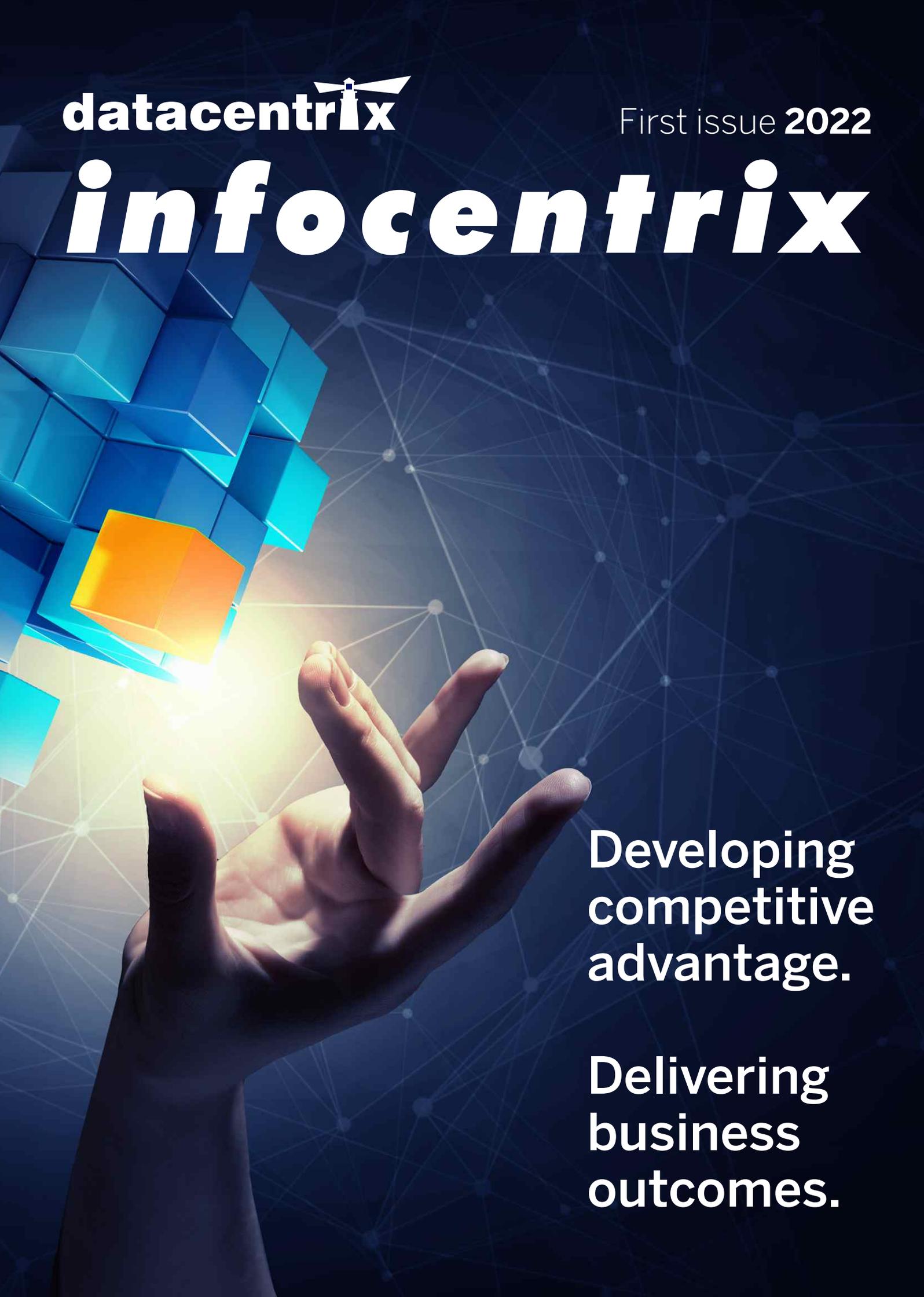


datacentrix

First issue **2022**

infocentrix



**Developing
competitive
advantage.**

**Delivering
business
outcomes.**

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

Datacentrix is a leading hybrid IT systems integrator and managed services provider.

Our expert teams leverage the power of technology to connect, transform and future-proof business.

The company's value-driven approach and proven execution capability reinforce its position as one of the top ICT players in the market.

Datacentrix has a broad African footprint and presence in the Middle East.

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

**Aruba
Cloudflare
Hewlett Packard Enterprise
HP Inc
IBM
Infinidad
Micro Focus
Rubrik
Veritas**

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CEO message



Dear valued Clients,

Business leaders are looking to technology to achieve business outcomes. Hybrid ICT solutions provide the pertinent response to complex operations and unique business needs. The value of partnering with a professional hybrid IT and services partner lies in the operational efficiencies and guidance on governance that is delivered on the road to digital transformation. This issue of Infocentrix showcases some of our abilities to support clients in their digital transformation.

Technology partner recognition

In line with our technology partner strategy, the collective efforts by our teams have secured the following partner accolades recently:

- Eight Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) South Africa Channel Partner awards, including the title of HPE Overall FY21 Partner of the Year;
- F5 UNITY+ Platinum Partner recognition – one of only two in South Africa currently – demonstrating that we have met their highest technical, accreditation and sales criteria requirements for multi-cloud application security and delivery;
- Red Hat Premier Business Partner status, becoming one of only a handful of local partners to reach this highest level of certification from the enterprise open source solutions provider;
- Huawei Cloud Partner of the Year due to the company closing the most cloud deals nationally, of varying sizes and across multiple industries in South Africa; and
- Fastest Growth Partner of the Year from Veeam Software for 2021 as well as the Best Subscription Reselling Partner - for the third year running.

Furthermore, we have deepened our partnership with OutSystems, bringing application modernisation, workplace innovation, business process automation and customer experience transformation to South African and Dubai-based businesses.

Client successes

At Datacentrix, we develop client strategies and design appropriate solutions that deliver competitive edge. Some of our recent client successes are discussed, including:

- **Private cloud infrastructure implementation:** Datacentrix completed one of the biggest private cloud infrastructure implementations in KwaZulu-Natal for the largest online-sports betting operator in South Africa, Hollywoodbets.
- **Data protection:** Africa's leading entertainment company, MultiChoice, deployed a powerful data protection solution, enabling the organisation to protect twice as many systems as it could previously, while using less infrastructure with Datacentrix. In addition, the

company has seen a significant improvement in backup success, with day-to-day management of the data protection environment taking approximately a quarter of the time previously spent.

- **Digital experience management:** The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) has successfully rolled out a digital experience management solution with the help of Datacentrix.

Industry trends and thought leadership

Our teams have in-depth experience in technology integration, infrastructure monitoring, cybersecurity threat mitigation technologies, data protection, governance and risk frameworks, and so much more. Industry trends discussed in this issue include:

- **Cloud-based call centre solutions:** The contact centre has become instrumental in its contribution to improving the overall experience of customers – both external and internal - to an organisation.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Successful AI business outcomes depend on the careful selection of use cases. Use cases deliver significant business value, can be scaled to reduce risk, and are critical to demonstrate the impact of AI investment on the business.
- **Secure Access Service Edge (SASE):** SD-WAN follows a more traditional networking concept of network infrastructure centring around the datacentre, while SASE considers the datacentre as just another service edge – essentially the SE in SASE.
- **Zero Trust cybersecurity:** A Zero Trust approach to cybersecurity can assist in creating a safer remote and cloud environment, simplifying the security architecture and reducing organisational risk.

Corporate social investment

Datacentrix joined HPE in supporting the Greater Alexandra Chamber of Commerce Digital Hub and Township Incubator to help empower small businesses and local youth in the area. The project aligns with the company's strategy to support education in South Africa.

We at Datacentrix, partner with our clients to develop and implement digitalisation strategies that enable the business of the future. We are looking forward to doing the same for you.

Regards
Ahmed Mahomed

Hollywoodbets wins private cloud infrastructure solution jackpot

International sports betting operator Hollywoodbets has successfully consolidated multiple platforms and technologies across its production and development environments, with the rollout of a single, high performance, scalable storage and server platform. Touted to be one of the largest private cloud infrastructure implementations in KwaZulu-Natal, the project was successfully completed by Datacentrix.

Hollywoodbets is the largest online sports betting operator in South Africa and a top contender on the world's gaming stage. The primarily online company operates in South Africa, Mozambique, Ireland and the United Kingdom, with 92 stores across South Africa.

Hollywoodbets offers betting on horse racing, soccer, cricket, rugby, tennis, motorsport and more. The operator also has a wide range of betting options on virtual games, casino-type slots and table games, live games, scratch cards, as well as lottery draws.

Michael Collins, General Manager at BET Software, says: "BET Software, Hollywoodbets' provider of cutting-edge betting platforms, needed to double the capacity of its existing storage systems and to extend the maintenance and support by a further 24 months.

"Multiple vendors provided the storage infrastructure, of which some warranties had expired and others were about to lapse. Hollywoodbets faced several other challenges in managing performance and balancing capacity across these technologies, with limited real-time statistics and dashboards.

"In addition, the cost of maintenance was high; upgrades required downtime with additional business risk and loss of income. There was also a need for greater flexibility and agility to support growth and to deploy new systems and solutions with higher performance."

Solutions put forward

Datacentrix, having a mature engagement with BET Software, performed a detailed assessment of the existing environment to understand the complexity of the platforms accessed by

the various applications and systems. Furthermore, the Datacentrix team wanted to ensure that any suggested upgrades would not only support the required capacity, but also increase performance as Hollywoodbets expands its storage footprint.

Two scenarios were proposed by Datacentrix to Hollywoodbets; the first being to continue as is, with a view to doubling the capacity and extending the maintenance, while the existing systems would preserve the organisation's current persona and limitations. The second option was the Infinidat Infinibox enterprise storage system.

"The potential benefits that could be realised by using the Infinidat offering were significant, including inter alia:

- A 20 percent cost reduction over three years, consolidation of the various storage platforms onto a single system, thereby greatly reducing operational and management overheads;
- An investment in next-generation AI-driven technology that would continuously learn and self-optimize as Hollywoodbets grows;
- Potentially increased performance and reduced latency across all systems, especially on the geographical cluster; and
- Access to detailed, real-time dashboards and reporting, proactively providing information as and when required, and reducing time on analytics.

The Infinibox solution could also provide for a capacity expansion of 250 percent within the same price point, and would deliver a seven 'nines' high availability platform, as



Michael Collins, General Manager at BET Software

“From a commercial perspective, our cost per gigabyte of storage has halved, while performance has increased. Being an online real-time transaction business, system performance and online user experience is imperative. When there are events that impact on user experience, having access to immediate data and performance analysis is critical. Our new solution delivers on this.”

opposed to its existing five ‘nines’ solution, which is critical for a real-time online sports betting business.

“Finally, Infinidat’s unique commercial model would mean no downtime or physical upgrades for future capacity expansion requirements, and a fixed commercial model for expansion.”

Based on Datacentrix’s recommendations, BET Software then carried out an independent comparison to other solutions in the market, and found that the Infinidat option offered better availability, higher capacity, reduced total cost of ownership (TCO) and on average was 40 to 50 percent more cost effective upfront than comparative offerings.

“A few weeks prior to discussing the storage requirement with Datacentrix, we had briefly mentioned that Hollywoodbets was considering deploying a third datacentre as an enabler to disaster recovery (DR). Datacentrix demonstrated, as part of the proposal, how our existing investments could be rearchitected and deployed into the third DR facility with very little additional investment. Datacentrix provided the architecture and deployment service as part of the new storage investment, thereby adding great value to Hollywoodbets.”

Says Peter Spies, Solutions Manager: KwaZulu-Natal Commercial at Datacentrix: “The Infinibox storage solution was critical to the win and a major solution differentiator with its attractive pricing, innovative financial modelling and neural cache technology that sees system performance optimised and improved year on year (unlike other technologies that typically slow down and develop bottlenecks over time). Infinibox delivers faster than all-flash performance and provides hyperscale capacity and bulletproof reliability.

