

# Précis

Thoughts on IT in Business



How Do You Manage?

# Editorial Panel

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# How Do You Manage?

Post-second world war Japan was the scene for reformulation of Adam Smith's division of labour and Henry Ford's production line theories into new ideas on the business of manufacturing.

Though subsequent decades saw the world's production plants implement management disciplines such as total quality management (TQM), just-in-time (JIT) manufacturing and Six Sigma (to name but a few), one could argue that the unparalleled dominance of Japan's manufacturing sector during the 80s arose from their early start in formal process management.

Today's IT function is poised in the early stages of a similar maturation and opportunity for differentiation – that of IT Service Management (ITSM). ITSM seeks to instil a process management discipline to the IT environment that is not too dissimilar to the operations management theories of manufacturing.

And it couldn't have come at a more opportune time. With much of today's business taking place online, through workflows and systems enabled tools, the IT environment is a production asset and needs to be managed accordingly.

Hence this issue of *Précis*, which seeks to ask and answer the question: "How do you manage" your IT environment to best effect? We share ideas from different technologies, clients, and experts. Now it's your turn: How are you managing?



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# How Do You Manage?

## Virtualisation Demands Proactive Management

Considerations for Refining your Approach

4

As the world moves towards a virtualised IT environment – on the way to the cloud and, eventually, to IT-as-a-service – so the way in which an organisation's IT environment is managed, needs to be revised. To state the obvious: it makes no sense to manage a changing IT environment as though it hasn't changed.

## Managed Services? Look Before You Leap

Why IT Service Management Provides the Cornerstone of Support for New Approaches to Outsourcing

7

It's no secret that outsourcing is not what it used to be. Concepts such as consumerisation of technology and cloud computing are influencing outsourcing decisions today, challenging traditional models. The good news is that proper planning, coupled with a 'common language' – offered by IT service management best practice processes and procedures – can go a long way to effectively 'bridge the divides' associated with an increasingly heterogeneous service provider mix.

## Video, It's Not New but Coming of Age

Pressure is Building for Video to Become Part of Mainstream Corporate Communication

11

The use of video to conduct business is growing faster than many people realise. For many multi-national or multi-regional businesses, video is a strategic necessity in terms of accelerating business processes and enhancing collaboration while cutting travel costs. As a result, the management of video will need to move from a niche focus to an approach suitable for an integrated communications estate.



## Operationalising Ideas

Interview with Dilip Kumar, Chief Operating Officer at Datacraft Asia (a Dimension Data Company)

14

*Précis* recently spoke to Dilip Kumar, Chief Operating Officer at Datacraft Asia for his thoughts on managing competition and complexity ... as well as what he sees on the IT services marketplace horizon.

## Unified Communication and Collaboration Calls for an Integrated Management Approach

That Doesn't Necessarily Make Managing IT More Difficult

16

Because today's technologies inter-relate and integrate business activities rather than simply streamlining and automating them, the technologies themselves can no longer be managed in a siloed way.

## IT Asset and Estate Management is Risk Management

More than Simply Managing Technology

20

More than 90% of organisations are at risk of their systems failing and business performance plummeting because they have no idea when IT assets are about to run out of support from vendors.

## Oiling the Wheels of Compliance

IT Management and Compliance Management are Two Sides of the Same Coin

23

Compliance is challenging on two fronts: first, there is often a lack of clarity on what the requirements are or, indeed, what exactly to do to meet the requirements. Second, organisations begrudge the expenditure on resources needed to ensure compliance – because compliance doesn't necessarily improve the way the business runs or create greater profitability.

## Managing your Microsoft Environment Comes Down to Making the Right Choices

How to Pave Your Way to a Stable and Optimised Microsoft Environment

27

The issues related to managing an organisation's Microsoft environment are unique because Microsoft software is so ubiquitous as a business tool and there is such a range of different components. It therefore impacts both the operating environment in general and the end user in particular. While increasing complexity, the great advantage is that it provides choices about how to manage the environment.

## Case Study

Seamless Collaboration between Geographically-Dispersed Stakeholders Thanks to a Robust and Secure Infrastructure

31

In a world where IT enables and often transforms business, our client, a leading aircraft manufacturer, is mindful that making sure its network operates at peak performance, and is managed effectively and continually, is essential.

## Research Notes

What's New in the World of Technology Research

33

- 'Ease of Doing Business' Delivers Sustainable Outcomes
- Cybercrime Driving Growth of Managed Security Services Market

# Contents



# Virtualisation Demands Proactive Management

As the world moves towards a virtualised IT environment – on the way to the cloud and, eventually, to IT-as-a-service – so the way in which an organisation's IT environment is managed, needs to be refined.

To state the obvious: it makes no sense to manage a changing IT environment as though it hasn't changed.

More than that, however, there is a strategic need to shift from a focus on the technology in the environment to a focus on management of the services provided by that technology; the reason being that in order to get to IT-as-a-service, or even, initially, to a virtual model, organisations have to get used to abstracting content and services from the underlying technology.

In other words, to be able to hand over to a virtualisation or cloud provider whatever part of your technology or business operations you choose, you need first to separate that function or service out from the rest of your operations.

"Then, you need to define what service levels you require from the cloud provider for that particular part of your operations," says Peter Menadue, Dimension Data's Group General Manager, Microsoft Solutions.

"And doing that forces you to think about the strategic role played by that particular part of your operation in the overall business, why you believe a cloud provider can deliver it better than you can, under what conditions you want it to be delivered in order to meet your business strategic needs, and how you are going to measure and enforce the meeting of those conditions.

"All of which is a management, rather than a technical, process. It can be supported by technology, of course."

## The management continuum

The theme of management rather than pure operations runs right through the virtualisation discussion.

For one thing, virtualisation itself is still in a process of maturation. There just hasn't been enough deliberate virtualisation in enough organisations over a long enough period of time for all the wrinkles to have been ironed out.

While the very considerable benefits of virtualisation have been proven repeatedly in the data centre – with the virtualisation of servers – what experience has taught is that on one hand virtualisation simplifies and on the other creates more complexity.



“Being able to consolidate multiple physical servers on to a single virtual server saves space in the data centre and thereby reduces the need for real estate,” says Jeff Jack, Dimension Data’s Group General Manager, Network Integration. “It also reduces electricity and cooling requirements. And it saves time because you can replicate the configuration of one virtual machine across many. So, whereas it might take hours to prepare a physical server, it takes a few minutes to prepare a virtual one.

“The flipside of all this is that, before virtualisation, you may have had a sprawl of hundreds of physical servers. Now, because it’s so easy to provision a virtual server, you can, potentially, simply replace your sprawl of physical servers with a sprawl of virtual servers.

“Which means having to manage more servers, not fewer; more data, not less. On top of that, you have to consider issues of application, data, and profile virtualisation. At the most basic level, you have to manage the complexities of software licences.

“Most of all, by having so much more traffic, you’re placing extra demands on the network. So, you need to manage more tightly quality of service, prioritisation of traffic, and bandwidth.

“In essence, what happens when you use virtualisation to simplify things at the front end is that you often make things more complex at the back end. To achieve user simplicity, you need to operate an environment of greater complexity. And, to cope with the extra complexity, you need extremely effective management.”

### **Flexibility**

In other words, as with all step changes away from accepted wisdom, virtualisation is not a one-dimensional concept. It brings both benefits and new demands on the business. It also brings new opportunities for the business.

Chief among these is the flexibility it gives an organisation in terms of the choice and source of the services generated by virtualisation.

“Virtualised desktops and servers don’t have to be on-premise,” Menadue says. “They can come from someone else’s cloud. They can be provided by a mixture of private and public clouds. The point being that virtualisation enables an organisation to get the best possible types of services for its requirements wherever they might reside, and not be restricted to the limitations of its internal IT staff or those of a local provider.”

However, there is a ‘but’. To be able to access any services from any provider, you still need to make sure you are effectively connected to your provider and that your network is secure.

As Menadue says: “If you’re using more than one virtualisation or cloud services provider, then you need to manage them in such a way as to ensure that what each provides, enables you to run your business in an integrated, coherent way.

“Proactive planning and management are therefore crucial. So is getting a logical, consistent, and appropriate IT architecture in place before virtualising anything, even on-premise.

### **Key tenets of the cloud**

In essence, virtualisation is a practice run or rehearsal for moving into an era in which only the most basic IT functions will be kept in-house and all others will be provided by external entities.

The best rehearsals will be those that adhere to the key tenets of the cloud: self-service and automation.

“These two things get you used to managing your IT infrastructure at arm’s length,” Menadue says. “Automating

steps and processes in the data centre, for instance, means those activities or services can, some day, be run in someone else's cloud.

