

CONEXT

The Official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa

June 2021 Edition



Celebrate:
YOUTH DAY

POPIA and
your business

Accelerating Digital
Transformation
in your business

Strategies for
sustainable
Telco
businesses

Broadband
Infraco &
Sentech
to merge

MICT Seta &
the Digital
Council Africa
sign an MOU

Telco Sector
enabling WFH
jobs for youth



**Digital
Council**

Issue #003



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WELCOME FROM JUANITA



Dear Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that a year later this pandemic still seem to have a grip on us.

I believe that we are a strong and resilient people and we can overcome this and through the choices we make, we can help to contain it.

Now, as the third wave is gathering in strength and force we once again find ourselves at a defining moment in our fight against this disease.

Let us stand together and hold firm until this wave, too, passes over us. I want to offer my sincere condolences to everyone that has lost friends or family during this time.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS - By Cyril Ramaphosa - 27 June 2021

"We have climbed many hills before, and we will climb this one too. We will do so by working together, as we have always done. I say so because I believe in you, the South African people. I know that you will continue to do what is right and what needs to be done. And I know that no matter how difficult things become, we never, never give up. May God bless South Africa and protect her people."

It is with these words of hope in our hearts that we face the third wave that is raging not only through South Africa but many other countries around the world.

In these uncertain times it is all the more important to work together towards a brighter future. With this

in mind we keep striving towards our goal of a South Africa where everyone is connected to all the extraordinary opportunities brought about by the digital economy.

As Youth month draws to a close we are resolved to continue our efforts in bridging the digital divide and its negative effect on education in disadvantaged communities. The potential of youths living in these under-serviced areas is severely limited by their lack of access to the technology that will enable them to access the world wide web and in turn, participate in the digital economy. It was my pleasure to support the [Black Business Council in the Built Environment Youth Chamber](#) this month during their Youth Summit which took place on the 23rd and 24th June 2021 to share some insights into the potential of the 5G economy.

Also, it was with great excitement that we announced the dates for our annual Conext conference from 4th - 8th October 2021. Although a physical event is still not possible this year, we will strive to provide an unparalleled simulated experience for the CONEXT Conference 2021. Of course, digital events also have their benefits, such as being more inclusive and allowing for greater delegate attendance from every corner of the world. Focusing on 5 streams, with each day having a dedicated focus we explore the world of Fibre, 5G, Cloud & Data, Cybersecurity & Governance and

lot & Edge as well as the impact on the ICT sector and the opportunities it holds for the continent. Please see more information regarding this later in the issue.

The Digital Council Africa (DCA) is proud to announce that we have signed an MOU with Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (MICT Seta) to increase the capacity in digital transformation. This MOU will see the DCA working with MICT Seta to develop skills that are needed within the ICT industry, supporting MICT SETA's 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) initiatives as well as their qualifications development and realignment and offering extend support through its ecosystem of industry partners.

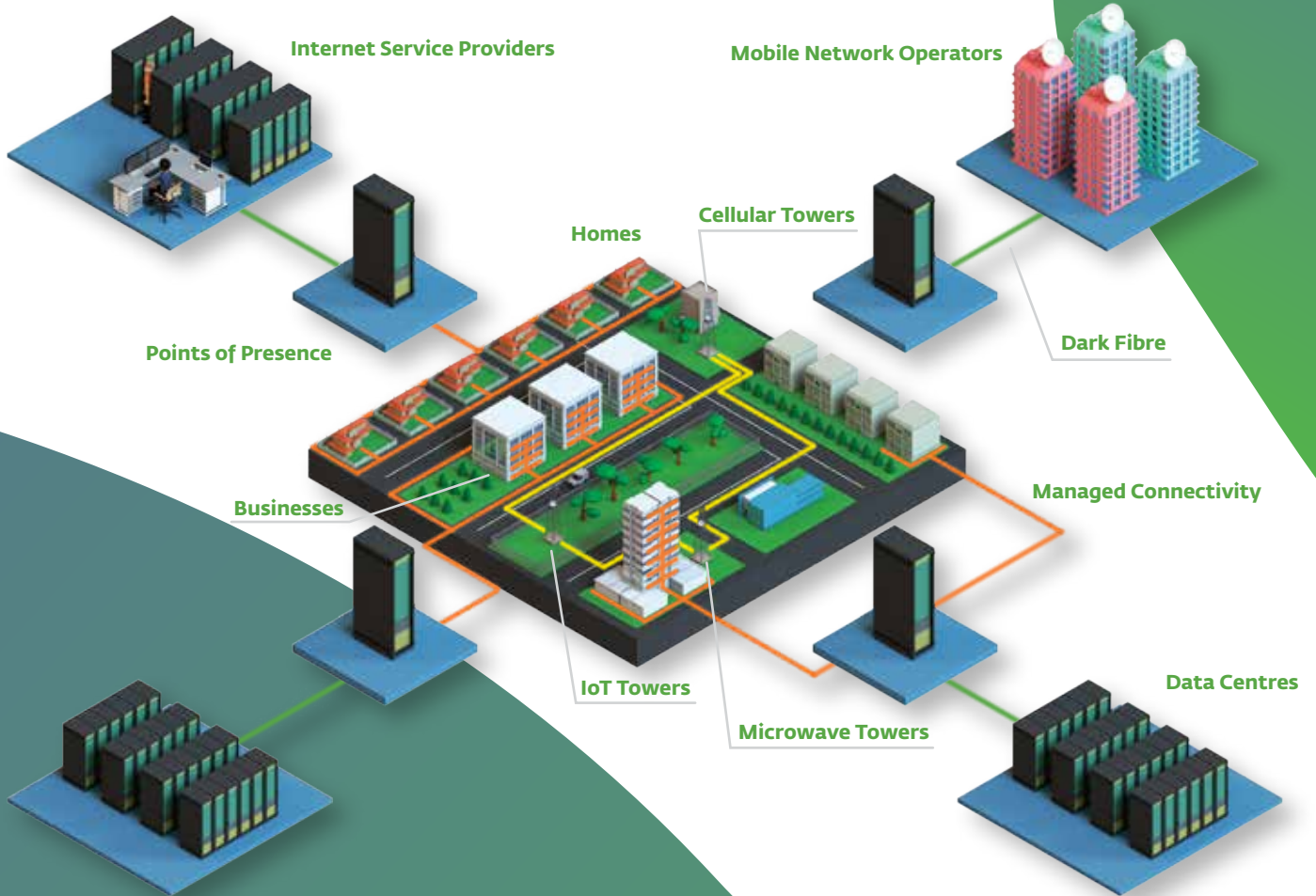
The DCA will also be partnering with MICT Seta on Centers of Excellence throughout the country and attend MICT SETA stakeholder engagements as a strategic partner, please read more about this further in the issue.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the organisation and its work. Without you none of it would be possible.

Yours,
Juanita Clark
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juanita Clark', written in a cursive style.

D F A
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Service providers that use our wholesale **fibre infrastructure** and **connectivity services** can give you premium access to a world of digital possibilities where **innovation** and **meaningful connections** prosper.

For more information on our state-of-the-art wholesale connectivity, visit www.dfafrica.co.za.

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What is Conext?

“CONEXT: a relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with someone or something else.”

In a world that is becoming increasingly digital, it is important to ensure that ongoing engagement takes place. The Digital Council Africa strives to remain in contact with its members, and to provide its members with ongoing communication about its activities. Conext is the answer to staying engaged.

Member engagement is encouraged through participation in events and working groups and through the distribution of the Conext Newsletter.

The DCA strives to offer members opportunities to network and collaborate and discuss best practice frameworks that is in the best in-

terest of all, solving complex issues through dialogue and policy recommendations and we encourage dialogue between government and private sector from a platform that is independent and product agnostic.

STAY CONEXTED. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

Member Webinar

The Digital Council invites all members to participate in upcoming webinars, which will focus on key topics pertaining to the industry. These webinars will be held on an ad-hoc basis via the collaboration platform and will be communicated via the member mailing list. Please note that members may also request to host a webinar, provided that the content is relevant and informative.

On May 17th 2021 the DCA hosted a World Telecoms Day webinar. Focusing on the role of telecoms in Africa and the immense opportunities it has created in African economies. The Digital Council recognizes the importance of the digital evolution in society and its impact on the economy. The talk was delivered by Mr Bora Varliyagci the CEO and Founder of DigitalThings, a valued contributor to the Digital Council Africa’s annual research. Mr Varliyagci unpacked global digital service trends together with underlying enablers and challenges that will enable us to realize the full benefits of digital developments and technology driven innovation.

Watch the full talk [here](#).



The potential of the Digital Economy
Celebrating World Telecommunications Day in Africa



Speaker: Bora Varliyagci
Chief Executive Officer - Digitalthings

17 May 2021 • 14:00-15:00 • Join us via zoom

Meeting ID: 92335439318

DCA AGM 2021



The Annual General Assembly of the Digital Council was held on the 18th May 2021 via a virtual platform.

President of the DCA, Mr Andile Ngcaba started the meeting with the welcome and introduction. Thereafter Juanita Clark did an overview of the Council and discussed upcoming events and projects for the year ahead. Chartered Accountants, FC Fin then provided a brief summary of the Council's finances.

Thank you to all members who attended and continue to support the Council in its endeavours.



5 DAYS - 5 STREAMS

Monday - Fibre

Tuesday - 5G

Wednesday - Cloud & Data

Thursday - Cyber Security & Governance

Friday - IoT & Edge

The Digital Council Africa is pleased to invite you to the 2021 edition of the CONEXT Conference.



The annual Digital Council Africa Conference aims to keep participants abreast of the sector as we explore the world of Fibre, 5G, Cloud & Data, Cybersecurity & Governance and IoT & Edge as well as the impact on the industry and the opportunities it holds for the continent. The 2021 edition will bring together like minded individuals from all over the world over a 5 day period with expert speakers who will share local and international expertise on topics relevant to the various streams.