“Datacentrix also recommended high-end servers designed to run Hollywoodbets’ demanding, mission-critical applications and databases, ensuring performance and availability.”

The project continued, despite COVID

Datacentrix was able to complete the environment assessments just prior to the initial COVID-19 lockdown, in February 2020, proposing the initial solution a few weeks later.

Engagement between the teams continued into lockdown, and the order was formally placed by Hollywoodbets in June 2020, with Infinidat’s commitment to a two-week delivery, despite many local and global lockdown restrictions still being in place.

Continues on page 5

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The actual implementation and ability to go live on the new Infinidat platform was completed within 96 hours, followed by a 60-day testing and validation process.

By September, all production systems had been migrated onto the new platform. Hollywoodbets also took this opportunity to leverage the many benefits the new platform brought to optimise, migrate and consolidate their systems.

Once the old equipment was freed up, the third DR site build began and was completed in February 2021.

Reconfigurations and optimisation to some of the LAN switching and inter-site L2 links were completed by the middle of March 2021, which signalled the end of the project.

Betting on the new platform

“Datacentrix was able to triple the number of data warehouses running on the new Hollywoodbets high-performance, scalable platform with zero impact to users, customers or performance,” Spies states. “The system currently delivers around 5,000 bets per second (18 million bets per hour) with a catalogue of between 22,000 and 23,000 items available on which users are able to bet.”

Collins says: “From a commercial perspective, our cost per gigabyte of storage has halved, while performance has increased. Being an online real-time transaction business, system performance and online user experience is imperative. When there are events that impact on user experience, having access to immediate data and performance analysis is critical. Our new solution delivers on this.

“Less time is spent managing and optimising our storage systems and the AI technology takes care of optimisations. In the immediate nature of Hollywoodbets’ business, having AI technology that can predict and respond faster than any human has been significant and seamless.

“We have been able to increase workloads by a factor of two since deploying the Infinidat solution, without any impact on business, and have also been able to leverage the advanced tools inherent in the Infinidat system to recover from application issues in a matter of seconds.

“Datacentrix, together with Infinidat, provides us with regular service review meetings, again reducing the time and effort spent keeping things running, and allowing Hollywoodbets to focus on our core business.”

According to Collins, the Datacentrix Infinidat solution is set to demonstrate significant benefits into the future, such as:



“Datacentrix was able to triple the number of data warehouses running on the new Hollywoodbets high-performance, scalable platform with zero impact to users, customers or performance. The system currently delivers around 5,000 bets per second with a catalogue of between 22,000 and 23,000 items available on which users are able to bet.”

- Less capital expenditure required for future capacity growth by leveraging the included pay-as-you-grow model;
- No downtime for future expansions, as a 100 percent capacity growth is already included with zero investment from Hollywoodbets; and
- The integrated AI technology means that the system will continue to self-heal and self-optimize, resulting in it being faster tomorrow than it was today.

“The team from Datacentrix has a long history of engaging with BET Software,” he continues. “We like the fact that the company doesn’t just give us what we ask for; Datacentrix invests the time and effort to look outside the box to see if there is a better solution that will add more value to Hollywoodbets, not just in price, but in how we conduct our business.

“Datacentrix’s engagement is very much a ‘client-first’ model, and the organisation retains the top people and technical skills, who make themselves available to BET Software 24x7 to ensure our success,” Collins concludes.



Datacentrix shines at HPE channel awards, receives eight, including Overall Partner of the Year

Datacentrix excelled at the Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) South Africa Channel Partner awards ceremony held at Fancourt in the Western Cape, with the company winning the title of HPE Overall FY21 Partner of the Year, as well as seven other hotly contested awards.

“This year was probably our most successful HPE awards ceremony to date,” says Tony de Sousa, Managing Director: Technology Solutions at Datacentrix. “HPE has been a strategic partner for Datacentrix since the company was established, and we are gratified to have taken top honours at this year's awards event.”

In addition to the Overall Partner of the Year award, Datacentrix was named as the Aruba Partner of the Year, receiving the honour also for the Aruba Partner Deal of the Year accolade for its project with a local healthcare company.

This is significant for Aruba as it represents the company's first end-to-end Edge Services Platform (ESP) customer, additionally nominated as one of the EMEA Deals of the Year for Aruba 2021, according to Mandy Duncan, Aruba Country Manager for South Africa.

Moreover, the organisation received the individual award again for the Aruba Distinguished Partner Engineer of the Year for outstanding work and integral role in several key projects.

“The fact that Datacentrix was acknowledged on the Aruba side of HPE's business, as well as receiving several Specialisation Awards, such as HPE Compute Partner of the Year, HPE-as-a-Service Partner of the Year, and HPE Pointnext Services Delivery Partner of the Year, is significant

“This year was probably our most successful HPE awards ceremony to date. HPE has been a strategic partner for Datacentrix since the company was established, and we are gratified to have taken top honours at this year's awards event.”

for us,” explains Wimpie van Rensburg, Business Unit Manager: Enterprise Solutions at Datacentrix. “This is because the awards received across the board showcase our extensive capabilities, knowledge, and experience within the full HPE product set.

“We've invested heavily in the right skills for engineering, delivery, and sales and will continue to do so, with a focus on actively deepening the partnership in terms of adopting new solutions and building new services around the HPE portfolio,” he continues. “In particular HPE's GreenLake platform, which underpins Datacentrix's Hybrid IT offering and cloud-first approach will continue to be a serious area of emphasis for us moving forward.”

MultiChoice locks down data protection for on-prem and cloud workloads

Africa's leading entertainment company, MultiChoice, has deployed a powerful data protection solution, enabling the organisation to protect twice as many systems as it could previously, while using less infrastructure.

In addition, the company has seen a significant improvement in backup success over the previous legacy system, with day-to-day management of the data protection environment taking the MultiChoice team approximately a quarter of the time previously spent.

A challenging environment

The group required uninterrupted availability for several key business systems, which includes one that manages content and ensures programmes flow to customers without interruption, and another that underlies corporate billing.

MultiChoice's Storage and Data Protection Platforms group is responsible for maintaining the availability of these applications and data. However, its then-legacy data protection solution had seen persistent challenges from the start.

"We were constantly rebooting all the backup servers," explains Pfarelo Masithulela, Senior Manager, Storage and Data Protection Platforms, at the MultiChoice Group. "On some occasions, we would find that the deduplication database had gone into a maintenance and rebuild mode, which could take many hours. We could not send data when it was in maintenance mode and would then have to shift all of our systems to back up to a different location."

Even when backups were completed successfully, they often took longer than the designated backup window, creating concern for potential cyberattacks – in particular ransomware – on core applications and databases.

"And as our exposures mounted, our hardware costs continued to escalate," says Masithulela. "The product was initially less expensive than competitors, but we learned the hard way that it needed more hardware to function properly, and these requirements kept growing."

With the licence renewal for the legacy solution approaching, MultiChoice decided to relook at its data protection strategy, with Masithulela and his team launching an open request for proposals (RFP). The organisation appointed hybrid ICT systems integrator and managed services provider, Datacentrix, to help with solution selection, architecture design, and implementation.

"MultiChoice engaged Datacentrix to solve our myriad data protection problems," states Masithulela. "We needed a knowledgeable service provider that understood how to overcome our specific pain points, and, after comparing the certifications and skillsets that different providers had to offer, we were most impressed by Datacentrix."

Building a world-class platform

With the assistance of Datacentrix, MultiChoice conducted a thorough needs assessment and due diligence process to select a new data protection vendor, deciding on a consolidated approach for backing up data across its hybrid environment.



Pfarelo Masithulela, Senior Manager, Storage and Data Protection Platforms, at the MultiChoice Group

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recovery (DR), Datacentrix configured both the cloud-based VMs and the appliances to replicate backups to an appliance in the datacentre, which then replicates to another appliance in the company's DR site.

MultiChoice is now also able to monitor backup performance and storage utilisation. Daily notifications provide details on backup failures and successes, while a dashboard offers an overview of MultiChoice's entire data protection environment and allows Datacentrix to move resources around to gain better efficiencies. "From a single pane of glass, I can see what our success rates are and where any problem areas lie," Masithulela says.

The project timeline was tight as the legacy software's licence renewal approached. Together, Datacentrix and Veritas implemented the replacement data protection infrastructure within a month. "Both Datacentrix and Veritas provided excellent service," Masithulela says. "We had joint project meetings on a weekly basis, sometimes even daily. The Datacentrix engineers really knew what they were doing, and they didn't hesitate to bring in further expertise from overseas when necessary."

After deployment, Datacentrix then trained MultiChoice database administrators (DBAs). "Datacentrix showed our team how to run backups and how to restore," Masithulela says. "The company also helped our DBAs understand expectations. This training ensured that everyone who would be involved in data protection was comfortable with the solution."

As part of its extensive testing process, Datacentrix helped the MultiChoice management team to become more comfortable with the transition, restoring all of the company's large databases. "The restores were successful, and everyone was happy, including our audit team," Masithulela says. "I know that we can restore any system or data across our data protection landscape."

This meets the key requirement of the solution: "If we face a ransomware attack, our new environment will protect our critical data. We're confident that we can recover from our backups if necessary."

Backups are completing much faster, due partly to the stability and deduplication abilities of the Veritas solution, which significantly reduce the volume of backup data that MultiChoice writes and replicates. As a result, the company was able to more than double the number of systems it backs up, without enlarging the backup window.

"The solution is working so well that we've seen significant growth in the size of our backups," Masithulela says. "It also scales very easily, unlike our legacy solution. We haven't had



"The solution is working so well that we've seen significant growth in the size of our backups. It also scales very easily, unlike our legacy solution. We haven't had any problems with the appliances; all that has increased has been our storage capacity. Our backups are completing within the backup window, and our backup success rate is excellent, which seriously reduces risk."

any problems with the appliances; all that has increased has been our storage capacity. Our backups are completing within the backup window, and our backup success rate is excellent, which seriously reduces risk."

Costs are lower and more transparent because MultiChoice is working with a single vendor for both software and hardware. Management of the data protection environment is streamlined, as well. "With our legacy solution, we managed backup and retention policies on the storage layer, which was difficult," Masithulela says. "By contrast, managing policies is straightforward with the Veritas solution, which has reduced the amount of time spent managing data protection each day."

MultiChoice achieved all these benefits thanks to the expertise of the Datacentrix team. "We leveraged Datacentrix's skills and understanding of the Veritas products," Masithulela concludes.

"They worked hand-in-hand with Veritas to make sure that we ended up with a solution that we trust, and that is stable and resilient.

"We can say with confidence that Datacentrix and Veritas built a world-class backup platform for our workloads, both on-prem and in the cloud."

Datacentrix, OutSystems jump-start low-code, rapid app development in South Africa and Dubai

Datacentrix has deepened its partnership with global leader in modern application development OutSystems, making a significant investment in bringing the low-code application platform to South African and Dubai-based businesses.

“Datacentrix and OutSystems have hit these markets with full force, already securing key engagements with local customers,” says Shakeel Jhazbhay, General Manager: Digital Business Solutions at Datacentrix. “We kicked off a series of joint online events covering Africa and United Arab Emirates, and the success of these has seen us move into more face-to-face engagements.”

The two organisations teamed up to present free one-day workshops in Johannesburg and Durban. “These events introduced South African businesses to the OutSystems low-code technology platform, with a view to assisting them to quickly and easily plan, develop, change, deploy and manage enterprise-grade applications,” Jhazbhay explains.

