

21 April 2020

COVID-19 and data centres: Bulletin SEVEN

This Bulletin pulls together developments since Tuesday 14th April. Useful links are included in each point and at the bottom.

1. [Key points and actions from catch up call with DCMS](#)
2. [PPE – who is doing what?](#)
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1 Latest update from DCMS

Our latest call with DCMS was on Friday 17th April. There were no major policy changes to report, so we continued to address their information requests. We tabled a number of works in progress: a slide showing where operators sit relative to each other within the range of data centre service offerings (i.e. who does what – see point 3), a suggested approach for collating a list of typical faults in data centres (see point 4), and a simplified representation of interdependencies (see point 5). Members exchanged information on PPE. The next meeting will be on Friday 24th at 9.30. The summary notes of the call are [here](#) (direct link to doc) or available via the insight here: <https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17354-data-centres-and-covid-19>.

2 PPE: What are operators doing?

There is no legal requirement to issue PPE in the UK at the moment but operators want to compare notes so we circulated questions to get a feel for current common practice. In general, most operators are issuing some form of equipment, generally non-medical grade, to front line staff although some operators are not classing this as PPE. The exceptions tend to be where staff work completely individually. Very few are issuing PPE to all visitors although some are asking visitors to bring their own. Several operators are taking temperature at points of entry but to date nobody has been refused entry by failing a temperature test, although multiple operators reported that they had refused access to individuals on the basis of screening.

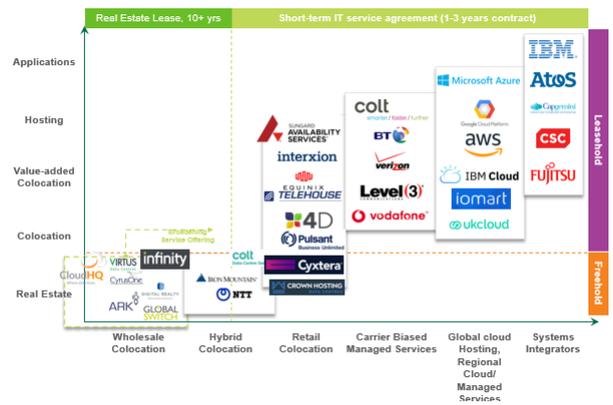
The vast majority of operators would issue more PPE if they could access it but do not want to erode front line supplies, for instance in healthcare where some items are in short supply. During the discussion operators asked about visors, where production does not rely on specialist materials, so domestic production has increased. Visors are available direct from manufacturers like this one:

<https://www.networkmedical.co.uk/ophthalmic/product-type/innovia-face-visor/>

We will publish a more detailed PPE overview shortly.

3 Where do YOU fit in the Data Centre Services landscape

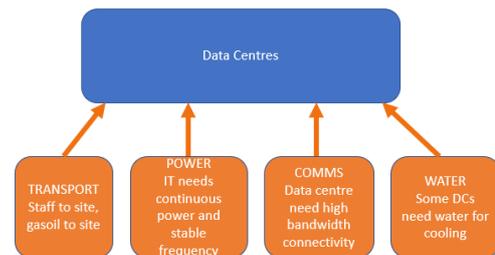
With the help of CBRE, techUK set out a simplified spectrum of data centre services and mapped a sample of UK operators against this spectrum. Operators are invited to add themselves to the chart if they wish, but there is no obligation: the chart is only indicative and not intended to be comprehensive. We will be making further adjustments before we publish the chart to make it clear that some operators provide a wider range of services than suggested, that the landscape was subject to change and that large cloud operators sometimes might run operations from a third party data centre or might operate their own facilities.



4 Interdependencies

We have been asked to map critical interdependencies for the sector. Interdependencies are usually mapped at infrastructure level. For data centres our interdependencies are sectors that we (simplistically) cannot do without. In this context, data centres depend primarily on power and connectivity but also on transport and usually water.

Critical Interdependencies #1



However, when we turn this round to look at sectors dependent on us, the picture is a lot more complicated. Even at infrastructure level, ICT (and by default, data centres) is the most frequently cited key dependency after energy. All utilities, transport, armed forces, central government see data centres as essential, for instance. Economically important sectors like finance, manufacturing and retail are also heavily dependent on data centres. The model is being revised to include additional categories and other refinements and will be posted for further comment shortly.