Sponsorship Benefits

There are various sponsorship benefits (dependant on package selection) and some of which include:

- Create business opportunities in new markets
- Give your brand the spotlight and share your business with participants
- Reach Digital Council Africa members through the Conext publication, the official newsletter of the Council (20 000+ readers)
- Delegates from around the world attend and will earn your company international recognition
- Brand the online registration area with your logo
- Naming rights – Brought to you by
- Branding on screen (before & after) sessions
- Speaking opportunity
- Panel discussion participation
- Workshop or Technical presentation
- 2 marketing mailshots to DCA member database (10 000+, 1 prior and 1 post event)
- Logo on all online correspondence
- Sponsor announcement mailer to DCA database

For more information about sponsorship [click here](#)



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Message about the Treasurer

Dear Members

Thinus Mulder will formally step down as CEO of its subsidiary DFA on 30 September 2021. On behalf of the President and Board of Directors, the Council extends its gratitude to Thinus for his contribution to the work of the Council and the industry at large. Thinus will stay on as Treasurer of the DCA until Dec 2021 after which the position will be replaced.

Read the full [press-release](#) from the DFA for more information.

Annual Invoicing

The Council's bookkeepers have issued the annual invoices for the 2021/2022 membership year. If you have not received this by now, kindly reach out to Reesha Iyer at reesha@digitalcouncil.africa.

Please take note of the adjustment in fees to the [SMME/Institutional/Individual category](#).

Member Certificates

Member Certificates for 2021 will be issued to members whose fees are up to date.

Please reach out to Reesha Iyer at reesha@digitalcouncil.africa to request a certificate for your organisation.

Database Management

To ensure that the relevant people in your organisation are receiving our communications, continually update the contact details of the individuals that should be added to the Council member database.

These details can be sent to Reesha Iyer at reesha@digitalcouncil.africa

Want to feature your company in the upcoming Conext?

Reminders will be sent from the office to submit your feature. All members are encouraged to participate and showcase their company in Conext.

Contributions can be sent to Nadene Reignier at nadene@digitalcouncil.africa

Member Benefits

By joining the Digital Council Africa members have a competitive advantage because they become informed members of their industry as the council actively engages and represents its members at government level. Council members who lead busy professional lives can depend on the organisation to represent and brief them on important industry trends, new legislative rulings, and advances in technology. The main platform the Digital Council Africa (DCA) uses for this is through its annual conference. This event aims to attract C-level speakers and best of breed OEM's and distributors to keep industry informed and updated on the latest trends in technology and legislation.

To find out more visit our [website](#).

CREATING INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CONNECTS US

Many companies face the challenge of needing to upgrade their infrastructure in order to make cities “smarter” in preparation for 5G, communities more connected, and all with intent of relying upon more data.

Most existing underground infrastructure is old and outdated, making fiber additions complicated. However, most network builders have the task is to create high-speed expandable fiber access using cost-effective solutions.

A utility company in the Southeastern United States faced such a challenge. Their underground infrastructure was built almost a century ago and they needed more capacity to meet the demands of providing both electrical services and communications needs, like high-speed fiber access to their customers.

They accomplished this great task by revitalizing their underground network with Dura-Line’s Future Path products.

FuturePath combines one or more pathways under an oversheath.

The unique design allows a single conduit pathway to be placed in old, existing unusable paths, creating either 6 or 7 new pathways for fiber depending on the FuturePath product.

Dura-Line’s FuturePath 7-Way, contains 7 of the same size MicroDucts, in this case, 12.7 mm Outer Diameter and 10 mm Inner Diameter. Each MicroDuct can easily accommodate a 144-count fiber cable, instantly creating more capacity.

The FuturePath Hybrid offers 3 larger pathways for more “traditional” or larger diameter cables, as well as 3 pathways for MicroCables, a great option for providing high capacity today with room for future expansion as the need arises.

FuturePath has other advantages, such as color coding to help with asset management. This utility color-codes their network maps so visual inspections in manholes provide instant confirmation with the Dura-Line product, understanding which pathways are occupied or empty and available for expansion.

Perpetual system upgrades are a modern essential, not only for the conduit but for the fiber cables as well. modern essential, not only for the conduit but for the fiber cables as well.

The antiquated copper wire technology has data and latency limitations while capacity is easily maxed out throughout the network.

In order to make systems more robust and reliable, existing old copper wire can be replaced with fiber. The technology has advanced so rapidly with the development of MicroCables, up to 432-count fiber in as small 8 mm Outer Diameter, as which can deliver incredible fiber density in small packages.

The outcome for this utility company was a flexible, expandable network with dedicated, easily identifiable pathways for system upgrades, redundancy, and future capacity.

With very little interruption to roads and traffic, as much as 90 percent of the cost of traditional construction was avoided showing good stewardship of current assets.



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 **dura-line**

www.duraline.com

Welcome

A warm welcome to our new Member



Outvise is the largest online talent marketplace for Digital and TMT freelance experts. With a growing global network of more than 30,000 professionals, we connect companies with high skilled freelance experts and management consultants, to address their talent gaps, reinforce their teams and support their transformation projects across all functional areas, from strategy, marketing and sales to operations, technology and IT in a fast and cost-effective way.

We make use of a unique and collaborative approach to disrupt the professional services by leveraging our expert community to deliver a personalised selection process, to certify key competencies and to provide tools for improvement and knowledge sharing within our community.

We select and certify the most relevant candidates for any specific profile, in any country, in 48 hours. Among our clients are O2, Vodafone, Samsung, Ooredoo and MTN.

FTTx Council DRC welcomes a new Board Member



MUSAVULI MBUTHO MOUSSA

A consummate professional with 20 years of experience and a Master's degree specializing in Information System and Digital Strategy from Grenoble Ecole de Management.

Serving as an ID4AFRICA ambassador in the DRC for four years, an NGO movement founded in 2014, which supports African countries in their development of robust and responsible identity ecosystems in the service of development and humanitarian action.

Musavuli has diversified experience in high-level policies, organizational strategies, planning of information systems, financial inclusion, economic intelligence, urbanization of information systems, architecture of information systems, cybersecurity, IoT.

It is with these skills that he served as (in descending order): Director of the Cabinet of the Special Advisor to the Head of State of the DRC in charge of Digital. Coordinator of the Scientific Commission which developed the DRC National Digital Plan Horizon 2025 (PNN Horizon 2025). Advisor to the Prime Minister in charge of the NTIC Cell, Advisor to the Minister of Finance, Expert of the Ministry of Planning, Developer at the Independent Electoral Commission (current CENI).

As a member of the Objectif Sciences International executive committee, He is in charge of business development in the DRC, as well as partially for Africa and Europe.



CELEBRATING YOUTH DAY 16 JUNE 2021



**Digital
Council**

Click here to listen to Digital Council Africa
Chief Executive Officer Juanita Clarks'
Youth Day Message

Youth Day 2021 Message from Juanita Clark

COVID-19 has rapidly accelerated the process of digital transformation. In the last year and a bit, South Africa achieved a degree of digital adoption that would usually have taken years to achieve. In a time when we were still debating participation in the Fourth Industrial revolution, suddenly African countries found themselves firmly catapulted into its midst. And while this is a positive development, it has the unintended consequence of further marginalising those who already suffer from digital exclusion. The Covid19 pandemic has highlighted the fact that the South African digital economy allows participation of a minority of the youth while the majority is excluded due to lack of access to connectivity, the cost to communicate and access to devices.

If the last year taught us anything it is that the Digital Divide, the gap that exists between youth who have access to modern information and communication technology and those who lack access, has exponentially increased.

It is well accepted that the digital divide widens the gap between rich and poor, polarising people within countries as well as enlarging the gap between developed and developing countries. This hinders the development of developing countries and leads to digital supremacy.

Further, the gap in access to and use of technology and the internet – is both a cause and effect of poverty. Unsurprisingly wealthier and educated youth are more likely to have access to digital resources, and those with limited online access options tend to be from lower-income communities.

A primary issue influencing the digital divide is its effect on education in disadvantaged communities. The potential of youth living in under-serviced areas is therefore limited because Internet access is not as obtainable as it is in more affluent areas. This results in a vicious cycle of youth from poorer communities not being able to transcend their circumstances as they simply do not have access to the technology that will enable them to access the world wide web and in turn participate in the digital economy.

With the world growing at such a rapid rate the internet and access to the internet becomes vitally important. For our youth, those with the ability and knowledge of the internet are set to rapidly progress and considering the speedy advancement of technology today, the digital economy will rapidly increase over the next few years. It must be a grave concern to us all that so many of our young people will not be able to participate in this economy.

To solve this problem policymakers need to address three interlinked areas and here the digital divide is clearly categorised: For the sake of time I will only briefly touch on these.

- **Firstly, we need to ensure that our youth has access to stable connectivity, and this will include ensuring that high speed broadband is deployed to the under-serviced communities. To do this we must remove cumbersome and outdated processes that slows down deployment.**
- **Secondly, we need to ensure that connectivity is affordable and here we need to lower the cost to communicate. In order to do that**

we have to make it easier for operators to deploy infrastructure, municipalities need to charge reasonable fees for access and again allow for more cost-effective deployment methodologies.

- **Thirdly, and very importantly we need to ensure that young people are given access to devices. If we manage to sort out the first two problems, yet we still do not place a device in the hands of every young person they will remain excluded from greater participation in the digital world. We need to ensure that devices which are no longer used are collected in a responsible manner and redistributed to under-privileged youth that can still use them to continue their learning opportunities.**

It may seem simple but solving these issues are complex and will require a certain effort by all stakeholders to find sustainable solutions that will ensure ubiquitous digital inclusion. But probably the most important issue is that of urgency. We are already behind and now is the time to accelerate our efforts so that we can bring all our young people together to equally participate in the digital economy.