“Enabling self-service massively reduces the amount of management of any given business function or discipline. Because it removes the need for human supervision, it doesn't directly involve the personality of the business or brand and can, therefore, more easily be handed to someone else to run – probably, because of economies of scale in the cloud, more cost-effectively and efficiently than you can do it yourself.

“And, because you have to set service levels for both automation and self-service, you get used to handing off management of certain parts of your organisation to external entities, knowing that they'll do things in a way that best reflects on your business.”

### Managing the management

There are still a lot of moving parts underneath all the services that result from virtualisation; more, in fact, than you might have had to deal with before virtualisation, and they need to be managed, preferably proactively.

The physical network, for instance, must be continuously optimised for new technologies and devices being brought to market or, indeed, for new business models such as virtualisation and the cloud. Users still need support. Hardware and software still have to be customised. Security still has to be tailored for specific organisational devices. The whole IT environment has to be integrated into the user's environment, including hand-held devices.

Virtualisation and cloud providers are not going to work down to that level.

And, someone has to ensure that there is a consistency of services and of service delivery from providers that is adjusted to the particular needs of the business. Specifically, someone has to make sure that the technologies underpinning the services being provided are invisible to users.

Most individual organisations don't have the in-house skills to do so. Besides, the whole point of virtualisation and the cloud is that the organisation uses technology more, but owns and manages it less.

Increasingly, therefore, organisations will turn to what used to be known as systems integrators and are now being called services integrators.

“In a services integration scenario, the services layer becomes the organisation's point of contact with all his services providers,” Menadue says. “The organisation won't care how the services are delivered as long as they meet the relevant service level agreements. Ensuring that they do becomes the job of the services integrator.

“A trend is developing in which the process of managing IT is moving progressively from the client organisation to services integrators. The first phase of that progression entails the organisation defining the services it wants, planning the architecture needed to deliver them, and undertaking the relevant virtualisation activities – defining service levels as they go. When the need to enforce consistency across all the virtualised components becomes too onerous, the organisation will call in services integrators to provide managed services.

“The second phase will be to migrate the virtualised components of an organisation's IT to cloud providers. This can be done by the services integrators or by the client organisation. If done by the client, when the need for proactive management focused on ensuring consistency becomes too time and resource intensive, a services integrator will be called in.

“In all cases, however, the over-arching need is for proactive, forward-looking management. Increasingly, therefore, the role of the managed services provider or services integrator will evolve from managing technology to managing management.”

# Managed Service? Look Before you Leap

Why IT Service Management provides the cornerstone of support for new approaches to outsourcing

It's no secret that outsourcing is not what it used to be. Concepts such as consumerisation of technology and cloud computing are influencing outsourcing decisions today, challenging traditional models. The impetus nowadays is on delivering computing as a service in an affordable and flexible manner, but without compromising service quality at any juncture.

"IT outsourcing today is all about core capabilities and generating business value, with a focus on multiple delivery models. Forward-thinking organisations are realising that the traditional mindset of driving down cost is no longer 'cutting the mustard' and consequently, they're evaluating new models where multi-vendor expertise is brought to bear," says Jonathan Bartholomew, Dimension Data's Principal Consultant for IT Optimisation and Service Management Consulting in the Americas. "Along with changing user demographics, companies are rethinking the basic tenets and understanding the opportunities that shifts in technologies bring. The future of outsourcing is about 'everything-as-a-service (XaaS)' with on-demand flexibility and pay-as-you-go enterprise applications."

It follows, therefore, that if IT departments are to continue to deliver to the business' wants and needs, they need to move with the times and embrace the trend towards cross-functional and business-collaborative delivery. That means integrating business processes, responsibilities, service



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level agreements (SLAs), technologies, and outcomes across multiple outsourcing service providers, including, increasingly, cloud providers.

According to Dr Wissam Raffoul, Dimension Data's General Manager for Consulting in Australia, a key challenge associated with new sourcing trends is the fact that enterprises no longer have an end-to-end view of the IT enterprise through a single window, across IT towers, and

business services. “Enterprises can no longer afford to have a limited view of their business services’ performance. Such a lack of visibility can lead to support delays, compromised service levels and increased operational costs. Against this backdrop, CIOs are realising how crucial it is to define the right governance framework, and the internal roles and responsibilities needed to work with, and among, their outsource partners... not to mention defining the requirements and contractual terms to ensure service integration. The good news is that proper planning, coupled with a ‘common language’ – offered by IT service management (ITSM) best practice processes and procedures – can go a long way to effectively ‘bridge the divides’ associated with an increasingly heterogeneous service provider mix.”

The value of ITSM in ensuring well-defined and properly managed IT service delivery is widely accepted. IT service management programmes based on ITIL and other process standards like CobiT, ISO 20000 and Six Sigma, allow organisations to adopt standardised processes across IT. Through this standardisation, IT departments can eliminate redundant processes, streamline existing processes, remove barriers that exist between IT department silos, and increase IT efficiency by eliminating redundant steps in change or configuration management. They can also optimise IT service performance and availability while improving operational efficiency. On the flipside, having non-repeatable processes can result in potential service failures or instability and an over-reliance on ‘heroes’ in the organisation rather than documented processes, procedures and work instructions.

Toni Hawken, a senior ITSM Consultant at Dimension Data, believes that the advent of cloud computing has seen the growing importance of having well-defined IT service management processes. “Cloud computing has changed the way enterprises support and consume IT. Today’s mantra of delivering ‘everything as a service,’ on a day-to-day basis translates into a plethora of service requests, incident and change management, configuration and release management and therefore requires disciplined but flexible processes. On the upside, the cloud brings agility, flexibility and scalability to enterprise computing. However, a more

robust level of management and governance is required when it comes to managing a large virtual infrastructure in the cloud.”

Today, it’s not uncommon for organisations to opt to have certain IT services delivered in-house, some delivered via a private cloud and others out in a public cloud. However, regardless of the chosen delivery model, IT still needs a single view of all the services it provides to its business stakeholders. CIOs may have handed over responsibility for the delivery of certain IT services to external providers – but ultimately, overall accountability to the business remains firmly in their laps! Without proper process interlocks and appropriate governance, there will be additional complexity and a lack of visibility. Moreover, if there are interfaces or upstream and downstream impacts between services that are geographically spread between cloud providers, outsourced providers, and in-house teams, having clearly defined processes, metrics, governance and compliance is critical. Moving to the cloud potentially means loss of control, so companies need to ask themselves: “How mature and ready is our organisation to manage and govern both retained and cloud services? How will reporting occur? How will workflow be managed?”

ITSM helps CIOs manage these complexities in the cloud through a system of process enablement and applications. Adoption of ITSM establishes a uniform process framework for IT, and more importantly, a standard by which external services can integrate seamlessly with internal services. Measuring the benefits of ITSM as a core component of a cloud environment is not an easy task; measuring the impact of a lack of integration is much easier. That said, when one adopts consistent processes in an enterprise to one’s best ability, quality and standards automatically set in.

### **Managed services? Look before you leap**

Given the inherent and ever-growing complexities of IT services provision, it follows that today, the success of any move to a managed service rests in the planning. From an IT service management and sourcing strategy perspective, consideration needs to be given to the following:

- What service(s) should I be considering moving to an external provider?
- Who should I consider to perform this/these service(s)?
- What should I expect in terms of service level performance?
- Which services should I consider moving to the cloud?
- Do I have a comprehensive service catalogue?
- How do I know that opting into an outsourcing partnership or moving to a cloud provider is truly the correct decision?

Remember that governance cannot be considered as an afterthought. How will you ensure that your providers adhere to your policies, standards and processes or are you comfortable for them to ‘stand alone’ and not be integrated? Bear in mind that there are very few organisations in which IT services stand completely alone; typically there are a myriad of application dependencies, upstream or downstream data flows and technology dependencies. All these issues need to be comprehensively planned for and coherently managed. Transition of services – either through the process of outsourcing to cloud or to traditional providers or bringing a service back inhouse is another critical factor that needs considerable planning and stakeholder commitment. There are many aspects to transition that are often overlooked, resulting in major dissatisfaction, delays and cost overruns.

