36-month warranty virtually ensure non-stop productivity and peace of mind.
- Trusted by major companies worldwide, both as a technology partner and as a supplier.

### Opportunity

- Significant cost saving and price/performance leadership against the competition.
- Innovative APU architecture addresses end-user needs both today and tomorrow.
- Industry standards-based security and manageability architecture drives freedom of choice.

Power user	AMD PRO A12 APU	CORE i7
	AMD PRO A10 APU	CORE i5
Mainstream	AMD PRO A8 APU	CORE i3
	AMD PRO A6 APU	
Basic tasks worker	AMD A4 APU	PENTIUM
	AMD E-series	CELERON





# Datacentrix shares South African success story at OpenText global conference

**Datacentrix** recently had the honour of being one of only three OpenText partners worldwide invited to present a "Partner Success Story" at the company's Enterprise World 2016 event, held in Nashville, Tennessee.

OpenText's Enterprise World event is an annual partner and customer conference where product announcements, seminars and workshops are held, with participation from both partners and customers around the world.

Datacentrix' presentation – which formed part of the Partner Summit conference for OpenText's global partner programme members - centred on a local oil and gas company that needed to mitigate business risk related to contract management processes, as well as to reduce costs associated with manual data mining of existing contracts.

"As the only OpenText Platinum Partner in South Africa and a long-term attendee of Enterprise World events, it was a real coup for Datacentrix to be given the opportunity to present to a global audience of OpenText partners," says Stephen D'Arcy-Evans, services manager at Datacentrix, who delivered his presentation "Datacentrix/OpenText engagement" to approximately 500 partners who attended Enterprise World 2016.

"Through our use of OpenText solutions, Datacentrix has been able to assist the client in question with a centralised repository of all contracts (irrespective of their financial obligation), to manage contract life cycle processes, automate contract review and approval processes through reusable sets of contracts, discover and migrate existing contracts, integrate with the organisation's existing SAP and Microsoft SharePoint systems, and provide for its multilingual support needs of English, Portuguese and French for beyond South African borders," he explains.



Stephen D'Arcy-Evans, services manager at Datacentrix

**Datacentrix' understanding of our customers' requirements, along with our deep technical expertise, are supported by access to OpenText throughout the engagement cycle. Together, we are able to realise new and exciting solutions to meet local organisations' business needs.**

D'Arcy-Evans maintains that the foundation of Datacentrix' ongoing content management success is laid in its continuous training investment, and constant collaboration with OpenText.

"Datacentrix' understanding of our customers' requirements, along with our deep technical expertise, are supported by access to OpenText throughout the engagement cycle. Together, we are able to realise new and exciting solutions to meet local organisations' business needs," he adds.



# Debswana digitises and automates

## accounts payable function with Datacentrix

**International** diamond producer, Debswana Diamond Company Ltd, is one of the world's largest producers of diamonds. With four diamond mines in central Botswana, as well as a coal mine, the organisation operates in a complex ecosystem that includes numerous suppliers.

Debswana's Accounts Payable (AP) function had grown organically over the years, and its paper-based, manual processes had become unwieldy. It selected the SAP Invoice Management solution by OpenText, delivered by Datacentrix, to solve a litany of problems, including:

- ▶ No centralised visibility of the AP function;
- ▶ Escalating staff costs required to process invoices;
- ▶ Limited reporting capabilities resulting in poor audit reviews;
- ▶ Missed opportunities to take advantage of early-payment discounts;
- ▶ Inaccuracies due to manual data entries; and
- ▶ Poor vendor relations resulting from longer closing cycles.

"We needed a way to manage our invoices in a far more efficient manner," notes Tshepo Mokgethi, project manager at Debswana, adding: "We selected Datacentrix to deploy the new invoice management solution to digitise and automate many aspects of the processes."

Datacentrix' approach was to integrate the solution seamlessly into Debswana's existing environment, and to augment the technology deployment with a deep change management and training programme. This resulted in a smooth transition to a fully-digital AP function, creating a number of immediate and long-lasting benefits.

Using optical character recognition, data is automatically captured from paper, email or fax. With the PO number as a



Sunset at the Debswana Jwaneng mine in Botswana

**Datacentrix' approach was to integrate the solution seamlessly into Debswana's existing environment, and to augment the technology deployment with a deep change management and training programme.**

unique identifier, invoices are automatically linked to all relevant documents – including purchase orders, goods receipts, invoice transaction screens, invoice images and transaction notes.