It is my pleasure to support the *Black Business Council in the Built Environment Youth Chamber* this month during their Youth Summit which took place on the 23rd and 24th June 2021. Because of the pandemic, it will be an online event and anyone can attend. For more information, please email youthsg@bbcbe.org.

Thank you for your time and I wish you an excellent Youth Day celebration.

Sector innovation creates new work from home call centre jobs for South African youth

Collaboration between industry stakeholders proves it's ability to unlock jobs.

- **Sector-level coordination allows industries to organise themselves into engines of inclusive growth by harnessing the mutual interests of all players**
- **Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, CallForce and Vuma pilot work from home jobs for township youth**
- **Township women empowered to work from home**
- **Pilot shows that South Africa's township economy can grow and benefit from sector innovation**
- **No single organisation – whether government, corporate or civil society – can solve South Africa's unemployment crisis alone. With nearly two-thirds (63.2%) of our young people not in work or education, a coordinated effort is required to offer them economic inclusion.**

Coordination at a sector level supports industries to organise themselves into engines of inclusive growth by harnessing all players' mutual interests. This approach's success is currently being tested in a Soweto pilot programme with three organisations working together to create township-based work from home opportunities in the global business services (GBS) sector.

SA-based global outsourcing specialist CallForce brought the job opportunities, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator brought the employees, and Vumatel brought the high-speed internet that enabled their employment.

Since the beginning of lockdown, contact centres have worked with limited on-site capacity. However, their business model relies heavily on the efficiencies of scale afforded by a centralised workforce due mainly to limiting operational variables such as connectivity costs and access. All the remote work enablement platforms that power the GBS sector exist and are excellent at enabling remote staff to work from home. However, with 40% of its workforce still at home, the most significant hurdle the

sector faces is last-mile connectivity, particularly for remote workers in townships and similar communities, who constitute a large proportion of the sector's workforce.

As a high growth BPO company, CallForce was looking for the optimal connectivity solution to empower its remote working strategy to enable stable and fast connectivity cost-effectively and ensure world-class service delivery by its contact centre agents working from their township homes. Harambee had employable young people living in townships who could be geo-located close to the third collaborator's established fibre presence, Vumatel.

Matched on geography, the fact young people had a quiet space to work in their homes and employment by CallForce, Vumatel then stepped in to provide last-mile connectivity by installing a stable 20MB fibre line into each home. The cost of installation, and connectivity for the first month was covered by Vumatel, with ongoing expenses carried by employer CallForce.

Evan Jones, Group Strategy Director of Harambee, says the pilot

is successful on every level. "It more than meets minimum viable requirements. It proves that great quality township remote work is possible, that the work-from-home model works, and that it is scalable and globally competitive." Also noteworthy is that this pilot shows that South Africa's township economy can grow and benefit from such enablement programmes.

It is clear from the pilot that a coordinated and collaborative approach completely changes young people's prospects and women especially. Disproportionately affected by lockdown, 65% of women lost their jobs at its height. They have not yet recovered at a meaningful rate; fewer women are now employed than before the pandemic.

Candice Roberts, CEO of CallForce, says that enabling women is a gratifying aspect of the programme. "Knowing that the women in our workforce can earn their salaries as skilled call centre agents while taking care of their families is as much weight off our minds as it is off theirs. It also matters that they don't have to spend a high proportion of their earnings on transport which increases their much-needed disposable income."



harambee
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATOR

One of the critical successes of the programme is that it provides stable and sustainable employment. To ensure this, new employees are trained on-site to enable successful learning and establish a close connection to CallForce as their employer. Once they started working remotely, the relationship was maintained through various online apps and platforms to foster team building and ensure that they continued to feel part of the broader company.

Taylor Kwong, Vuma's CSI Manager, says the pilot dovetails with the company's vision. "Our vision is to help build a connected South Africa. We believe that our value extends beyond infrastructure, reaching ordinary individuals and empowering communities. The nature of our business puts us right in the heart of our communities, and our philosophy of 'if we can, we must' guides our value of creating opportunities for people in these areas." She adds that this project is about growing the economy through unlimited access to information and opportunities to empower people to do extraordinary things. One of its rewards is uplifting and empowering young South Africans by connecting them to work opportunities.

The main lesson of this pilot is proof that sectors can organise themselves into engines of growth. It demonstrates that when mutual interests are harnessed, they can be translated into concrete jobs filled by skilled and employable workers.

A collaboration like this enables the sector to service existing demand for good contact centre operators and mitigates any risk of client commitments not being delivered. What's more, it has created a remote

working model for the future to cement our leading international position further.

To read the original article online and watch the accompanying video [click here](#)



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



MICT Seta & the Digital Council Africa sign a MOU

The Digital Council Africa (DCA) have signed an MOU with Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (MICT Seta) to increase the capacity in digital transformation.

MICT Seta is a public entity established in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998). They play a pivotal role in achieving South Africa's skills development and economic growth within the sub-sectors they operate, namely; Advertising, Film and Electronic Media, Electronics, Information Technology and Telecommunications. Providing opportunities through funding of skills development for stakeholders to participate in the economy, through meaningful employment and entrepreneurship and in building a capable, creative and innovative developmental state.

The MICT SETA engages in learning programmes that lead to employment and new venture creation, whilst at the same time engaging in programmes that assist in bridging the digital divide especially in rural areas.

This MOU will see the DCA working with MICT Seta to develop skills that are needed within the ICT industry, supporting MICT SETA's 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) initiatives as well as their qualifications development and realignment and offering extend support through its ecosystem of industry partners. The DCA will also be partnering with MICT Seta on Centers of Excellence throughout the country and attend MICT SETA stakeholder engagements as a strategic partner.

Partnership objectives:

- Partner to roll out capacity building workshops focusing on young people within the ICT Sector
- DCA is represented on the MICT SETA 4IR Advisory Committee
- Partner to participate on World Skills Competition initiative which stimulates creativity within the ICT Sector
- MICT SETA to invite DCA and its members to contribute to the development of the 4IR qualifications,
- Participate on the development of Sector Skills Plan and other 4IR Research related initiatives

FEEDBACK ON THE CLOUD AND SERVICE PROVIDER AFRICA WORKING GROUP (CISPA)

The Cloud and Service Provider Africa Working Group (CISPA), under the leadership of the Chair Mike Silber (Liquid Intelligent Solutions) and Vice-Chair Avela Gronemeyer (Accenture), held various meetings to achieve its objectives in providing a consolidated industry response to the Draft National Data and Cloud policy document which was published by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies on the 1st April 2021.

The DCA extends its gratitude to the Chair, Vice-Chair and the following leads who dedicated their time and effort in providing valuable inputs into the respective sections of the policy document:

Digital Infrastructure – Karabo Motlana, AWS

Data – Andile Stofile, Microsoft

Competition – Charles Murito, Google

Knowledge and Human Capital – Mpho Lekitlane, Accenture

Should you wish to receive a copy of the final submission, please email reesha@digitalcouncil.africa.



Roundtable on the Development of Capacity for the Procurement of Cloud Computing in the SA Public Sector

The Stellenbosch University Faculty of Law and School of Public Leadership, and the African Procurement Law Unit, a multi-institutional academic unit focusing on research and education in public procurement law in Africa (see www.africanprocurementlaw.org for more information) is currently organising a roundtable discussion to explore ways of enhancing capacity within the South African public sector in the procurement of cloud-based solutions.

The roundtable will be an open exploratory discussion between relevant public and private sector stakeholders. The purpose is to engage on the topic and see explore avenues in terms of potential capacity-building initiatives.

Date: 8 July 2021 from 10h00 - 12h00

RSVP: To participate, please rsvp to kylej@sun.ac.za by 1 July

Programme outline

10:00 Introduction - 10:10 Setting the scene: Cloud computing and the public sector

10:25 Discussion - 11:40 Next steps - 12:00 Close

Invited parties include key public sector entities, such as SITA, the DCDT and National Treasury, along with cloud service providers and academic environments (such as Stellenbosch University School for Data Science and Computational Thinking and School of Public Leadership as well as UNISA's African Institute for Supply Chain Research and members and partners of the Digital Council Africa) to participate in the discussion.

OUTVISE
HOW DOES A LEADING COMPANY CREATE IMPACT FROM AI?
Webinar
Wednesday, June 30, 18:30 PM CET

Hosted by
Eusebi Llensa
CEO of Outvise

Special speakers

Fahim Alefi
Vice President Data Strategy
at ProSiebenSat.1 Media SE

Denys Holovatyi
Data Science
Consultant

Mario Nolla
Head of Big Data and Advanced
Analytics at Vodafone

AI is growing quickly across many industries. Data from an enormous variety of sources, all interconnected, is mined, interpreted and used to develop innovative ideas. How do you create artificial intelligence that inspires and compels your business growth?

Outvise's CEO, Eusebi Llensa has invited some of the best data science professionals who will help identify:

- How is AI transforming business, and what are the opportunities for more businesses to leverage artificial intelligence to drive faster growth and greater profits?
- What are the main challenges facing Data Adoption in a firm?
- How to drive data focus within the management team?
- How to make the best use of existing technology and what is the minimum requirement?

Our special speakers in this roundtable are:

- Fahim Alefi, Vice president of Data Strategy at ProSieben.
- Mario Nolla, Head of Big Data and Advanced Analytics at Vodafone.
- Denys Holovatyi, Outvise Data Science Consultant and Founder of EnterpriseAI Consulting!

Are you ready to join us on an exciting adventure exploring the possibilities of AI in your business?
[Register now!](#)

How to secure your hybrid work world with a Zero Trust approach

By Vasu Jakkal -
Corporate Vice President, Security, Compliance and Identity,
Microsoft SA

Original article can be found [here](#).



