Manchester is ripe for a data centre boom

Richard Tang, managing director of Zen Internet, explains current data demand

ZEN doesn't just believe that Manchester is ripe for a data centre boom; we know it. Having invested £4m in a state-of-the-art north west data centre, we've watched the first phase fill within 18 months of opening. We're now planning for a further expansion, which will see the Data Centre grow by a further two halls.

We also see that demand reflected when we talk to companies. We've just conducted a new survey of businesses in the north west, asking them about their plans, their requirements and their main concerns. 32.9 per cent of those we surveyed are now hosting the majority or all of their systems in a third-party data centre, up nine per cent from the response when we asked that question last year. They also told us that flexibility, lower costs and a pay-as-you-go payment models are pushing them to adopt cloud-based and virtual data centres rather than splash out on their own.

Cloud computing creates opportunities for businesses of all sizes to take advantage of new applications and work more efficiently. It helps small and medium-sized enterprises compete by giving them access to more advanced technology without a huge investment, while providing scope to grow.

According to the survey, Managed Hosting is the most-used outsourced hosting service, with 40 per cent of the respondents who used a hosting service relying on it. The numbers using cloud-based Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and dedicated infrastructure services are growing too, though, at 20 per cent for each.

Why Manchester?

Zen is a north west-based company – we're proud of it – and having a Manchester-based data centre makes

■ **Richard Tang, managing director of Zen Internet**

good business sense. We see big opportunities for business growth in the region, and many of the businesses starting up or coming to it will be reliant on connectivity, web-based applications and data. Buying and maintaining in-house infrastructure will be an inefficient and overly expensive choice for many. Simple scalability, flexibility and cost make hosted and collocated infrastructure the better option for growing organisations. What's more, in Manchester we're easily accessible to businesses across the north west and Yorkshire region. Our Data Centre is connected to a high-speed, resilient network that's among the very best in the UK, and we know we can offer a service to match – and surpass – anything you might find elsewhere in the UK.

To find out more about Zen's North West Data Centre, and about finding your data a Manchester home, email thedatacentre@zen.co.uk