The AP team is empowered with instant access to these documents. At a higher-level, management sees a central, consolidated view of activity within the AP realm, and end-to-end process analytics that helps to uncover any bottlenecks or areas to improve.

The problem of errors, inconsistencies and duplicate entries

is essentially eradicated; and in cases where there is an issue with correlating data, exception flags are raised and can be easily isolated and handled manually.

Debswana is able to curtail the escalating headcount required to manage growing volumes of invoices. As some administrative staff are redeployed to higher-value activities like supplier relationships, the number of people involved in managing invoices can be reduced – resulting in cost savings.

With a faster and more efficient AP function, Debswana is also able to take



## Storage and virtualisation

# Tradebridge enhances storage and virtualisation efficiencies with Datacentrix

**Tradebridge**, the leading South African value added transaction switch company, has successfully completed another effective technology implementation with Datacentrix. The most recent of a string of projects involves a storage replacement and virtualisation solution upgrade to help the organisation improve efficiency, availability and agility.

Tradebridge provides solutions that enable immediate, secure and reliable messaging between organisations that support financial transactions, currently operating through three member companies: Healthbridge, which handles electronic claims switching between medical aids and medical practices; SureSwipe, which is the fastest growing provider of debit and credit card swipe machines in South Africa; and the DCM Group,

which provides debt counselling and restructuring services.

As a group, tradebridge handles a large volume of financial data, as well as real-time transactions, so the selection of a strong, security-conscious ICT partner was a top concern.

Says Carel van Heerden, group IT manager for tradebridge: "Tradebridge has worked with Datacentrix for more than a decade in a partnership that has encompassed networking, servers, storage, software implementation and support. Over this time, we have found that we can come to Datacentrix with a challenge and the company will bring the right minds together to find a speedy, cost effective solution."

Carel explains that Datacentrix has been able to provide the best technical expertise and support, as an HP Platinum Partner, while also delivering the personal "human touch".

"The type of relationship the two companies have can be exemplified by an experience early this year; tradebridge experienced a serious, area-wide power outage that damaged one of our storage devices. Datacentrix managed to source the correct parts and have us up and running again by the very next day, a feat that could not be achieved by many other technology partners.

"Tradebridge and Datacentrix have walked a long road together, and this in itself speaks volumes," Carel concludes.

## Debswana digitises and automates accounts payable function with Datacentrix (continued)

advantage of early-payment discounts, avoid any late-payment penalties or interest charges, as well as reduce the costs of physical couriering.

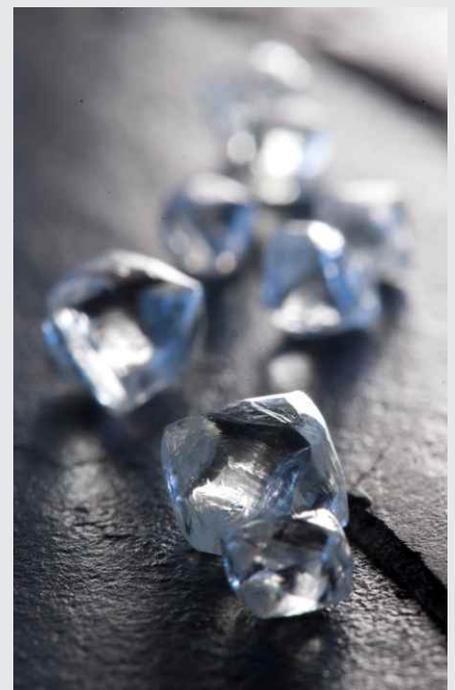
When combined, these cost savings create a significant financial impact, which only grows in value as time goes on.

The new solution enables faster and more consistent payment cycles, and frees-up capacity for staff to focus more on supplier relationships. This has helped Debswana enhance its engagement with vendors and suppliers.

An improved credit rating and excellent standing with suppliers means that the organisation can negotiate prices and contract terms more effectively with its major suppliers.

"With rigorous controls built into the solution, Debswana enjoys peace of mind, knowing that consolidated information is available in a variety of reporting formats, to cater for all audit and compliance requirements. Information residing within the invoice management solution is fully secured," explains Matthew Cook, business unit manager: EIM at Datacentrix.

"And as impressive as these benefits are, ultimately Debswana's AP team will realise even greater advantages over time. The foundation has been set, not only for speedy invoice payments, but the ability to focus strategically on stakeholder relationships and the optimal deployment of capital."