We are operating in the most complex cybersecurity landscape we've ever seen. Sophisticated and determined attackers are the norm. And we all are preparing for the next great disruption—hybrid work.

Security has never been more important, and as I shared in another [Security blog](#) today, it's clearer than ever that a Zero Trust approach, which basically means you have to assume breach, will be critical to success. We've been listening and working closely with our customers around the world and rapidly innovating to help you to secure and protect your organizations. Today, I'd like to share some of our latest updates across security, compliance, identity, and management in response to that feedback to help you in your Zero Trust journey.

Strengthening your Zero Trust approach across your environment

The hybrid work environment, with some users working remotely and others in group office settings, introduces more digital attack surfaces, complexity, and risk as perimeters are now increasingly fluid. As such, a Zero Trust strategy will be top of mind for many organizations because its principles—verify explicitly, grant least privileged access, and assume breach—help maintain security amid the IT complexity that comes with hybrid work.

Verify explicitly

One of the most important first steps in a Zero Trust journey is to establish strong authentication. As Bret Arsenault, Microsoft's CISO would say, "Hackers don't break in. They log in." Regardless of length or complexity, passwords alone won't protect your account

in the majority of attacks. Monitoring logins for suspicious activity and limiting or blocking access until additional proof of identity is presented drastically reduces the chances of a breach. Modern multifactor authentication (MFA) doesn't have to be complicated for the user. We recently announced passwordless authentication and Temporary Access Pass in Azure Active Directory (Azure AD), our cloud identity solution, to help customers strengthen their access controls and simplify the user experience.

Verifying explicitly requires the ability to make real-time access decisions based on all available information for any user trying to access any resource. For us, Azure AD Conditional Access is this real-time access policy engine, which looks at all the data and signals related to the user gaining access, and today we're announcing powerful new features that give admins more granular access controls while making it easier to control a growing list of policies. The GPS-based named locations

and filters for devices enable a new set of scenarios, such as restricting access from specific countries or regions based on GPS location and securing the use of devices from Surface Hubs to privileged access workstations.

Additionally, to empower security for all, you need to be able to verify explicitly for all. We are expanding granular adaptive access controls to all users with the general availability of Azure AD Conditional Access and Identity Protection for business-to-consumer (B2C) apps and users. And we've made it easier to manage all your new policies with new search, sort, and filter capabilities, as well as enhanced audit logs to track recent policy changes. You can learn more on the Azure Active Directory Identity blog.

We also believe that for comprehensive protection through Zero Trust, we need to have end-to-end integration across device management and identity. New today, we are announcing the preview of filters for devices in Microsoft Endpoint Manager. These unique integrated capabilities between Microsoft Endpoint Manager (which brings together Configuration Manager and Intune) and Azure AD Conditional Access create even more granular controls. With device filters, administrators can target policies and applications to users on specific devices. For example, you can assign a filter so that a policy restriction is only applied to Surface Pro devices. You can learn more in today's Tech Community blog.

Healthy devices and unified device management across platforms continue to be anchors of Zero trust, and to help protect data from potential leakage on mobile devices; we are introducing new conditional launch settings with App Protec-

tion Policies in Microsoft Endpoint Manager. These controls can block access or wipe data based on conditions such as maximum OS version, jailbroken or rooted devices, or require Android devices to pass SafetyNet attestation.

In addition, we are making it easier for you to manage your devices, regardless of the operating system. First, you can configure Android Enterprise-enrolled devices with Azure AD shared device mode in Microsoft Endpoint Manager. This new capability is now generally available and provides a simplified and more secure experience on devices shared across multiple users. With single sign-in, single sign-out, and data clearing across applications, shared device mode increases privacy between users and reduces the number of steps a frontline worker needs to take to access their work apps.

Then to make it easier to manage and secure your Apple devices, we recently released a Microsoft Endpoint Manager preview of the Setup Assistant for iOS, iPadOS, and macOS automated device enrollment. Based on customer feedback, you can now allow users to start using their iPadOS device immediately after enrollment without waiting for the Company Portal to install on a locked-down device. You can also configure a Conditional Access policy to require multi-factor authentication either during enrollment in the Setup Assistant or upon authentication in the Company Portal. Learn more about the administrator and user experiences for shared devices and Setup Assistance in this Tech Community blog.

Finally, we continue to invest in BitLocker, which helps you to protect data at rest. BitLocker now has several enhancements, such as comprehensive modern management with Microsoft Endpoint

Manager, role-based access controls for BitLocker recovery passwords, recovery password search, and recovery password auditing. Check out our BitLocker series that explains how to manage BitLocker in Microsoft Endpoint Manager, such as enabling silent encryption.

Grant least privileged access

As we have entered into new hybrid work environments, businesses need to think about how they will proactively protect their organizations from the influx of new or "bring your own" (BYO) connected devices—or even new apps that have helped people to work in new ways. This new normal has exposed the most challenging cybersecurity landscape we've ever encountered, and the least privileged access ensures that only what must be shared is.

To help, we recently added the ability to discover and secure unmanaged endpoints and network devices to Microsoft Defender for Endpoint. Once network devices are discovered, security administrators will receive the latest security recommendations and vulnerabilities on them. Discovered endpoints (such as workstations, servers, and mobile devices) can be onboarded to Microsoft Defender for Endpoints, allowing all its deep protection capabilities. You can learn more in the Microsoft Security blog, Secure unmanaged devices with Microsoft Defender for Endpoint now.

The early detection of vulnerabilities and misconfiguration is critical to an organization's overall security posture, and to prevent those weaknesses from being exploited. With our commitment to support multi-platform, the threat and vulnerability management capabilities



in Microsoft Defender for Endpoint now also support Linux OS, giving organizations the ability to view discovered vulnerabilities, assess the latest security recommendations, and issue remediation tasks for Linux devices. With the addition of Linux, threat and vulnerability management now covers all major platforms, including Windows and macOS.

Assume breach

Comprehensive security that is multi-platform and multi-cloud with simplification front and center is going to be important for the “assume breach” approach. With that in mind, today we are announcing the general availability of the converged portal for Microsoft 365 Defender, which unifies and simplifies XDR capabilities for endpoints, email, and collaboration. For Azure Sentinel, we are announcing solutions, which is a simplified means to deploy connectors, detections, playbooks, and workloads for both first and third-party integrations, all together as one package. To simplify team communications in the Security Operations Center, we now have built-in integration of Microsoft Teams into Azure Sentinel, so now you can create a Teams call directly from an incident.

With threats continuing to get more sophisticated, it is important to have the latest AI and machine learning capabilities at hand to separate important incidents from noise. Customers using Azure Sentinel consistently tell us how useful it is when incidents we raise are closed directly in the product. This quarter, more than 92 percent of incidents produced by Azure Sentinel’s AI were reported as useful by security professionals, which is dramatically higher than industry standards and enables you to focus on what’s important. Today we are adding new anomaly detections, including User and Entity Behavioral Analytics (UEBA) to Azure Sentinel that are powered by configurable machine learning. These anomalies can be used to provide additional context while hunting or fused with incidents. What’s powerful is that you can configure the variables for the machine learning driven anomalies with just a few clicks to customize for your specific environment.

Today’s hybrid work environment spans multiple platforms, multiple clouds, and on-premises. We recently extended the multi-cloud support in Azure Defender to include not just servers and SQL but also Kubernetes, all using Azure

Arc. Azure Security Center remains the only security portal from a cloud vendor with multi-cloud support, including Azure, Amazon Web Services, and Google Cloud Platform. Today we are announcing that we are extending protection to the application level with the preview of the SAP threat monitoring solution for Azure Sentinel. This supports SAP running in any cloud or on-premises and includes continuous monitoring of SAP with built-in detections and can be customized to your specific SAP environment. You can learn more about this and the rest of Azure Sentinel’s announcements in the Tech Community blog post.

Enabling a secure way to access cloud apps while protecting your resources in this hybrid work environment is critical. New enhancements to Microsoft Cloud App Security will help protect against recent cloud-based attack types by detecting suspicious app activity and data exfiltration attempts from cloud services. Over the next few weeks, the general availability of the integration between Microsoft Information Protection and Cloud App Security will also be available. This integrated information protection policy management from the Cloud App Security portal enables

5G TECHNOLOGY



Samo Engineering Telecoms offers Optical Transport Network (OTN) technology that enable backhaul systems for 5G applications.

This technology supports telecommunication companies that provide 5G services. These platforms simplify network structure, enhances network efficiency and reduces operator's CAPEX and OPEX.



greater visibility, control, and protection for your sensitive data in the cloud.

With over 90 percent of threats surfacing through email, it's critical that organizations can configure security tools in a way that works for their environment. Over time, settings can age, new attack scenarios develop, and new security controls are available, necessitating regular review, upkeep, modifications, and even removal of old configurations. We've been on a journey to make it easier for customers to understand configuration gaps in their environment with recently launched features like preset security policies, Configuration Analyzer, and override alerts in Microsoft Defender for Office 365. Essentially, when Microsoft is confident that an email contains malicious content, we will not deliver the message to users, regardless of tenant configuration. We also recently announced our

Secure by Default capabilities that eliminate the risks posed by legacy configurations. You can learn more in today's Tech Community blog post.

But "assuming breach" isn't just about external threats—you also have to be thoughtful about protecting your organization from the inside out. We released new capabilities today in our Insider Risk Management solution to help you to address insider risk in a holistic, collaborative way. Today's Tech Community blog has more details.

For investigations, eDiscovery is critical. Today we're announcing that eDiscovery support for Microsoft Graph connectors will be available in Summer 2021 as a developer preview. With Microsoft Graph connectors, investigators can query across more than 130 systems—directly from Microsoft 365 and our partners. Use the same eDiscovery tools in Microsoft 365 to search for

content in third-party systems connected to Microsoft Search as used to search for content in Microsoft 365 apps and services. You can learn more in today's Tech Community blog post.