### All in the planning

“At Dimension Data we hear these questions from clients frequently,” says Brian Sullivan, Dimension Data’s Group Consulting Manager for ITSM. He believes that a critical first step in planning to hand over IT services to external providers is to gain a thorough understanding of the services one currently has and of those providers that represent the best candidates for outsourcing. “It’s not uncommon for organisations grappling with these decisions to approach Dimension Data to conduct a sourcing strategy or IT service management consulting engagement. These initiatives help clients in a number of ways; they identify the key tenets of all the organisation’s services, and assess the relevance, suitability and priority for moving each one to a managed service; and they also assess the organisation’s readiness for outsourcing, and provide practical recommendations

on preparing for a managed service, including issues such as governance, contractual language, key performance indicators, documentation and transition approaches. We can help further, by creating comprehensive service definitions and service catalogues that enable clients to make correct and informed choices. Armed with these insights, the logical next step is to identify your organisation’s current IT operations’ maturity – including process, people, tools and governance – and put in place an actionable improvement plan to address any gaps. This will allow the organisation to develop a roadmap to drive to the desired ‘to-be’ state and ensure that it is ready to transition to and effectively govern a managed services contract.”

### Not just for ‘newbies’

It’s not uncommon for organisations to question the relevance of service management and sourcing assessments if they

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have existing managed services agreements in place. Does having an existing arrangement render the need for such initiatives null and void? Hawken says no. “Performing a temperature check around one’s ITSM maturity is not solely for organisations about to venture down the outsourcing path for the first time. Should one already have a managed services contract in place, or even be operating in a fully-fledged multisourcing environment, gauging one’s health in the realm of ITSM should be strongly considered. Why? Because by conducting an assessment you’ll have an opportunity to evaluate respective suppliers’ performance against best practices – which provides a baseline for future service enhancement, so that these improvements can be measured and demonstrated to business stakeholders,” she explains.

The assessment can also identify gaps against best practice. Such insights deliver opportunities to organisations to

drive performance or cost improvements from their current suppliers. Indeed, oftentimes it uncovers gaps in delivery against what is written into the contract.

“By the same token, conducting an assessment will send a strong signal to your suppliers that adherence to IT service management best practice is something that remains very firmly on your organisation’s agenda. This is particularly powerful when a renewal of a managed service contract is impending. Not only does it provide you with bargaining power, it also creates the opportunity for additional improvement initiatives to be included as part of the contract renegotiation and renewal.

“Importantly, such assessment initiatives also reinforce a ‘service management excellence’ mindset among all your suppliers,” concludes Hawken.

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# Video:

## It's Not New but Coming of Age

The use of video to conduct business is growing faster than many people realise. For many multi-national or multi-regional businesses, video is a strategic necessity in terms of accelerating business processes and enhancing collaboration while cutting travel costs.

This trend is closely tracking consumer use of video. Skype recently announced that video accounted for 40% of calling minutes in the first half of 2010. If the current growth rate continues, we expect the 50% threshold to be crossed in 2011. Of course, this has a major impact on the network, with Cisco's Visual Networking Index Forecast and Methodology 2008-2013 White Paper<sup>1</sup> stating that 90% of all consumer traffic will be video based by 2013 and will be the sum of all forms of video (TV, video on demand, Internet, and peer to peer).

So, on several fronts, pressure is building for video to become part of mainstream corporate communications. This has two consequences. The first is that video will have to become an integral part of the business's unified communications environment and, as a result, the management of video will need to move from a niche focus to an approach suitable for an integrated communications estate.

The second is that video must become as easy and intuitive to use as voice communications – otherwise adoption will

be stalled, decreasing the value to the business of video investments.

### Converging video

One of the primary reasons for the ownership of visual communications migrating from Facilities to IT is that vastly increased business value is derived from integration of video into a unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) environment.

Another is that voice and video have many elements that are currently duplicated – dial plan, directory, call processing, management, and dedicated network bandwidth. There are too many operational and cost saving benefits to be had for these not to be combined with time. This is in spite of many carriers today offering to silo video on an overlay network and taking a walled garden approach to managing it.

Also, as video usage becomes more prevalent – extending from telepresence on the executive floor to room-based video conferencing on a broader scale and even reaching

<sup>1</sup> Cisco's Visual Networking Index Forecasting and Methodology 2008-2013

most desktops within the organisation – so demands on bandwidth will escalate and put the network manager under more strain.

“An added consideration is the fact that there is a growing demand for video to become mobile” says Craig Levieux, Dimension Data’s Group General Manager, Converged Communications. “More and more executives need to be able to participate in telepresence sessions or video conferences from airports, hotels, and their holiday homes. This calls for high levels of inter-operability among types of video, including PC clients, desktop appliances, conference room video conferencing, and immersive telepresence.

“It also calls for video to be managed as an integral part of the entire business operation. In which case, it needs to be managed coherently with all the other technology that supports the business. That responsibility falls squarely into the lap of IT.”

### **Video as the new voice**

If users have their wish, video will overtake voice as the primary real-time communication channel within a few years. To achieve this, two areas require the attention of communication leadership within organisations and of the industry as a whole. The first is ease of use. The second is on-demand inter-organisational video calling with quality of service.

If users have their wish, video will overtake voice as the primary real-time communication channel within a few years.

Video is perceived as hard to use and call setup as unreliable. Organisations try to solve these problems by increasing their investment in concierge services. This is analogous to using manual switchboards for telephony – and is clearly not a scale model. Nor is it necessary. The ideal is to have video operated as simply as a telephone, with only a button or two to push to get it running. The technology to do this exists but is often implemented inappropriately or without sufficient rigour. The video industry can certainly learn from the discipline of the voice industry in this regard.

Compared to voice, Internet Protocol (IP) video is in its infancy from an inter-organisation calling perspective. In general, every telephone can call every other telephone in the world. This is accomplished through careful design and implementation in many dimensions. There is an addressing scheme (dial plan) that is agreed and consistent worldwide, enabling anyone to call anyone else. Signalling protocols are agreed and well understood, enabling calls to cross network boundaries, and diverse terminals and networks to inter-operate reliably. Significant investment and attention is paid to quality of service, call admission control, and congestion control to ensure reliable call setup and good and consistent quality for the duration of the call. Many of these elements are missing for IP video.

In theory, ubiquitous inter-organisation video is possible using the Internet for transport but, because of security issues, organisations often restrict access and only open up paths bi-laterally. This is a model that doesn’t scale. There are also no quality of service guarantees, rendering critical business interactions such as executive meetings and sales presentations too risky for serious consideration.

Some carriers have built telepresence exchanges to solve the quality of service issue for immersive telepresence calls. In recent months, a few of these have even linked their exchanges - allowing organisations on their exchange to call those on other exchanges. However, these are not services

without problems and they don't address general video conferencing usage. Again, this is not a scale model.

"There's also some distance to go on resolving issues of inter-organisational quality of service," says Shaun Struckmann, Dimension Data's Solutions Development Manager for Visual Communications. "To get quality of service, a network has to be set up for it, agreement must be reached on, amongst other things, the addressing schemes, a regime for inter-carrier connection, and charging.

"To get to that point, there needs to be much closer co-operation among carriers, vendors, and service providers. At the moment, none of us have all the answers to all the challenges."

### Still...

Struckmann believes, however, that better planned and more accurate implementations of video would resolve a lot of the current reputation video has of being difficult to use and lacking in acceptable quality. "A managed service can help organisations understand how video should fit into the network and what support to give IT in order to provide the best possible operating conditions.

"That said, integrators and managed services providers should be chosen with care. They must be equipped to help implement video as a consistent part of a converged network, making sure that the video infrastructure works seamlessly and is at least easier to use than is the case now."

## A Case in Point

One of Dimension Data's long-standing financial services clients, a global organisation whose executives travel extensively, began to use telepresence video conferencing some 18 months ago. So successful has it been in terms of cutting travel time and cost as well as time to executive decisions, that the company has committed itself to the considerable cost of another six units.

Also, the company's culture and business model are based on collaboration. Restricting video access to the top echelon of executives only limits collaboration on day to day activities at other levels of the organisation. Lack of ubiquitous video has therefore become a strategic threat to the company.

To address these issues, Dimension Data has offered a managed video service that moves the management of video from Facilities to IT, treats video as part of UC&C, and integrates video into the converged network. The focus will initially be on creating an architecture that can

easily scale and evolve with the progressive addition of video facilities. The next phase will be to stabilise the existing network, standardise video equipment and video usage methodologies, and maintain and optimise legacy equipment so that it works seamlessly with the new video additions.

Attention will also be given to integrating video with Microsoft® Office Communications Server and, as technology developments permit, making video a fundamental part of the company's UC&C.

At an organisational hygiene level, all rooms fitted with video equipment will be upgraded and standardised, and Microsoft® Exchange Server used for the scheduling of bookings and maintenance.

Last but not least, the company's helpdesk staff will be trained to provide support to video communications as part of their support of the converged network.