# Cisco application-centric infrastructure is taking data centres to the next step in automation

**Cisco ACI.** Cisco's software-defined networking (SDN) architecture, enhances business agility, reduces total cost of ownership, automates IT tasks, and accelerates data centre application deployments.

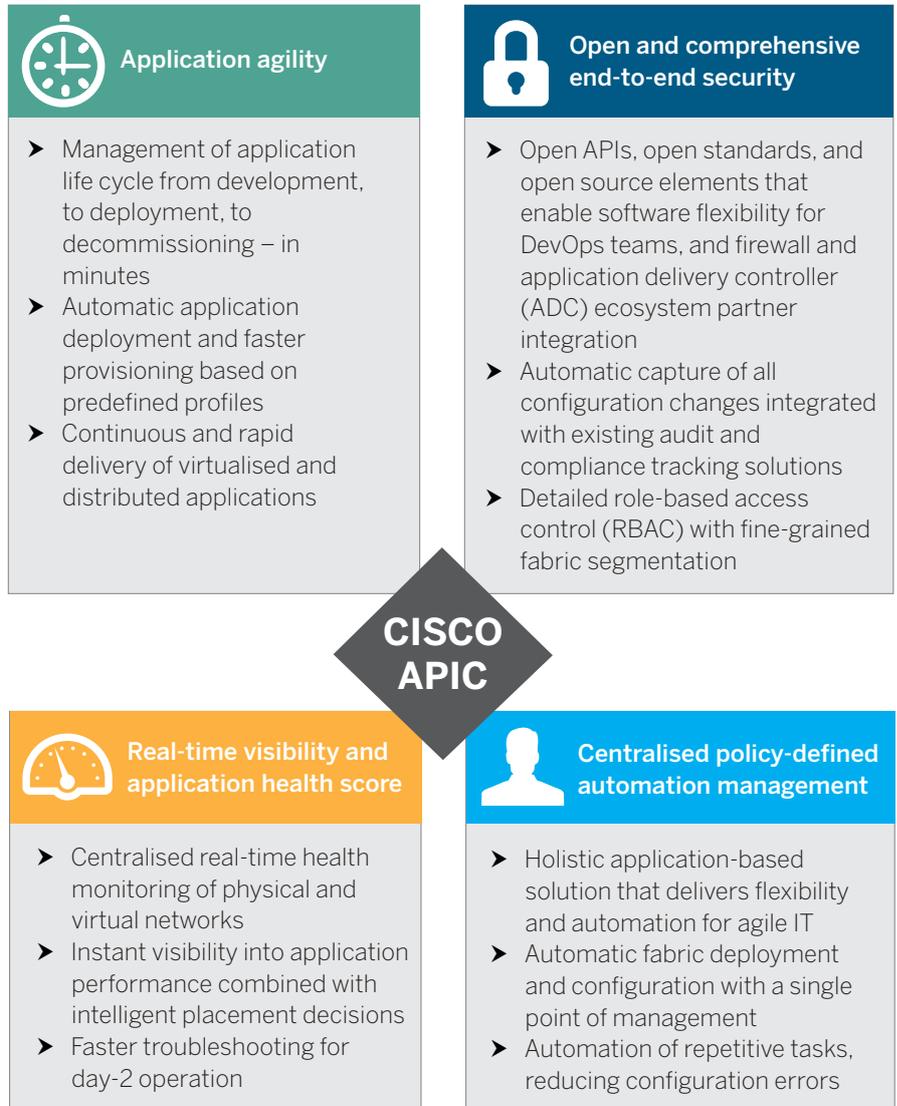
### State of the data centre

User demands and changing application requirements call for a different approach that is simple, more agile, and application centric. Applications today behave differently, are highly virtualised, run on multiple hypervisors, and are more distributed than ever. Developed differently, these applications require rapid and continuous delivery, shifting the communication needs within the data centre. This new model is a transformation in data centre design and scale, IT infrastructure management, provisioning, and consumption.

Ease of provisioning and speed are now critical performance metrics for data centre network infrastructure that supports physical, virtual and cloud environments – without compromising scalability or security.

### Why today's solutions are insufficient

Today's solutions lack an application-centric approach. The use of virtual overlays on top of physical layers has increased complexity by adding policies, services and devices. Traditional SDN solutions are network centric and based on constructs that replicate networking functions that already exists.



