

New vendor-neutral data centre opens

Teraco has opened its vendor-neutral data centre in Cape Town. Carriers, corporates, ISPs and IT service providers now get unrestricted choice in what they do with their data, in a secure facility built to international best practices.

The company's customers can connect to any carrier, network operator or service provider, as well as any other customer, within the data centre, without restriction. There are standard, open interconnection policies between all service providers and customers.

To date, outsourced data centre facilities have typically been offered by the ISPs, bundled with their Internet access or managed hosting services, or by the large IT outsourcing companies, bundled with outsourcing, systems integration or hosted application services.

Teraco, however, limits its activities to providing only infrastructure and facilities, which it feels will avoid all conflicts of interest. The company takes care of the practical side of data-centre management, such as infrastructure redundancy, climate control, guaranteed electrical power, security and protection and maintenance.

“There is absolute focus on taking care of the physical space and honouring our quite punitive service-level agreements,” says Lex van Wyk, MD of Teraco Data Environments. “We remain neutral and offer customers the freedom of choice to purchase or sell products and services to whomever they wish. You want to buy your connectivity from one company, Internet access from another, and then do back-ups with yet another, that’s okay with us. It’s your business. We don’t ever compete with our customers.”

The centre has gone live with carrier connections from Neotel and FastNet in place, Vodacom Business and Telkom in the pipeline, and points of presence from leading ISPs, such as WebAfrica.

Alphonzo Samuels from Telkom Wholesale says his company fully endorses the development of a carrier-neutral data centre for the ICT industry in South Africa. “Other deregulated markets around the world have seen this happen too. It presents a neutral environment where carriers will be able to interconnect their networks, free from historic legacy issues,” he says.

“The timing for this business is right,” says Van Wyk.

“Communication Minister Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri created a *de facto* complete liberalisation of the South African telecommunications space when the courts affirmed the right to self-provision. As a result 533 operators have been awarded electronic communications network services (ECNS) licences, enabling them to build networks,” he adds.

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