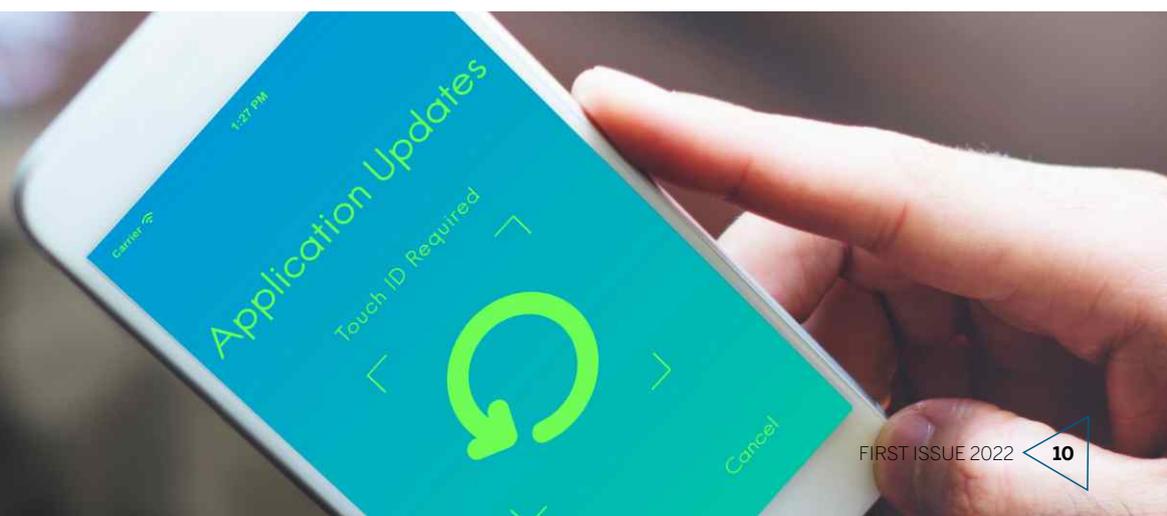
“OutSystems has once again been named by Gartner as a Magic Quadrant Leader, this time for Enterprise Low-Code Application Platforms for the fifth consecutive time, as well as receiving a 2021 Gartner Peer Insights Customers’ Choice distinction for Enterprise Low-Code Application Platforms from its customers,” states Ahmed Mahomed, Datacentrix CEO.

“This underscores the fact that it is playing a vital role in helping businesses take on strategic challenges such as application modernisation, workplace innovation, business process automation and customer experience

transformation. It enables fast reaction to market disruptions, building secure, resilient, cloud-ready apps that are easily scalable.

“Datacentrix maintains that our partnership with OutSystems is an ideal fit for Datacentrix to assist our clients in South Africa and the Middle East in their digital transformation journeys, helping them to build more flexible apps, faster,” Mahomed continues. “We look forward to many successes with OutSystems in the process automation and application modernisation space.”

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Aruba ESP delivers cloud-native services to automate and accelerate the deployment and protection of edge-to-cloud networks

Aruba Central NetConductor provides management and security for standards-based network fabrics; new breakthroughs in location services unveiled.

Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company announced significant advancements to Aruba ESP (Edge Services Platform), with new functionality in Aruba Central to enable organisations to keep pace with rapidly changing business requirements. The new Aruba Central NetConductor allows enterprises to centralise the management of distributed networks with cloud-native services that simplify policy provisioning and automate network configurations in wired, wireless, and wide area network (WAN) infrastructures. Central NetConductor enables a more agile network while enforcing Zero Trust and SASE security policies. Aruba also revealed the industry's first self-locating indoor access points (APs) with built-in GPS (Global Positioning System) receivers and Open Locate, a proposed new industry standard for sharing location information from an AP to a device.

“The advancements introduced will help customers evolve their approach to a ‘services orientation’ using AI-powered solutions, strengthening security and accelerating the move to a cloud-centric network architecture, which are all hallmarks of a modern network.”

Digital acceleration driven by remote/hybrid work, new business models, and the demand for improved user experiences highlights the need for a more agile, flexible network. Aruba provides a comprehensive set of cloud-native services to deal with the complexity of multi-generational architectures with their attendant operations and security challenges. Traditional virtual local area network (VLAN) based architectures require significant manual configuration and integration, are slow to adapt to new business connectivity requirements, and introduce potential security gaps.

A modern, agile network employs a network “overlay” that seamlessly stitches together existing VLAN segments with cloud-native policy and configuration services that enables users and devices to make secure and reliable connections from anywhere. To help customers accelerate their digital transformation initiatives, Central NetConductor uses artificial intelligence (AI) for management and optimisation, implements business-intent workflows to automate network configuration, and extends Aruba's industry-leading built-in security with cloud-native Network Access Control (NAC) and Dynamic Segmentation for fabric-wide enforcement. Because Central NetConductor is based on widely accepted protocols such as EVPN, VXLAN and BGP, it can be adopted in a seamless manner that preserves investments based on the ability to operate with existing Aruba networks and third-party vendor infrastructures.

“In today's business world, flexibility is paramount – enterprises need to be able to shift gears, turn up new services and offerings, and serve new customers seemingly overnight. Because the network underpins everything – enabling critical connectivity and data-driven intelligence – it needs to have the flexibility built in,” said Maribel Lopez, founder of Lopez Research. “Organisations today should look for standards-based solutions that give them technical flexibility and the



ability to protect their investments and adopt new technologies at their own pace, but also options when it comes to consumption models.”

Three key principles of network modernisation

Static networks no longer meet growing business demands or support changing security requirements. Aruba Central NetConductor accelerates the deployment, management, and protection of modern networks by mapping capabilities to the three network modernisation principles:

- **Automation:** Simplified workflows and AI-powered automation reduce the time and resources required to plan, deploy, and manage networks that support remote, branch, campus, and cloud connectivity.
- **Security:** Increased threat detection and protection with built-in identity-based access control and Dynamic Segmentation that are the foundation for Zero Trust and SASE frameworks.
- **Agility:** Cloud-native services for a single point of visibility and control. Standards-based for ease of migration and adoption to preserve existing investments, and optimise budgets and staff resources.

Innovations in indoor location services

Wireless LAN (WLAN) access point (AP) installation remains a manual process that is time consuming, prone to error, and results in an unreliable reference for location-aware applications. To address this, Aruba has introduced the industry’s first self-locating indoor APs to simplify how organisations capture indoor location data and communicate information over the air to any mobile device or application.

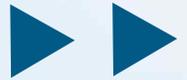
Aruba Wi-Fi 6 and Wi-Fi 6E APs use a combination of built-in GPS receivers, Wi-Fi location support for fine time measurement and intelligent software to enable highly accurate, automated WLAN deployments. Aruba’s self-locating WLAN APs provide zero-touch determination of AP location, continuously validate and update location, and provide a set of universal coordinates that may be transposed on any building floor map or web mapping platform.

Accurate location of the WLAN infrastructure creates an anchored reference that is shared using Open Locate. Businesses can use the universal coordinates and anchored reference of Aruba’s self-locating indoor APs to easily develop or enhance asset tracking, safety/compliance, facility planning, venue experience apps or other location-aware services.

“Location is core to many app experiences and accurate indoor location unlocks many new and innovative enterprise use cases,” said Sean Ginevan, Head of Global Strategy and Digital Partnerships for Android Enterprise at Google. “With Android 10, Google was first to fully support Wi-Fi RTT (road-trip time) to enable precise indoor location on mobile devices. Aruba’s self-locating network infrastructure and the Open Locate initiative will help realise the vision of accurate, indoor location for our developer community and make it much easier to deploy these networks at scale. We can’t wait to see what developers build.”

“Enterprises have shown tremendous resiliency in the face of major disruptions and tectonic shifts within their businesses over the past two years, and it’s become clear that business agility is now top-of-mind for our customers,” said David Hughes, Chief Technology and Product Officer at Aruba. “The advancements introduced will help customers evolve their approach to a ‘services orientation’ using AI-powered solutions, strengthening security and accelerating the move to a cloud-centric network architecture, which are all hallmarks of a modern network.”





Remote user experience tool delivers IT performance gains at SANBS



The South African National Blood Service (SANBS), a not-for-profit organisation providing an essential service within South Africa, has successfully rolled out the Aternity digital experience management platform with the help of Datacentrix.

The new platform provides SANBS with deep, actionable insight into its users' digital experience and productivity, as well as the performance of end-user devices, application performance and the effect on the business.

Says Amit Singh, Senior Manager: Service Delivery at SANBS: "Our real need for improved remote management arose during the pandemic, with many staff members working from home. We needed to manage the user experience and performance of two specific areas within the business: our tele-recruiters, who make contact with potential donors; and the finance department, more specifically debtors' staff, who manage the collection of funds."

SANBS put together a formal request for information (RFI), including criteria as agreed on by the IT side of the organisation, identified business owners within the organisation, and then issued a formal tender to the market.

"The companies that responded were asked to run demonstrations and proof of concept projects, which we then short-listed to two entrants. The final decision to appoint Datacentrix was based on the rich feel of the application that they put forward, the user-friendliness of its dashboards, and its easily understandable reporting," Singh explains. "Datacentrix's solution ticked all of our boxes and, over the past five months since rollout, it has delivered even more than our initial requirements."

According to Savan Marimuthu, Senior Account Manager at Datacentrix, the solution implemented for SANBS provides actionable insights on user experience for every device and application within an organisation. "Not only can this information be used to drive user productivity, but it also allows for improved management of the IT environment, as businesses can access data linked to users' measured



Savan Marimuthu, Senior Account Manager at Datacentrix with Amit Singh, Senior Manager: Service Delivery at SANBS

“SANBS has enjoyed a brilliant partnership with Datacentrix over a number of years now, right up to CEO level. It’s heartening to know that any challenges could be escalated right to the top of the organisation, but there has never been the need. We really cannot fault their delivery.”

experience, which is typically difficult to source as there is generally little visibility around the operational efficiencies between users, their devices and the systems they are using.

“This has become particularly important as we’ve moved into a more digitalised, remote environment in recent years, where issues such as slow system response and downtime have become more challenging for remote workers.”

Since implementation, SANBS has set up dashboards for its respective teams and can access user productivity reports at any time.

“Our intention was not to set up a ‘Big Brother’ scenario within the organisation, but rather to use this data to better utilise resources and address any capacity planning concerns,” Singh states. “Not only has the new tool allowed us to improve the splitting and assignment of workloads, but it has also proven to be a valuable tool for our IT department from a support perspective.

“We’re now able to pinpoint exactly where user issues lie, in terms of whether they are hardware or software related. Instead of having to test and check, we’re now able to see exactly what is affecting the end-user quickly and easily, often before they even realise there is an issue.

“We’ll see even greater improvement in proactivity once the new tool is fully integrated with the SANBS service desk,” he adds.

“SANBS has enjoyed a brilliant partnership with Datacentrix over a number of years now, right up to CEO level. It’s heartening to know that any challenges could be escalated right to the top of the organisation, but there has never been the need. We really cannot fault their delivery,” Singh concludes.

Datacentrix secures position as second F5 UNITY+ Platinum Partner in SA

Datacentrix has been named as an F5 UNITY+ Platinum Partner – one of only two in South Africa currently – demonstrating that it has met the highest technical, accreditation and sales criteria requirements of the global leader in multi-cloud application security and delivery.

“We are very excited to reach Platinum partnership status from F5,” states Chris Pretorius, Business Unit Manager at Datacentrix. “Datacentrix has been a Gold partner for four years and, in 2019, received the F5 Partner of the Year award. It’s clear that, as a team, we put a lot of effort into positioning F5 within Datacentrix, and have also invested into broadening the Datacentrix F5 skills base.

“Reaching Platinum status has always been our main goal and with this achievement now in place, we are in an excellent position to assist in growing the F5 business from strength to strength within South Africa.”

Says Linsay Narayanan, Channel Account Manager – Sub-Saharan Africa: “F5 Networks strongly values its relationship with all partners; this was one of the driving influences behind the F5 Unity+ Partner Programme.

“After reviewing Datacentrix’s performance as a Gold Partner throughout 2021 financial year, it was clear that they had met the requirements to become an F5 Platinum Partner. We look forward to our continued partnership throughout 2022, tapping into the significant opportunities and jointly driving new business growth in EMEA. Congratulations and well done to the Datacentrix team.”