**CISCO APIC: The Cisco Application Policy Infrastructure Controller**

Business outcomes with Cisco IT		
<p><b>Greater business agility</b></p> <p><b>58%</b> Reduced network provisioning</p>	<p><b>Reduced costs/complexity</b></p> <p><b>21%</b> Reduced management costs</p>	<p><b>Lower operating costs</b></p> <p><b>45%</b> Reduced power and cooling costs</p>
<p><b>Lower capital expenses</b></p> <p><b>25%</b> CAPEX reduction</p>	<p><b>Resource optimisation</b></p> <p><b>10-20%</b> Compute and storage optimisation</p>	



## Backup as a Service

# Datacentrix introduces scalable, always available Backup as a Service offering

**As organisations** pursue the benefits of cloud computing in response to their evolving business requirements, the race is on to provide the best business value and the highest service levels.

And when the average downtime for any business can cost thousands, if not millions of rands in lost revenue, the fact that every company must implement a backup strategy to protect their assets in the case of an emergency becomes clear.

For these reasons, high performing and secure ICT solution provider, Datacentrix, has developed a solution to help local organisations protect their data from unforeseen and even predictable circumstances.

"Datacentrix has introduced a Backup as a Service (BaaS) that has ten times faster backup and recovery capabilities, and delivers numerous advantages for backup, deduplication and replication," explains John Dewar, business unit manager: storage solutions at Datacentrix. "It also features flexible self-service capabilities that are fully able to meet specific business demands.

"Our cloud business model delivers competitive advantage and key milestones, including hugely scalable service delivery; guaranteed data

sovereignty and local support for customers," he adds.

The Datacentrix BaaS offering is available as a fully managed service within an environment that is monitored and controlled on a 24/7 basis. Customers can enjoy the benefits of regular reporting, as well as service meetings with a specialised team that boasts highly demanded technical and business skills.

This service offers customers:

- A zero capital outlay;
- End-to-end disaster recovery;
- Secure offsite locations for backup data;
- Reduced data loss;
- Shortened recovery times;
- Data encryption during transit and in offsite state; and
- Fully customisable services that are specific and respond to customer needs.

"Our BaaS service provides quick, efficient support for new software versions, enhanced customer backup and recovery service levels, and can be deployed within a day instead of weeks. Not only this, but it offers a backup speed up to 10 times faster than traditional products and 10:1 greater deduplication. Furthermore, we can deliver automated replication and a self-service portal that increases control and places the customer in the management seat."

Datacentrix' hosted services utilise the country's first state-of-the-art, energy saving, Tier 3+ capable modular data centre infrastructure. Services are customisable and are available on a plug and play basis. Customers can opt to house and manage their own hardware in one of Datacentrix' facilities, or consume infrastructure specifically commissioned for their use. The company has implemented all the operational and management



**John Dewar, business unit manager: storage solutions at Datacentrix**

**Our BaaS service provides quick, efficient support for new software versions, enhanced customer backup and recovery service levels, and can be deployed within a day instead of weeks.**

processes and procedures based on the ITIL disciplines and principles.

Operations are fully managed and supported by a dedicated services, consulting and projects management team that coordinate services including architectural and design services, monitoring, disaster recovery, storage management, application monitoring and control, networking and more.



# The fibre dilemma

**By Graham Beneke**, technical specialist at eNetworks (a Datacentrix company) and chairman of the Internet Service Providers' Association (ISPA)

Fibre optic technology could catapult the African internet economy into the future, in much the same way that the cellphone revolutionised communication on the continent in the early part of the century. In fact, market analysts, Ovum, predict that fibre connections to homes and businesses in Africa will grow strongly in the next few years – to pass the one million threshold in the year 2020.

Once laid, fibre promises speeds and distances that are orders-of-magnitude better than South Africa's copper-based DSL technology which has, rather painstakingly, characterised the country's internet journey to-date. Those lucky enough to have a fibre connection in their households enjoy incredible speeds, ultra high-definition video streaming, low-latency online gaming, and other benefits.

And, in the business context, the fibre that is being laid to office parks in major metros will enable next-generation digital business, advanced machine learning

and artificial intelligence, cloud computing, enterprise mobility, big data, video conferencing, enhanced collaboration tools, and the like.

Unfortunately, for most companies, this exciting promise of fibre-powered digital transformation remains tantalisingly just out of reach. Reaching that one million connections mark within the next couple of years seems unlikely, at the current pace.

