Centre of attention

Ganesh Bhat, head, data centres, eHosting DataFort, says, it is critical to have measures in place to minimise data centre outages.

Data centre outages are no trivial matter or inconsequential irritant in today's world. In fact, numerous real world examples of recent times reveal just how much of an alarming and negative effect they can have on a business. An outage of less than an hour, for the Amazon's US site in 2013, resulted in losses exceeding $4 million! An outage at just one of the data centres used by UK ISP Telehouse, in 2016, disrupted Internet connectivity for more than 5 percent of their subscribers. While your enterprise may not necessarily be of the size and scale of the examples mentioned, but you have every reason to wish to avoid a similar fiasco. Data centre outages are never good news and can even, on occasions, be disastrous.

Data centre companies in the UAE have empowered several businesses by lowering their operating costs and simplifying their day-to-day functions. Nevertheless, few vulnerabilities can extract as heavy a price, as a disruption in the functioning of IT infrastructure. The emergence of the UAE as a business hub in the region has resulted in a surfeit of colocation data centre firms in Dubai. This not only provides local enterprises with easy access to their service provider, but also gives them many more options in choosing the right one.

Network connectivity is one of the more common reasons for which an enterprise can experience a data centre outage. What makes it particularly dangerous, as a vulnerability, is that there are so many ways in which it can occur. From physical connection disruptions – due to cables or equipment – to software crashes, hacking and human error, there are a number of factors that can disrupt connectivity. Not only are these factors diverse, but they also precipitate a high cost of repair when they occur. In addition, redundancy – an important preemptive strategy against disruptions – is not possible for all physical network connections due to budgetary limitations. Data centre companies in Dubai serve some of the most important corporate entities in the region as well as globally and are expected to provide the highest quality of service. In order to accomplish that objective, it is important to emphasise planning the network in a fashion that reduces the chances of a disruption in connectivity. Care should also be taken to ensure that the network is designed in a fashion that accommodates the ability to fix such problems in the shortest possible time and with minimal expense.

As in any other part of the world, data center service providers in Dubai cannot guarantee against all disruptions in service due to connectivity. However, companies that prefer an in-house data centre, are perhaps even more vulnerable. The risks inherent to networks and the prohibitive cost of ensuring complete redundancy are, of course, common to both strategies. An in-house data centre, however, along with the previously discussed issues, introduces additional factors that can precipitate disruptions. Most in-house data centres usually have too many singular elements and nodes that can cause a disruption due to their failure. An in-house data centre, for instance, is likely to have a single carrier and a single network provider, exposing it to higher probabilities of disruption. In-house data centres also tend to have lower in-built redundancy – which colocation data centres can provide at less expense.

Few technologies have become as central to business function as various aspects of IT infrastructure. Networking and communications are intrinsic to the functioning of a modern enterprise. Along with the convenience such technologies provide comes the possibility of disruptions that can damage reputation and cause monetary loss as well as downtime. It is, therefore, critical to ensure that preemptive steps are taken to minimise these risks when implementing a data centre solution.