Heads in the cloud? Yes please

ICT&T INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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Ann Beynon, Director, BT Wales

The Telecommunications and ICT sector is very good at coming up with weird and wonderful acronyms like ADSL, WBC, SFBB* or phrases and words that encapsulate new technological advances but do not instantaneously explain themselves very well. Cloud computing is one of those.

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Cloud Computing, which can also be called Smart Computing, is how telecommunications networks across the globe can be interlinked, can support massive data bases of content and can deliver that content to an ever increasing multiplicity of devices from web enabled TVs to lap top computers, from iPhones to iPads. These internet protocol based digital networks driven by software are vastly more swift and effective at collecting, sifting and disseminating information than the old mechanical switches and paper based filing systems.

Not only are they more effective, they are also more efficient. Seventy one per cent of telecom operators stated in the recent Operational Efficiency Survey for the 2010 Telecom World Congress that 'finding ways to save costs' was their number one priority. They are not alone.

Cloud computing gives all businesses cost efficiency because it allows them to buy IT services on a pay as you go basis without having to tie up expensive capital in unnecessary hardware and equipment. The Yankee Group is unambivalent: 'For twenty per cent of users an on-demand system can be over fifty per cent cheaper than owning your own'.

Data is stored remotely in state of the art, highly secure, energy efficient data centres. Disaster recovery is built in. Software packages and their upgrades are built in. Remote working on a global basis is built in. Detailed reporting using business intelligence tools is built in. Increasingly, services such as online payroll services will become possible and reduce costs to all users whether they are in the private or public sector. The managing director of NetSuite states: 'We are now seeing a saving of over £100,000 per annum. That's a direct return on investment.'

Managing data securely will be a growth market. This is an area BT knows well, as its own global enterprise information platform and centre of expertise is based in its Cardiff data centre, Ty Cynnal.

Cloud computing is expected to create 240,000 new jobs in the UK alone and INSEAD predicts it will amount to 0.3% of Europe's GDP. In September 2009, the US Government announced a cloud computing policy objective to cut costs and reduce the environmental impact of government IT projects. Costs are expected to be reduced to a third of what they were previously.

So this Cloud can reduce costs, increase efficiency and be a driver for economic growth.

It does require, however, high-speed fibre based networks, which is where BT's investment in Wales comes in. BT's existing fibre network, which covers the whole of Wales, is being increasingly enabled to support the Cloud and the investment in state of the art data centres in Cardiff and the new NGD facility in Newport are also critical elements in the supporting architecture. Added to that is the skills base to make sure Wales is also part of this growing global market.

The Assembly Economic Renewal Plan was right to focus on skills, infrastructure and the ICT sector as key planks in the economic prosperity of Wales. They will be the ladder which will allow Wales to claim its place in the Cloud.

- ADSL = Assymetric Digital Subscriber Line = broadband
- WBC – Wholesale Broadband Connect = faster broadband over copper
- SFBB – SuperFast Broadband = even faster broadband with fibre and copper

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World leading Excelerate technology supports Gwent Police at Ryder Cup

Excelerate Technology Ltd is a Wales-based high tech company developing and integrating satellite broadband, wireless and other advanced communications solutions for emergency services, government departments, sports organisations and other users. Its solutions have become essential for organisations requiring access to real-time data, video, voice and internet based incident information that is critical to public safety and security or to event success. The company is the UK market leader, and is increasingly being called upon to implement projects in overseas markets, drawing on its success throughout the UK and lately, internationally.

Based in St Mellons, Cardiff, Excelerate employs a growing number of highly skilled ITC design, development, engineering and systems integration personnel to support projects within the UK's emergency services and government departments such as the UK national ambulance service's HART (Hazardous Area Response Team) project (the largest fleet implementation of advanced command communications vehicles in the UK, and probably one of the largest in the world).

In addition to the wide range of advanced ITC and satellite skills being developed in Wales, and the employment created as a result of the company's growth, Wales will also benefit this year from the company's delivery of technology for Gwent Police's mobile Incident Command Units vehicles, which will have a critical role to play supporting the force's policing and security for the 2010 Ryder Cup.

The Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, Wales will host the 38th Ryder Cup, (between 1 and 3 October 2010), an event which is ranked as one of the top five global sporting events. The competition is held every two years between Europe and the United States of America (the current holders of the Cup), and this will be the first time this prestigious golf match has been played on Welsh soil. Because the Ryder Cup attracts famous international visitors, including previous US Presidents, as well as many other high profile political and business leaders, many of whom require their own personal security, it presents a wide variety of critical policing challenges.

Responsibility for the multi-agency command of the event has been given to Gwent Police, assisted by HOSDB (Home Office Scientific Development Branch). Excelerate Technology Ltd is the supplier of the satellite broadband and wireless enabled data and video, voice and internet command technologies being used by Gwent Police and HOSDB.

Gwent Police's incident command vehicles will act as Silver and Bronze (middle and lower level) command centres. The vehicles have been equipped by Excelerate Technology with the latest command communications equipment, including a roof-mounted transportable satellite solution that allows real-time voice, data and video information to be shared with Gold (top level) command headquarters, thereby helping to provide a Common Operational Picture of any incident. Both vehicles will also be able to provide a private GSM network to ensure secure communications throughout the three-day event.

A key consideration for Gwent Police has been the ability to cover the course with real-time video and communications. Excelerate's solutions supports this requirement, with rapidly deployable wireless video cameras available for use by sector commanders, and body-worn cameras available for police officers patrolling the course on mountain bikes.

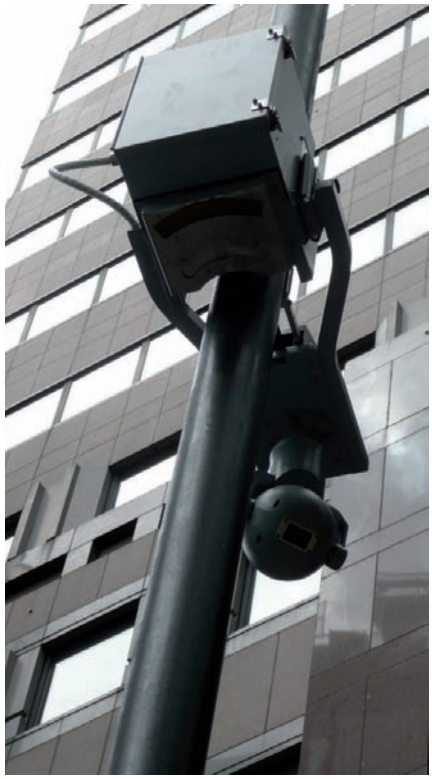
Excelerate has an unrivalled reputation of excellence within its core market working alongside the emergency services, providing data, video, voice and internet via satellite and wireless on board command and control units.

The company provides innovative and proven communication solutions for the emergency services, with technology that is both resilient and operator friendly, in addition to a built-in ability to evolve with customers' needs as they and their projects develop.

Excelerate delivers the comprehensive functionality, along with exemplary levels of service reliability and performance, on which emergency services throughout the UK and Ireland have come to rely, using integrated solutions, single products, and design and build projects, all of which champion the rigorous demands of the emergency services. The most recent addition to the company's product portfolio is the remarkable Sherpa 'climbing camera' surveillance system, which allows camera and communications platforms to be transported up poles by a self powered unit and then left in position for monitoring incidents and events such as demonstrations, festivals and sports events. By deploying the Sherpa system, a temporary wireless video network can be set up for the duration of any event, and then taken down when no longer required.

Increasingly emergency services around the world are using wireless CCTV systems, with both standard and thermal cameras, to deliver live video required for real and recording viewing, thereby improving the effectiveness of incident management.

London's Metropolitan Police, Thames Valley Police, the Irish Garda, and now Gwent Police, are all emergency service customers of Excelerate, illustrating this company's strong position in police forces throughout the British Isles and Ireland. Given the critical importance of the public safety role of police and security forces in the current high threat environment, Excelerate Technology expects to see even more widespread adoption of its solutions for many years to come.



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DATA VIDEO VOICE INTERNET VIA SATELLITE & WIRELESS

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