Your Zero Trust journey

In a risk landscape as complex as today's, your adoption of a Zero Trust approach won't happen overnight. It's important to value progress over perfection and to enlist help when you need it. Microsoft and its partners are committed to helping you on this journey. To chart out your path, or assess your progress, enable a remote workforce by embracing Zero Trust security.

Cyber Crimes Bill Signed into law



The Cyber Crimes Bill, which seeks to bring SA's cyber security laws in line with the rest of the world, was signed into law by president Cyril Ramaphosa on June 5th 2021.

This Bill will now be known as the Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020 (the Cybercrimes Act). This development is a welcome move in the fight against the ever-increasing rise in online and Internet-based crime. Although signed into law, the Cybercrimes Act (or different sections of it) will only come into operation on a date(s) to be announced by the President. It is not clear when such date/s will be announced.

Cyber criminals will (hopefully) feel the ramifications of this new law, which criminalises various types of cyber crimes, including illegally accessing a computer system or intercepting data, cyber fraud, cyber forgery, unlawfully acquiring a password or access code, cyber extortion and theft of incorporeal (intangible) property.

Read the full article click [here](#) or find the full act [here](#).



MICROSOFT WHITE PAPER ON PERSONAL INFORMATION ACT, 2013 (POPIA)

To read the full White Paper [click here](#).

The Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA) came into effect on 1 July 2020. The 12-month grace period for compliance commenced on 1 July 2020. This means that private and public bodies, and anyone else who determines the purpose of, and means for, processing personal information (processing entities) now have until 30 June 2021 to comply with the Act's comprehensive requirements.

This White Paper sets out key provisions in POPIA but should not be read as an exhaustive summary of its provisions. Likewise, the controls detailed below should not be considered as representative of Microsoft's entire control framework. Furthermore, Microsoft's continuous development of its cloud service capabilities, combined with its focus on supporting and facilitating customers' compliance efforts, means that customers should consult their Microsoft representative for more information on available compliance technologies at the time of reading this White Paper.

Below we set out a high-level overview of the instances in which POPIA will apply to processing activities and the obligations which come with POPIA.



AM I SUBJECT TO POPIA?

POPIA APPLIES TO JURISTIC AND NATURAL PERSONS:

- Who are domiciled in South Africa; or
- Who are not domiciled in South Africa but use automated or non-automated means in South Africa, unless the personal information is only forwarded through South Africa.

YES

SO IF YOU PROCESS PERSONAL INFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA:

POPIA will apply to you even if you are not domiciled in South Africa.

NO POPIA DOES NOT APPLY

AM I PROCESSING PERSONAL INFORMATION?

"Processing" is defined broadly to include various actions that can be taken in relation to personal information, including its collection, receipt, storage and use.

YES



WHAT IS PERSONAL INFORMATION?

PERSONAL INFORMATION IS:

- Information relating to an identifiable, living natural **OR** juristic person.

POPIA defines personal information very broadly, to include a wide range of information that can be used to identify a data subject.

Notably, POPIA refers to the personal information of juristic entities, meaning that businesses will be able to enforce their data protection rights under POPIA.

YES



WHO CAN PROCESS PERSONAL INFORMATION?



A RESPONSIBLE PARTY

A **responsible party** is the person or entity that determines the purpose and means of processing personal information (i.e. determines the destiny of the information) and can act independently or jointly with other responsible parties.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY OBLIGATIONS UNDER POPIA

Determining whether a person is a responsible party or an operator will not always be an easy exercise.

A person will have to assess its processing activities very closely.

The distinction is important, because it affects the rights and obligations that fall on responsible parties and operators respectively.



OPERATOR

An **operator** processes personal information for, or on behalf of, a responsible party in terms of a contract or mandate.

OPERATOR OBLIGATIONS UNDER POPIA



GENERAL PROCESSING PRINCIPLES

A RESPONSIBLE PARTY MUST COMPLY WITH ALL 8 CONDITIONS FOR LAWFUL PROCESSING, NAMELY:

- ACCOUNTABILITY:** You will be responsible for ensuring POPIA compliance
- PROCESSING LIMITATION:** You must only process that information which you require
- PURPOSE SPECIFICATION:** Personal information must be collected for a specific purpose
- FURTHER PROCESSING LIMITATION:** Further processing of personal information (i.e. outside original purpose) must be compatible with the original purpose of collection
- INFORMATION QUALITY:** You must keep personal information records accurate and up to date
- OPENNESS:** You must disclose certain information to data subjects (i.e. that their information is being collected, where it is collected from and how it is used)
- SECURITY SAFEGUARDS:** You must secure the integrity and confidentiality of personal information
- DATA SUBJECT PARTICIPATION:** You must allow data subjects to access their personal information

OPERATOR CONTRACTS

Responsible parties must conclude a written contract with operators to ensure that the operators establish and maintain measures that secure the integrity and confidentiality of personal information.

INFORMATION OFFICER

Responsible parties must appoint an Information Officer who is responsible for overseeing their compliance with the provisions of POPIA.

PRIVACY NOTICES

Responsible parties must tell individuals how their personal information is collected, why it is collected and how it will be used.

TRANS-BORDER INFORMATION FLOWS

POPIA sets out restrictions on when personal information can be transferred outside South Africa.

DATA SECURITY AND BREACH NOTIFICATION

If there is a data breach, the responsible party may have to inform the affected individuals and the Information Regulator.

PROCESSING JUSTIFICATION

A responsible party must make sure processing in these circumstances:

- With consent
- For performance of a contract
- In compliance with a legal obligation
- Legitimate interests
- Public law duty.

RECORD RETENTION

POPIA restricts the instances in which personal information can be retained by a responsible party.

OPERATOR CONTRACTS

Operators must comply with the provisions of the contract concluded with a responsible party.

DATA BREACH

Operators must notify the responsible party immediately of any suspected or actual data breach.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY / OPERATOR EXAMPLES

| | |
|---|---|
| You manage your employee data on your IT systems | You are likely a Responsible Party |
| You are appointed to provide payroll services to your client | You are Likely an Operator |
| You provide information about your patient to a medical insurer | You are likely a Responsible Party |
| You send marketing emails to your client's customer list | You are likely an Operator |



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How can telecom operators leverage sustainability in their business strategies?

By **Therése Jombart**



Focus on sustainability is becoming a necessity for long-term success for telecom operators, as they are under pressure to comply with stringent non-financial laws and regulations; suffer from growing energy costs driven by increasing demand on traffic and edge solutions, resulting in requirements of more sites; and are expected to obtain good ESG ratings by investors. At the same time, sustainability also represents great business opportunities as customers and talent are increasingly aware of, and attracted to solutions that create a positive impact on the environment and the society. Integrating sustainability into the overall commercial strategy can be a driver for business growth, help to avoid cost and risk and increase companies' ability to attract and retain talent – all while doing good for the employees, the society, and the planet.

Why Sustainability is crucial for telecom operators

Sustainability means meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. When companies talk about sustainability, it often represents a holistic view of its impact on:

- Environment
- Society
- People (employees, partners etc.)
- Business

Like most big companies today, telecom operators face many external and internal challenges linked to sustainability, such as: costs; compliance to non-financial laws and regulations; tough competition for recruiting talent; and increased pressure from investors. That is why sustainability is increasingly becoming a central part of the overall commercial strategy for many telecom operators and is more and more integrated into business units' daily work and core business strategies. Sustainabili-

ty is considered fundamental for long-term success as it helps to grow the business, to avoid cost and risk and/or to increase employer branding.

Business growth

Business growth strategies rely on:

- Increasing the customer base
- Selling more to each customer (either in quantity or upselling more offerings)
- Increasing the price of the offerings
- Recurring revenue models

Sustainability can be a driver for telecom operators for all these growth strategies towards both consumer and enterprise customers, through direct and indirect business opportunities. New technologies pushed by the telecom operators, such as 5G and Internet of Things (IoT) are enablers of more sustainable behaviors for companies and for individuals.

Enterprise customers need sustainable solutions for the same reasons as the telecom operators themselves, such as achieving

more top line, improving bottom line, abiding by laws and regulations etc. In IoT, there are many new ecosystems of companies innovating in sustainable solutions that aim at reducing waste in different forms and the telecom infrastructure is an enabler for this innovation. Independently if the telecom operator choose to play a driving role in the value chain or to take a more enabling and indirect approach, there is sizeable growth potential from new sustainable business opportunities such as energy optimization through smart meters, smart lightning and Heating, innovative Ventilation and Air Condition (HVAC) systems or agriculture solutions that reduce water consumption and use of pesticides. In addition, sustainability also has the potential to substantially boost telecom network usage as a wide range of sustainable offerings are also "smart" and connected, such as electric cars (cleaner energy), real-time ride-sharing (reduced consumption) and high-precision manufacturing (waste reduction) to mention a few.

Furthermore, many studies show that consumers in general are willing to pay more for consumer products that have less negative impact on the environment and society. There is no reason why that should not also be true for telecom operators. The "greener" or more sustainable a brand is, the easier it will attract new customers and the higher price it can maintain compared to its competitors. However, any company must be careful with overcommunication around sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility activities. A responsible brand often has more success with its "green" positioning when being honest about the challenges it faces, the targets it is working towards and their actions. "Green-washing" is often spotted

by consumers and watchdog organizations and can cause the opposite impact on the brand value than the wanted one.

Employer branding

Attracting and retaining talent is necessary to constantly innovate and deliver satisfying results in the long-term for any successful company, which drives focus on overall employee satisfaction. The telecom industry needs pretty much the same talent profiles as "new tech" companies, such as developers, product engineers and skilled sales profiles and the telecom operators are competing with companies with attractive products, youthful brands, strong finances, and flexible working conditions.

