



Simon Campbell-Whyte, DCA Executive Director reports from Paris on the ISO/IEC standards meeting

THE ISO/IEC INTERNATIONAL working group tasked to develop standards of KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for Resource Efficient Data Centres met in Paris for a 3 day working group session from 28-30th October. Kindly hosted by AFNOR, the world renowned and respected French organisation for standardisation, the meeting was attended by delegates from Germany, The Netherlands, USA, Japan, Canada, China, Korea, France and UK. The group is focussed on developing a suite of KPI's to improve the resource efficiency performance of data centres.



clarification and removal of ambiguity in the reporting of PUE and is a vital step forward for the industry.

At the meeting Simon Campbell-Whyte announced the EU commission backed Pan European DCA (PEDCA) project designed to identify the training and research requirements and develop a "Joint Action Plan" for the industry. A call was made for the experts to provide their input and participate in the project. It is essential to gain knowledge of research that was already underway or planned and to help identify research needs. The group discussed the need for cohesion and the role PEDCA can play in this. Also at the

The working committee has two sub-groups, one of which is working on developing KPI candidates for standardisation under a series termed ISO/IEC 30134, whilst a second is assessing how the KPI's are reported and interpreted. Several KPI candidates are already under consideration, whilst Power Utilisation Effectiveness or PUE is already progressing through its first Committee Draft.

meeting, André Rouyer, Chair of CEN/CENELEC/ETSI Coordination Group on Green Data Centres, presented a brochure that shows the current depth, breadth and status of EU Data Centre Standards. This is a valuable document to highlight where any gaps or areas duplication exist. Once a release document is available this will be disseminated via the DCA.

Major steps were made in dealing with all energy sources utilised by data centres, the measurement methodologies and the reporting periods. The standardisation of PUE will provide much needed

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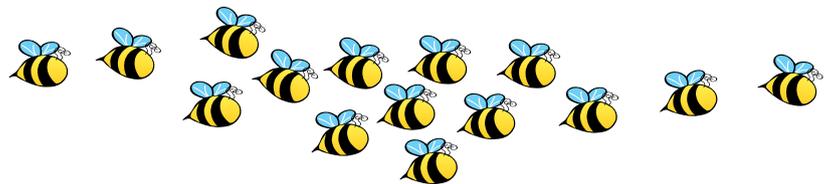
Making a beeline for Big Data: How to build a business case



INTERXION'S IAN MCVEY explores how certain strategy processes can enable a culture of innovation and ultimately enable organisations to build a business case for big data.

2013 WASUNOFFICIALLY dubbed the 'Year of Big Data' following revelations from a study by Gartner that showed that 42 per cent of firms have already invested in big data or will do so over the rest of the year. These were promising statistics that indicated a rapid move towards the use of analytics in business – or so you'd believe.

However, research results published by Interxion last month found that despite the hype, only one in four European organisations have actually built a business case for big data. The research also revealed that companies with an IT strategy aligned with the business plan are much more likely to have explored the possibilities of big data: more than nine in ten European organisations with an IT plan closely mapped to the business plan have already explored the possibilities of this phenomenon.



However a third of respondents agreed that their department struggles to take a proactive and long-term strategic view, and as a result most European businesses are finding it difficult to build a business case for big data. So how can businesses ensure they're fine-tuning their strategy processes to pave the way for real big data innovation?

Sharing insights across the business

In today's world, technology is often at the centre of business innovation and nowhere is this more the case than with big data. Yet

all the key business decision makers (the CEO, COO and CFO) sit outside of the technology sphere. In order to successfully build a business case, it's vital to understand the business strategy, operation strategy, ICT strategy, and supporting telecoms strategy.

As a result, including insight from a business perspective alongside IT and telecoms is key. Businesses need to ensure that they have managerial and organisational processes in place for aligning these three disciplines. This "management innovation" is well documented by the business guru Gary Hamel in his book "the Future of Management". To ensure innovation is systematic rather than treated as a one-off event requires significant alignment and change in organisational and management structure. To build the business case for big data and ensure this becomes a systematic innovation this management innovation is a pre-requisite.

The Chief Innovation Officer

Revising management structure can be a great idea in theory but is often easier said than done. Interxion's research showed that the IT department's time is being monopolised by the amount of 'fire fighting' that is required on a monthly basis. Urgent demands from the business resulted in 99% of European respondents admitting that they spend at least some of their time reactively dealing with issues rather than carrying out proactive, strategically important work that would benefit the company. With this considered, there is an obvious need for someone to assume the role of the Chief Innovation Officer and there is a solid argument to be made that this should be the CIO.

As the Chief Innovation Officer needs to understand both the business proposition and the technology required to deliver the solution in order to get the most from big data, the CIO is the clear and sensible choice. Creating the headspace to assess the transformative power of big data for an organisation will be vital to creating a business case. Those companies that do will win out and reap the benefits in terms of increased efficiency and new revenue streams.

Laying a foundation for the future

It's clear to see that it's those forward-thinking companies that are working in sync with their IT departments that are more aware of the opportunities presented by the application of emerging technologies like big data. It's incredibly important for the IT departments at these firms to think ahead and lay the foundations for any future applications that may provide the business with competitive advantage. This is particularly important when you consider that 74% of organisations believe that a successful business case will come from either developing new data sets or bringing them together with existing ones. If the business case lies in data sets that don't yet exist, how likely is it that the technology needed today will meet all of an organisation's future needs?

Increasingly we are moving to a real-time culture. Businesses which can harness real-time in their operations, product development and customer support models have the chance to leap-frog their competition. Real-time processing of big data solution sets offers the opportunity for companies to differentiate and in so doing create sustainable competitive advantage. This is a board level discussion. Giving CIOs the role of Chief Innovation officer, creating the headroom to think strategically and ensuring innovation is embedded as a sustainable process are all pre-requisites for developing successful business cases for real-time big data analytics. Finally, organisations must start to look over the parapet and take into account the option value of considering technologies on a five to ten year cycle rather than a one to three year as aligned to their business's strategic goals.

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