Veritas transforms future of data management with autonomous, multi-cloud optimised solutions and launch of NetBackup 10

Veritas Technologies, a leader in multi-cloud data management, announced the launch of new technology to enable its strategy for cloud optimised, Autonomous Data Management, that will simplify the way businesses manage data and automate protection from threats, such as ransomware. At its Conquer Every Cloud 2022 event, Veritas laid out its strategy for Autonomous Data Management, where NetBackup harnesses artificial intelligence and hyper-automation to self-provision, self-optimize, and self-heal in multi-cloud environments. This commitment was immediately reinforced by unveiling Veritas Cloud Scale Technology, a new generation of industry-leading NetBackup architecture, modernised to operate at web scale. This state-of-the-art technology will be available with the newest version of the company's flagship NetBackup software.

Greg Hughes, CEO of Veritas said: "Accelerated digital transformation and cloud adoption is delivering benefits to businesses around the world. However, a joint advisory from the US, UK and Australian security services, highlighted that hackers are increasing the impact of their ransomware attacks by targeting cloud services and data. Veritas is laying out its strategy for how we solve that challenge for our customers, starting with tools that will help to reduce cloud footprint and costs, keep data safe from ransomware, and pave the way to Autonomous Data Management."

Cloud Scale Technology

Veritas Cloud Scale Technology, powering NetBackup, will be the foundation that delivers this strategy. Cloud Scale Technology enables a containerised, programmable, and AI-powered microservices architecture that provides autonomous unified data management services across any cloud. The benefits of Cloud Scale Technology are first realised through the launch of NetBackup 10.

NetBackup 10

Powered by Cloud Scale Technology, NetBackup 10 is the industry's first cloud-optimised, at-scale data management

"Veritas is planning for a future where its technology is able to autonomously provision, optimise and repair data management services, while empowering end users to enable self-service data protection and recovery, freeing up IT staff to focus on strategic and transformational activity."

solution that applies web scale technologies and automation to deliver more cost-effective, efficient and secure data management in multi-cloud environments.

Lowered TCO through cloud optimisation

- NetBackup 10 features enhanced multi-cloud storage and orchestrated tiering capabilities, including deep support for Amazon Web Services and expanded support for Microsoft Azure, to reduce the cost of backup storage by up to 95 percent.
- NetBackup's leading deduplication services have been upgraded to help further minimise its cloud footprint, while elastic multi-cloud compute services deliver the exact scale needed by businesses at the right time, further reducing costs.
- With support for all major Kubernetes distributions, NetBackup 10 now provides multi-cloud cross-platform recovery. This allows users to recover the data that they want to.



Data management for the modern, digital enterprise



Cyber Resilient

Data must be protected and recoverable from anywhere to anywhere, no matter the threat



Multi-cloud Optimised

Organisations must operate in the most cost-efficient and performant way possible within and across any cloud



Autonomous Operation

Autonomy is achieved when data is managed independent from external control without sacrificing human insight

Increased efficiency through simplified, automated operations

- NetBackup SaaS Protection is now integrated with NetBackup 10 to provide a single-pane-of-glass view of a customer's entire data protection estate for governance and compliance purposes.
- NetBackup 10 includes a new fully integrated no-cost base version of NetBackup IT Analytics, formerly known as Veritas APTARE, to provide comprehensive artificial intelligence-driven analytics and reporting that streamlines data protection services and mitigates risks.
- NetBackup 10 features new automated detection and protection for more platform-as-a-service workloads, including Apache Cassandra, all major Kubernetes distributions and Microsoft Azure Managed SQL and Azure SQL.

Enhanced ransomware resiliency through integrated malware scanning

- NetBackup now provides automatic malware scanning during backups and prior to restores to ensure infection-free recovery of data.
- NetBackup's already powerful, artificial intelligence-driven anomaly detection can now automatically initiate malware scanning. This combination of ransomware detection services in NetBackup 10 provides content-aware, granular flexibility that delivers rapid restoration of clean data.
- NetBackup 10 expands support for immutable storage, including Microsoft Azure Blob Storage.

Veritas believes that it can solve the challenges of enterprises as they deal with the quantity and variety of

workloads and data that they need to manage, by automating workflows for data management. Veritas is planning for a future where its technology is able to autonomously provision, optimise and repair data management services, while empowering end users to enable self-service data protection and recovery, freeing up IT staff to focus on strategic and transformational activity.

Christophe Bertrand, Practice Director, ESG, said: "It's easy for organisations to end up with a patchwork of piecemeal data protection solutions in the cloud, where individual workloads and applications have been deployed by new functional decision makers and managed in silos. But, over time, these add up, creating a continually growing cost and management burden that quickly becomes unsustainable at scale. In order to avoid this, enterprises need a long-term solution that can help to reduce the footprint of their cloud backup and automate its management."

Everton da Costa, IT Manager at Prodesp, IT Company from São Paulo State, said: "The number of different clouds, SaaS applications, platforms and tools we're using is growing rapidly, exposing our data across a broad and diverse landscape. Our IT team has to constantly anticipate and manually address the challenges this creates before they become financial and infrastructure burdens. The long-term solution cannot be to simply expand our environment, but to evolve our approach in an intelligent way so it autonomously adapts to our increasingly complex infrastructure needs. Veritas' vision for multi-cloud optimised data management aligns with our goals and will help us ensure that we are prepared for any challenges ahead."

To find out more about Veritas' strategy and the products, please visit www.veritas.com/company/event/conquer-every-cloud for replay options.

VERITAS™



Datacentrix fulfils Red Hat Business Premier Partner ambitions

Datacentrix has achieved its goal of achieving Red Hat Premier Business Partner status in South Africa, becoming one of only a handful of local partners to reach this partnership level from the world's leading provider of enterprise open source solutions.

“Open source technology has gained an even greater foothold with enterprise leaders since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic,” explains Shawn Marx, Business Unit Manager: Converged Solutions at Datacentrix. “In fact, a recent Red Hat paper, the fourth 'The State of Enterprise Open Source: A Red Hat Report', found that 92% of IT leaders surveyed feel enterprise open source solutions are important to addressing their COVID-related challenges. Outside of the pandemic challenges the report found that 95% of respondents view enterprise open source as important to their organisation's overall enterprise infrastructure.”

“We're seeing serious uptake of open source technology across Africa currently, allowing businesses to cut costs, increase flexibility and accelerate the digital economy. And because our collaboration with Red Hat has been a continued focus for Datacentrix, we're staying ahead of the curve to meet these demands,” Marx continues. “We've worked hard to reach the Red Hat Premier Business Partner level, with serious investment, and are very excited to continue bringing Red Hat's enterprise open source solutions to local businesses.”

“The Red Hat Premier Business Partner recognition demonstrates Datacentrix's capabilities to solve client challenges and build integrated solutions,” adds Graeme Dendy, Services Manager for Converged Solutions at Datacentrix. “And in order to meet the requirements of a Premier Business Partner, Datacentrix has beefed up its pre-

“We are very proud to have partners who share our vision of enabling enterprises with the solutions they need, solutions that not only maximise their ICT capabilities, but that also strengthen and make them industry leaders in their respective markets.”

sales delivery, sales and technical skills, and also delivered solutions to the requisite number of reference sites. We currently hold a specialisation in infrastructure but moving forward will also be looking to deepen our expertise to include other aspects of the Red Hat portfolio over time.”

Speaking on Datacentrix's Premier Business Partner status, Dion Harvey, Regional General Manager Sub-Saharan Africa, Red Hat, says: “It's a testament to African suppliers' commitment to offering robust and reliable open source technologies across the continent. We are very proud to have partners who share our vision of enabling enterprises with the solutions they need, solutions that not only maximise their ICT capabilities, but that also strengthen and make them industry leaders in their respective markets. With modernisation a priority for all businesses, Red Hat and open source are available to help and make a difference.”

Datacentrix named as top Veeam Cloud Subscription Partner for third year, takes Fastest Growth title

The accolades were rolling in for Datacentrix at the Veeam ProPartner Awards for 2021. Datacentrix won the title of Fastest Growth Partner of the Year from Veeam Software, the leader in backup, recovery and data management solutions that deliver modern data protection. In addition, it was also named as the organisation's Best Subscription Reselling Partner – for the third year running.

The awards are held annually to reward the success and commitment of Veeam's local ProPartner Value-Added Resellers (VAR) and Veeam Cloud & Service Provider (VCSP) partners.

“Datacentrix is thrilled to have been acknowledged by Veeam again this year, for having demonstrated the highest growth in Veeam sales during 2021 and also for closing the greatest number of subscription deals for the year,” explains Wimpie van Rensburg, Business Unit Manager for Enterprise Technology at Datacentrix.

“Datacentrix is proud to be one of Veeam's first Platinum Resellers and, as such, has unwaveringly continued to place a strong focus on its excellent backup, recovery and data management solutions.

“This recognition from Veeam is most gratifying, especially during the difficult economic time experienced by so many sectors over the past two years,” he continues. “We look forward to continuing to build our partnership with Veeam over time.”

Speaking at the recent event, Lisa Strydom, Senior Manager of Channel & Alliances: Africa at Veeam, said that Veeam has navigated through the pandemic and its challenges over the past two years, and is proud that it has managed, together with its local ProPartner network, to continue building a solid foundation for future success. “Our South Africa ProPartner Award winners have delivered exceptional results in 2021, and I sincerely thank them for their loyalty and the greatly valued, trusting collaboration.”



Lisa Strydom, Senior Manager of Channel & Alliances: Africa at Veeam, Marius Redelinghuys, Enterprise Solution Architect at Datacentrix, Darren Naidu, Partner Account Manager at Veeam and Chris Norton, Veeam Country Manager for Africa

End-user device managed services stop IT headaches in hybrid era

Leased end-user devices and managed services to support them are becoming increasingly popular in South Africa as stretched IT departments battle to support newly remote and hybrid workforces.

This is according to Prudence Maleka, End User Computing Product Specialist at Datacentrix, who says IT capacity and budgets have come under strain in the hybrid work environment, making managed services an ideal option for organisations of all sizes.

“It just makes sense – organisations are opting to lease end-user devices and outsource all support and management across the entire life cycle,” she says. With a solid managed

services partner, organisations enjoy consistent end-user device costs and enhanced employee productivity, while also reducing pressure on the IT department. Datacentrix manages end-user devices for scores of companies and thousands of end-users, making sure they are able to stay productive and can count on their machines.”

Devices matter

At the same time as organisations look to managed services to support productivity, they are also focusing on higher quality devices for greater reliability and performance, she says.

“We see growing awareness that the quality of the device really matters – particularly with employees working remotely,” Maleka says. “Companies want to invest in performance, reliability and productivity. This is why demand has soared for devices like HP Elitebook 800 series notebooks, HP’s enterprise business class laptop line. Not only are these notebooks elegant and distinctive, they are also more robust, lightweight and powerful in terms of performance and speed. The units are available in a variety of sizes, ranging from 13.3-inch to 15.6-inch, with touch and non-touch displays.”

She notes that HP Elite Notebooks are designed to meet today’s challenges, with fantastic out-of-the-box security software features that allow users to browse with confidence, avoid visual hackers and automatically monitor and restore BIOS (basic input/output system) settings.

“They’re ideal for remote collaboration since they have noise reduction, high-resolution displays and crisp, clear sound, as well as mobile-friendly features like long battery life and quick charging. With platform stability, this work-ready notebook is designed for a long life cycle. The HP Elitebook 800 series has many advantages over its lower-cost counterparts, especially in terms of security. We see many corporates choosing HP for reliability and performance.”

Leasing and managed services

To simplify the acquisition and management of quality devices such as the Elitebook 800 series, Datacentrix offers the options of outright purchases, or leasing in partnership with HP Financial Services, with a range of managed services to support the remote workforce.



Prudence Maleka, End User Computing Specialist at Datacentrix

“It just makes sense – organisations are opting to lease end-user devices and outsource all support and management across the entire life cycle. With a solid managed services partner, organisations enjoy consistent end-user device costs and enhanced employee productivity, while also reducing pressure on the IT department.”



Maleka says: “Datacentrix now offers local businesses a secure, flexible remote working solution that supports the modern, cloud-connected workforce – called remote working as a service (RWaaS).”