After years of consolidations and cost cutting in the telecom industry, the employee age distribution for most telecom operators is more of a diamond shape, rather than a pyramid and this can cause unbalanced salary structure and difficulties in the future to find the right seniority and competences for key positions. For example, the median age of telecom employees in the US in 2020 was 43.9 years and only 27 percent were below the age of 35 (<https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18b.htm>). The same year, Millennials made up 35 percent of the workforce globally and by 2025, 75% of the global workforce are expected to be Millennials, who are in general more health-conscious, socially aware, and environmentally responsible than previous generations. According to Gallup's report on [*How Millennials Want to Work and Live*](#), they want to work for organizations with a mission and purpose, for companies that care about the environment and the society and that treats their employees fairly.

Also here, honesty and truthful communication around sustainability challenges, actions and targets is to prefer. This is a group of talent that will be happy to contribute to improving identified issues if there is a willingness to let them. However, they will most likely leave in case they do not feel that the communication is not sincere. Integrating sustainability strategies into the day-to-day business strategies and honest communication around challenges and achievements will help telecom operators to attract and retain the talent they need for the next decade's success.

Sustainability to avoid cost and risk

Even though investing in sustainability can bring many upsides for an organization, it is becoming more and more a must-have, stemming from pressure from investors, cost and productivity reasons, or to comply with laws and regulations.

Most telecom operators are under pressure to reduce the cost of their operations and whereas sustainability is often perceived as a cost to companies, it can also bring substantial savings. The GSM Association estimates that telecom operators today account for 2 to 3 percent of the total global energy demand and estimates that it will increase despite the savings in energy consumption that the 5G-new-radio standard brings. Many more mobile stations will be needed to meet the expected exponential growth in data traffic from 5G connected devices, as well as the growing demands of edge capacity for high-performing services. More and distributed sites will lead to higher energy requirements and more energy transmission loss than a more centralized distribution of data.



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McKinsey estimates that the average energy cost for telecom operators represents approximately 5 percent of operating expenditures, and that most telecom operators could achieve energy savings of 15-20 percent in a year's time frame. A 15 percent savings on industry level would represent approximately 100 000 GWh/year, which is about the yearly energy consumption of the Philippines. McKinsey also share some good insights on where the *biggest saving opportunities lie*:

- Artificial-intelligence-driven sleep and shutdown – with quick-wins in the radio access network (RAN) in the mobile sites where AI analysis of traffic patterns can allow for quick, automated decisions on the parts of the system that can be put into sleep mode or shut down.
- Internet of Things-based energy optimization – smart meters, enabled by IoT, allows us to measure energy consumption accurately, track it and report it. That creates an opportunity for the operators to optimize consumption, uncover potentially costly anomalies, identify theft, and optimize price negotiations.
- Structural and architectural transformation - energy is the primary source of cost savings when decommissioning legacy networks and when migrating to cloud-base solutions.
- Strategic and sustainable energy sourcing – as such a significant consumer of energy, the telecom sector can also be a driving power in the transition to clean energy through sustainable sourcing strategies and generation of energy where it makes sense.

Other internal sustainability initiatives, such as re-use and recycling equipment, reducing water consumption in factories and

offices or reducing office space and daily commute thanks to increased homeworking will not only have a positive impact on the environment, but also bring cost savings in real estate or rent, utilities, cleaning services, food etc. In addition, it can be an opportunity to foster well-being and employee engagement.

Sustainability is also important for attracting investors, both for debt and equity. Around 50 percent of the investors choose to focus at least part of their investment portfolio on companies with good ESG ratings (Environmental, Social and Governance) according to research by Quilter. The drivers, in addition to creating a positive impact with their investments, are to mitigate risk and to maximize long-term success. Despite different ESG rating agencies often resulting in incoherent outcome and the lack of alignment in measurements, ESG ratings play an important role for public companies to attract and satisfy investors.

When it comes to laws and regulations regarding sustainability, the rules are the same as for most other industries. For example, the EU requires listed companies with more than 500 employees to comply with the new Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) based on a unified Green Classification System called "EU Taxonomy" from December 2021 onwards. This is a step towards harmonization of metrics, which in the longer run will simplify the work with sustainability for companies. In terms of local laws and regulations, the EPS (Environmental Policy Stringency) Indicator from OECD is a good pointer for how stringent the environmental policies and regulations in a country are. For example, the US and the UK are slightly less stringent than the OECD average

and Northern EU countries are on average more stringent.

Maximize impact of sustainability work through a holistic approach

To summarize, there is a great opportunity for telecom operators to gain additional value from their existing work with sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), by integrating it into the overall commercial strategy and regular business planning. With a holistic view, the results can be maximized across the entire organization, generate revenues, reduce cost, and help attract talent – all while doing good for the employees, the shareholders, the society, and the planet.



Therése Jombart

- 16 years of international experience in the ICT industry
- Business strategy and business development of complex sales in the sectors of Telecommunication, Cloud Computing, Media, New Tech and Internet of Things
- Swedish, based in Portugal, worked globally from Europe and South America



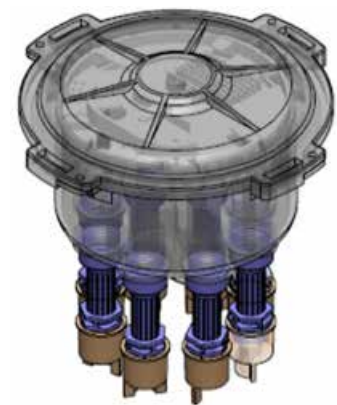
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OUR PRODUCTS BUILD NETWORKS

The m4a (Pty) Ltd pre-term assembly comprises of a 400R axsCHAMBER™ and a CNKT™ FSC PT-12F Fibre Splice Closure.

axsCHAMBER™ 400R is a purpose designed mini Access Box, or Boundary Box, that caters for medium fibre count connections. The axs 400R is normally used to connect MDU's or multiple users to the network.

CNKT™ FSC PT-12F closures can be installed in aerial networks, underground networks (direct burial or inside axsCHAMBER™ manholes with small volume, but large capacity). The closure can be used in new networks or in maintenance applications.



Benefits of this combination:

- The pre-term system is supplied already assembled (simplified supply chain and reducing lead times).
- This allows for quick Installation and on-site fibre termination (reducing installation times and costs).
- Installation of the system does not require any special machinery or equipment.
- Adequate cable storage space provided in the closure basket and in the access chamber.
- This solution can accommodate LC or SC connection Types.
- This is a full turnkey plug and play solution for up to 12F.

**400R axsCHAMBER™
specification sheet**

**CNKT™ FSC PT-12F Fibre Splice
Closure specification sheet**

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Minister delivers 2021 Budget Vote

On 18 May Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams delivered her annual budget vote.

In her speech she emphasized the importance of partnerships and collaborations as key factors to taking the sector to greater heights and announced that R27 billion is being pledged collectively by operators and vendors to expand the 4G network and to deploy 5G and fibre technologies in South Africa.

An excerpt from her speech:

We are partnering with both public and private sector, with the intent to bridge the digital divide. For this reason, our training programmes will be conducted everywhere in South Africa including the remote areas.

We are partnering with the Department of Higher Education and Training to train

- 20 000 young people in 4IR and related skills.
- 6 TVET colleges situated in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West and KwaZulu-Natal will be targeted this year. We are deliberate in exposing and stimulating the young minds in these TVET colleges to be innovators and not just end users of technologies. Google through Google For Education Program will be training teachers in digital teaching.

We are also working with the Department of Employment and Labour to train 73 000 unemployed youth. Our model pools together a given craft, skill and entrepreneurship such that every learner finishes their training already having exit strategy.

Digital Council for Africa has also heeded our call and committed to train young people from Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo in fibre splicing. Never again, shall our youth be only trench diggers. Already we have trained 12 young people, and the Council is in a process of placing them in various companies. More of these young people will be benefiting from this partnership. Watch the space!

The Department has partnered with Huawei. So far, 50 students from disadvantaged Universities have been trained through the Seeds of the Future Programme. These young people are trained in IoT, 5G, AI and have been exposed to various technologies in Shenzhen and Beijing. Today the company has commenced with a training of 1000 ISPs in partnership with the ICT youth council. The partnership continues, and we are getting more students participating because these trainings are now held virtually.



With NEMISA and COURSERA we will offer 60 000 free online training opportunities; additionally we also have 82 000 slots available in the co-labs situated around the country

Through the partnership with GIZ estimated at R49 million, the Department will train 3000 young South Africans and support 150 SMMEs for Future of Work.

To read the rest of her speech [click here](#).

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE



Free resources to assist in raising awareness amongst workers and employers

As the vaccine roll-out begins, the Return2work Initiative has launched a range of additional resources to assist in raising awareness amongst workers and employers.

These freely available resources include:

- An educational vaccine video around the vaccine roll-out;
- Educational cards on the vaccine for workers; and
- What's Your Story (WYS) an easy to use programme to facilitate conversations between employers and employees around the pandemic and the vaccine roll-out.

These resources supplement a range of educational workplace materials which provide easy to use content on work place safety during COVID-19. All these resources are available free online on the Return2Work.co.za website and can be distributed freely via email, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

The vaccine educational video is an addition to a six part series which is available in isiZulu, isiXhosa and seSotho with English subtitles. The videos can be found on the Return2Work website or YouTube channel.

These resources have been developed by Return2Work, a voluntary collaboration, in conjunction with the Solidarity Fund.