A few years ago, the biggest throttling point to local internet ambitions was the lack of international links. But now, we have a wealth of undersea cables - from Seacom, to EASSy, WACS, ACE, MalN OnE, TEAMS, and LION. Awkwardly-named, but immensely powerful, these cables present a staggering array of backhaul options for local ISPs and network providers.

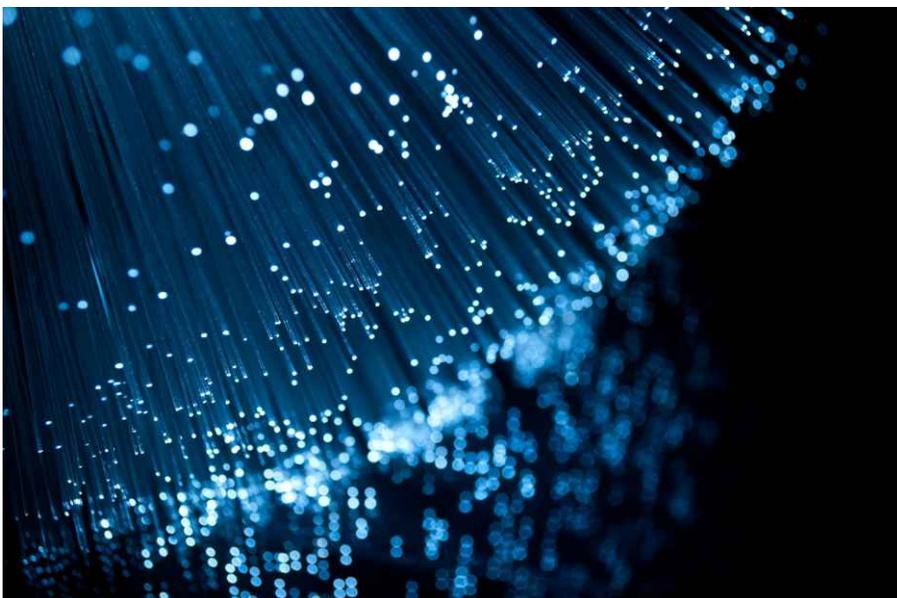
With the international bandwidth challenge now effectively solved, the irony is that a new local challenge has surfaced, "the economics of fibre".

South Africa, like most African countries, suffers from some inherent problems when compared to some of



**Graham Beneke**, technical specialist at eNetworks (a Datacentrix company) and chairman of the Internet Service Providers' Association (ISPA)

**For now, fibre connections remain the preserve of affluent residential suburbs, and large corporates headquartered in higher-density business districts. It will take smart, enabling government policies to change the current “economics of fibre”, and speed up its roll-out into other areas.**





## The fibre dilemma (continued)

its international peers. The market size of individuals and businesses is relatively low, when compared to the vast geographies in which we live and work.

Consider the sprawling low-density office campuses that continue to sprout between Johannesburg and Pretoria, or the new business hubs in Cape Town's northernmost regions, for example. Contrast this with the tighter, taller office arrangements in the skylines of Tokyo or Manhattan, and the problem of density becomes apparent.

Simply put, the economics of fibre requires substantial users in the same area. It's a physically resource-intensive process to dig up roads, divert traffic, and lay expensive fibre infrastructure.

Currently, not enough companies can justify the price of a new fibre installation. And, at the current demand, fibre providers can't rationalise lowering their price. So we struggle on with our creaking DSL networks, in a chicken-and-egg dilemma, a market-failure of sorts, which may need government intervention to resolve.

The Australian government, for example, addressed the problems of fibre's "initially unattractive" economics, with stimulus measures designed to get more fibre into the ground and into the office. The local regulatory and municipal approvals frameworks need to change, to encourage the

deployment of fibre into South Africa's major business centres. Currently, signing a fibre contract, to actually seeing the results, can take anywhere from three to 12 months. As local companies increasingly compete head-on with powerful digital enterprises - the likes of Amazon, Netflix, and Google - this is far from an ideal scenario.

For now, fibre connections remain the preserve of affluent residential suburbs, and large corporates headquartered in higher-density business districts. It will take smart, enabling government policies to change the current "economics of fibre", and speed up its roll-out into other areas.

## eNetworks is one of the top five peered Internet service providers in South Africa



**Presence in 8 data centres across South Africa**



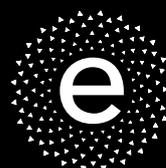
**Core network uptime of more than 99.997%**



**Ultimate connectivity with great speeds of up to a Gigabit per second**



**Always fast,  
always reliable  
Internet services.**



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