Simon Campbell-Whyte, DCA Executive Director reflects on the progress the DCA is making

I'M PLEASED to see the DCA is on course to surpass its target of 100 member organisations and the data centre industry now has the independent and democratic collective from which to bring about the improvements we all want to see.

As has been discussed many times before in these pages, today we are starting to see the seeds being sown for standards, with both European standards bodies CENELEC and ETSI active, and some with plans for International standards being laid. Therefore, it is important for the industry, not only to define itself as an "industry" but also to act as one - the fact that one standard covers data centre design, construction and operation, another energy efficiency "best practice" and another PUE makes one look for harmonisation and cross collaboration.

Any government's record on influencing complicated industrial technical issues for the better is not great and the data centre world waiting for governments to sort out an industry's ills is to be is naïve in the extreme. This points to the need for the data centre industry to invest in itself properly and to bring forward solutions for self-governance. This will allow the industry to expand and grow sustainably without any undue red tape.

The DCA has already co-ordinated the Pan-European Data Centre Academy (PEDCA) project back in January this year which involved 15 partners including four universities and three regional governments across the EU to set up much needed technological R&D facilities and skills development programmes.

This will give us the resources to be able to respond to any legislative proposals technical or commercial in a peer reviewed scientific manner, without this, we are without a creditable argument. The project is bang in line with the EU's call for stimulation of the Digital Economy and its vision for a SMART, resource efficient Europe by 2020, this is a good foundation block but the project needs to

progress with or without funding assistance. But will only do so with the support of the industry by joining and contributing both time and resources to the DCA.

Moreover, this will kind of platform can embrace technological ventures by providing a reference point to engage ideas with the issues and will encourage innovation and private investment.

We also need a method to communicate and collaborate effectively, because without this, our "industry" is not co-ordinated or joined up. Again the building blocks are being laid, I'm pleased to announce that following beta tests, the live version of the DCA's Secure Collaboration Platform which will be called "DATA CENTRAL" will be launched at the beginning of April.

The Platform will provide the DCA members with a secure private environment to collaborate on data centre industry projects. The DCA exists to provide a voice for the industry, but it can't be done with small groups, it can only be achieved by providing a professional online platform with the ability to reach the numbers concerned.

Finally, self –governance is taking shape, the DCA has been working with its members and is also soon to roll out a cohesive and independent data centre auditing and certification programme which will bring consistency and clarity to data centre resilience, energy efficiency, site security and operational professionalism – crucially, with the data centre customer in mind.

Again this is a beginning and will be the best industry led view based on current methods, this is a foundation stone, but it will provide a valuable platform which will be evolved by the industry itself and will link closely to the R&D, education, collaboration and communication initiatives outlined above that the DCA has undertaken.

Louise Fairley reports on the DCA at Data Centre World, London

THE DCA was delighted to catch up with old friends and meet so many new ones during Data World this year. We certainly had a very busy stand and my thanks to all the dutiful members who very kindly stopped by longer than they had envisaged and helped out with greeting people on behalf of the DCA. We certainly received a good deal of encouragement and confirmation that the DCA is heading in the right direction, the Pan European Data Centre Academy (PEDCA) and data centre certifications were popular subjects of discussion throughout the two days. The DCA webinars and Data Central also received a great deal of approval.

The DCA event calendar continues to fill up with Paris, Frankfurt and Singapore being added. In the meantime I look forward to seeing existing and new members at Data Centre Technologies and Outsourcing, Colocation and Hosting in London on May 22nd and 23rd.

James Cotter, a partner in the Information, Communications & Technology group at international law firm Simmons & Simmons LLP looks at the complexities of data centre legal work and how a specialist legal approach is needed.

FIRST OF ALL, I'm delighted to announce Simmons & Simmons' involvement with the Data Centre Alliance (DCA) and for the opportunity to share with DCA members our wealth of data centre legal content covering a wide range of data centre legal issues. We hope the DCA members will find the resources both insightful and, most importantly, useful in their day-to-day work.

Simmons & Simmons has many years' experience advising both data centre service providers and enterprises buying data centre services. Our years of data centre experience allow us to deliver not only up-to-the-minute, legal, regulatory and policy advice to our clients but also the very best commercial advice. We have learnt that our work for both data centre service providers and customers needs to be solution-oriented. It is all about solving problems quickly and helping our clients make and save money where they can.

One of the key lessons we have learnt over the years advising data centre clients is that data centre legal work requires input from many different types of lawyer: lawyers specialising in technology, real estate, construction, environmental, data and information security, corporate and project finance law. As a result, Simmons & Simmons has built a strong, integrated team of data centre legal and regulatory specialists who can advise on all data centre-related legal matters: everything from data centre financing, builds, leasing and licensing to the procurement of data centre power, hardware and connectivity and the provision of co-location, hosting and managed data centre services.

Our data centre legal team can draw on this data centre expertise across our whole international network of offices and we regularly advise data centre clients in multiple countries, whether it is in relation to, for example, the transformation of a global data centre estate or the development or franchising of data centres in new countries.

At the heart of our data centre legal team are technology lawyers who understand both data centre technology and the data centre business. Many of these lawyers have spent time working in-house for data centre service providers. With the complexity of data centre services increasing dramatically with new data centre services such as cloud computing and virtualisation, clients – both enterprises buying data centre services and data centre service providers looking to update their service offerings – need lawyers who can hit the ground running and will not cost clients time and money learning what the data centre technology does and how the data centre business works.

We have looked to capture much of our data centre experience in the legal content that DCA members can access through the DCA website. We aim to make our legal content accessible, practical and easy to understand both for the lawyer and the non-lawyer – focusing on the key, business-critical data centre issues such as, for example, the rapidly changing environmental regulatory framework impacting data centres or the increasing complexity of virtualisation software licensing regimes.

You'll find everything from 5-minute podcasts and short 1-page briefings to recordings of our latest data centre and TMT conferences, detailed industry sector-specific analyses and our regularly updated Global Data Centre Report covering the key legal, regulatory and policy issues across 23 jurisdictions (including 13 European countries).

We would encourage DCA members to make full use of the legal resources provided. We will be regularly adding new and interesting content covering the latest legal or regulatory developments and the key commercial issues and DCA members can opt to receive notices of any new updates. We always welcome feedback on our data centre content and suggestions for new content.

In addition to being able to access a wealth of data centre legal content via the DCA website, we would encourage DCA members to register for the free Simmons & Simmons online legal resource, elexica (www.elexica.com), where they will find a huge amount of useful legal content: everything from what you need to know about the new UK Bribery Act to the latest changes to European data protection laws.

www.datacentrealliance.org/legal-content.php

Steve Hone, DCA Operations Director looks at the new DCA website and starts blogging

I'M PLEASED to announce the new DCA website is now live at www.datacentrealliance.org I hope you find the new fresher look and navigation a great improvement over the old website.

The change was also needed due to the amount of content today and to provide room in the menu system for the future needs of the DCA community. There is also a new membership section, media centre, strategic alliances section and full DCA leadership profiles.

I am also pleased to announce the new blog functionality which will provide the community with a discussion board this will also integrate with "Data Central" the member's only website where bloggers can select if they wish their discussion to be public or members only.

If you would like to contribute to the DCA blog please just go right ahead, if you would like to become a DCA blogger yourself please contact membership@datacentrealliance.org