Taking charge

YASSER ZEINELDIN, CEO, EHOSTING DATAFORT, DISCUSSES HOW MANAGED SERVICES CAN HELP ORGANISATIONS PUT MORE FOCUS ON THEIR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND IMPROVE THEIR SECURITY POSTURE.

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How do you see the regional technology landscape shaping out this year? What factors will affect the growth of the ICT industry in the Middle East?

As the world becomes more connected, dependency on ICT will continue to increase.

At a regional level, the technology market will experience exponential growth in 2017 and beyond, due to events like Dubai Expo 2020, which will drive demands for the latest technologies. With over 25 million visitors expected to visit Dubai for the World Expo 2020, the event promises to be a major opportunity for business and IT development. With the huge number of tourists and

investors expected to come to the country, an influx of data is highly anticipated, which will necessitate better infrastructure planning. In line with this, regional organisations will be pushed to invest in additional storage and network capacity.

The same can be expected from other regional government initiatives like Qatar World Cup 2022 and Saudi Vision 2030 programme.

Which emerging technologies will see more on-ground applications and deployments in the region in 2017?

Data centres in the region will continue to evolve in 2017 to meet current

and future business requirements. Technologies in this space will undergo a number of transformation as businesses shift their focus to issues like speed of implementation, flexibility, agility, efficiency, scalability and security.

Cloud computing is one of the main technologies driving the transformation of data centres, as it facilitates faster business operations. Today's data centres are also being transformed to utilise cloud technologies to enhance their performance. Moving forward, we will witness dramatic changes in the structure, software and control processes of data centres.

Trends such as automation, virtualisation, software-defined applications and infrastructure, IoT and BYOD will also contribute to the transformation of data centres.

Furthermore, the managed services market in the Middle East will continue to grow as enterprises look for more cost-effective ICT solutions and services that will help them focus their investments on their core business. From network and data centre management services to disaster recovery, storage and backup, server management, security and IT support, it is possible to offload the day-to-day provision of significant chunks of the IT function, liberating financial and human resources to focus on productivity and efficiency.

Which technologies will you invest in over the next year?

Over the last year, we have expanded our services portfolio to include a Cyber Defence Centre, which offers real-time threat management and remote managed SIEM services; advanced managed security services for DDoS, vulnerability management, penetration testing, incident management and response; and Snapshot Service with Recovery, which have enabled customers with faster backup and recovery capabilities.

We have also partnered with global technology vendors to further enhance and expand our services portfolio to keep up with changing customer demands.

> **"THE MANAGED SERVICES MARKET IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AS ENTERPRISES LOOK FOR MORE COST-EFFECTIVE ICT SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES THAT WILL HELP THEM FOCUS THEIR INVESTMENTS ON THEIR CORE BUSINESS."**

Continuous innovation is at the heart of eHDF's strategy – this has been demonstrated through our commitment to developing products and services that address evolving customer requirements.

In 2017, eHDF will continue to invest in upgrading our data centres and cyber defence centre. Over the last year, we invested significantly in our Tier-3 data centre upgrades to ensure the highest availability and minimal downtime of the data centre services we provide our clients.

Security is closely interwoven in all technologies; how does your company aim to ensure secure offerings?

Cyber threats are on the rise, and are growing in complexity. Subsequently, the economy is forcing organisations to reduce their operational costs while maintaining a proactive security setup urging them to look at managed IT security as an option.

The eHDF Cyber Defence Centre offers 24/7 monitoring and management, which allow customers to focus on what they do best – their core business. Through the centre, we can assist customers in the complete end-to-end security lifecycle, which includes patching services, as well as collecting and analysing security data. Services also include incident management, which offers a single dashboard of their security posture, attacks, and incidents.

In addition, our unique OPEX-based approach allows us to pass on tangible cost benefits to customers planning to procure new security technologies. Purchasing capital assets through eHDF on an OPEX model eliminates the need for lengthy evaluation and procurement process.

What are your organisation and market expectations for 2017?

This year, we aim to put more focus on advancing our technology, facilities, processes, resources and certifications. We will also continue to develop solutions and services that will address the different trends that are shaping today's ICT industry. This will help us effectively address changing industry demands, and allow us to gain a competitive edge both at local and global levels.