

Network

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VOLUME 20
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//22 **COLUMN**

Building out
the next-gen
data centre

//18 **COLUMN**

Everything you
need to know
about cloudbursting

//38 **OUTSOURCING**

Is the region ready
to outsource its
infrastructure?

APPLICATION
DELIVERY
HOW TO
BEAT THE
BOTTLENECKS
//32

PROTECT AND SERVE

HOW PACIFIC CONTROLS GUARANTEES
SECURITY FOR ITS CLOUD CUSTOMERS

Volume 20 Issue 05
May 2014



26

“You need security to be dynamic in terms of its scalability.”

Dilip Rahulan,
executive chairman at
Pacific Controls

14//Analysis> **What you do with it**

As emerging, enterprise-grade technologies become more and more ubiquitous, analysts predict that organisations will increasingly focus on new things to do with them – as opposed to simply worrying about acquiring the technology in the first place.

32//Technology> **Special delivery**

With enterprises becoming ever more reliant on their network infrastructures, business-enabling applications need to be delivered smoothly and securely. But bottlenecks still provide headaches for IT managers. What are the best ways to tackle poor application delivery performance?

38//Technology> **Moving out**

The idea of infrastructure outsourcing is simple: Offload the servers so that the organisation's IT team has more time to deliver business value. But are Middle East enterprises ready to do this en masse?

→ Rahul: This could snowball into an opportunity to make Dubai a hub for cloud services.



Case study

Securing the cloud

Having introduced an IaaS offering through its Tier III-certified data centre, Pacific Controls opted for a Trend Micro cloud security solution to safeguard its customers' data.

Dubai-based Pacific Controls specialises in providing IT automation products and machine-to-machine (M2M) communications. One of its first major customers was Dubai International Airport, for which it managed an entire facility infrastructure. It has since made a name for itself in the IT automation world, having grown to other geographies in the world, and even has its own research lab in Vienna.

In 2011, however, Pacific Controls entered into a new business — providing data centre space and cloud computing solutions to the Middle East. To achieve this, it set up Pacific Controls Cloud Services (PCCS), a fully-owned subsidiary, and built itself a Tier III-certified, 87,000-square-foot data centre at the newly opened Dubai Techno Park, just outside of Jebel Ali in the emirate. And in 2013, the company began offering carrier-grade infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) solutions within the UAE.

The data centre was built at a cost of around \$85 million, according to local media reports. It's the largest facility of its kind in the Middle East, but what is impressive about the project is that Pacific Controls does not consider its core competency to be in

delivering data centre space and cloud services. Indeed, according to the firm's executive chairman, Dilip Rahulan, the data centre was originally intended to be for Pacific Controls' own use.

"We hired a consultant to do a study for us in order to make sure that we were doing the right thing. When we realised the outcome of the study, there was an opportunity — there was a 100,000-square-metre shortage of white space for the whole GCC region. We realised that, if we invested into this, it could potentially become an opportunity that could actually snowball into making Dubai a hub for data aggregation, storage and virtualisation," he says.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The facility was built from scratch. Whereas, traditionally, most data centres are retrofitted into existing buildings, Pacific Controls created this campus from the outset as a data centre, hiring consultants, architects and contractors to ensure that its requirements were met. However, the company also recognised that it was no expert in delivering cloud services, so it went about finding strategic partners who could provide input on how to create the best facility in the Middle East.

"Selling data centre space or hosting a cloud is not our

“It's a service that Pacific Controls has taken on board as a commitment. When a customer subscribes to any service, he is protected by our cloud security service.”

PACIFIC CONTROLS CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Objective

Having built out a Tier III-certified data centre in Dubai, Pacific Controls in 2013 began offering carrier-grade infrastructure as a service (IaaS). However, to assure customers of data security and privacy, the company needed a robust security solution that could protect customer data residing within the Pacific Controls cloud.

Solution

Realising that cloud computing was not its core competency, Pacific Controls scoured the globe for a security vendor to partner with so that it could offer its cloud customers the best security possible. A Trend Micro solution stood out thanks to its agentless anti-malware protection, its centrally managed platform and its scalability.

Results

Pacific Controls is now able to offer enterprise-grade cloud security to even its smallest customers, and claims that anyone operating within its cloud is given end-to-end protection from Trend Micro. This has allayed worries about cloud adoption within the region, and has helped Pacific Controls to acquire new customers keen on adopting aspects of IaaS.



↑ The 87,000-square-foot data centre in Techno Park was built at a cost of \$85 million

core competency, so we decided to go to major global players with whom we could partner and build on their knowledge base without re-inventing the wheel,” Rahulan says.

“From the business development and marketing proposition, we went to the local telco, Etisalat, and made a partnership with them to go to market. With regard to the cloud, we made a partnership with one of the world’s biggest technology companies, Fujitsu, and we used their technology, their knowledge, their research facilities in order to make this facility dynamic in terms of our cloud offering.”

And from a security point

of view, Pacific Controls did exactly the same thing. Even now – at a time when cloud computing is almost a given – one of the biggest hurdles facing cloud adoption in this region is being able to allay concerns over security. With its own cloud services, then, Pacific Controls needed to guarantee protection from cyber-threats.

During the build-out phase, then, Pacific Controls floated a global request for proposal (RFP) to partner with a security vendor that could offer robust cloud-based security for its customers. Rahulan says that the security provider had to be innovative in its approach to cloud security, as well as

“ This is a groundbreaking technology, it’s got huge challenges. Partnering with companies like Trend Micro helps us in resolving those challenges.”

