DNI plans for future ICT capacity and performance needs with Datacentrix

DNI, a niche investment company in the telecommunications and distribution sectors, has revamped its Johannesburg-based server room, overcoming current capacity and performance-related challenges and making provision for future requirements, with the assistance of Datacentrix.

Newly appointed Head of IT at DNI, Christiaan Jacobs states: "Our infrastructure needed an urgent upgrade as it was frequently freezing, which meant that users could not access the network or storage. Not only this, due to our recent growth, the company's ICT infrastructure needed to support more employees, with a view to expand further in the future. Thus, our most important requirements were availability, as well

as added capacity to cater for the speed at which DNI is expanding."

Jacobs explains that DNI was seeking recommendations on best-of-breed products that would be a good fit for its business and infrastructure requirements, in addition to best practice advice. Running a fairly lean IT division, the company also wanted to build in a level of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) for improved, proactive infrastructure management.

Says Jacobs: "Datacentrix' submission was accepted in March this year, not solely based on cost effectiveness, but also the organisation's skills and expertise, which were an important checkpoint

Head of IT at DNI, Christiaan Jacobs with Datacentrix account manager, Charl Ferreira

in this tender process. Having established a relationship with Datacentrix in my previous role, I was also aware of the team's reliability and execution abilities, and its commitment to understanding customer environments and specific requirements."

Since the ICT company's appointment earlier this year, Datacentrix has positioned itself as a trusted advisor to DNI, having successfully implemented the new environment, which includes servers, networking equipment, rack enclosures, and connectivity.

"In addition, Datacentrix rolled out a storage solution that not only caters for our growth over time, but makes provision for DNI's in-house development programme, which requires a great deal of space. Our previous system just couldn't handle the related queries and loads, meaning that they had to be run overnight. Today, these can be resolved in a matter of minutes, at any time of day."

The new infrastructure also has a much smaller footprint, leaving physical space for expansion over time, and is fully redundant. "We now have in place the proactive management structure, and it was here that Datacentrix' certification levels were critical. I'm pleased to advise that there has been no downtime since the rollout – even during migration, where our users were live on the system. It was a seamless process with no disruption at all; in fact, the only feedback from our staff was around the improved performance of the new infrastructure."

These gains have been particularly prevalent within the new storage environment – with huge

space savings. "According to our virtual server, we are currently running at 30TB of data, but after deduplication and compression this has been scaled right down to 4.5TB," states Jacobs.

"Our speed has also doubled, which has meant that we're simply not seeing the noticeable usage spikes that we did previously. In the old environment, the kit was operating at maximum capacity, and heavy usage – such as the BI team running reports during the day – would slow down the entire production department."

The modularity of the new equipment has effectively future-proofed DNI's ICT environment for at least the next five years, Jacobs adds. "Now, we are able to expand blade by blade and chassis by chassis – up to six times our current capacity – as our requirements grow.

"Working with Datacentrix has been an extremely positive experience, there has been no deadline unmet. Everything was delivered according to plan and on time.

"The Datacentrix team has been very hands-on, and has effectively become an extension of our IT department."

Now that DNI's new server room is fully operational, and its capacity challenges addressed, the organisation will turn its attention to additional requirements to improve system stability. "We're confident that DNI's new platform is sustainable enough to meet future requirements," explains Datacentrix account manager, Charl Ferreira.