Datacentrix delivers SLA (service level agreement) driven IT maintenance and support services for PCs, laptops and enterprise equipment throughout their life cycles, minimising overall downtime, support costs and capacity challenges for customers. The service includes spares, logistics, deployment projects, call planning, uptime, warranty management, SLAs and user satisfaction measurements.

“We have an always-on, centrally managed, ITIL-aligned service desk solution that allows customers to track IT incidents to resolutions while also providing auditable tracking, escalations and knowledge management,” she says.

Datacentrix is an approved member of the HP Amplify Partner Programme and qualifies as an HP Amplify Power Services partner, which allows us to have access and offer customers analytical tools such as Proactivate management powered by HP Techpulse, to proactively manage the health of devices. The tool collects key data from devices and applications, allowing IT to detect and manage device issues before they affect employees.

“What sets us apart is the fact that Datacentrix is not a box-drop business. We manage the whole life cycle of HP devices, providing customers with the best support and service. We also have a well-rounded, fully equipped configuration centre that helps with custom imaging, asset tagging, integration and packaging,” she says.

“Basically, we offer end-to-end managed services for the front and back offices, as well as for end-users, such as service management on a complete or selective outsourcing basis, always-available monitoring, shared services and support desk, managed workspace and end-user computing services, ensuring that we can deliver all the services that an organisation needs in a single holistic package.”





Tony de Sousa, Managing Director: Technology at Datacentrix, Jay Zhou, MD for Huawei Cloud South Africa, Ahmed Mahomed, CEO at Datacentrix and Shawn Marx, Business Unit Manager: Converged Solutions at Datacentrix

Datacentrix brings home Huawei Cloud Partner of the Year accolade

Datacentrix added the accolade of 'Cloud Partner of the Year' to its achievements, receiving this award from global provider of ICT infrastructure and smart devices Huawei, at its annual South African partner recognition awards.

The awards event took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and was attended by strategic partners including Datacentrix.

Says Erica Schemel, Senior Channel Manager at Huawei South Africa: "Cloud is a key joint growth area for both Huawei and Datacentrix, and cloud services are an increasingly essential feature of ongoing transformation, enabling businesses to scale, reduce IT costs and innovate. Together, Datacentrix and Huawei are building significant momentum in the adoption of public and private cloud.

"As such, Datacentrix is a key local cloud partner for Huawei. Not only do the two organisations have well-aligned go-to-market strategies, but Datacentrix provides a strong team of skilled cloud professionals and is creating good value for Huawei and its South African customers.

"This has been highlighted recently, with Datacentrix closing the most cloud deals nationally, of varying sizes and across multiple industries in South Africa," she adds.

"Huawei Cloud is centred on our value propositions, for our partners and customers," explains Jay Zhou, MD for Huawei Cloud South Africa. "We are focused on creating a sustainable ecosystem, offering local support and joint go-to-market strategies as our key differentiators in a highly competitive, ever-evolving market.

"An understanding of the driving forces behind technology and business decisions is fundamental in strategic partnerships and we focus on building these relationships with decision makers in every customer engagement. Our strategic partnership with Datacentrix is one of joint value creation, and it is because of this that we recognised the company's contribution to growing the cloud business in South Africa. This award reflects Datacentrix's achievement in closing the first deal for cloud in South Africa; and subsequently also the most deals for Huawei Cloud locally," he continues.



“Cloud is a key joint growth area for both Huawei and Datacentrix, and cloud services are an increasingly essential feature of ongoing transformation, enabling businesses to scale, reduce IT costs and innovate. Together, Datacentrix and Huawei are building significant momentum in the adoption of public and private cloud.”

Shawn Marx, Business Unit Manager: Converged Solutions at Datacentrix, comments that Huawei has shown significant strides in the global cloud market, receiving positive industry recognition across sectors.

“In fact, Huawei’s Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) offering was included among the top five globally in the Gartner report – Market Share: IT Services, Worldwide 2020/1. The organisation has made significant progress in the South African cloud market, and we believe that, together, Huawei and Datacentrix are well positioned to address local customer needs.”

Datacentrix is a Huawei Enterprise Gold Partner, focusing on its portfolio of cloud computing, enterprise networking, data centre, collaboration and enterprise wireless solutions, including a specialisation in network energy.

The company recently received its Enterprise IT Certified Service Partner (CSP) 4-Stars certification from Huawei, further qualifying Datacentrix to help solve the challenges of digital transformation.



Datacentrix is elevating the IT conversation to a business conversation

Achieve a customised hybrid IT strategy to ensure business competitiveness and success into the future.

Truly Hybrid IT

Datacentrix drives innovation, digital transformation and the right business outcomes for its clients using a data-first approach.

Data-centric

The cloud is part of digital transformation, but it is not only about the cloud. Rather, a data-first strategy will move a company forward by providing an end-to-end roadmap that includes three fundamental pillars:

- The ideal data hosting environment
- Reliable data transport and connectivity
- Pervasive data security

The information technology elements in each pillar form a forward-looking strategy that is completely unique for each client. The roadmap touches on every point of the cloud journey and incorporates an in-depth consultative process, a mature service catalogue, data management, optimisation solutions and more, including continuous management and regular gap analysis.

For more information visit:
<https://www.datacentrix.co.za/hybridit.html>



Datacentrix and HPE join forces in Alexandra to assist with small business and youth development initiative

Datacentrix has continued its ongoing efforts to enable economic development, by participating in a project that will specifically target small businesses and local youth. The company has joined long-term partner Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) in supporting the new Greater Alexandra Chamber of Commerce (GALXCOC) Digital Hub and Township Incubator, launched in early March by the Minister of Small Business Development, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams.

The township incubator is based at Motswedi Skills Centre in Alexandra and will foster the growth and development of small businesses and the economy. It is backed by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), Ecosystem Development for Small Enterprise (EDSE) Programme and the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa (EU in SA).

“Broad economic growth and small business development are two areas that are highly dependent on an efficient, integrated and connected network of support platforms, such as these digital hubs and incubators,” explained Billy Mabena, General Manager: Public Sector Sales at Datacentrix, speaking at the launch of the Alexandra digital hub.

“This project, and the many others embarked upon by SEDA and the Department of Small Business Development aiming to provide small innovative digital start-ups with the required support, will have a significant impact in addressing our socio-economic challenges. More specifically, they will target youth unemployment by assisting young entrepreneurs to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital era.”

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) presents a plethora of digital opportunities across all industries, said Mabena. “What is also accurate, especially for South Africa, is that for this programme to succeed, it requires private/public partnerships that will provide small innovative digital start-ups with the much-needed business infrastructure, enterprise supplier development linkages, access to funding, and investor linkages.

“Upon initial discussions with HPE regarding involvement in this project, it was clear that it resonated well with Datacentrix’s vision of being a good corporate citizen. We have partnered with HPE for the past 25 years, and both companies share the same the vision in many respects relating to business drivers, social cohesion, particularly when it comes to human development, and philanthropic initiatives.

“As a local business, Datacentrix has a vested interest in the economic development of this country. In simple terms, when the South African economy does well – especially through digital programmes – we do well too. And what better way to enable economic development and job creation, than through digital entrepreneurship?” Mabena asked.

“It was only natural, then, that Datacentrix raised its hand and offered to assist where it could by providing ICT network infrastructure installation services and expertise for the GALXCOC Digital Hub and Township Incubator.”

Over and above the infrastructure support provided to this facility, Datacentrix will also support the new hub with linkage opportunities through its supplier development and learnership programmes.



“As a local business, Datacentrix has a vested interest in the economic development of this country. In simple terms, when the South African economy does well – especially through digital programmes – we do well too. And what better way to enable economic development and job creation, than through digital entrepreneurship? It was only natural, then, that Datacentrix raised its hand and offered to assist where it could by providing ICT network infrastructure installation services and expertise for the GALXCOC Digital Hub and Township Incubator.”

“Datacentrix's transformational projects are not a tick-box exercise. We are very clear and concise about what transformation means for us and the country in general, and about the initiatives that meaningfully contribute to our transformational objectives, in particular supporting our previously disadvantaged youth,” he added.

The main objective of the Datacentrix supplier development programme is to build sustainable EMEs (exempted micro enterprises) and QSEs (qualifying small enterprises) that will contribute to job creation and economic growth, by providing financial and non-financial support aligned with the National Development Plan (NDP) and broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) Codes of Good Practice.

“In our view, this aligns with the objectives of the GALXCOC Digital Hub and Incubator, and it is for this reason that we took up the challenge to partner on this project. It is encouraging to see that, despite the many challenges faced by South Africans, including crime and unemployment which have only been put under more pressure during the pandemic, we have also witnessed a rapid increase in digital adoption across all sectors of the economy and country - and even in our private lives.

“This is an opportunity for the communities to accelerate their digital programmes and contribute towards the revival of the economy through technology,” Mabena said. “We offer our sincere congratulations to SEDA, the Department of Small Business Development and all involved in this inspirational project, and look forward to seeing the fruits borne of this good work.”

Michael Langeveld, Chief Technology Officer at Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Kholiwe Makhohliso, VP and Country Managing Director South Africa at Software AG, Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, Minister of Small Business Development and Billy Mabena, General Manager: Public Sector Sales at Datacentrix



HPE GreenLake edge-to-cloud platform delivers greater choice and simplicity with unified experience, new cloud services, and expanded partner ecosystem

Hewlett Packard Enterprise announced significant advancements to HPE GreenLake, the company's flagship offering that enables organisations to modernise all their applications and data, from edge to cloud. HPE's market-leading hybrid cloud platform just got stronger, with a unified operating experience, new cloud services, and availability of HPE GreenLake in the online marketplaces of several leading distributors.

"HPE was among the first to deliver a cloud platform that enables customers to manage and extract insights from their data from edge to cloud, and our continued innovation is driving growth and furthering our market leadership," said Antonio Neri, president and CEO, HPE. "In the hybrid cloud market, HPE GreenLake is unique in its simplicity, unification, depth of cloud services, and partner network. We are furthering our differentiation, boldly setting HPE GreenLake even further apart as the ideal platform for customers to drive data-first modernisation."

"HPE GreenLake supports multi-cloud experiences everywhere – including clouds that live on-premises, at the edge, in a colocation facility, and in a public cloud – and continues to drive strong demand worldwide."

HPE GreenLake platform – supporting multi-cloud experiences wherever workloads live

HPE GreenLake supports multi-cloud experiences everywhere – including clouds that live on-premises, at the edge, in a colocation facility, and in a public cloud – and continues to drive strong demand worldwide. In Q1 2022, HPE reported Annual Recurring Revenue of \$798 million, and increased as-a-service orders 136 percent year-over-year.

HPE continues to invest and innovate in HPE GreenLake to provide customers one easy-to-use platform to radically transform and modernise their organisation. Platform updates include:

- Convergence of Aruba Central, a cloud-native, AI-powered network management solution, with the HPE GreenLake platform. Now, more than 120,000 Aruba networking customers, which includes nearly 2 million devices to manage and 2 million API (application programming interface) calls per day, can use the HPE GreenLake platform to order services on-demand and manage their assets.
- A new, unified operational experience that provides a simplified view and access to all cloud services, spanning the entire HPE portfolio, with single sign-on access, security, compliance, elasticity, and data protection.

The HPE GreenLake platform provides the foundation for more than 50 cloud services, including electronic health records, machine learning operations, payments, unified analytics, and SAP HANA, as well as a wide array of cloud services from partners.

HPE GreenLake for Aruba networking: As a leading provider and expert in delivering comprehensive edge connectivity networking solutions, HPE is building out its network as a service (NaaS) offerings with HPE GreenLake for Aruba



“In the hybrid cloud market, HPE GreenLake is unique in its simplicity, unification, depth of cloud services, and partner network. Today, we are furthering our differentiation, boldly setting HPE GreenLake even further apart as the ideal platform for customers to drive data-first modernisation.”

networking. The eight new services simplify the process of procuring and deploying NaaS and allow customers to align network spend to usage needs, while ensuring that the network is always ready to support business objectives.