For more information contact Renee Grawitzky on rgrawitzky@gmail.com or 083 307 6754

[Click here to access all the resources](#)



Press-Release

DFA partners with USTDA for rural digital infrastructure roll-out study

DFA today announced the launch of a feasibility study in collaboration with the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) that will look at the challenges of rolling out fibre in the rural areas of South Africa. The partnership was formalized at a virtual signing ceremony attended by South African and US government representatives. In terms of the agreement, the USTDA will fund a year-long study that will support DFA's efforts to increase access to connectivity for the large number of South Africans outside of the country's major metros. The initiative is part of the US agency's wider aim of contributing towards digital inclusivity on the African continent.

Rural digital connectivity provision has continued to present challenges to African countries in particular. The year-long project will assess the technical and commercial sustainability of expanding DFA's network into residential areas in South Africa where population density and household incomes are low.

DFA said that the study would enhance existing efforts by infrastructure providers, governments, and industry regulators to provide access to connectivity, and that a collaborative approach was crucial to addressing challenges in the provision of digital infrastructure.

'The study will contribute significantly to shaping our approach in extending the reach and access to digital infrastructure to the less connected,' said Vino Govender, DFA's Chief Strategy, Mergers and Acquisitions, and Innovation Officer.

The USTDA highlighted the US's long history of supporting South Africa's infrastructure efforts in the information, communications, and technology sectors in particular. 'Our partnership with DFA will expand USTDA's legacy of bridging South Africa's digital divide through the application of US solutions,' said Enoch T. Ebong, the agency's Acting Director. Today's signing paves the way for the appointment of the US company that will carry out the study.

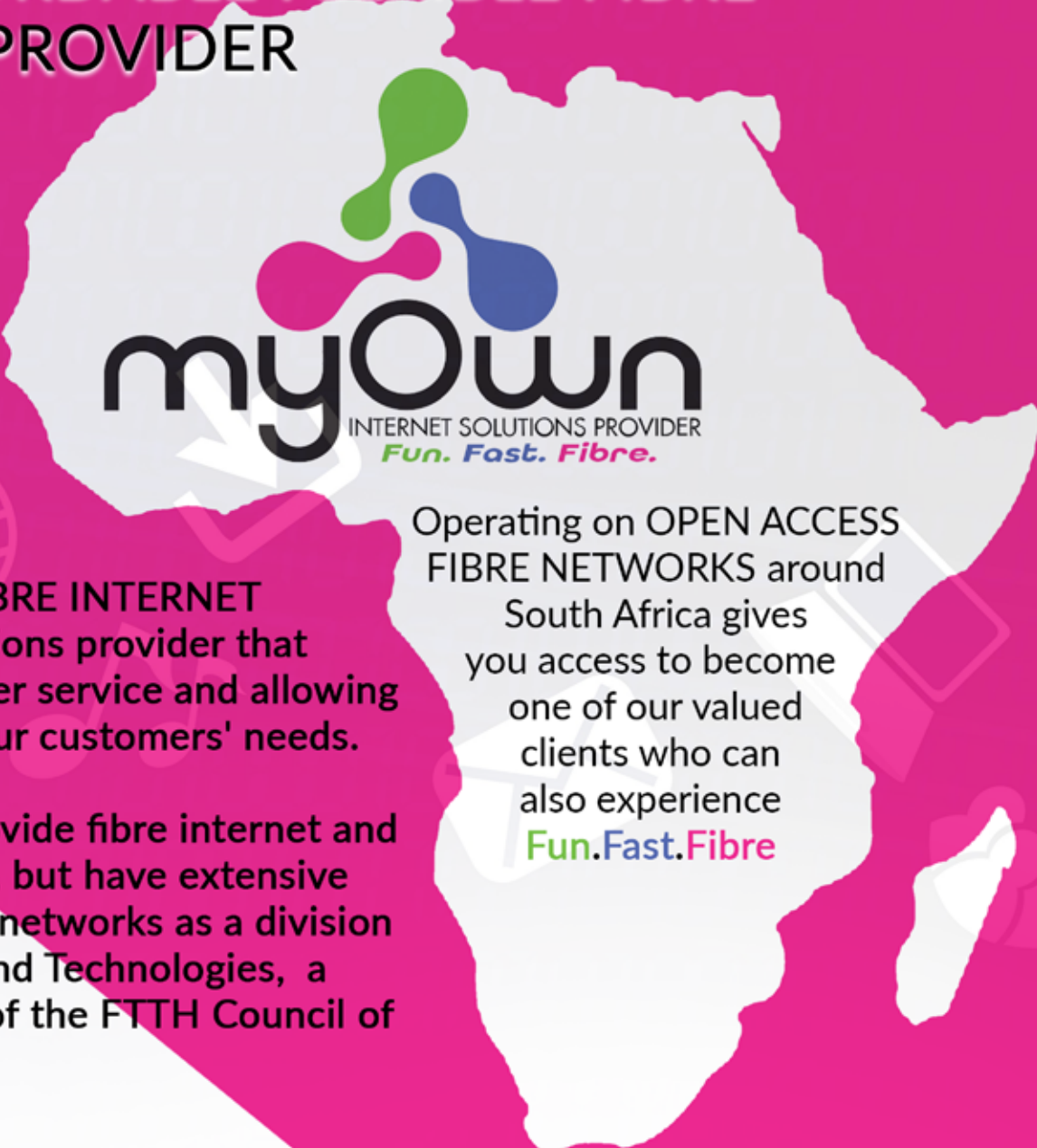
DFA is the premier open-access fibre infrastructure and connectivity provider in South Africa. We finance, build, install, manage, and maintain a world-class fibre network to transmit metro and long-haul telecommunications traffic. We started rolling out our fibre network in 2007, and to date, we have deployed over 14,000 km of duct-

ing infrastructure in major metros, secondary cities, and smaller towns. Our network runs with an industry-leading uptime of 99.98%. We lease our secure transmission and backbone fibre infrastructure and provide associated connectivity services to telecommunications operators, Internet service providers, media conglomerates, tertiary education institutions, municipalities, government organizations, and other businesses, large and small, on equal terms. DFA is a Level 2 B-BBEE Contributor on the ICT Sector Codes. For more information, visit dfafrica.co.za.

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Broadband Infraco & Sentech to merge

Q & A Content delivery service **SENTECH** will be merged with telecommunications services provider **Broadband Infraco** in order to form a singular broadband infrastructure company. The DCA's **Sipho Makhalema** talks to Infraco CEO **Andrew Matseke** about the merger.

1. Please can you tell us about the merger between BBI & Sentech and how the industry stands to benefit from the proposed merger?

The merger of Broadband Infraco (BBI) and Sentech has its origins in the report of the Presidential Review Committee on State-Owned Entities, which was released in 2013. As a result of the recommendations made in the Review, the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS) submitted a motivation for the merger of BBI and Sentech to Cabinet, and this was approved in December 2017. The process of the merger has been formally in place since then.

Late in 2019 the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies formally announced the formation of a State Digital Infrastructure Company (SDIC), to be formed out of the merger of Broadband Infraco (BBI) and Sentech. The State Digital Infrastructure Company will incorporate ICT infrastructure that includes broadband, satellite, cloud and other technologies. The merger of the two (2) entities forms part of the plan that was announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa during SONA, to rationalize certain state-owned entities to avoid duplication.

BBI is committed to supporting the Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies in meeting the objectives of the merger, and the Company believes that this merger will be positive for the country through:

- Optimizing the State assets that are owned by the two entities.
- Enable the presentation of an

end-to-end value proposition to our customers through BBI's optical fibre backbone and Sentech's wireless radio last mile. BBI and Sentech can complement each other to provide a complete broadband infrastructure solution, hence the merger to form the SIDC would be suitable in order to provide affordable services to all communities and industries.

- Enable connectivity and broadcasting capabilities to our customers.
- Optimise the use of digital infrastructure to bridge the 'digital divide'. This opens up a world of opportunities that would otherwise have been denied to people and communities marginalized either geographically (mainly in rural areas where digital infrastructure is not necessarily commercially viable or readily available) or economically (mainly in poor, previously disadvantaged communities who cannot afford the market cost of broadband connectivity) or developmentally (mainly in communities who do not have the digital literacy skills to participate in the digital world).
- Provide the necessary digital infrastructure to enable 'smart government'. This may be either the dedicated digital or hybrid infrastructure required to improve the overall quality of service to citizens and/or to reduce the cost-of-service delivery so that state resources may be optimally utilized.
- Ensure national digital sovereignty by safeguarding and securing government or citizen data to ensure that it is not malicious-



ly accessed or utilized by third parties and by ensuring that key components of digital infrastructure are under the control of the state. Data is the currency of the digital age.

- Champion the provision of smart, intelligent infrastructure to ensure national competitiveness in a hyper-competitive digital world.

2. When is the merger bound to be finalised?

The process of the merger is owned and implemented fully by the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies (DCDT). BBI and Sentech are participants in the process, though they play a crucial role and provide various inputs to the Project. A Project Management Office (PMO) to oversee the merger is located at the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT). The process of the merger is expected to be completed in the 2022/23 financial year.

3. How will the merger assist government to reach its goal of providing connectivity to SA citizens by 2030?

The future SDIC will provide an important, foundational base for the digital infrastructure required for South Africa, and indeed for all South Africans, to participate successfully in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The SDIC will assist in implementing government's plan to connect South African citizens to the internet by 2030.

Accelerating Digital Transformation in Challenging Times

By Pramod Venkatesh,
Inq. Group CTO



Digital Transformation as a topic has been on everyone's mind for the last five years. Every CIO, CTO, CEO must have attended countless presentations on why their enterprise should undergo Digital Transformation, but it rarely moved on the ground as internally it was challenging to quantify this, and most of them followed the option of "Do not fix a process if it is working".

All of this came to a grounding halt in early 2020 when the Novel Coronavirus started to spread across the globe, leading to lockdowns in almost all parts of the world.

