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Jaap van Vliet,
Operations Manager of the CyberCenter

Intelligent 10G Infrastructure for Getronics' Innovative CyberCenter

SYSTEMAX® iPatch® and GigaSPEED® X10D Solutions from CommScope play a central role in new Dutch data housing facility

10 Gb/s network connectivity and an intelligent infrastructure solution are helping the Netherlands' largest ICT service provider to offer better customer services at an advanced new data housing facility. The benefits include quick upgrades, reduced management costs, improved security and more efficient moves, adds and changes.

With worldwide revenues of €2.2 billion and more than 14,000 employees, Getronics is the largest ICT service provider in the Benelux and a world leader in its field. It offers a portfolio of integrated ICT services for the large enterprise market, delivering services to a consistent, global standard.

Since 2007, Getronics has been part of KPN, the Netherlands' main provider of telecom services. As part of KPN it has continued to develop its workspace management, connectivity, data center and consultancy services. These provide employees of large organizations with secure access to information, 24/7, from any location.

The company's CyberCenter in the city of Almere is an example of Getronics' innovative approach to workspace management services. In this new data housing facility, efficient, high performance technology is used to provide power continuity and cooling as well as its data network infrastructure.

From the start of the project, the plan was to equip the CyberCenter with a fully specified 10G infrastructure. This ensures that customers who base their IT facilities in the 5000m², two-storey building can benefit from 10Gb/s networking whenever they wish. All that is required is the installation of suitable 10G electronics.

To provide an infrastructure able to support both 1G and 10G data transmission, Getronics chose CommScope Enterprise Solutions. CommScope's SYSTIMAX[®] product portfolio includes the GigaSPEED[®] X10D Solution, which uses UTP (Unshielded Twisted Pair) copper cabling. This was selected because it is guaranteed to meet the full specifications of the Category 6A/Class E_A cabling standard. It will deliver 10 Gb/s end-to-end transmission performance over a 100 meter connection with four connectors under all normal conditions.

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To ensure reliable operation at 10 Gb/s under all likely operating conditions, CommScope, designed the GigaSPEED X10D Solution using a unique modelling and testing facility. This accounts for all 1024 parameters that determine the performance of 10G UTP cabling.

As well as supporting 10GbE (10GEthernet), the GigaSPEED X10D Solution also gives performance advantages at 1Gb/s speeds. This allows users to benefit even before they invest in 10G active components to upgrade to 10GBASE-T 10 Gb/s networking.

At the heart of the CyberCenter's 10G network infrastructure is the SYSTIMAX iPatch[®] System, part of the SYSTIMAX Intelligent Infrastructure Solution. This provides a range of facilities that reduce network management costs, improve security and helps technicians to change network connections faster and more efficiently.

Through their desktop PC, network administrators have greater knowledge and control over the physical layer infrastructure. They can have real time alerts of any connection changes and direct the work of technicians at the patch panel via a display in the cabinet.

Technicians benefit from step-by-step instruction on making required changes, displayed at the point where the work is done. Light emitting diodes on the patch panels indicate where cords should be connected and confirm when connections have been made correctly. The end result is faster completion of moves, adds and changes with fewer errors.

"The iPatch System gives us a real-time view of the entire physical layer so we are always a step ahead in avoiding situations that might impair the service to our customers," said Jaap van Vliet. "The system works alongside the software we use to monitor active components, giving us a much more complete picture of the network than we would have otherwise.

"It helps us provide data processing services that are more cost effective, reliable and efficient than in-house facilities that customers might build for themselves. Confidence is a key part of the move from in-house to remote data housing, and the iPatch System gives us - and our customers - more confidence that there will be no unforeseen issues in the physical layer."

To provide similar confidence in power continuity at the CyberCenter, Getronics has adopted another innovative solution. Instead of a traditional UPS system with batteries, it relies on the kinetic energy in a flywheel to maintain power until its diesel generators take over.

Its GigaSPEED X10D structured cabling also helps the CyberCenter reduce its environmental impact by avoiding the need for early infrastructure replacement. Installing a solution limited to 1Gb/s would have been less expensive initially. There would, however, be a huge waste of material when it needed replacement within two or three years to meet demands for higher bandwidth.

By opting for a high performance 10G infrastructure solution, Getronics will not have the cost and disruption of premature replacement. Added to this, the GigaSPEED X10D Solution also has enough bandwidth to support energy saving, high density virtual server installations.

Using a single high performance cable in place of several lower performance alternatives also reduces cabling volumes. This leaves more clear space around server cabinets for the flow of cooling air that is vital in any data center.

Commenting, Carl van Bethray Country Manager, CommScope Enterprise Solutions, The Netherlands said: "Energy efficiency and effective cooling are key requirements of the new generation of data centers, alongside increased capacity and reliability. CommScope's solutions can contribute to all these.

"It is easy to forget connectivity in the excitement about other energy saving technologies. But, without the right infrastructure foundations, the full benefits of energy saving advances such as multi-core blade servers and virtualization are not realized in practice."



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