# Operationalising Ideas

*Précis* recently spoke to Dilip Kumar, Chief Operating Officer at Datacraft Asia (a Dimension Data company) for his thoughts on managing competition and complexity ... as well as what he sees on the IT services marketplace horizon.

## **Please describe your role and responsibilities at Datacraft.**

In my capacity as Chief Operations Officer of Datacraft, I oversee the business operations of 13 countries across three Asia Pacific regions, with a specific focus on driving profitable growth to deliver the financial performance and building capabilities to gain competitive advantage and meet the company's near, medium and long-term strategic objectives.

## **Would you agree that complexity is perhaps the single biggest challenge that investing in a managed service can help companies to deal with?**

Indeed, complexity, coupled with an increasingly competitive marketplace, is coming up time and again in our conversations with clients. As an IT services partner, the onus is on us to be innovative and dynamic in the way we assist clients to cope with these twin challenges, through the provision of technology or services or a combination of both. Managing complexity requires the capability to create, extend or modify our resource base. Effectively addressing an increasingly competitive marketplace requires operational capabilities of 'speed' and the ability to provide clients with solutions that enable them to take their products or services

to market in the shortest possible time. We need to adapt to local requirements quickly and be able to sense, mobilise and operationalise ideas quickly.

## **How does the need to control and support multiple vendor technologies across not one, but several geographies add additional burden? Who has the answers?**

In our business, more and more, the ability to provide multi-vendor, multi-geography solutions is becoming imperative in order to remain competitive. Without these capabilities, IT services providers will fail to offer the level and flexibility in their solutions that companies today are expecting. At Datacraft Asia, we believe we need to demonstrate our ability to perform these activities better than our global and local competitors. To this end, we've taken a strategic decision to develop capabilities to support manufacturers technologies, in addition our networking base. This depth and breadth of expertise gives us a definite edge on our competition and we don't have to try to 'shoe-horn' clients down any particular technology path. In addition, our ability to offer professional and managed services that complement their preferred technology solutions adds further value. We believe this approach aligns well with clients' expectation today for IT

partners to address their entire IT infrastructure from end to end, rather than offering only point solutions.

**Today we're seeing more IT services being delivered by a blend of internal and external providers, and increasingly cloud providers. How should organisations be thinking differently about their sourcing approach?**

There has been a definite shift in recent years away from monolithic or 'total' outsourcing deals to more selective models. Today, CIOs' sourcing behaviours typically involve them dividing their infrastructure into three discrete areas:

- Non-critical infrastructure, for which the key driver for outsourcing is cost savings.
- Critical infrastructure, for which the main driver for outsourcing is not cost but rather the desire for a single point of contact with a high level of commitment and reliability. Selective or multisourcing contracts are very common in this domain.
- Core infrastructure and applications, which increasingly is being viewed as a candidate for a move to a public, private or hybrid cloud, in order to leverage flexibility, scalability and cost benefits.

At Datacraft, we recognise the importance of being able to assist our clients in any of these areas, or indeed all of them.

**What about security? Today data and devices are 'on the move'. Companies are increasingly operating across borders and continents. How does all this make the importance of robust security management become amplified?**

Globalisation, coupled with the proliferation of mobile devices or 'devices on the edge' such as Apple iPhones and iPads has undeniably ushered in a new wave of security risks. Nevertheless, we believe that the importance of maintaining a strong and continued focus on ensuring security at the core of the network should not be understated. This is best achieved by deploying the appropriate products and having a robust network and security management partner at your side. Companies should look for IT services partners that can prove they have the processes, systems and certifications to satisfy the relevant government laws,

restrictions and standards that need to be observed, in all relevant geographies.

**How and where does video fit into the managed services mix?**

The business benefits in terms of costs savings and reduced carbon footprint that flow from the adoption of video conferencing solutions are impressive. However, sustaining these benefits over the longer term and wringing maximum return from these investments can be tricky. To do so requires a well thought-out visual communication strategy to address issues such as adoption, duplication of functionality and onerous management. We're also seeing a growing need on the part of our clients for inter-operability. Companies are evaluating a host of different models and looking to their IT partners to deliver a customised mix of different services. That's where engaging with a systems integrator to deliver a managed service can deliver significant benefits. At Datacraft, we've successfully assisted a number of clients to develop hybrid, fully integrated visual communication solutions, which are deployed, supported and operated on a single platform.

**Dimension Data has made no secret of its intent to pursue managed services as its number one priority. How do you see the managed services market evolving in the next five to ten years? How will we and our fellow services providers need to adapt and align to keep 'at the front end' of our clients' wants and needs?**

These are exciting times; it's a period of transition and transformation. I believe the IT services market is poised to become even more competitive. In the next few years certain IT services will become highly commoditised. At the same time, new technologies and services continue to emerge and mature, providing huge opportunities for companies such as ours. To remain profitable, I believe we need to understand and accept the shifts in emphasis in play, keep moving and keep innovating. It's all about embracing the trends and, where necessary, changing our game.

A decorative graphic at the top of the page consists of several thick, overlapping lines in various colors: red, green, blue, purple, yellow, and pink. The lines are arranged in a way that they appear to be part of a larger, abstract structure, possibly representing interconnectedness or a network.

# Unified Communications and Collaboration Calls for an Integrated Management Approach

Because today's technologies inter-relate and integrate business activities rather than simply streamlining and automating them, the technologies themselves can no longer be managed in a siloed way.

That doesn't necessarily make managing IT more difficult. It does mean fundamental changes – taking a step back to see the big picture and then implementing management tools and processes to support integrated communications and applications.

Unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) is a prime example. Until it came into the mainstream a few years ago, organisational communication was managed in silos. Initially, of course, real time business communication was based almost exclusively on the telephone. Management of telephony was based on PBXs operating within an isolated

environment. Much of the management revolved around moving phones and cables in patch panels.

New communication channels emerged, including instant messaging, mobile telephony and video, each of which was also managed on its own, without reference to the others. The advent of IP telephony shifted telephony away from a basis in equipment to a software application. This allowed integration to the new communication channels and increased functionality (such as click to dial from the instant messaging client). In the process, it has completely changed the approach to management.

## The pressure

The proliferation of communications channels has created pressure for organisations at both a technical and human resources level. There is a need to provide up to date infrastructure that is reliable, secure, and flexible. At the same time, customers, business partners, and employees are demanding modern communication tools that keep them connected and mobile as well as personal and involved.

Internet Protocol UC&C technologies are the future – but no one integrated organisational IT estate will be the same as another because of differing business needs, the age of the existing estate and many other factors.

## Consult

“Essentially, the shift from the telephone to UC&C is as much a shift in business strategy as it is a shift in technology,” says Assad Noori, Dimension Data’s Group Service Delivery Team Manager. “Because UC&C provides for multi-faceted communication and, therefore, extended levels and types of collaboration, it means that no organisation can operate independently of its general environment. Though there might be fairly effective technical barriers between the organisation and the wider community, the flow of emotional and intellectual influence into and out of the organisation is virtually unlimited.

“Superficially, this looks like complexity. Actually it’s a perfectly natural continuum. But it does mean that both technical and human interactions must be managed holistically. The problem is that there is no individual technical specialist who has all the answers to the management of a UC&C infrastructure. And there is no single business specialist who knows all the best ways to derive business benefits from UC&C.

“So, many organisations are turning to managed services providers to manage their UC&C infrastructure. They’re realising there is absolutely no benefit in reinventing the wheel when expertise and experience derived by a managed

services provider from multiple instances of UC&C across multiple industries under wide-ranging business, cultural, and economic conditions can so easily be distilled into just the right solution for a particular business.

“The key is to choose a mature managed services provider that proactively provides both strategic and technical expertise in a comprehensive service that is not limited to maintenance of the technology with a bit of management of vendors thrown in.”

## Choosing services

Neville Cousins, Dimension Data’s Technology Director for Unified Communications Solutions, believes that the role a managed services provider plays for an organisation depends on the maturity of the organisation.

The key is to choose a mature managed services provider that proactively provides both strategic and technical expertise in a comprehensive service that is not limited to maintenance of the technology with a bit of management of vendors thrown in.

“Firstly, organisations that haven’t yet started a coherent journey towards IP telephony and find themselves confronted by a myriad of vendors and technologies and, potentially, significant cost, want a managed services provider to take responsibility for reducing the cost and perceived challenges of moving to UC&C. The organisation can then focus on getting its head around the change and transformation that UC&C demands.

“Then, there are those that have started the IP telephony journey and begun to see the benefits, but want a managed services provider to aggressively create for them a fully standardised and unitary environment.

“Lastly, there are organisations that want to proceed incrementally. They’ve already got silos of UC&C technology and want a managed services provider to help them integrate them, one by one, over time.”