HPE GreenLake Data Services: New and enhanced services for block storage and data protection join the current HPE GreenLake data services.

HPE GreenLake for Block Storage: HPE GreenLake for Block Storage is the industry's first block storage as-a-Service to deliver 100 percent data availability guarantee built-in on a cloud operational model. It helps businesses transform faster and brings self-service agility to critical enterprise applications. The new offering delivers the following capabilities:

- Self-service provisioning to provide line of business owners and database admins the agility required to build and deploy new apps, services, and projects faster
- IT resources are freed to work on strategic, higher-value initiatives with 98 percent operational time savings

HPE Backup and Recovery Service: Enhanced HPE Backup and Recovery Service is backup as a service built for hybrid cloud. Customers can effortlessly protect their data for virtual machines, gain rapid recovery on-premises, and deliver a cost-effective approach to store long-term backups in the public cloud. HPE Backup and Recovery Service is now available for virtual machines deployed on heterogeneous infrastructure. Additionally, HPE is advancing its ransomware recovery solutions by adding immutable data copies – on-premises or on Amazon Web Services (AWS) with HPE Backup and Recovery Service.

HPE GreenLake for High Performance Computing: HPE is further enhancing its HPE GreenLake for High Performance Computing (HPC) offerings, making it more accessible for any enterprise to adopt the technology, by adding new, purpose-built HPC capabilities. The new capabilities quickly tackle the most demanding compute and data-intensive workloads, to power AI and ML initiatives, and accelerate time to insight. These also include lower entry points to HPC, with a smaller configuration of 10 nodes, to test workloads and scale as needed.

HPE GreenLake for Compute Ops Management: First introduced at HPE Discover 2021, the HPE GreenLake Compute Ops Management is a cloud-native management console to access, monitor, and manage servers. Compute Ops Management easily and securely automates the compute lifecycle management across a customer's compute environment. The cloud service is open for a 90-day free trial and will be available for purchase in June 2022.

HPE expands its partner ecosystem to deliver industry-leading solutions through HPE GreenLake: The HPE GreenLake platform attracts a broad ecosystem of partners seeking to deliver their applications and services on the platform.

HPE continues to invest in co-development with key distribution partners. Over 100,000 partners can now leverage the platform to deliver the cloud experience to their clients. Updates include a catalog of pre-defined cloud services for the marketplaces, and improvements to automate ordering and billing.

HPE also announced the availability of HPE GreenLake for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI, a new, optimised offering that provides customers more choice and flexibility for their hybrid IT environments. HPE GreenLake for Microsoft Azure Stack HCI is an integrated system, pre-built and configured for faster deployment and easier integration and delivered as a pay-per-use service from HPE GreenLake.

Find out more by visiting
<https://www.datacentrix.co.za/hpe-greenlake.html>



**Hewlett Packard
Enterprise**

Seven ways cloud-based contact centre technologies improve employee engagement

By Shawn Gradwell, Solutions Architect at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company

Engaged employees are more passionate about their work and proactively contribute towards improving a business and its reputation. In fact, a study from global analytics and advice firm Gallup confirms the strong link between high employee engagement and better business outcomes – across industry and company size – whether in good economic times or bad.

“The contact centre has become instrumental in its contribution to improving the overall experience of customers – both external and internal - to an organisation,” says Shawn



Shawn Gradwell, Solutions Architect at eNetworks

Gradwell, Solutions Architect at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company. “And cloud technologies are delivering significant value in this area, specifically for internal customers, by helping to improve employee engagement levels through improved collaboration between team members, important for social interaction and team cohesion.

The right tools

Cloud-based contact centre technologies are helping to improve employee engagement in several ways. “Having the right tools in place is an important consideration for better employee engagement,” Gradwell explains. “Cloud solutions can capacitate contact centre employees by allowing them to work effectively from home or from anywhere, maintaining their status as part of the team and keeping them engaged by using technology systems they are motivated to operate.”

User-friendly interface and workflow automation

Next-generation cloud-based contact centre services create efficiencies that support employees in their work by delivering the service in an easy to use and understandable application that is available on their computers or mobile phones. Customised workflows can be integrated automatically into existing ERP, CRM and ITSM systems, thereby reducing duplication, manual tasks and errors.

Reliable, real-time information

“Another key consideration is the fact that the analytical power and speed of the cloud is unparalleled and has increased the depth of the reporting and visibility across contact centre services. Not only does this empower employees, but real-time statistics bring about greater accountability to the team. Reliable data improves and opens communication in teams, which enhances teamwork and builds trust.”



Access to data-driven insights and trends

“Furthermore, cloud technologies deliver live data feeds and complete data-driven insights, enabling management to adapt their business strategies based on trends identified. This also provides managers with an opportunity to stay on top of their teams’ deliverables and to identify areas for improvement.”

Employee coaching

Gradwell goes on to advise that cloud technologies allow for employee coaching opportunities too. “Artificial intelligence (AI) generates a sentiment score on calls made to the service desk. The nature of customer comments in phone calls, text messages, emails, and chat sessions can be properly assessed and used as coaching opportunities for staff to be better kitted to handle various service call situations. Recordings are kept and transcribed automatically to support training initiatives.”

Tailored mentoring and recognition

“Supervisors can also provide tailored mentoring to individuals when analysing and comparing scores against the floor’s average. These scores mean that supervisors are more geared to recognise employee performance and express staff appreciation more regularly.”

Improved management

Modern cloud contact centre technologies offer users an easy-to-use, intuitive, experience-focused user interface that enables managers and supervisors to change call flows, routing and configuring text-to-speech IVR (interactive voice response) messages quickly and immediately, without any intervention from IT support or delays while a ticket is queued to an engineer. This permits supervisors to take decisions quickly to improve the performance of the team in each unique situation.

“A well implemented cloud contact centre solution supports employee wellbeing by allowing team leaders to engage more regularly and more meaningfully with employees, from addressing concerns timeously, through changing behaviour, to recognising and rewarding employee performance and more.”

“Consistent employee engagement improves the physical and mental wellbeing of employees,” Gradwell continues. “A well implemented cloud contact centre solution supports employee wellbeing by allowing team leaders to engage more regularly and more meaningfully with employees, from addressing concerns timeously, through changing behaviour, to recognising and rewarding employee performance and more.”



Rubrik delivers cyber threat hunting in battle against ransomware

Now organisations can more accurately identify the last known clean copy of data to prevent reinfection and accelerate recovery.

Rubrik, the Zero Trust Data Security Company™, today announced new enhancements to its cyber resilience solutions to help better equip customers in the fight against ransomware. With this latest release, organisations can improve ransomware preparedness, respond with more intelligent and integrated tools, and recover from attacks faster. Now with simple user interface support and API Driven integrations, including Palo Alto Networks' Cortex XSOAR, the market-leading extended security orchestration, automation and response (SOAR) platform, security operations teams can recover from attacks faster and reduce the chance of reinfection.

According to IDC, more than one third of organisations worldwide have experienced a ransomware attack or breach that blocked access to systems or data in the previous 12 months. Of these attacks, only 13 percent of organisations attacked or breached reported not paying a ransom.

"Recently, organisations have been targeted more frequently by highly sophisticated cyber attacks that exploit vulnerabilities in legacy backup products, forcing a ransomware payment," said Dan Rogers, President of Rubrik. "With these new advancements, IT and security teams are able to better protect their enterprise, cloud, and SaaS environments and more quickly recover from cyber attacks without paying the ransom."

Typically in the event of a cyberattack, organisations have been forced to scan their production systems for malware, which can be difficult, time consuming, and inaccurate. Now with Rubrik threat hunting, organisations can directly scan their backups for indicators of compromise, including ransomware. With this added intelligence, organisations can more accurately identify the last known clean copy of data in order to prevent reinfection during and after recovery. Additionally, Rubrik's new threat hunting capabilities integrate with Cortex XSOAR threat hunting playbooks for

"More than one third of organisations worldwide have experienced a ransomware attack or breach that blocked access to systems or data in the previous 12 months. Of these attacks, only 13 percent of organisations attacked or breached reported not paying a ransom.

easy identification of compromised data within backup snapshots during post-incident reviews and for simplified reporting to external regulatory agencies.

"As the rate and complexity of managing ransomware attacks continues to increase, companies need to leverage automated workflows to recover quickly without paying the ransom," said Rishi Bhargava, Vice President of Product Strategy for Cortex at Palo Alto Networks. "Rubrik's integration with Cortex XSOAR enables our joint customers to benefit from prebuilt threat-hunting playbooks to quickly identify new threat activity, recover from ransomware attacks faster, and prevent reinfection from happening during or after the recovery process."



Rubrik's latest release delivers new capabilities across data security, cloud and SaaS, and data protection

New data security capabilities

As legacy backup vendors struggle to meet the needs of ransomware protection and recovery, Rubrik continues to make its Zero Trust Data Security platform more robust. For example, Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) can be globally enforced across the entire platform to help ensure that unauthorized users do not gain access to data.

Additionally, Rubrik is expanding its Sensitive Data Discovery service to roughly 60 pre-defined analyzers that can automatically identify and classify more data types, including certain types of Personal Identifiable Information (PII). The ability to discover sensitive business and customer information across environments without production impact can help reduce data risk, including assessing potential damage from an exfiltration attack.

New cloud and SaaS capabilities

Without Zero Trust Data Security, enterprise productivity tools and business applications in cloud and SaaS environments can be highly vulnerable as well. Rubrik continues to enhance cloud data protection with the following advancements:

Protection for Azure SQL with fully-managed SaaS

support: Expanded Rubrik coverage in Azure cloud ensures Azure SQL can be secured alongside other cloud and on-prem workloads for unified visibility and streamlined policy management.

Reduced blast radius with archives for AWS S3: In the event of an AWS production account being compromised by ransomware, cloud data can be recovered through a bunkered account with new credentials. To maintain security, the new account has limited access and deletion rights.

Optimised cloud economics: Low-cost daily snapshots for Azure VMs and AWS EC2 instances can save organisations up to 40 percent.

Enterprise-scale protection for Microsoft 365: With Rubrik protection for up to 100,000 users, Rubrik customers can recover more application data with restores for Microsoft Exchange contacts and calendars, SharePoint lists and Teams channel posts.

New data protection capabilities

Rubrik's data protection begins with a logical air gap to keep data online for rapid recovery while incorporating proprietary protocols so that attackers cannot discover customers' data. Additionally, Rubrik's append-only file system keeps data in an immutable state. With this latest release, Rubrik is introducing:



Werner Vorster, Country Manager,
Sub-Saharan Africa at Rubrik

Expanded protection for SAP databases: Customers can now protect SAP HANA on IBM Power Systems, extending the ability to streamline protection and reduce the need for manual scripting and job scheduling across on-premises and the cloud.

Faster recovery of Oracle and SQL: Customers with large Microsoft SQL or Oracle databases that have a large number of files will now be able to recover even faster. SQL customers can see up to 3 times improvement in restores and Oracle customers can see up to 25 percent improvement for database recoveries.

Enhanced data protection with quicker backups for Nutanix AHV: Now for Nutanix AHV, users can select individual disks to exclude from their backup to quickly protect only the critical and needed pieces, which frees up time and storage. Also to optimise network bandwidth and provide an extra security layer, the entire Nutanix AHV backup connectivity can be sent over a separate and isolated iSCSI Data Services network.



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<https://www.rubrik.com/warranty>

The what, how, where and why of AI

By Shakeel Jhazbhay, General Manager:
Digital Business Solutions at Datacentrix

Artificial intelligence (AI) technology is playing a vital role in transforming not only businesses, but entire industries, and even our day-to-day lives.

Gartner forecasts that worldwide AI software revenue is set to reach \$62.5 billion this year, a fairly significant increase of 21.3 percent from 2021. However, the research company also states that, while enterprises continue to show strong interest in AI, the reality is that deployment is lagging behind, and it will take up to 2025 for half of organisations worldwide to reach the maturity model level Gartner describes as the 'stabilisation stage'.

The reasons for this? A reluctance to embrace AI and also a lack of trust, amongst others.

