WSJ CUSTOM STUDIOS

NTT Communications

WHEN DATA IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF BUSINESSES, HOW CAN IT BE STORED, PROTECTED AND DELIVERED MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THAILAND?

Data is all-important to businesses today. Customer records, transactions and project details are the lifeblood of companies.

Data security is always top of mind. Protecting vital information from hackers and malicious threats is on everyone's agenda. However, what about the risks due to more mundane but frequent occurrences, such as power outages, flooding, earth tremors – or maybe being immobilized and unable to get to business facilities and other sites because of traffic congestion and street demonstrations?

In truth, no company can expect a 100% fail-safe solution. A trusted data center partner, however, can show clearly what contingencies should be put in place, and help businesses continue to operate and serve their customers, even under extreme circumstances.

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO KEEP YOUR DATA?

Selecting a data center is an important decision. It's like choosing the best people for your company and the best location to base a business facility. Pick poorly and your business could be severely impacted.

Some companies continue to host their data in-house or in their own data centers. While this remains customary in Thailand, many companies, especially financial services companies, risk having businesses come to a standstill in a country where power outages are commonplace. The figures are staggering – 40% of Thai organizations suffered unplanned systems downtime mainly caused by hardware,

software and power failures. Of that figure, some 46% experienced losses in revenue as a result, according to the 2014 EMC Global Data Protection Index.[1]

There have been approximately 20 major power outages over the last two years in Bangkok, with each outage lasting from 10 minutes to an hour. While this may be a minor inconvenience to some people, it can spell disaster for time-critical businesses. Imagine a stock exchange having to close for an hour.

Many companies are investing in extra resources, such as backup power generators just to manage these power cuts.

Another major risk faced in Thailand is that of flooding. Keeping IT systems dry might seem an obvious consideration but, in 2011, an unusually heavy monsoon season led to severe flooding in the low-lying Mekong and Chao Phraya river basins, affecting companies' data centers in many parts of Bangkok. The human cost was devastating, and the business

impact felt globally, as companies were unable to operate, manufacture or deliver customer service.

EFFECTIVE DATA MANAGEMENT

A reason many Thai companies host their data in-house or in their own data centers is the relatively lower labor, land and capital costs in Thailand. However, data center management is a highly skilled job, and some companies often do not have the expertise to manage their own data centers safely, efficiently and effectively, in line with global best practices.

Future growth is also a challenge. Gearing up quickly enough to keep up with business expansion can prove a test for companies. The complexities of data center management can hold them back from pursing their core business. This is why it makes sense to colocate data centers with credible and skilled service providers.

COLOCATION - A GROWING TREND

With these challenges, companies around the world are looking to colocation. Essentially, this means a company works with the data center service provider to host their own equipment in the provider's space. The provider supplies the power, the cooling, the connectivity, the security – and the expertise.

[1] Source: EMC Global Data Protection Index, 2014.
    <https://hk.emc.com>
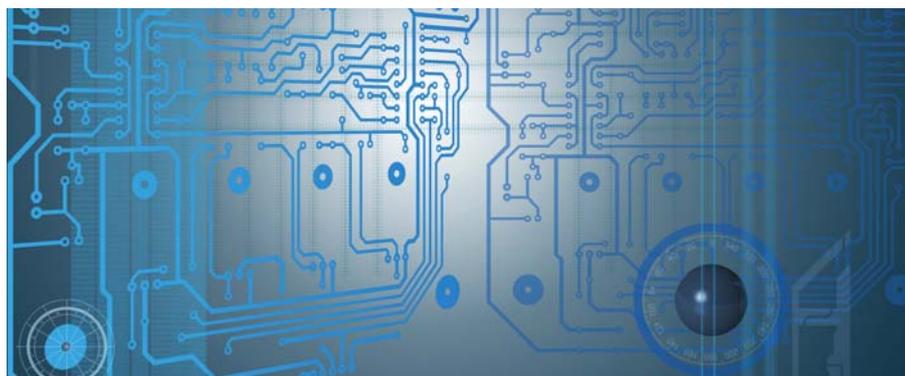
Thailand Bangkok 2 Data Center

According to technology research firm IDC, 60% of data center-based IT assets that organizations worldwide rely on to conduct business and deliver services will be in colocation, hosting, and cloud data centers by 2017.[2]

Richard Villars, vice president for data center and cloud research at IDC, says the key question for organizations is whether they have the insight, capital, and commitment to design, build, and operate data centers.

He asserts that for many, the answer will be 'no', and that they will rely increasingly on third parties to build, deploy, manage, and 'rent' IT capacity and store important information.

A SAFE HAVEN IN BANGKOK

In December 2015, NTT Communications launched its premium Bangkok 2 Data Center in Thailand, with server rooms taking up an area of 3,800 sqm, making it a truly large-scale data center facility for the country.

Built at a cost of US$32 million, the four-story facility is situated in the Amata Nakorn Industrial Estate in Chon Buri, about an hour's drive from downtown Bangkok. It is a high quality data center certified by Thailand's Board of Investment.

The Bangkok 2 Data Center's location is a key attraction for businesses. While close to the city center, it is far enough away to avoid impact from traffic or frequent political demonstrations. It is also built more than four meters above sea level and on solid ground surrounded by floodwalls and dikes, making it a flood-free facility.

In addition to its day-to-day function, the Bangkok 2 Data Center serves as a disaster recovery site for companies with IT assets located in NTT Communications' Bangkok 1 Data Center in central Bangkok. The two data centers are connected by 'dark fiber', which is unused fiber optic cable and allows for a 'belt and braces' approach to data management. With this approach, NTT Communications is able to position itself as a valuable partner for businesses in Thailand.

CARRIER-NEUTRAL ADVANTAGE

The quality of its service extends to connectivity options, too.
NTT Communications' carrier-neutral policy enables the use of multiple carriers to take advantage of redundant networks, making the Bangkok 2 Data Center vital for mission-critical applications and core systems of financial institutions. If, for example, a submarine cable is damaged by an earthquake or a ship anchor, customers can instantly switch to any of Thailand's carriers to avoid service disruption.

Customers can enjoy carrier diversity and a high quality network ensured by NTT Communications' experience in running a global communications network. The use of dual-path power systems – where IT and mechanical workloads are run on separate power infrastructures – also enables NTT Communications to guarantee an enviable 99.9999 percent power availability, which is unrivaled in Thailand.

As the cost of bandwidth in Thailand is expected to fall over the next few years, Hajime Miyazaki, senior director of product and service, and country manager for Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar at NTT Communications (Thailand) believes companies will find colocation with a carrier-neutral data center provider even more cost effective than before. Further, he says the Greater Mekong Sub region is a growing business hub for international companies, particularly from Japan and these companies can quickly expand into the region without worrying about the infrastructure costs of running their own data centers.

Can data be stored, protected and delivered more effectively by outsourcing? With many of Thailand's public agencies also migrating their information systems to new data centers in 2017, the answer is clearly 'Yes'.

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[2] Source: IDC. IDC Reveals Datacenter Predictions for 2015. 09 Dec 2014. <https://www.idc.com/>