Core to all these different requirements, however, is the fact that there is a need to manage the service, the individual technology layers, and the user experience at the same time.

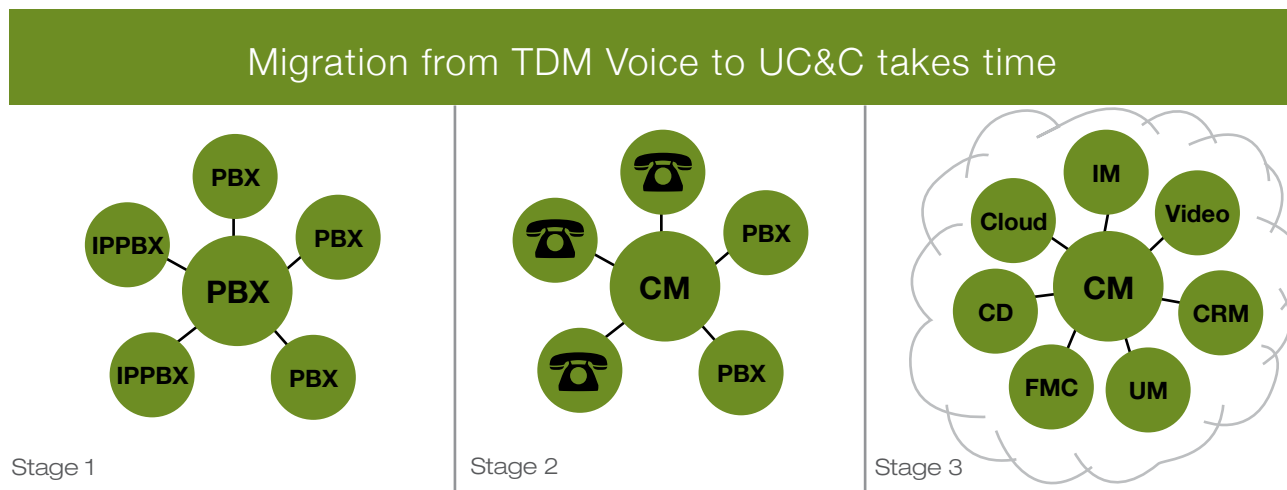
### The journey

Inevitably, achieving such holistic management takes time. For most organisations, whether they’ve begun to move to UC&C or are part-way there, the journey progresses through three quite specific phases (see diagram below):

**Stage 1:** For organisations that feel unable to accelerate their technology migration, outsourcing is the first step towards consolidating maintenance contracts, lowering cost, and increasing consistency of management.

**Stage 2:** The implications of centralisation and consolidation are that the system now becomes much more mission critical, with many more users relying on its performance and availability. The consequences of failure will be felt more widely. So, the service provider needs not only to architect for redundancy and resilience but also to pay attention to management processes – particularly the incident-problem-change-release cycle.

**Stage 3:** The issues here are all about effective management of a multi-vendor, mission-critical system founded on a



**Key:**

CD = Corporate Directory

CM = Call Management

CRM = Customer Relationship Management

FMC = Fixed Mobile Convergence

IM = Instant Messaging

IPPBX = Internet Protocol Private Branch Exchange

PBX = Private Branch Exchange

UM = Unified Messaging

potentially complex ecosystem of integrated applications. The ecosystem is not just mission critical, it's specific to the organisation – making the discipline and maturity of management even more important than in the centralised IP telephony phase. Keeping a lid on ongoing costs is key. For example, every software upgrade of an individual application requires compatibility testing with numerous other applications. It's important, therefore, that the number of interfaces is minimised. There is no single vendor that currently offers a true end to end UC&C solution and, given that most organisations have existing investments they need to leverage, the service provider will take a best-of-breed approach.

### Choosing service providers

“Because UC&C is still relatively new in its adoption phase, organisations are uncertain about how it will affect their performance and bottom line and how they will manage its lifecycle,” says Dimension Data's Group Business Development Manager, Jaskarn Randhawa. “They want to know what the roadmap is, so that they have some confidence in committing their business to this new way of being.

“It's vital, therefore, that service providers demystify the various components of UC&C and make it more centred on and applicable to their client's business model. At the end of the day, UC&C helps to drive profitable growth – if implemented and supported in an optimal manner. The organisation needs to see the clear benefits of adopting a UC&C strategy at a bottom line level within profit and loss performance.

“It also helps to know that, with their deep skills set and close relationships with manufacturers, the right sort of services provider can take away from IT the apprehension involved in first migrating a mass of different systems into a single unified environment and then keeping that environment optimised and current.”

### Organisational change

Whether or not an organisation chooses to manage its UC&C through a managed services provider, the move towards

UC&C automatically brings with it internal organisational changes.

Before UC&C, voice was managed by the telecommunications specialists in the organisation, video by Facilities, and e-mail and the Internet by IT.

However, just as the strategic principle that underlies UC&C is coherent integration of different aspects of communication, so the management principle that supports UC&C should be coherent and integrated across the various silos that used to manage their part of the communication spectrum.

“Taking down the barriers between the various departments requires considerable management skill,” Noori says. “You don't want everyone immediately to go hands-off, but you do want some relinquishment of turf; the consequences of not relinquishing may impede the unification of intent, content, and technology.

“Again, having a managed services provider is useful, because the provider can mediate many of these issues – or be the rationale for a different organisational structure in which the silos are more easily able to move into a closer working relationship with each other because they all need to work with the service provider.”

Taking down the  
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# IT Asset and Estate Management is Risk Management

More than 90% of organisations are at risk of their systems failing and business performance plummeting because they have no idea when IT assets are about to run out of support from vendors. Also, organisations have no knowledge of upwards of 25% of their IT estate.

Small wonder then, that the management of IT assets and estate is about managing business risk rather than simply managing technology.

That said, managing business risk is not something one would expect one's IT department to do – partly because business risk is not the department's area of expertise, but also because managing risk in terms of IT assets and estate is best done through asset lifecycle management.

This involves a lot of repetitive paperwork, monitoring, measuring, and reporting on detail. Technology-focused people tend to dislike paperwork! More importantly, collecting and analysing the level of detail required for technology lifecycle management (TLM) must not only be automated as far as possible but also leverage the analytical capabilities of experienced specialists.

## Why should an IT manager have advance knowledge of end-of-support?

Many an organisation, particularly those that have tightened their belts through the recession, will argue that it's wasteful

to replace or to upgrade equipment that is at the end of manufacturer support but still works.

“The problem is that such an asset very rapidly moves to a high risk category – and the more of such assets you have, the greater the risk to your organisation,” says Dimension Data's Business Development Manager, Mark Holmes. “And then there's the incremental risk from vulnerabilities that arise through running operating systems on those ‘unknown’ assets.

“If the equipment fails, the vendor will refuse to fix it and will have, long ago, stopped manufacturing replacement parts. So, you'll have to deploy another piece of equipment to replace the one that's gone down, which extends your downtime. Chances are, that with technology continuously evolving, you won't be able to replace like for like, which means you'll need to change your architecture to accommodate a new piece of technology. Inevitably, this will cost you time as well as money, because you'll need to go through the entire process of design, shipping, installation, and testing before you can bring the equipment into service.



The problem is that such an asset very rapidly moves to a high risk category – and the more of such assets you have, the greater the risk to your organisation.

There is no upside to not knowing when your assets will age out of support – or in waiting until your contract comes up for renewal before deciding whether or not to replace the asset.”

According to Imran Abbas, Dimension Data’s TLM Solutions Manager, for those rare IT organisations that do take a proactive approach to managing their estate, the challenge is to gain access to manufacturer tools geared to tell them about their assets. “Most such tools are too expensive for a single organisation to acquire purely for its own use.”

“For managed services organisations, however, access to the tools is automatic because their relationships with manufacturers are close, and the cost of the tools can be amortised over multiple clients.”

Rich Schofield, Dimension Data’s Business Development Manager, believes that, in order to mitigate the risk of extended downtime and the unnecessary cost of bringing failed but unsupported equipment back up, organisations should take at least a four to five year view of their IT estate. “Technology manufacturers have standardised end-of-life milestones through which they progress their products towards obsolescence. These are made public. So, it is entirely possible to get out of crisis mode and plan for obsolescence.

“The challenge comes in staying abreast of all the vendor milestones across thousands of assets. The only way to do that with any sort of precision or reliability is with a TLM tool that can automate the collection and analysis of all necessary information.

“Even without a TLM tool, it’s vital that you take a TLM approach to your IT estate. More than knowing what you’ve got and where in the support cycle it is, you need to know how upgrading or replacing that asset will affect your architecture and your business agility.