"Successful AI business outcomes will depend on the careful selection of use cases," said Alys Woodward, Senior Research Director at Gartner. "Use cases that deliver significant business value, yet can be scaled to reduce risk, are critical to demonstrate the impact of AI investment to business stakeholders."

So, while there's no debate that AI has serious value potential, it is important that businesses understand upfront what it is, current trends, and how it can be successfully adopted.

What is AI? Understanding the use cases for AI technologies correctly

AI encompasses several technologies. These include the following:

1. **Natural language processing (NLP)** – an area of AI where a computer is able to break down and understand spoken and written human language, encompassing chatbots, sentiment analysis, summarisation, entity recognition, translation, and concept extraction;
2. **Robotic process application (RPA)** – this technology aims to automate the more mundane, repetitive business processes, freeing up users to perform higher value work;
3. **Speech recognition** – AI speech recognition uses speech-to-text technology to convert voice to text. Also known as voice computing, text-to-speech allows you to convert written text into natural-sounding audio in a variety of languages and voices;
4. **Machine learning (ML)** – this area of AI sees machines using data and algorithms to mimic human learning, but without human intervention. By learning, machines are then able to identify patterns in data and predict outcomes. Important areas within ML include predictive analytics, forecasting, and anomaly detection; and
5. **Vision technologies** – here, AI is able to process and make sense of visual data, like images and videos, using video analytics and image recognition.

How do you take the right steps to implement AI effectively?

When it comes to AI at any level, the output requires clean data as input. This refers to data that has been cleansed, with corrupt information, inaccurate or irrelevant records and



Shakeel Jhazbhay, General Manager:
Digital Business Solutions at Datacentrix

duplicated data replaced, modified or deleted. Without clean data, you won't get the right output.

What are the difficulties to avoid on an AI journey?

A major pitfall many organisations encounter when embarking on an AI journey is starting the project off too big and trying to accomplish everything at once; the key is to try and avoid undertaking too much, too soon. It's more prudent to tackle one area or challenge at a time, and gain immediate business value. Start small for bigger impact.

Where will AI be in five years' time?

AI will play a major role in catapulting us into the metaverse. In fact, we're already seeing AI building practical models in a virtual world. For instance, an architect can provide a building model using virtual reality that allows the opportunity to experience the scale, depth and design intent of the building within an immersive 3D experience, long before the structure is physically built. It's also possible to use AI for accurate weather forecasting, allowing meteorologists to predict future events such as rainfall, wind and temperature.

In addition, facial analysis is being used in job interviews to analyse potential candidates' facial expressions and their tone of voice to assess personality and job skills, although this has been a highly debated topic globally.

All of this information reinforces the fact that a good understanding of what AI technologies are, and how they can be used most effectively, is critical for any company looking to positively influence operational efficiencies, gain competitive advantage, and ultimately improve business outcomes.

“All of this information reinforces the fact that a good understanding of what AI technologies are, and how they can be used most effectively, is critical for any company looking to positively influence operational efficiencies, gain competitive advantage, and ultimately improve business outcomes.”

Micro Focus' Hybrid Cloud Management solution now has SaaS support

Micro Focus announced the introduction of Hybrid Cloud Management X (HCMX), a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) that was earlier acknowledged as the "Global Winner" in the Research in Action (RIA) Vendor Selection Matrix: Hybrid Cloud Service Management Tools, 2021.

HCMX combines hybrid-cloud and on-premises fulfillment processes by delivering self-service resource provisioning with explicit cost containment and governance built-in. Existing Micro Focus cloud management clients (e.g., Hybrid Cloud Management (HCM), Cloud Security Alliance, or on-premises HCMX) can now use HCMX as a SaaS with an easy conversion route. HCMX SaaS is ISO 27001 and ISO 27034 certified and SOC 2 compliant and provides multi-layered security.

HCMX is a component of the Micro Focus' Enterprise Service Management (ESM) platform, which provides modular solutions for IT Security Management, Discovery and Topology, IT Asset Management, Process Automation, and the previously mentioned Cloud Management. All modules share a single service site and catalog, giving employees a consistent experience and one-stop purchasing for any service, from IT to human resources to cloud usage.

Micro Focus HCMX comes with the following features:

- **Lifecycle management orchestration** – Accelerates hybrid app and service provisioning and automates and orchestrates day two actions using a library of unique workflows and connections.
- **Blueprint designs that work everywhere** – Allows IT to efficiently construct and deliver unique environments, ranging from simple virtual machines to big multi-tier application stacks, using blueprint designs that work anywhere. Designs are adaptive, reusable, dynamic, and cloud agnostic.
- **Self-service with governance guardrails** – Provides a centralised self-service portal with a virtual agent to provide 24x7 support to customers and decrease IT workload while retaining oversight via compliance guardrails such as access limits, tracking continuous integration dependencies and other policies.
- **Cloud cost optimisation** – Provides insight into cloud utilisation and spending through detailed multi-cloud spend reporting, AI-generated savings recommendations, and budget management tracking.

Expert's view

"We are very pleased to announce the availability of our popular hybrid cloud management solution, alongside our other ITOM offerings, as an independent SaaS product," said Rohit De Souza, Senior Vice President and General Manager of ITOM at Micro Focus. "HCMX has been available via our SMAX platform as SaaS and as a standalone product on premises, but SaaS makes HCMX easier to adopt through flexible consumption and licensing models that reduce start-up costs, while helping organisations optimise their cloud utilisation."



Enterprise Linux on IBM Power helps agile business scale

By Graeme Dendy, Services Manager for Converged Solutions at Datacentrix

Many organisations have legacy systems and applications that are trying to sustain operations in new market scenarios. They run up against increasingly agile, adaptable, and scalable competitors who have transformed digitally. However, continuing the way they have always operated increasingly exposes enterprises. When others improve, it results in comparative regression.

Cumbersome and expensive operations make companies ponderous and slow to adapt to market changes. Market opportunities are missed, products are launched late or after competitors, growth stagnates, and there's impoverished ability to scale. The challenge has always been the difficulty in reliably migrating business systems to the cloud to achieve dependable, scalable, high-performance operations.

It's true that not all IT projects run smoothly. It happened to leading companies with their ERP implementations. It happened to a multi-billion dollar conglomerate with their digital transformation project. It happened at a multinational automobile and commercial vehicle manufacturer as well as at a leading sports apparel corporation. All companies with deep pockets.

Trail blazers

But they were among the trail blazers in their respective endeavours, companies that defined new migratory paths, rather than travelled well-worn routes signposted by previous experience. Nor could they rely on partners who knew their new terrain like the backs of their proverbial hands.

Open-source software is no longer a trail blazing solution for business. It has been enterprise-grade for decades. But in the complex world of hybrid on-prem and cloud native digitally transformed businesses, enterprises require enhanced safety and additional comfort that they have the complete solution.

Sign up for our webinar at <https://www.datacentrix.co.za/ibm-power-systems.html> to understand how our Linux systems' integration capabilities, experience and managed services can help your business achieve your digital transformation goals.

IBM invested a billion dollars in Linux in 2000 and outright bought Red Hat for \$34 billion in 2018. They have pedigree. We have years of IBM partnership under our belts, investing resources into skills and experience in the environment.

Dependable production

As organisations shift their Red Hat and SUSE Linux environments from development into production, we help them get reliable mission-critical applications that scale out because they can maximise platform performance.

Linux on IBM Power means that we can help customers design and deploy customised, future-proof solutions that provide rapid returns and the best possible business value. IBM Power servers deliver up to twice the performance and 12 times the workload density of competitive commodity servers.

SUSE and IBM help organisations of all sizes deploy and maintain mission-critical systems. SUSE provides reliable, interoperable Linux and cloud infrastructure solutions with increased agility, manageable complexity, and reduced cost.

Red Hat is a leading provider of open-source solutions and IBM is one of the largest Linux contributors.

Support where it's needed

Managed services underpin the success of these deployments. In an always-on world, where everything is connected, serviced by teams of specialists, with advisory-based engagement and service delivery, this ensures customers free up their time to focus on growing their business. Full front office and back office support with end user, ISP, and facility services ensure reliable, uninterrupted, and sustainable operations.

Linux on IBM Power from Datacentrix delivers hardened enterprise operations that are stable, supported, and profitable for future-proof business.

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Hello SASE. Goodbye SD-WAN?

By Hardus Dippenaar, Senior Network Architect at Datacentrix

The working environment has been irrevocably changed over the past two years, and the debate rages on as to whether we'll ever go back to a pre-COVID setup.

Certain organisations like PwC have made decisive moves, with the accounting and consulting firm announcing that all of its 40,000 US client services employees would be able to work virtually, from anywhere, permanently. Other major accounting firms, including Deloitte and KPMG, have followed suit, providing staff with the option to continue to work remotely into the future.

In South Africa, it seems – at least for now – that many businesses are considering a hybrid approach to working, giving employees a degree of flexibility, with certain days designated as in-office 'face time' days and others as work-from-home days.

Farmers too have had to modify their day-to-day operations, where possible changing the way in which they interact with suppliers, clients and staff, explained Hardus Dippenaar, Senior Network Architect at Datacentrix.

Speaking at Datacentrix's Agri Indaba event, Dippenaar added that regardless of what a company's decision is in the shorter term around a hybrid approach to work, several considerations must be taken into account.

"One is that an organisation's data is moving as people are moving. Another is that staff expect the same, seamless

"The critical difference for today's environment, however, is the fact that SD-WAN still follows the more traditional networking concept of all network infrastructure centring around an organisation's datacentre, whereas SASE considers the datacentre as just another service edge – essentially the SE in SASE."

connection to the applications they need, regardless of where they might be working from.

"Not only this, but security as we know it is no longer pertinent just in the workplace, it also needs to move with your users," he stated.



This is where the concept of Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) is coming to the fore, Dippenaar explained, as the requirements of a distributed workforce have placed remote access to applications and the ability to work from anywhere as top organisational priorities today.

“The datacentre is no longer a company's hub, it's now the user. At the same time though, the traditional office has not disappeared, and worker distribution could shift again at any point.

“It makes sense then to deliver the necessary agility by running your network as a service through a SASE-enabled architecture, which defines the edge of the network as constantly changing and moving with the user, extending IT's visibility beyond the corporate network and into the cloud.”

What about SD-WAN

The good news for those businesses that are or have already invested in software-defined networking (SD-WAN) technology, is that there is no rip and replace required. “Businesses deploying SD-WAN create an overlay network through physical appliances, software or cloud-based vendor services, depending on their IT needs, but SASE is more distributed and, by Gartner's definition, strictly cloud-based.

“The critical difference for today's environment, however, is the fact that SD-WAN still follows the more traditional networking concept of all network infrastructure centring around an organisation's datacentre, whereas SASE considers the datacentre as just another service edge – essentially the SE in SASE.

“Essentially, SD-WAN provides the foundation for a SASE-enabled architecture, delivering protected, anywhere, anytime access.”

How secure is SASE?

With cybercriminals already raking in billions of Rands, a valid concern voiced by many firms is whether SASE is further complicating cybersecurity challenges. This is not the case, said Dippenaar, due to the multi-layer security capabilities provided by SD-WAN technology for both on-premises and cloud.

“These security measures can bridge a company's current security deployment with a SASE rollout by providing consistent security policy enforcement that can be rolled out and managed anywhere. The edge is secured because the network is treated as a Zero Trust network. The trust of any device and any user must be proven with every access request, no matter where it comes from.

“An important point here is that it's not just about the deployment of security across the modern enterprise, it's



also about the simplified monitoring, managing and reporting that this also brings.

New connectivity needs

By the same token that an existing SD-WAN implementation does not need to be replaced when rolling out SASE, an organisation's connectivity infrastructure should also not necessarily be changed. “A company can use its existing connectivity, whether it be an asymmetrical link, fibre, LTE (Long-Term Evolution), MPLS (Multi-Protocol Label Switching) or anything else.

Don't throw away good infrastructure unless it's expensive, or slow; use what's available and optimise it.”

