

Dube TradePort's IT services ready to fly

With 2000ha of land and an established infrastructure of fibre-optic cables, telecommunications and broadband services to back an economic development mandate, there is a compelling reason to move to cloud computing says Dube TradePort's ICT executive Hamish Erskine



"With the emergence of cloud computing in the IT community, Dube TradePort decided that this was the route to take as its main business is value-added services. And, with an economic development mandate, it was not confined to business within its perimeter," he says.

Between March and April this year Dube TradePort will launch iConnect's cloud management suite, though iConnect has been providing data centre and value-added services commercially since March last year. Available to small and major companies, it provides full visibility, a 99% up-time service level agreement, data security and highly trained staff. It will also enable companies to meet the King 3 requirements of data recovery and business continuity in the event of a disaster.

In 2009 global IT research company Gartner estimated that by 2013 the cloud computing market will be about US\$150bn, while Merrill Lynch puts it at around US\$160bn. It is also predicted that 60% of server workloads will be *virtualised* by 2014, compared with 12% in 2008, says Erskine.

Though security is listed as a top concern and a deterrent for many businesses, a 2010 Mimecast survey shows that 57% disagree, believing that the cloud improved security.

iConnect's data centre offers commercial services including disaster recovery, virtual computing platforms, storage, back-up and recovery. These are provided through an expanding network of resellers. In the future, iConnect's cloud will support applications such as SAP; enterprise content management; an integrated logistics trading platform; national MPLS solutions; a cloud management suite; virtual desktop solutions; and more frequent customer interactive sessions.

"KwaZulu-Natal needs to raise its game to attract major businesses. That is why we are going further than our original cyberport concept of IT infrastructure, which was to support the cargo terminal and trade related businesses," he says.

More than R100m has been invested in the ICT infrastructure at Dube TradePort, which includes the data centre and a

proposed second larger one. The data centres will be 1,000m² each and raise the bar on the generally accepted level T2 status. The aim is to achieve level 3 and 4 status to offer business world-class data storage services.

Erskine also sees the data centre as an incubator where young enthusiasts work, train and learn in IT labs.

For a fixed monthly rate iConnect provides the trade port's business owners with high-end computing platforms, reducing - if not eliminating - infrastructure set-up and maintenance costs.

Erskine says the licence also allows iConnect to buy bandwidth in bulk from several major telecommunication providers. This allows it to provide voice and data services at significantly lower rates to all businesses located in the precinct.

source: *Financial Mail* via I-Net Bridge

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