“For instance, knowing where and what your risk is positions you to choose with planning to leave some items without

support or re-deploy them where they are more fit for purpose. There are many ways of ‘skinning the IT asset cat’, but you can’t make appropriate choices in terms of detail without being able to see the big picture.”

Abbas believes that it’s also important to keep the big picture up to date. “The Dimension Data TLM Assessment, for instance, is a very precise snapshot that tells you what’s in your estate today. Within a few weeks, however, you’ll have added more assets, got rid of some, and configured others in different ways to do different jobs.

“It makes no sense, then, to base plans on a snapshot of a moving target. Large organisations with thousands of assets need to repeat the TLM Assessment every three months. Smaller organisations with hundreds of assets rarely need to do the assessment more than once a year.”

### **What’s the point of a managed service?**

As with most managed services, the biggest benefit is always that someone else has the headache. In the case of IT estate management, a managed service should take care of your assets from acquisition to final disposal.

It should also take care of complexities beyond managing support cycles.

“Vulnerability and configuration management, for instance, are hidden aspects of estate management,” says Holmes. “All IT assets have some sort of operating system and no operating system is perfect. Every few weeks, a vendor will announce a bug that can lead to assets being hijacked or denied service. Unlike support cycles, which are now very predictable, operating system vulnerabilities really can come at you out of left field. You can have ten vulnerabilities this week and none for the next two months. So, your attention to vulnerabilities has to be hawk-like.

“That’s not easy for an individual organisation to achieve, whereas vulnerability management can be easily packaged into the automated systems of a managed services provider. A managed services provider also has on board specialists

who keep up to date on the latest methodologies for addressing vulnerabilities, and, while the managed services provider is right there, scanning the network, it's an easy extra step to look at configuration – and all the other hidden aspects of lifecycle risk management.”

Most organisations, however, opt for a managed service for their IT assets and estate because doing it themselves is too onerous. Abbas says that, while there are a lot of technology scanning tools available from vendors, they tend to provide information on a piecemeal basis, focused, obviously, on only that vendor's equipment.

“Information in and of itself is pretty useless. You need to be able to make sense of all the bits of data, contextualise it in a constructive way, and then present it on management dashboards so that executives can make relevant decisions. It takes experience, insight, and technological capability to do that – and more of that resides in an integrated, coherent way with managed services providers than with individual organisations.”

### **Lifecycle management expands its scope**

Today, by virtue of where it originated, TLM is focused mainly on network and IP telephony assets. However, the

basic principles and approach apply with equal validity to other areas of the IT estate such as data centres, servers, storage, and desktops.

Also, as take up of virtualisation gathers momentum, lifecycle assessment and management become increasingly important – and need to range further into strategic territory. “What matters in a virtualisation scenario goes beyond knowing whether your assets are heading for obsolescence into issues such as whether your installed base can support your shifting business objectives,” says Schofield.

Also, while networking isn't new to the basics of virtualisation, with virtual LANs having been around for a good while, full-blown virtualisation creates greater complexity for the IT estate. The dependencies between assets are greater. Accordingly, the role of the managed services provider becomes more strategic. As Schofield says: “Lifecycle assessments can help an organisation understand where they are in the adoption of technologies and enable them to identify which equipment can be re-used most effectively in a virtualised environment. In other words, a managed services provider assists in the planning phase of virtualisation, in order to maximise the organisation's return on the asset base in which it has already invested.”

## How Not to Manage your IT Assets

Key findings of Dimension Data's 2010 Network Barometer Report, which covered 235 organisations, show that:

- The technology obsolescence rate is running at 35% of organisations' installed asset base.
- 20% of products in the obsolescence cycle are beyond End of Software Maintenance (EoSWM) and, while the manufacturer will still support the equipment, any new bugs that are found will not be fixed.

- 31% of products in the obsolescence cycle are beyond Last Day of Support (LDoS) and will not be supported by the manufacturer. This represents a downtime risk.

On the positive side: An increase in technology obsolescence in certain organisations indicates that, with astute technology lifecycle assessment and, therefore, an overall understanding of their technology estate, they're able to 'sweat' assets intelligently.

### *ABOUT THE 2010 NETWORK BAROMETER REPORT*

*The 2010 Network Barometer Report, published by Dimension Data on the status of networks globally, aggregates data from 235 organisations and the Technology Lifecycle Management Assessments conducted by Dimension Data around the world during 2010. The Report reviews networks' readiness to support business by reviewing the security vulnerabilities, end-of-life status and configuration variance from best practice of network devices. For more information about Dimension Data, and to download the free Network Barometer Report, visit [www.dimensiondata.com/networkbarometer](http://www.dimensiondata.com/networkbarometer)*

# Oiling the Wheels of Compliance



Compliance is challenging on two fronts: there is often a lack of clarity on what the requirements are or, indeed, what exactly to do to meet the requirements and, secondly, organisations begrudge the expenditure on resources needed to ensure compliance – because compliance doesn't necessarily improve the way the business runs or create greater profitability.

For these reasons, organisations are increasingly seeing value in opting into a managed service that includes a sharp focus on this thorny issue.

## Indicators

The 2010 Dimension Data Network Barometer Report, which presents aggregate data from 235 organisations, reviewed the organisations' networks' readiness to support business by evaluating the configuration variance from best practices, potential security vulnerabilities, and end-of-life status of the included network devices.

The research shows that 38% (more than one third) of organisations are carrying at least one known security vulnerability. The average number of configuration violations per device is 41.7. Organisations across the board are continuing to fall down with regard to authentication, authorisation, and accounting (AAA), with an average of 13 AAA violations per device.

## Kill two birds with one stone

"It's clear that organisations are not only struggling with security and preventing direct threats to their organisation, they're also battling with the much vaguer and sometimes much more complex issues of compliance," says Martin Schlatter, Dimension Data's Group Managed Security Services Product Manager.

"If you can't keep track of your device configurations or change and release management processes, where do you find the extra will, insight, and human resources to, first, interpret your compliance requirements and, then, implement or enforce them?"

"A powerful motivation might be the realisation that proactively managing your IT infrastructure enables you to obtain detailed knowledge of what you have in your systems and what's working and what's not. This automatically gives you a much clearer idea of your compliance status.

"In other words, IT management and compliance management are two sides of the same coin and should happen together in order to reduce the effort and resources needed to manage compliance while, at the same time, increasing your levels of compliance."

For organisations that understand this, managed services become extremely attractive – because, correctly packaged, managed services offer the distinct advantage of embedding compliance in routine maintenance activities.

By way of example, one of Dimension Data’s financial services clients recently failed 40 of its internal audit requirements and turned to Dimension Data to conduct a risk assessment. “We suggested that a number of remedial activities on the company’s network should be performed and, because the client didn’t have enough internal resources to make the changes before the next audit cycle, we brought in nine of our own engineers to assist with the task at hand,” Schlatter says.

“We realised that the network problems had arisen more or less organically as a consequence of the way the network had been operated over a period of years. So, the chances of similar issues arising after we’d done the fix were very high. The organisation needed to change the way it operated its network. To ensure that the correct changes were made, the company needed to find out where the potential for problems lay and then resolve the problems before they impacted the network. It didn’t have the tools or resources to do either – and subsequently opted to enter into a managed services agreement with us.”

### **Value add**

Traditionally, managed services are about managing network operations and availability. What Dimension Data adds is a layer of due diligence and compliance that includes, for instance, configuration management as a discipline that is measured against stringent service level agreements.

“We also provide extensive reporting on our infrastructure management activities, which are focused on identifying which network devices are up or down,” Schlatter says. “It’s a very short step from there to identifying – and reporting on – whether or not the device is being operated to compliance requirements. From there, it doesn’t take a great deal more

It is worth noting that Dimension Data also provides a Governance, Risk, and Compliance Assessment, which covers both Cisco and other vendor IT infrastructure assets.

effort and time to suggest and implement the steps needed to bring the device into compliance.

“What clients get therefore, is much more ‘bang for their managed services buck’. This is not a return on investment discussion. It’s all about the total cost of operating IT infrastructure. Why have one set of people and tools to perform your infrastructure management and another to do security management and a third to look after compliance management?”

### **Best intent**

Perhaps more than the need to save money, time, and resources on managing compliance, organisations are driven to managed services in large measure because no other part of the IT infrastructure is officially policed in the way that compliance is. And once the auditors have found a problem, they keep going back to it, even when it’s remedied just to make sure it doesn’t recur.

“Also, interpretation of compliance requirements can be as difficult for the auditors as it is for the IT department,” Schlatter says. “When they’ve found something that is clearly not compliant it’s just that much easier to stay with it than move on to vaguer areas.”