Suddenly, for executives, the world moved beneath their feet on how to handle all employees working from home, and with the inability to travel to their different operations, it now dawned to many enterprises who were resisting or procrastinating their digital transformation process that it was no

longer an option but a must if their business had to survive.

And this transformation is not just giving employees laptops or just moving the Meet, Teams, or Zoom meetings. It was about transforming an entire enterprise that had never worked in this fashion before.

For example: Once lockdown was announced, many enterprises faced VPN outages, as their VPN servers did not have enough capacity to operate with almost all their employees connecting remotely. This is just one example of how such companies' IT staff had to work day and night to scale their VPN servers to ensure business continued.

Even in our organization, we had just recently acquired operations in Nigeria, Zambia, and Ivory Coast. With new executives such as myself joining the organization, we were hoping to travel to these

countries to meet the team and familiarise ourselves with their operations, but lockdowns made it impossible. At Inq. however, the default strategy has always been Digital-first. We had ensured that we could not just operate in this challenging environment but also drive value to our operations remotely.

The pandemic is not going to go away (anytime soon), even after one and half years, we are still seeing countries getting impacted with multiple waves and subsequently lockdowns by nations and states to protect their citizens. So in these challenging times, what does Digital Transformation look like, and what points of Digital Transformation stand out which will add immediate value to enterprises operating in these times.

Below are few aspects of Digital Transformation which needs to be considered

Access

Access for employees is one of the most critical aspects of this pandemic; as many employees worked from home in the lockdown, enterprises had to provide them with either laptops or thin clients, which previously were only given to a select few. In addition to providing laptops or thinning clients, it was essential to provide on-demand IT support as not all employees are well versed with technologies. Here, companies had to provide self-help or digital tools to self-diagnose the issues and provide steps to fix the problem and scale their IT support. In addition to this, having an excellent secure meeting platform and providing access to all is equally important. While providing all these tools it is also essential to provide employees with On-Demand training to be able to familiarise these tools and understand how to operate them seamlessly.

Since employees are unable to meet each other and reduce the load on emails that can be missed, investing in an enterprise chat platform such as Teams or Slack is necessary. Otherwise, employees would switch to unsecured platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram to share company data.

At inq., we use Google workspace, which gives us an extensible set of toolsets, enabling us to scale quickly and seamlessly without investing a lot of resources. In addition, inq. also has an AI-enabled self-paced LMS which employees used to get resources on these toolsets and be able to scale up their knowledge.

Security

Security is one of the critical issues many enterprises have faced due to this rapid expansion of employ-

ees working remotely. There have been several instances in the last year where multiple data leaks have happened because of this change. Enterprises have been unable to keep in sync with their Cybersecurity policies when undertaking these massive Work From Home (WFH) exercises. Hence, it is essential to focus heavily on CyberSecurity because many employees working from home, the threat vector has expanded significantly.

Enterprises should ensure every employee's laptop is scanned for malware or viruses and ensure their remote access is not compromised. Enterprises should also add more resources to their SIEM tools to assess and predict any threats that might come about. In addition, employees should be trained to handle, identify and ensure they do not fall prey to phishing, social engineering attacks.

Enterprises should ensure all their Apps are enabled with Multi-Factor Authentication to ensure an additional layer of security.

In inq. we have scaled our endpoint security using Elastic which provides AI-enabled threat detection capabilities. In addition, we have ensured most of our Apps are single signed on with Google Workspace to ensure our employees do not need to remember multiple usernames and passwords. We have encouraged most of our employees to move MFA for their Google Workspace access to add further security to their system

Scale

Due to the massive number of employees working from home the scale and load on platforms have to be well understood. Typically there are three aspects to consider for Scale

- Networks
- Applications
- Security

For the network aspects, enterprises now have to understand that the incoming bandwidth into their DC would increase significantly and ensure the correct bandwidth has been allocated and managed and monitored the same.

From an application's point of view, it is important to know those specific applications will have a higher load, such as Remote Desktop servers, AD authentication, email, DNS. Essential care needs to be taken to auto-scale these applications. These applications should also be considered to be migrated to the cloud or burst into Public Cloud providers if procurement of servers is taking longer for scaling.

From a security point of view, using Network Function Virtualization (NFV) solution for all networking services such as routing, switching, load balancing, security, can be scaled immediately without waiting for procurement as it would take a long time, specifically in this pandemic, where every shipment has been delayed by a couple of months.

At inq. as we are an ISP our networking bandwidth is something we could easily scale. But for other areas we had a cloud-first strategy, hence we never had to worry about scale as most of our critical applications were either SaaS or hosted in the public cloud with automatic scaling. For our Security specifically, we have used NFV to be able to expand our services instantly and be able to scale our security very quickly. In addition, our SIEM is again built on Elastic running on the cloud, which enables us to expand and contract on-demand.

Visibility

Due to executives and employees unable to travel as many countries have either stopped international travel or are in lockdown, it is very important to be able to take quick decisions remotely. The only way to ensure this is possible is by providing an in-depth single frame of glass visibility of all metrics of various business units spread across different countries. This enables executives to get detailed real-time metrics across the organization, enabling them to make data-driven decisions remotely.

To achieve this, enterprises should invest in a centralized business reporting platform and ensure real-time metrics are gathered from various tools and provide visibility to the executive team. Enterprises should first ensure that all their business toolsets provide North-bound API, through which data can be extracted securely and presented in a centralized platform. Providing visibility to all layers of the business is one of the most critical factors which has to be thought about during this pandemic

At inq. we have invested heavily in digital platforms for Sales, Finance, Support, Human Capital, Training, and Monitoring. Through this, all business units can now access a single source of truth data that can quickly identify issues and take actions and enables us to provide value when operating remotely across multiple countries.

Automation

Automation is a key and principal area for Digital Transformation. Almost all Digital Transformation processes speak about automation bringing value to the enterprise. The need for automation has given new light to the state of the pan-



dem, where workers are remote and manual and paper-driven processes can no longer work.

Automation has to be driven in all business units to quickly reduce manual processes, which would take longer as employees work remotely. In addition, as companies scale their business, it is also a fact that hiring workers also becomes a challenge in this environment.

Also, most enterprises in various sectors are seeing declining revenues in this pandemic. Hence to maintain their EBITDA, there is a heavy focus on controlling costs either in Cost of Sales or Opex. The only way to achieve this flexibility is through automation which immediately reduces Opex or maintains it at the same level as the business scales.

Companies should invest in automation platforms and train their staff in automation toolsets such as Python, Go, etc. In addition, companies should try to use Robotic Platform Automation processes to further reduce multiple layers of approvals and increase the speed of execution. Companies should also try to provide where possible self-service capabilities to their customers as well.

In inq. automation is heavily driven into our employee mindset. This has enabled inq. to transform itself during this pandemic to quickly identify places of pain and automate where possible. As automation is a continuous process, we in inq. continuously assess various business processes and try to automate as much as possible.

To Summarize, the pandemic is not going to end soon and hence enterprises need to scale up or accelerate their Digital Transformation process. As across the world, remote working has seen wide-scale adoption, the post covid world would see many companies after seeing the advantage and savings of remote working would continue in this mode. Hence it is imperative that to be relevant in this day, it is very important for companies to not only adopt but also ensure it in a scalable and secure manner and be ready for the future.

At inq. we strive to work with our customers to use our experience in our internal digital transformation to be able to replicate the same. Digital Transformation should never be seen as a fixed project, but rather as a continuous process to learn, improve and transform to be ready to handle any other challenges that may come about.

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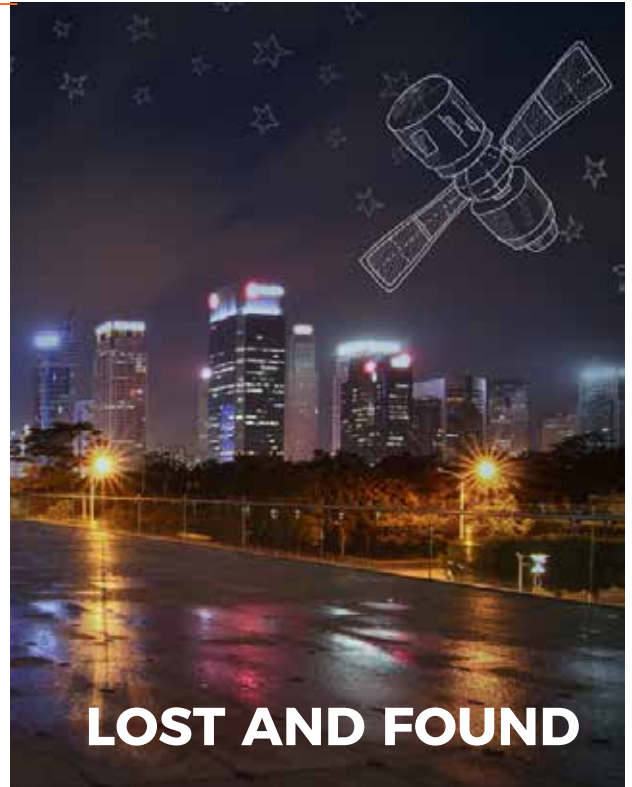
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LOST AND FOUND

The Digital Council Africa has an [*Equipment Monitoring page*](#) on its website. The aim is to curb theft of equipment.

To view a list of stolen equipment, you can access the list [*here*](#).

We encourage members to regularly send through the serial numbers of stolen equipment, and inform us when equipment is recovered to ensure that the information remains up to date and accurate.

Information can be sent to Reesha Iyer at [*reesha@digitalcouncil.africa*](mailto:reesha@digitalcouncil.africa)

In addition, it remains the responsibility of the industry to regularly do spot checks against the serial numbers of contractor equipment to ensure that stolen equipment is identified and that culprits are eradicated from the industry. Companies wishing to purchase second hand equipment should compare the equipment serial numbers against those listed on the website.