CoreNet Global | UK Chapter

Thin Clients, Clouds & Data Centres 1 Nov 2010

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1 November 2010 at Lawrence Graham, 4 More London, Riverside, London SE1

Introduced by:	Greg Koplick	CoreNet UK Chapter, Programmes Committee
Moderator:	Martin Laws	Real Estate Solutions, Deloitte
Speakers:	John Starling	Technology Integration Practice, Deloitte
	Alan Wakeman	Oracle Corporation
	Richard Forrest	Technology Integration Practice, Deloitte
	John Killey	Realty Services, Citibank

Greg Koplick, Programmes Committee, CoreNet UK Chapter, introduced this extended Technical Forum - designed to provide a broad guide to IT infrastructure and the implications for corporate real estate.

Moderator **Martin Laws** then took over, explaining how, in a generally gloomy market, one bright light is the close connection between property and IT. Evolving technology is providing property benefits through virtualisation using thin client technology and Cloud computing - even the public sector is rationalising with the use of the G Cloud.

John Starling, who leads Deloitte's data centre practice in UK explained his part on stage as 'Debunking myths and providing insight into trends'. Leading off he noted controversially, 'The traditional corporate workplace is dead', replaced by a new world of technology and delivery. 'Cloud' he said is 'the delivery of IT through technologically abstracted and commercially flexible models': that is from the web. There is nothing fundamentally new: it can be delivered internally or externally, provides benefits of size and speed of delivery and answers to variable demands. It can provide software, or the platform for that software as a service. The real management challenges are data protection and ownership, and real estate. The challenge for CREs, he said comes from greater mobility, improvements in connectivity and the way people work: more flexibly, more hotelling and most importantly in the disruption of design ideas. It is not just a question of replacing desktops but of considering the consequent reduction in heat generation in offices. It is, he said, Life after Death - the way IT is delivered is changing and with it a whole way of delivering office space.

From Oracle, **Alan Wakeman**, described how the market is taking off for the new thin client technology or, more accurately, desktop virtualisation. Displaying a small box which connects the user to the internet, he described how it contained no disk, no data, all of which is held centrally, gives out no noise, has no fan, no heating and needs no data stick. Called a 'Sunray', it was developed by Sun Microsystems and has provided cumulative savings for Sun relating to IT systems administration and real estate footprint. The savings on power can be enormous as are those on carbon emissions. The opportunities he said are 'huge - simply in terms of cost reduction, and sustainability/CSR targets, to say nothing of increased mobility with security'.

A break for coffee which also offered a chance to see a real time demonstration of the Sun technology, was followed by a further session, this time on data centres. **Richard Forrest** of Deloitte's Technology Integration practice provided a 'primer' on data centre strategy and the related decision processes used by corporates. He told us how blast-proof, purpose-built data centres are still being located round the M25 ring, though remoter sites and tax havens, such as Guernsey and Jersey were also popular. Co-location he suggested is also popular as while data centre strategy can be expensive they do provide essential continuity. While Cloud is suitable for small and low tech businesses, data centres provide the capacity for larger businesses. They also provide energy efficiency - half of all power is lost in cooling systems, and bad management of computers and IT departments can lose an incredible amount of both power and time.

Finally **John Killey**, head of realty services EMEA for Citibank, described the building of Citi's industry-leading green data centre in Frankfurt, the only data centre so far to have achieved a platinum LEED certificate. So discreet that you would almost miss it, it combines cost optimisation, energy efficiency, minimal environmental impact, with reliable performance and, together with one other, replaces nine previous locations. Its green roof and green walls increase roof reliability, water capture provides 'free' cooling systems and a policy of no compromises have combined to produce a building that uses 20% less energy with savings of some 12,000 tonnes of CO_2 per annum. 'Sound environmental design', he said, 'does make sense. But it must be involved from the beginning and not simply bolted on at the end'.

Summing up, Martin Laws commented on the strong evidence provided by the morning's presentations of the critical need for IT and CRE to draw together and work together ever more closely.

Alison Sutherland