

COLOCATION: INCREASING AGILITY, FLEXIBILITY & COST SAVINGS

With colocation businesses can be confident that their data is safe and even in case of a disaster or emergency, they will be able to access data through secure connections, with high bandwidth and almost zero downtime, preventing any data from being lost or damaged. Apart from helping save space, colocation also guarantees network reliability and availability with maximum uptime, writes Yasser Zeineldin, CEO, eHosting DataFort.

Trends such as Internet of Things (IoT), mobility, cloud and social media have been responsible for the exponential growth of data and higher complexity of enterprise computing workloads. This means that an organisation's IT infrastructure also needs to grow at the same pace.

However, building or expanding your own data centre facility could become quite expensive for businesses.

According to Forrester, it costs around \$200 per square foot to build a data centre, and additionally, installing fibre can cost over \$10,000 per mile. While larger companies have extensive financial and human resources to cover costs, maintain and monitor the facility 24/7, it's almost impossible for SMBs to do the same.

Even large organisations find it challenging to expand data centre facilities, continuously purchase new hardware and software and upgrade employee skills. Hosting servers in-house can put a business at an additional risk of downtime since internal IT does not often provide guaranteed SLAs and 24/7 Support.

Hence, more and more businesses are now considering colocation,

which is a third party data centre facility that allows businesses to rent space for their servers and other computing hardware. The need for 24/7 availability of data in a safe and secure environment has also created a growing demand for data centre colocation.

Hosting service providers that provide colocation services also often offer a range of convenient options including rack cabinets, secure cage, remote hands, quality service account management, etc. Service providers also ensure that the data is always secure and the IT infrastructure is running 24/7. More recently, service providers have also started to offer managed colocation, which combines traditional colocation with managed services.

DRIVERS FOR INCREASED UPTAKE OF COLOCATION

Continuously surging demand for data storage and its reliable and efficient processing is impacting the data centre infrastructure market. In the present scenario, most organisations are facing saturated data centre capacity, in terms of power, cooling, and space. Therefore, companies are either expanding their existing data centre capacity or using colocation

facilities for their new workloads. This is a major driver for the data centre colocation market in the UAE.

Colocation is being considered by businesses of all sizes for varied reasons - Small Businesses can obtain needed features of a large data centre without the capital investment, whereas medium to large sized enterprises can expand their existing infrastructure capacity without undertaking costly data centre construction.

Across vertical sectors, there is a demand for colocation to help deliver greater efficiency. Colocation is almost always more efficient in terms of energy and cooling costs than having equipment in server rooms within organisations as service providers can leverage economies of scale due to their large customer base.

The need to minimise latency and enable faster access to applications drives regional colocation growth for organisations with users based in the region.

The need for increased data protection, business continuity and disaster recovery have also fuelled the colocation market as organisations

consider colocation facilities for their DR sites.

Due to significant increase in power, bandwidth and cooling requirements for data centre equipment, many legacy-built data centres are unable to accommodate these new power and cooling demands. This too has driven the upward demand in the data centre colocation market.

COLOCATION MARKET IN THE UAE

According to figures released in a recent report by the International Data Corporation (IDC), the UAE's managed and data centre service market is expected to be valued at \$971.8mn by 2018. As more and more data centres are established and utilized among large corporations and SMEs, several verticals will increase their demand for colocation.

The expected growth stems from increasing demand amongst end-users who are trying to match the higher level of IT agility and increased operational efficiency expected in the modern market.

BENEFITS OF COLOCATION

- **Lease vs build** - Building your own data centre is expensive! In addition to the large capital

expenditure, it involves regular maintenance, upgrade and facilities management costs. By opting to work with a services provider, you can lease data centre space and convert CAPEX to OPEX with predictable monthly costs.

- **Focus on core business**

objectives - Colocation takes the burden of operation, management and repair of data centre facilities off the shoulders of the IT department which in turn gives IT staff increased time to focus on the business needs of the company.

- **Scalability** - Colocation allows you to expand your infrastructure to fit the needs of your company's growth without having to take on capital expenditures. If your company grows, your IT infrastructure can expand to support it quickly and with less investment.

- **Security** - This is also a major issue related with hosting your own data centres. On the other hand, service providers guarantee top-notch security preventing unauthorised access to their customers' systems. In addition, business data and assets are secured with 24X7 monitoring, dedicated security staff, access

systems, including biometric access, authentication systems, and CCTV surveillance.

Also, having all your resources in one location can always prove to be a hindrance in the long run, especially in the face of unforeseen natural disasters. A colocation data centre would make the necessary provisions to make sure your data is secured and protected from such threats.

- **Redundancy and high availability** - It may be costly to achieve 100% network reliability, but at the same time this is a must if businesses want to continue their growth. Colocation guarantees reliability and availability with the maximum uptime.

- **Better connectivity** - Colocation data centres have fully redundant network connections ensuring that customers' business critical applications always run uninterrupted

TOP TIPS TO CHOOSE A COLOCATION PROVIDER

A recent Gartner report suggested that colocation grew by 8% last year alone. Many businesses are now turning to colocation providers to host their IT infrastructure.

With so many players in the market,

it is important for decision makers to evaluate key factors when deciding on a colocation provider as it will help them plan and operate in a more efficient manner.

1. Analyse the hosting provider's services portfolio, services features, flexibility in pricing and packages available
2. Evaluate the data centre facility based on your company's needs — size of the organisation, nature of business/ industry, nature of the application, availability requirements, security/ compliance requirements, etc.
3. Choose a services provider who takes the responsibility of monitoring the systems 24/7, ensuring that they are running continuously
4. Know if the potential services provider offers 24/7 support
5. Ask for testimonials, case studies and reference checks from clients they have done similar projects for

Colocation, when implemented with a trusted data centre hosting services provider, offers a plethora of benefits and allows IT staff to focus on strategic business operations required for optimal growth.



ABOUT

A veteran of the ICT industry, Yasser Zeineldin brings to eHosting Datafort over 25 years of experience gained from working with global majors such as NCR, AT&T and Microsoft.

Prior to joining TECOM Investments, Zeineldin was a Regional Director of Microsoft Gulf, responsible for managing diverse teams across sales, marketing, partner management, operations, technology specialists and industry management.

Earlier, he headed the Public Sector team at Microsoft Middle East and Africa. He was also a member of the Worldwide Government Industry Core Strategy Team and the Worldwide Partner Executive Council.

Before joining Microsoft, Zeineldin led the communication giant AT&T's operations in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. He took up the role after moving back from a special assignment with NCR/Teradata, a global technology company in the US, where his primary focus was on developing the market for Business Intelligence and Parallel Processing Systems in Latin America and the MEA region.

eHosting Datafort (eHDF)

Managed Co-location services are an extension to the traditional co-location where most of the capital expenses are offset by managed services charged on a monthly basis.

Customers can opt for a mixed environment where specific services such as Backup, Security, Databases, and Monitoring are managed by eHDF while customers choose to retain the management of their hosted infrastructure and business applications.

The servers can be co-located in eHDF's own data centres located in Dubai, UAE.

Choose from these optional services:

- Network Services
- Server & Application Management
- Server Services
- Storage and Backup
- Monitoring Services
- Managed Security



With eHosting Datafort managed Co-location services, you can save a significant amount of investment on IT assets and staff costs. Your staff can focus on the core IT activities rather than spending time on backup, storage and monitoring activities. You can also reduce capital expenditure on hardware components by converting those expenses into operating expenses. It also allows you to not bother about hardware becoming obsolete and depreciation costs.

For more information about eHosting Datafort's co-location offerings, please visit www.ehdf.com