

GOVERNMENT DATA MANAGEMENT / TECHNOLOGY / MALAYSIA

EXCLUSIVE - Consolidation as key to achieving more efficient data centres in Malaysia

Representatives from various government agencies in Malaysia gathered to learn more about achieving more efficient data centres at the OpenGov Breakfast Dialogue

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By Dean Koh



Centred on the topic of transforming data centres to be more efficient and sustainable, OpenGov Asia and its partner Schneider Electric organised an exclusive invite-only Breakfast Dialogue at Le Meridien Putrajaya on the 6th of September 2016.

Mr. Mohit Sagar, Editor-in-chief of OpenGov Asia and dialogue moderator began the dialogue, speaking about how important it was for government agencies to be able to reduce costs on running data centres and the most fundamental step was to be able to measure what the agencies currently know about their own data centres. This would then help them be able to accurately evaluate their costs and look into strategic measures to reduce costs.

Mr. Chan Jian Wen, Business Director, Schneider Electric, shared on how data centres are consuming a lot of energy and thus imperative for government agencies and organisations to adopt a long-term journey in running and maintaining data centres.



The guest speaker and former group CIO from Singapore, Mr. Teo Chin Seng (above right), explained that data centres need transformation and summarised three main pointers:

- Data centres can be optimised by consolidation
- Agencies have to 'create less for more'
- Data centres have to be designed to be energy efficient

Dialogue questions and discussion

One of the issues that delegates were most concerned about with the running of data centres was constantly having to 'do more with less'. Mdm Azlina Bte Azman, Senior Deputy Director, Public Service Department of Malaysia, mentioned that indeed it was a necessity for government agencies to 'do more with less' as there is a constant demand for more services both from citizens as well as within the government agencies.

Ms. Rekha Maryanne Louis, IT Officer, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, expressed the same sentiment that was a constant increase in the request for servers and data centres but yet working within the same amount of budget. Mr. Teo replied by saying that it is important to start a journey, beginning with the discipline to put processes together within an agency and set up a governance process to address the various needs.

In terms of one of the main drivers behind data centre optimisation, 50% of the delegates polled that service continuity was very important, even more so than cost management (31%). The main reason, as Mr. Sagar succinctly put, was that government agencies need to constantly "keep the lights on and plan for the future"- in other words, keep providing services and support yet also keep in mind of the future needs and demands.

As a means to reduce cost, Mr. Teo also suggested for government agencies to take in cloud services which are safe and approved, which can be used for in-house trials and pilots before running certain applications full-scale. He emphasised the importance of consolidation of data centres as this would help reduce costs, inefficiencies and enhance service delivery.



Mdm Azlina Bte Azman, Senior Deputy Director, Public Service Department of Malaysia, shared much of her experiences with ICT implementation at the dialogue.

Moving on to the question on whether delegates wanted their respective agencies to own their data centres or outsource them, the responses were quick and 56% polled that they wanted to own their data centres. Mdm Bte Azman explained that she would rather outsource the data centres to MAMPU so that her agency could fully focus on the business and service delivery and having her agency's data centre parked at another government agency would give her a piece of mind.

Mr. Kathirrasan A/L K. Kupusamy, Principal ICT Consultant (System Development), MAMPU, saw Mdm Bte Azman's response as a compliment and it was a good reflection of the willingness of government agencies to work together to enhance efficiency and provide better services to citizens. Mr. Sagar reminded delegates that if their agencies wanted to own the data centres, they have to be able to measure them properly as well and also take into account the necessary security precautions.



Mr. Chan Jian Wen, Business Director, Schneider Electric, encouraged the delegates to share their experiences with data centres.

In closing, Mr. Chan said that the journey towards more efficient data centres was just beginning from the dialogue and delegates can continue to engage and learn from each other at their respective agencies. Mr. Teo also gave very practical and useful advice at the conclusion of the dialogue: given the complexity of work done by public service agencies, there is a need to take a step back and look at consolidation of data centres so that processes can be standardised and they can work towards becoming more energy efficient.