“A strong motivation for IT departments, therefore, is to keep the auditors out of their hair. What they forget, though, is that auditors are simply looking for proof of best intent to address a compliance requirement.”

In that context, Dimension Data believes that IT and Audit should work together on managing the organisation’s risk. While compliance needs to be coherently applied, it is usually about making incremental rather than holistic changes. Sometimes the fix needed is one change to a process or documentation. Sometimes all that are needed are additional authorisation levels. Occasionally, it’s necessary to buy a piece of additional or new technology and, very often, compliance best intent and best practice are optimally served by changing nothing.

If IT and Audit focus jointly on what option is best for the organisation, the process of arriving at those decisions can be significantly shortened, money can be saved, and business performance improved.

Just as importantly, a joint proactive focus prevents knee-jerk responses to discoveries of non-compliance that more often than not result in expensive ad-hoc repairs by external suppliers.

Getting IT and Audit to work together is easier said than done, but a managed service that includes compliance management oils the wheels – because the managed services provider automatically generates regular, comprehensive reports that proactively identify the issues. So, everyone involved is always abreast of events. Managed services providers are also best placed, because of years of best practice experience across multiple industries, to



And once the auditors have found a problem, they keep going back to it, even when it’s remedied just to make sure it doesn’t recur.

interpret compliance requirements in ways that are most relevant to the organisation’s particular technology set-up. Most client organisations simply don’t have the resources or tools in-house to do this.

### Getting ahead of the problems

According to Schlatter, Dimension Data’s Managed Secure Infrastructure Services (MSIS) were designed precisely because clients who were using the company’s network monitoring services said there was a huge gap between Dimension Data’s sophisticated ability to identify a potential problem for them and their being able to remedy it themselves, using internal network engineers who were not security specialists.

“Clients felt there was no point in knowing about a problem they couldn’t fix. Instead, what they wanted, was a combined monitoring and maintenance service that would be proactive in terms of ensuring that network configuration was continuously updated according to both compliance and best practice – to minimise the risk of being attacked,” he explains.

“Dimension Data responded to that need and now, for example, a number of Australia’s regional governments use the MSIS risk dashboards to find out exactly what their security posture is and the state of health of their infrastructure. They know who logged on to what device, what they did to the device, and whether or not best practice was contravened. If something is implemented that doesn’t match compliance needs, they receive an alert – enabling them to pre-empt problems.”

Also in Australia, major banks have elected to use MSIS to monitor and manage their configuration changes to security devices and correlate and reconcile what was done to which devices, when. The MSIS report is automatically provided to the organisations’ change advisory board and their audit departments.

Schlatter says that it’s the correlation and reconciliation that are key. “Compliance isn’t just about performing a series of tasks – it’s about making sense of the impact that doing those things will have on your business. Using a managed service is one of the most cost effective ways of doing that.”

Compliance isn’t just about performing a series of tasks - it’s about making sense of the impact that doing those things will have on your business. Using a managed service is one of the most cost effective ways of doing that.

# Managing your Microsoft Environment Comes Down to Making the Right Choices



The issues related to managing an organisation's Microsoft environment are unique because Microsoft software is so ubiquitous as a business tool and there is such a range of different components. It therefore impacts on both the operating environment in general and the end user in particular. The great advantage of this is that it gives the organisation a wide array of choices as to the ways in which it can manage the environment.

What is becoming apparent, however, is that it makes good business sense to include some managed services into the management mix.

That's because the Microsoft infrastructure in most organisations plays a key role in their business performance capabilities – by spanning back-end services as well as end user desktops and applications. So, it is vital that the Microsoft infrastructure be kept as stable as possible.

Given the number of elements within that infrastructure – from Microsoft® Active Directory, Microsoft® Exchange and Microsoft® SharePoint to SQL and Windows servers – keeping the entire infrastructure stable can best be achieved by proactive monitoring of the system as well as constantly (daily, weekly, monthly and ad-hoc) performing a set of pre-determined tasks geared to optimising the infrastructure.

## **The proof of the pudding**

Using the Microsoft Operations Framework, Dimension Data developed managed services effort-based models

to understand the effort required to support Microsoft infrastructure. The models tested scenarios in which proactive monitoring tools such as Microsoft® Systems Center Operations Manager (SCOM) were deployed and those in which no such tools were deployed.

The results of the tests were enlightening. Depending on the Microsoft product involved, operating the environment without a monitoring tool in place was between two and four times more resource intensive than if a tool was deployed.

In the monitored environment, pre-determined tasks were simplified – as they needed to be done only once in the tools' console rather than repeatedly on every server in the infrastructure. Additionally, engineers were alerted to issues in the environment before they became incidents. Where incidents did occur, they were raised quickly via the tool's ability to auto log incidents into the service desk system.

But, as Rob Sears, Dimension Data's Microsoft Pre-Sales Manager, points out, it would be very difficult for individual organisations to use the automated tools. "It's not a matter of plugging in Microsoft SCOM and sitting back while it does the work. One needs to know what level of operation is needed. For an individual organisation to acquire that would be expensive in time and resources. Managed services providers that have developed processes utilising the combination of proactive tasks and proactive monitoring can operate much more leanly and across a much broader front."

### Mix and match

Clearly, managed services are going to save organisations time and money – and downtime – in stabilising and optimising their Microsoft environment.

Is it necessary, however, to hand over all of the Microsoft environments to a third party? And what about the upgrade to Microsoft® Windows 7 that is occupying everyone's mind right now? Do you tackle that in-house or do you get someone in to help you to get it done smoothly and with minimum stress to the business? And, who handles the virtualisation of all or part of your Microsoft environment?

There is no one single answer that is suitable for all organisations all of the time. So, you can suit your own particular operational, security, compliance, and business strategy needs.

"Once again, the advantage here is having choices," says Dimension Data's Microsoft Solutions General Manager, Brian Walshe. "If your IT department is mature enough and has the relevant capabilities, you can probably tackle all your Microsoft challenges in-house – provided, of course, that it doesn't cost you more than absolutely necessary.

"But, you also have the option of having someone else manage your Microsoft environment on premise, having it hosted off-premise, moving it into your own private cloud, migrating it to the public cloud – or having a mix of all of these options.

"There is no one single answer that is suitable for all organisations all of the time. So, you can suit your own particular operational, security, compliance, and business strategy needs."

## Size matters

Current trends in Microsoft managed services seem to be dictated by the size of the client organisation.

In general, if large organisations are going to have their Microsoft environments managed offsite, they tend to prefer having their own boxes, configured specifically to their organisation's needs and integrated back into their own systems. They can afford to pay for a dedicated, customised service while still getting the benefits of the economies of scale of a managed service provider's infrastructure and human resource base.

Smaller organisations (under 1,000 users) tend to have an appetite for commoditised, more generic services that are not integrated back into their own infrastructure. Their needs and pockets can be more easily served by generalised services that meet most operational requirements most of the time.

In the middle are organisations that want a hybrid solution in which, for instance, their e-mail is hosted on a shared

The managed services provider has a fundamental role to play in guiding enterprises from private clouds into the public cloud.

Exchange server – giving them the advantages of minimal time to deployment and the ability to add and remove users on the fly. Even so, they want the hosted service integrated with their in-house infrastructure.

“We are beginning to see an interest from large organisations in benefiting from the enormous economies of scale of the public cloud,” says Derek Wilcocks, Managing Director, Internet Solutions (a Dimension Data Subsidiary). “The difficulty for most of them in doing that right now is that there are so few precedents and so there is no established best practice for moving from either in-house management or a private managed service to a publicly hosted cloud.”

## Managed migration service

Wilcocks believes that, in fact, the managed services provider has a fundamental role to play in guiding enterprises from private clouds into the public cloud.

“The managed service provider has a view of the entire services landscape that single customer organisations would find it impossible to achieve. Managed services providers work across all industry sectors and all types of customers, so they have insight into and experience of what works in a range of different circumstances. Of necessity, they employ the kind of specialised skills that can cut through the clutter of opinions and projects that litter early adoption technologies such as virtualisation and the cloud.

“Managed services providers can, therefore, provide the most relevant consulting capabilities along with advisory frameworks and targeted methodologies that will give customers the means to choose effectively between private, hybrid, and public cloud options.”

## Dress rehearsal

There is consensus, however, that before an organisation makes any move towards a public cloud – or even a managed service – it should get its basic technology architecture right and define very tightly how it will manage external providers. “If you're functioning in a private environment now, the

chances are your change management discipline is not that mature,” says Hayden Lamberti, Innovation and Technology Manager, Internet Solutions. “In a private scenario, small configuration changes and fixes to your infrastructure can be – and usually are – fairly ‘seat of the pants’. In a public cloud, however, you have to fit in with your provider’s change control windows. You won’t necessarily be able to adapt on demand the way your system operates.

