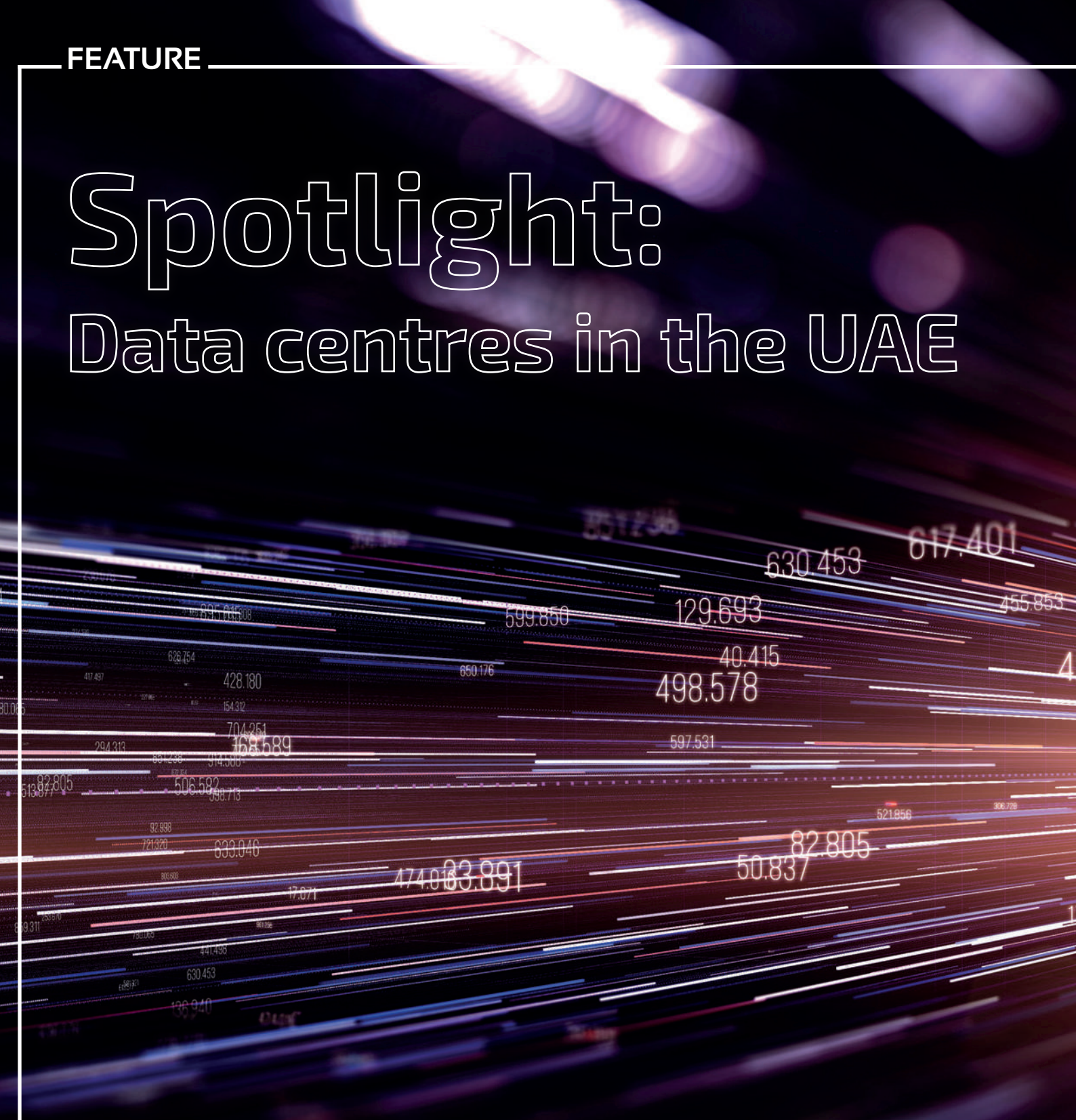
Spotlight:
Data centres in the UAE



Dubai is leading the charge to become the world's smartest city, while other countries in the Middle East continue to make strong investments in Digital Transformation. It is a region which is undergoing immense technological change – so it is crucial that the infrastructure is able to support this. Yasser Zeineldin, CEO of eHosting DataFort, talks to us about the technology trends shaping the region's future as well as the business' operations within the UAE.

OUR DATA CENTRES ARE THE BACKBONE OF OUR COLOCATION, CLOUD AND MANAGED HOSTING SERVICES AND HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY DRIVING MANY ENTERPRISE BUSINESSES IN THE REGION.