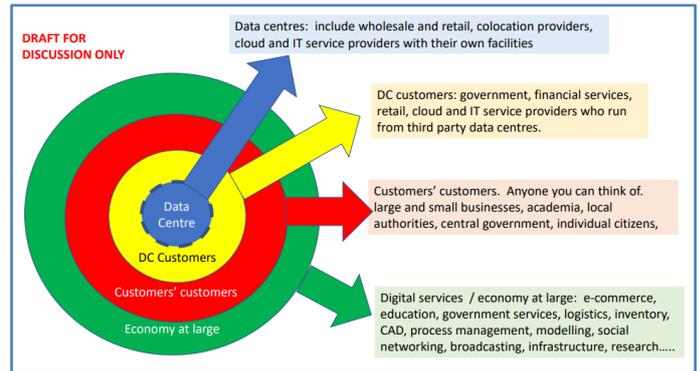
5 Typical Faults

Environment	Fault	How resolved BAU	COVID-impact on likelihood	Covid impact on resolution
M&E	CRAC unit malfunction	Call supplier's specialist engineer, <u>meanwhile</u> pull in redundant unit	Potential increase if maintenance deferred	If engineer unavailable, eat into redundancy
Network				
Compute				
Other				

We are assembling a simplified list of typical things that can go wrong in a data centre, and whether COVID-19 is making those a) more likely to happen and b) harder to address. DCMS want to get a feel for why faults happen and how they are addressed within data centres. This is part of a wider enquiry into managing and mitigating risks to business continuity. Government wants to identify areas where they could or should be providing support of some kind – for instance green routing components through customs or categorising some areas of subcontracting as key worker industries. The table is on the website here: <https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17338-data-centres-and-covid-19-impacts-on-faults> and members are invited to provide input.

6 Risk Timeline updated

Our risk timeline is a purely indicative look at COVID-19 related risks in data centres to compare the way that different risks evolve over time. We recently added extra slides showing the different levels of economic activity dependent on data centres and explaining that, because data centres are infrastructure, outages can have far reaching effects – which is why the sector works so hard to prevent them! These slides too are just indicative as we consider the best way to illustrate and explain these relationships. You can find these drafts [here](#) (direct link to document) or via the insight here: <https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/17298-data-centres-and-covid-19-indicative-risk-timeline-latest-version>. Work with DCMS has started on when, where and why individual risks may be realised and how they can be mitigated. The activity above on faults is also part of this work.



7 Regular catch up calls

Our regular catch-up calls are held on Friday mornings, 9.30 – 10.30, kindly hosted by 4D Data Centres. Access details will be in the email circular the day before. Get in touch if you are not receiving these.

8 Useful links

DCMS Data Infrastructure Resilience Team mailbox: COVID-data-resilience@culture.gov.uk for queries from data centre operators, customers and suppliers. They understand the critical role that data centres play and are ensuring that this is understood across government.

techUK information hub: Don't forget that we are trying to group as much information as possible into the data centre COVID page here: https://www.techuk.org/covid-19-information-hub/data_centres This is a section of [techUK's COVID-19 information hub](#). Which covers broader developments relevant to the tech sector at large.

Operator statements

Digital Realty: <https://www.digitalrealty.com/coronavirus-statement>

Equinix: <https://www.equinix.com/lp/equinix-coronavirus-statement-to-customers-and-partners/>

Equinix: <https://blog.equinix.com/blog/2020/03/26/covid-19-protecting-our-critical-ibx-data-center-infrastructure/>

4D Data Centres: <https://www.4d-dc.com/insight/4d-data-centres-covid-19-latest-response-plan-statement>

UKCloud: <https://ukcloud.com/hub/news/ukcloud-confirms-readiness-to-support-public-services-in-responding-to-the-coronavirus-outbreak/>

LINX: <https://www.linx.net/linx-response-to-covid-19-coronavirus-threat/>

Useful URLs

WHO guidelines: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Latest govt advice: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

PHE: Decontaminating non healthcare environments: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

For further information on techUK's data centres programme see our programme overview:

<https://www.techuk.org/insights/news/item/272-data-centre-programme-overview>

Or visit our website <https://www.techuk.org/focus/programmes/data-centres>

9 Contacts



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