“So, focusing now on getting your architecture the way you need it to be and also ensuring that you have the processes in place to manage a service provider, cloud or otherwise, equips you to manage your environment in the cloud once it gets there. It also equips you to be managerially flexible, able to bend to the way the public cloud functions without sacrificing the integrity of your business operations. A managed service provider can help you work out how to do this.”

### Lock in

Being locked into a specific cloud provider can be a concern. Keith Murray, Dimension Data’s Director, Managed Services, says that lock-in is not the problem one might expect.

“If you get your service management processes right and have, therefore, defined what services you expect and at what level, it’s actually much easier moving that services catalogue from one cloud provider to another than moving from one outsourcer to another.”

An additional concern for organisations is that, by the nature of their highly commoditised offering, public cloud providers won’t – and actually cannot – provide the granularity of services that would be expected in a private cloud.

“This is a role that managed services providers are best equipped to play, whether in a cloud future or otherwise,” Murray says. “After all, it would have been the managed service provider that guided the organisation into the cloud and, as a consequence, has a better understanding of the organisation’s infrastructure requirements and of the services

that it needs to consume than, perhaps, the organisation itself. Why put your organisation at risk by struggling to manage the services yourself, when someone much better equipped is available?”



If you get your service management processes right and have, therefore, defined what services you expect and at what level, it’s actually much easier moving that services catalogue from one cloud provider to another than moving from one outsourcer to another.

## Case Study

# Seamless Collaboration Between Geographically-Dispersed Stakeholders Thanks to a Robust and Secure Infrastructure

In a world where IT supports and often transforms business, our client, a leading aircraft manufacturer, is mindful that making sure its network operates at peak performance, and is managed effectively and continually, is essential.

In addition, like many forward-thinking organisations, it has opted to invest in visual communications technologies, in order to reduce costs, enhance employee productivity, and maintain strong relationships through better collaboration and face to face communication. However, obtaining hard skilled IT professionals who can deliver quality IT services and ensure that these investments are being optimised, was a thorn in the company's side. Engaging with Dimension Data has made all the difference. Over the past decade Dimension Data has provided the company with a range of professional and managed services (with a specific focus on network performance, maintenance and security management). Additionally, we work with the organisation's management team in a collaborative fashion on an ongoing basis to help it evolve and execute on its longer-term strategic technology strategy.

### Client Overview

Our client, a leading aircraft manufacturer with headquarters in Toulouse, France, produces a full spectrum of aircraft models. The company's manufacturing sites in France, Germany, Spain and the UK are formed into a range of Centres of Excellence covering all aspects of the aircraft design and production process and are complemented by

### Quick Overview

- **Industry:** Manufacturing
- **Region:** Europe
- **Challenge:** The client needed to ensure seamless collaboration between its geographically-dispersed engineering and project teams, ensure its network was robust and secure and reduce its carbon footprint.
- **Solution:** Dimension Data and the client have forged a mutually beneficial relationship that includes assisting the company to execute on a variety of aspects of its technology strategy.
- **Results:**
  - The company is able to rest assured that both its WAN and LAN networks are in a 'safe pair of hands', and free from performance and security issues
  - Thanks to its video conferencing solution, the company is able to better 'collaborate without borders' and at the same time, reduce its carbon footprint
  - Internal resources are freed-up to concentrate on core business issues

subsidiaries in North America and China. The company employs 52,000 people across 160 offices.

### **Business Challenge**

Our client's aircraft are the most advanced jetliners flying today, and use the latest in proven technology. On any given project, engineering teams located across multiple geographies need to work together closely to ensure that projects are delivered on time and to scope. With an employee base in excess of 50,000 and operations scattered across 160 sites, a robust network and the ability for employees to communicate and collaborate effectively in real-time are business imperatives. As a responsible corporate citizen, the company also saw the need to reduce its carbon footprint by reducing the amount of airtravel undertaken by its employees. Opting into a company-wide video conferencing solution therefore made business sense. However, the company wanted to ensure that it gained maximum return on investment from its visual communications infrastructure.

### **Our Solution**

Dimension Data was awarded a five-year contract to provide managed data network services to ensure that the client's business-critical data network was comprehensively managed. Our remit includes incident management (call handling, supervision and monitoring), level 1 operation (including incident resolution, diagnostic support and configuration), level 2 operation (level 2 support and expertise) as well as level 1 and 2 security management. To guarantee maximum uptime, the client also has handed over the task of providing global network support for all its European locations to Dimension Data. Uptime, our advanced end-to-end support service for mission-critical IT infrastructure delivers optimum network performance on a 24x7 basis.

Success on this front led to Dimension Data being invited to assist the company to execute on an ambitious visual communications strategy. The client realised that in order

to maximise video conferencing adoption rates it had to focus its efforts on careful planning and effective, ongoing user-support. For these reasons, the company took the decision to enlist the expertise of Dimension Data's visual communications' experts to provide it with a managed video conferencing service. Our responsibilities include ensuring that the company's 250 video conferencing units, spread across four countries, provide users with a high quality experience at all times. In addition, we co-ordinate a room-booking service, set up all the client's video conferencing bridges and provide on-site assistance and trouble-shooting. This was followed by a contract to supply enhanced secure network services for the client's European high-speed WAN network. Our responsibilities include the management of a bandwidth service provider in France, UK, Spain, Germany and the US. The secure solution covers encryption systems on network routers, redundancy, installations and deployments, network monitoring on a 24x7 basis and adherence to strict SLAs.

### **Adding value**

Dimension Data's strong and recognised expertise in Internet Protocol-related domains are key ingredients to the success of this relationship. The client is able to rest assured that both its WAN and LAN networks are in a 'safe pair of hands', and free from performance and security issues.

When organisations are contemplating outsourcing the management of their corporate network, the optimum mix of capabilities they look for in a service provider includes strategic market insight, products and services that map to the organisation's requirements, but also, importantly, a global footprint and ability to provide services where the client needs them, while still taking into account local nuances and cultural considerations. Dimension Data's ability to deliver seamless services across multiple geographies thus represents a key reason as to why the client has selected us as its technology partner of choice.

# Research Notes

## 'EASE OF DOING BUSINESS' DELIVERS SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES

Multinational organisations have traditionally tried to manage numerous service providers in various regions, leading to escalating costs, delays, multiple points of accountability and poor service delivery. In its 2010 Magic Quadrant for Communications Outsourcing and Professional Services, Worldwide,\* report, Gartner states:

"In Gartner's survey of vendor references, over 20% of respondents cited 'ease of doing business' as the single biggest weakness of their COPS provider. For MNCs, ease of doing business takes the form of many different issues in the vendor-client relationship. Chief among these were: pricing and contract flexibility; single contracts for ordering and provisioning work orders across targeted geographies; billing in local currency; and single global support and maintenance contracts."

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## CYBERCRIME DRIVING GROWTH OF MANAGED SECURITY SERVICES MARKET

As cybercrime continues to grow and become more complex, businesses must race to implement tools, technologies and strategies to protect their organisations. Frost & Sullivan cites Cybercrime as the primary driving factor in the growth of the Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) Market. The firm estimates that managed security service providers will generate annual revenues of \$3.90 billion by 2016.

"Although budget cutbacks have resulted from the economic slowdown, companies are continuing to implement measures

to upgrade security," says Frost & Sullivan Research Analyst Martha Vazquez. "Outsourcing security to an MSSP will free up time for organisations to focus on core business processes."

Frost & Sullivan's research has shown that organisations that have not experienced a serious security breach, are finding it difficult to comprehend the ROI benefits. Economic uncertainty is also making companies hesitant about implementing MSSP services, but organisations are more accepting than in the past. Enterprises also rely on outsourcing to secure infrastructure and lower operational costs.

"There is still a lack of information with regards to the costs entailed by serious data breaches, especially during this slow economy," cautions Vazquez. "Education must be increased to enable organisations to become more at ease with acknowledging the benefits obtained from outsourcing security to an MSSP."

MSSPs must focus on diversifying security portfolios in order to remain competitive in the market. MSSPs are leveraging hosted services as a means to offer lower price points; and this has increased the demand for these services in the past year.

For more information about Dimension Data, visit [www.dimensiondata.com](http://www.dimensiondata.com)

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\* Gartner "Magic Quadrant for Communications Outsourcing and Professional Services Magic Quadrant, Worldwide" by Eric Goodness. 3 March 2010



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