PHYSICAL SECURITY

Aside from providing its customers with cloud-based virtual security, Pacific Controls has gone to much trouble to safeguard the physical security of its facility. The campus features manned security gates with anti-crash bollards, as well as a campus wall with barbed wire, beam detectors for intrusion prevention, and perimeter surveillance cameras. CCTV cameras monitor all doors and critical areas, and the facility boasts access control systems with proximity and biometric readers, as well as a man-trap for the hosting area. Pacific Controls can also provide added locks and access control systems as per customer requirements.

extremely scalable. The solution had to be easy to deploy, and be able to address varying customer needs without compromising the performance of the cloud solution. Multi-layered IT security and data privacy were primary concerns.

“Today, when you look at cloud computing, it’s an emerging, dynamic tool that enables globalisation of your business and data. When you look at it, it’s sort of an incremental process. You need security also to be dynamic in terms of its scalability and elasticity, and to be capable of enabling concepts that are able to deal with large growth syndromes,” he explains.

WHY TREND MICRO?

After much deliberation, Pacific Controls settled on Trend Micro as a viable security partner. According to Rahulan, the vendor stood out as having the most innovative offerings when it comes to cloud computing, and so Pacific Controls signed up to use the Trend Micro Cloud and Data Centre Security solution.

“We identified Trend Micro as the most innovative company that can deal in real time with cloud, and provide 24-7, 365-days support by enabling and monitoring their dynamic capabilities that would allow opportunities of any threat being mitigated,” says Rahulan.

The solution integrates seamlessly with the PCCS infrastructure, providing a server security platform that protects data centre and cloud-based workloads from data breaches and business disruptions. As per Pacific



↑ Trend Micro stood out as the most innovative player in the security space, says Rahulan

“Selling data centre space or hosting a cloud is not our core competency, so we decided to go to major global players with whom we could partner and build on their knowledge base without re-inventing the wheel.”

Controls’ requirements, the solution is completely end-to-end, so it deals with not only the security aspect, but also the disaster recovery aspect of data hosted on the PCCS cloud, Rahulan says. Meanwhile, the solution’s agentless security modules enable server, application and data security across physical, virtual and cloud environments.

“Agent-enabled solutions have always been the trend, and Trend Micro is the first company who actually brought agentless security solutions to the mix. That’s a dynamic situation, and we believe that that is the only way that you could address today’s

scalability on the cloud, the big data syndrome, things like that,” says Rahulan.

To keep things simple, the solution provides a centrally managed platform that helps Pacific Controls to monitor security operations across its data centre. It also includes web protection that blocks access to suspicious URLs, as well as automated file inspection, which detects and reports unexpected changes on the network. The solution also features virtual patching, which shields known vulnerabilities from exploits.

BUSINESS BENEFIT

Rahulan says that the upshot of partnering with Trend Micro on its data centre is that every single customer using the PCCS cloud is now protected by the vendor’s security solution. And this has allowed Pacific Controls to attract new customers looking for infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS) offerings. It has also helped Pacific Controls to comply with industry regulations.

Naturally, Pacific Controls also allows its data centre customers to add their own security layers on top of their cloud infrastructures. The idea is simply to provide a base level of high-quality security so that customers of all types can feel safe using the PCCS cloud.

“We have been fortunate that some of the most prestigious institutions in the UAE have actually taken primary site in our facility. These are financial institutions, these are airlines, and so we have some unique customers whose requirements are far beyond the

“ You need security to be dynamic in terms of its scalability and elasticity, and to be capable of enabling concepts that are able to deal with large-growth syndromes.”



↑ Rahulan: The implementation of Trend Micro is a commitment to our customers that we will provide them with end-to-end security

traditional market. We have given clients total flexibility in how they want to have their strategies for security, and how they want to actually plan it in collaboration with our teams,” says Rahulan.

“It’s a service that Pacific Controls has taken on board as a commitment to our customers. When a customer subscribes to any service in our data centre, he is protected by our cloud security service provider, and that is Trend Micro. Trend Micro has a long-term partnership and contract with us to deliver that service, and we have SLAs set up so that, in a specified period of time, we will be given dynamic solutions that will solve any potential threat.”

Rahulan says that the security behind Pacific Con-

trols’ data centre will certainly allay any worries that potential customers may have about doing business on the cloud. What’s more, because the data centre is located in Dubai, he believes that Middle Eastern companies will be more willing to experiment with cloud computing through Pacific Controls, rather than through a large international player.

“We have found that having a data centre in the Middle East is, for our customers in the Middle East, a bonus. They can see data being stored within the geographies of the Middle East,” he explains.

The chairman stresses, however, that the real beauty behind all of Pacific Controls’ cloud offerings is that the company has partnered with

the best providers to deliver them. When it comes to security, he believes fervently that Trend Micro offers the very best level of cloud-based security, and it is for this reason that Pacific Controls chose the

security vendor’s data centre security solution.

“This is a groundbreaking technology, it’s got huge challenges. Partnering with Trend Micro helps in resolving those challenges,” he says.

THE CLIENT

Based in Dubai, Pacific Controls is a global provider of machine-to-machine (M2M) and Internet of Things (IoT) applications, and has local presences across the globe. The company works with a number of network operators, IT equipment players, professional service providers, software players and equipment OEMs to deliver automation and managed services to large enterprise customers. In 2011, it launched Pacific Controls Cloud Services, a fully owned subsidiary that operates the company’s 85,000-square-foot data centre in Jebel Ali, Dubai. The data centre space is currently white-labelled and sold through Etisalat, and the company recently partnered with Microsoft to offer SaaS solutions through its cloud.