From a local agricultural perspective, Dippenaar clarified that the future of business within the sector will see a large-scale interest in and adoption of IoT (Internet of Things) devices and related data collection.

“Digitalisation is a major driver for the future of agri. Through SASE, organisations within this industry will be able to empower their workforce with greater mobility, while also ensuring that only those people with the correct credentials and rights can access data and deliver it to the cloud. This information can then be analysed and used for more sustainable farming,” he said.

Integrated hybrid cloud storage solutions can be highly beneficial, but there are factors to consider

By Eric Herzog, Chief Marketing Officer at Infinidat

Many companies today have some form of hybrid cloud strategy and often find themselves juggling a relatively mature mix of cloud and on-premises storage technology, while also needing to extract more value from their data.

Integrated hybrid cloud storage solutions have become increasingly efficient at delivering the performance that organisations need, while helping them to contain the costs of rapidly-growing data volumes. Hence, the key to effectively deploying hybrid cloud storage is finding a solution that reduces the complexity of managing highly distributed data, minimising the burden on IT teams, and lowering data management costs.

Essentially, hybrid cloud storage integration architecture enables organisations to take advantage of the scale and flexibility of the public cloud, while maintaining the security and control of a private cloud or data centre. It also allows them to pursue a tiered storage strategy for maximum cost efficiency.

However, finding seamless integration with hybrid cloud environments for an organisation may not be as simple as it seems and there are a few key aspects that companies must keep in mind when investing in integrated storage solutions.

Structure and performance considerations

When an organisation grows, it should adopt practical methods of thinking about the structure and performance of the solution. From innovation and enablement to cybersecurity and applications, deploying a storage solution that caters to an enterprise hybrid cloud environment, including the overall computing environment, provides a variety of advantages to businesses.

Generally, an integrated hybrid cloud storage solution provides organisations with a lot of flexibility and agility for rolling out new services and applications, while also providing them with the ability to roll out these services at speed, either to the market or their internal user base.

An integrated hybrid cloud storage solution also provides enterprises with the flexibility of not having to keep all their eggs in one basket, as some more critical services, applications, and workloads will deliver the best security, performance and availability with the on-premises private cloud portion of a hybrid cloud storage equation. Additionally, some shared infrastructure is more suited to going to the public cloud portion of a hybrid cloud deployment. Where data resides is also a critical consideration to meet compliance with regulatory requirements.

Significant scalability

Aside from the ability to mix and shift workloads on demand between on-premises, private and public cloud environments, integrated hybrid cloud storage solutions also enable a significant degree of scalability. In hybrid cloud storage scenarios, there is generally no cap on the cloud burst that enterprises can use to gain access to additional resources. At the same time, integrated hybrid cloud storage offerings also allow for tiering of hot and cold data, which refers to moving less frequently used data to cheaper levels of storage or tiers.

Customers need scalable, high-performance, low latency and highly available Tier 1 storage capabilities as they transition from legacy on-premises infrastructure to modern cloud-optimised solutions. Cloud storage options for block and file datasets are not a sufficient replacement for many Tier 0/1 on-premises storage offerings, with particular challenges



around scale and enterprise features. InfiniBox bridges that gap with proven Infinidat values such as: high performance, built-in data protection with zero-penalty snapshots and active-active clustering, cross-region replication including synchronous, asynchronous, and three-site options and scalable snapshots that make test and development environments easy and fast to use on premises.

This also applies to customers with a private cloud approach. The ideal hybrid cloud storage solution can be deployed, and the storage can be consumed as a cloud extension for different business units within an organisation.

Despite the multiple benefits that integrated hybrid cloud storage solutions bring to an enterprise, there are several factors that companies must keep in mind when deploying.

1. **Enterprises must consider the cost.** A thorough cost evaluation must be conducted in the form of a cost analysis that will determine the total cost of ownership related to implementing a hybrid cloud storage solution. Understanding what applications are best served from the private cloud portion of a hybrid cloud storage scenario and what applications are best served from the public cloud.
2. **Enterprises must consider performance.** When considering a hybrid cloud storage solution, an organisation should evaluate the needs of its applications, workloads, and services determine which should be deployed in a public cloud configuration and which should be deployed in a private cloud environment.
3. **Companies need to evaluate a potential hybrid cloud storage solution from a regulatory, compliance, and cyber resilience perspective.** Where different types of data are stored must be determined against data sovereignty requirements, regulatory requirements, and cyber security issues.

Security considerations

Lastly, enterprises must consider the potential security implications. When deploying a hybrid cloud storage solution, an organisation must ensure that, from a role-based or application perspective, strict security measures are in place in terms of what data can be accessed in the private and public clouds.

Companies can enjoy a host of benefits from deploying hybrid cloud storage solutions, including flexibility, agility, scalability, and cost efficiency, as well as greater reliability, and back-up and recovery services. However, equal consideration should be given to potential challenges,



Eric Herzog, Chief Marketing Officer
at Infinidat

“Companies can enjoy a host of benefits from deploying hybrid cloud storage solutions, including flexibility, agility, scalability, and cost efficiency, as well as greater reliability, and back-up and recovery services.”

including complexity issues, security, visibility, and compatibility, as well as potentially losing control of infrastructure.

An increasing number of enterprises are investing in hybrid cloud storage. If done properly, a hybrid cloud storage solution will serve as a supplement or extension to an organisation's local private cloud. It can enable organisations to manage data in a unified storage system while at the same time striking the right balance between performance and cost.

INFINIDAT

Zero Trust cybersecurity approach vital for besieged local businesses

By Andre Lombard Technical Manager: Security at Datacentrix

At the end of 2021 a report released by the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) painted a fairly bleak picture of the cyberthreat landscape in South Africa.

Entitled the African Cyberthreat Assessment Report 2021, the survey highlighted that, while the broader African continent had experienced some attacks against critical infrastructure and frontline services, South Africa was amongst the countries hardest hit, experiencing around 230 million threat detections in total between January 2020 and February 2021. Comparatively, Kenya and Morocco were subjected to a much lower number of attacks, at 72 million and 71 million respectively over the same period.

In South Africa, 219 million detections were related to e-mail threats, and the country was also listed as the most targeted with ransomware and Business Email Compromise (BEC) attempts. In fact, the INTERPOL report referred to figures from Accenture, which stated that South Africa has the third highest number of cybercrime victims worldwide, at a cost of R2.2 billion a year.

It is clear that local business needs to reconsider its cybersecurity approach, and that the pre-COVID Virtual Private network (VPN) setup that permits users to access all areas of the network, is no longer a secure strategy.

In fact, today's world of remote working and cloud-based systems necessitates a 'Zero Trust' approach to keep a business' data and infrastructure secure. This type of strategy, based on the premise of 'never trust, always verify', revokes any type of access privileges that users may have previously had on a network, and keeps their access to the

“In South Africa, 219 million detections were related to e-mail threats, and the country was also listed as the most targeted with ransomware and Business Email Compromise (BEC) attempts. In fact, the INTERPOL report referred to figures from Accenture, which stated that South Africa has the third highest number of cybercrime victims worldwide, at a cost of R2.2 billion a year.

absolute minimum, while frequently requesting user authentication.

Check, check and check again

In a Zero Trust world, legitimate, authorised users may access only those areas of the network, as well as apps and data, that are needed to complete a task (for instance an organisation's enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, e-mail, and a document repository) and nothing more.



Here, technologies like Secure Access Service Edge (SASE), in combination with biometrics on end point devices as well as privileged identity management (PIM) solutions are playing a critical role in helping companies to scale down access and increase the security of their systems.

These technologies allow for the security perimeter to be moved away from the enterprise to the user or device. They then require users to be regularly identified and verified, before permitting them to enter the network perimeter, and provide only pre-assigned access to certain areas.

Policy management critical

Designing a Zero Trust architecture must include, at its core, centralised policy management, which encompasses identity-related and allocation policies. It must also align with local governance requirements, such as The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) or General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), regarding the safety and security of data and cloud infrastructure.

The alignment of processes and policies is essential, while it might be possible to control the technology, it is not necessarily possible to control the human behind the device; this remains a major anomaly when it comes to cybersecurity. However, while you may not be able to change user behaviour, it is possible to enforce processes and policies to best control engagements – leading to one path and one path only.



**Andre Lombaard, Technical Manager:
Security at Datacentrix**

A Zero Trust approach to cybersecurity can essentially assist any business to create a safer remote and cloud environment, simplifying the security architecture and reducing organisational risk.

Security Operations Centre



Simplify compliance. Enhance security. Mitigate risks.

The Datacentrix Security Operations Centre offers companies powerful protection from cyber attacks.

The technology augments human capability through automation to detect, investigate and respond effectively to a security breach. The flexible architecture deploys security everywhere it's needed, whether on premise, in public clouds, hybrid clouds or as a hosted SaaS solution.



Accurately detect and prioritise threats



Validate security threats



Respond effectively to threats



Be prepared



Monitor and defend your ICT environment in real time



Use intelligent insights to respond to incidents quickly

Datacentrix named as Cloudflare Managed Services Partner for Sub-Saharan Africa

Datacentrix has been appointed as a Managed Services Partner within the Sub-Saharan African region by Cloudflare, the security, performance, and reliability company that is helping to build a better internet.

Says Shawn Gradwell, Solutions Architect at eNetworks, a Datacentrix company: "Datacentrix has built a strong partnership with Cloudflare, taking pride in becoming a meaningful contributor to the organisation's local business.

"We've seen massive growth globally in ransomware and ransom DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) attack campaigns over the past year that have interrupted aspects of critical infrastructure around the world. In fact, the second half of the year in 2021 recorded a growing swarm of one of the most powerful botnets deployed, and record-breaking DDoS attacks.

"From a local perspective, there's no doubt that cyberattacks will continue to put public and private businesses at risk unless addressed.

"And, as more infrastructure is digitised and remote workforces becomes standard, both the benefits and the threat landscape will increase. Cloudflare's offering provides optimised security and connectivity, helping to keep attacks away from your infrastructure," Gradwell continues.

Cloudflare provides comprehensive cloud-based network and application protection against internet-borne threats, including DDoS protection, Web Application Firewall (WAF), DNS, Computer Network Defence (CND), Secure Access Service Edge (SASE), Zero Trust, Software Defined Wide Area Networks (SD-WAN) and more, all via one platform.

Interesting statistics about the company include the fact that Cloudflare protects one in six websites worldwide, and millions of internet properties, such as websites, remote teams, APIs,

mobile apps and more, are powered by Cloudflare. Another noteworthy point is that 86 billion cyber threats were blocked an average of each day by Cloudflare in Q4 of 2021.

"Cloudflare's cloud-based, services-focused offering fits well with Datacentrix's emphasis on managed services, ensuring that customers free up their time to concentrate on growing their businesses," Gradwell explains.

"A real benefit to the Cloudflare offering – which is all accessible from a single dashboard and is simple to set up, use, and maintain – is that it can be provided to organisations of all sizes. It also gives developers a flexible, internet-scale platform to deploy serverless code instantly across the globe, with no requirements for software or hardware.

"In addition, Cloudflare's speed of execution is excellent, and its cloud-based integrated network services can be up and running within 20 minutes.

"Datacentrix is thrilled to have been acknowledged by Cloudflare as a Managed Services Partner. Our next step over the next year will be to add 'white glove' service delivery to our partnership, with the aim of becoming the de facto service delivery partner for Cloudflare within the Sub-Saharan region," adds Gradwell.

"We are very pleased to appoint Datacentrix as a Managed Services Partner for Sub-Saharan Africa, certifying their consulting capability and delivery of our security, reliability and performance solutions with a broad range of value-added and managed services.," states Mohamed Zerri, Channel Manager for Middle East, Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa Region at Cloudflare. "Datacentrix's established footprint within the territory, and its reputation as a trusted hybrid IT systems integrator and managed services provider, were important considerations in the company's appointment as a Cloudflare Managed Services Partner. We look forward to working together to build a better internet and deliver true value to customers within this region."

For more information visit www.datacentrix.co.za/cloudflare.html



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