How many data centres do you have in the UAE; and do you have plans to open more in the coming years?

eHosting DataFort (eHDF) owns and operates multiple Tier 3 data centres in the UAE. Our data centres are some of the most technologically advanced Tier 3 data centres in the region.

Last year, we invested more than AED 20 million on infrastructure upgrades on our Tier 3 data centres in Dubai Internet City. The upgrades were intended to ensure that while eHDF is the most experienced and mature data centre operator in the region with an unparalleled track record of uptime and availability, its infrastructure is constantly modernised to take advantage of technology developments.

To combat security challenges, we launched our Cyber Defense Centre (CDC)/ Security Operations Centre (SOC) in the UAE in 2017, which offers customers a portfolio of Managed Security Services along with Remote Managed SIEM Services.

These services can be delivered either within our own data centres, on premise at the customer's site or in the cloud.

Some of the key features of our CDC include enhanced threat intelligence, custom business and technical use case development, industry vertical intelligence, regional and global threat awareness, guaranteed SLAs and 24/7 monitoring and support.

eHDF was the first managed services provider in the region to:

- Offer managed hosting and cloud infrastructure services
- Offer credit-based SLAs
- Achieve Cloud Security Alliance certification (CSA STAR)
- To become PCI compliant
- To achieve CREST certification for its Security Operations Centre
- Be certified on ISO 9001/ 20000/ 22301/ 27001
- Launch hosted private cloud
- Launch public cloud

What type of services do you offer at your centre/centres?

Our data centres are the backbone of our colocation, cloud and managed hosting services and have been successfully driving many enterprise businesses in the region. Our data centres are governed by strict policies and certifications ensuring compliance for our clients' hosted infrastructure.

Our data centres provide a secure, highly available environment for our clients' IT infrastructure and mission critical data and business applications, which results in minimal downtime, reduced overall operating costs and faster time to market.

Our services range from co-location to managed hosting, cloud services including both hosted private cloud and public cloud, disaster recovery and business continuity and security services to name some.

Can you give us an idea on the importance of Digital Transformation and how it benefits companies? In addition, how are companies in the UAE approaching Digital Transformation?

The UAE definitely leads in the GCC region in digital adoption, with Dubai leading

Yasser Zeineldin, CEO of eHosting DataFort

the way to becoming the smartest city in the world. Dubai has witnessed smart infrastructure being built based on the latest and cutting-edge technology and the government now aspires to transform the Emirate to not only be the smartest city but also the happiest city in the world over the next few years.

Big Data, AI, IoT, analytics, security and cloud technologies are key technology platforms enabling today's disruption.

Only 43% of Fortune 500 companies around in 1995 exist today and the average life of S&P companies has fallen from 60 years to 20 years.

With the huge number of tourists and investors coming to the UAE, there will be a large influx of data, which will need greater infrastructure planning. Businesses will have to manage this large amount of information in the most organised way.

To ensure the same, investing in additional storage and network capacity would be required.

The government sector is continuing to move towards digital. From adopting AI, to Big Data, Blockchain, mobility, IoT, BYOD, cloud and analytics, the sector is seeing an increased uptake in transformational technologies.

With increased frequency in the number of cyberattacks, the government spending on cybersecurity, which is one of the biggest technology trends in this sector across the globe, has definitely increased. With the increased uptake of IoT, the government sector is also ensuring that the connected devices are secure.

Cloud is one of the key drivers of Digital Transformation. As more UAE organisations are accelerating their Digital Transformation efforts, we see a higher uptake of hybrid cloud.

Many Middle Eastern countries and especially the GCC have been making strong investments to bring in Digital Transformation for economic and social prosperity. The digitisation efforts are clearly visible in the way governments are providing their citizens and residents with services, as well as in transportation, banking, etc.

The key factor to all of this is connectivity through the cloud, which is turn has propelled the growth of the cloud business.

What is the role that new age technologies such as AI, IoT and Big Data will play in the near future for businesses in the region? And, how are you leveraging such technologies?

Trends such as AI, automation, virtualisation, IoT, Big Data etc. are driving a change in the overall business context and organisations are looking at these new technologies to transform their business and capitalise on this growth.

Data centres are at the centre of this digital growth and transformation and are rapidly evolving to meet current and future business requirements. They are going through many changes as businesses are shifting their focus to issues such as speed of implementation, flexibility, agility, efficiency, scalability and security.

Cloud computing is one of the key technologies driving the transformation of data centres as it facilitates faster business operations and offers organisations the flexibility to scale their infrastructure capacity on demand.

With the continuing trend of cloud computing, data centres are being transformed to utilise these new technologies to enhance their performance and provide solutions to enterprises and businesses who want to maintain a leadership position in the years to come. ◊