ENGINEER IT
01 Jul 2010
Page : 57 #

Connectivity management

Managing the connectivity within a data centre is vital and is not to be underestimated. Large amounts of data interconnections, cable diversities and cable types require strict cabling standards, management and planning. Unmanaged interconnections are a guarantee for disaster. A lost interconnection to a server may lead to a similar disaster as a loss of power. If left unchecked, interconnections within a facility begin to grow to such an extent that they can throttle airflow and diversity, stunting any future growth or expansion.

Cooling

Correct cooling design is vital to achieve maximum efficiency and optimum power consumption. Selecting the correct cooling system, such as air or water, is vital, as this has a large impact on capital outlay, maintenance and flexibility. Airflow, cooling capacity and resilience require expert design and careful consideration. Failing to cool equipment correctly leads to inefficiencies, overheating and potentially fire. Expert adjustments, daily monitoring and correction, as well as unit balancing, can lead to large savings on electricity consumption.

Colocation, the practice of placing the data centre within outsourced premises, and potentially even using a provider to manage server systems, presents an attractive alternative – paying someone else a fixed monthly fee to make these infrastructure challenges their problem.

In the past, carriers and ISPs largely dominated the colocation industry, offering these services as a means to a different end (to sell data connections). Flash forward ten years and the outsourced data centre industry is now a mature sector, served by companies that specialise exclusively in providing reliable and efficient data centre space with comprehensive connectivity options. Neutral data centres, as opposed to operator-owned data centres, focus solely on provision of data centre space and therefore offer companies freedom of choice in carrier and service provider, enabling them to make the most effective use of their budgets and availability of necessary service .

Bank of America Merryl Lynch, referencing Gartner research (Nov 2008), reports that demand for colocation is growing at 17% per year across key European markets. Already, 20% of corporate data centre space is outsourced, expected to rise to 30% in the next five years. Over 60% of outsourced space is in neutral colocation facilities, with the remaining (and shrinking) 40% in data centres owned by carriers, internet service providers, or managed services companies. This reflects corporates' need for flexibility and choice in competitive telecommunications markets.

In South Africa, industry pundits see the costs of local, national and international bandwidth falling by as much as 80% in the next two to three years. This will bring companies better costs and services as greater numbers of competitive networks are deployed.

The next time you look for a colocation partner to take over your capex and opex nightmares, don't get locked into legacy IT decisions. Choice is important. Consider vendor-neutral. Consider freedom.

Contact Gys Geyser, Teraco,
Tel 021 200-0230, gys.geyser@teraco.co.za