



## Is it time for a collective effort to move the Data Centre to maturity?



In the first of a regular column from the **Data Centre Alliance (DCA)**, Executive Director, Simon Campbell-Whyte, explains the aims and objectives of this recently formed organisation.

datacentrealliance.org

The data centre industry has come a long way in its short history, from the room sized computers of the 70's through to the dotcom crash of late '90's and the 24x7 demands of today. But it is easy to forget that for most organisations, it's only when the Internet became a medium with which to do business that the data centre became a vital part of every day business. For most, that's well within the last 18 years.

So just like most teenagers I know, the data centre industry is dynamic, fast paced and full of confusion and contradiction.

Also like most teenagers it doesn't know quite where it belongs or where it fits—for example is it a Building Services thing, a Facilities Management responsibility, an IT project or an engineering Facility? The truth is that to a lesser or greater extent it is all these

things, but it is also ever more complex, in need of expertise from a myriad of diverse disciplines.

Although in fairness the industry has its fair share of good initiatives to address specific problems, for example Green Grid, EU Code of Conduct etc.

However it is important that these valuable programmes are joined up. Therefore isn't it about time for a

collective, single point of focus, an all industry association led by the industry?

Many challenges lay ahead for example; fixing the "skills gap" – there's no doubt the wealth of experience and expertise learned over those last 18 years will soon be enjoying retirement in the sun somewhere so who is ensuring this knowledge is being passed on to the next generation?

- What about lobbying? Those in the UK all know about the debacle that was the CRC carbon trading scheme, could the industry have done more to advise government decision makers of the pitfalls and the effect on data centres?

- What about buyers of data centre space, are they confused when they are told this data centre is a tier 3+ and this one is tier 4 but no recognised standards exist?
- Should we work on our own or share experiences?
- How do you go about capturing best practice data centre design and operation, surely the ones who are doing it now know best?

It seems the answers to all these questions is a resounding yes, and the feeling amongst the founders of the Data Centre Alliance is that it is time for the industry to start to show more maturity.

The Data Centre Alliance or DCA for short, intends to independently embrace and promote all the elements of what is good and works well within the industry. The one thing it doesn't want to do is to be seen as a "dictatorship" of some kind.

On the contrary, the DCA is an opportunity for the industry itself to work together to create what the industry needs for standards, representation, education and training to ensure its

future success, sustainability and growth. Some of this valuable work has already started, for example the DCA members are working closely with the University of Leeds in understanding the new CENELEC standard (EN50600) for data centre design and operation.

The DCA has members representing their national standards institute and will be feeding contributions from the DCA into the standard. This is a great example of the role the DCA can play in ensuring the industry as a whole gets a voice.

The DCA officially launched in late March, the DCA is continuing to build its membership which is open to all operators of data centres whether large or small and also anyone which serves the data centre industry. The DCA has nominated Data Centre Solutions as its official journal and will be at Data Centre Solutions Academy event at the QEII Conference Centre in London on May 19th this will be open to all to come along for a chat and find out more.

To become a member please visit the DCA website at [www.datacentrealliance.org](http://www.datacentrealliance.org)

## Telecity sees the DCA as crucial to the future

By Adriaan Oosthoek, EU VP of the Data Centre Alliance, and Country Manager, UK and Ireland, TelecityGroup



By bringing the leading stakeholders together, The Data Centre Alliance (DCA) will have a crucial role in guaranteeing the long-term health of the data centre industry through working collectively to ensure data centre best practice.

A key area of focus is the quality of operation teams within the data centre, as they are critical to the service levels the industry provides – providing optimum availability and service levels is more than just having the correct infrastructure in place. The DCA is developing accreditations to ensure best practice standards are met in this area – encompassing maintenance, training and management process issues – so operators can achieve an official, credible and industry-recognised rating. The DCA is also committed to fostering the next generation of highly-skilled data centre workers and managers; only through the continued development of IT skills will the industry be able to provide service levels customers expect. To do this, the DCA will be working alongside the University of Leeds to raise the profile of the data centre industry amongst both graduates and undergraduates. It will also provide best possible training and support to nurture this talent.

I am proud to have been appointed EU VP of the DCA. It is an excellent demonstration of how the industry can self-regulate itself, ensuring its long-term health, and most importantly steer the industry's overall direction to the benefit of all the organisations that utilise our services.

