



# Growth company DataCloud already meets storage needs of the future

Cisco is a quality label for data centre specialist

## COMPANY

DataCloud offers its customers tailor-made, high-quality storage and housing services in a brand new Tier III data centre in Erembodegem near Aalst. This unique geographical location makes DataCloud a particularly interesting partner for companies based in Brussels, West Flanders and East Flanders.

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Simple management thanks to homogenous network platform from Cisco
- Data centre services meet stringent customer requirements
- Redundant infrastructure of very high quality
- Flexible and future-oriented infrastructure



## CHALLENGE

DataCloud is a newcomer to the Belgian data centre market, but it was established by experienced people from the sector. The company aims to stand out from its competitors by offering tailor-made, Tier III data storage and housing services of very high quality and redundancy. So it needs to have an infrastructure that meets the stringent requirements of its customers.

“There is a rapidly growing demand for capacity outside a company’s own environment. Companies are going to be outsourcing their IT equipment and applications more and more over the coming years. That’s why they want to be able to call on reliable partners,” says Dominick De Boever, managing director of DataCloud.

For one thing, DataCloud offers its customers pure housing services, where they can rent racks and place their own servers and storage systems in a private cage. The space in the data centre is divided up so that these private cages are available while retaining cold corridors for optimal cooling. Another service is high-density hosting. This offers the advantage that you can provide a very high capacity per rack and still be able to cool the racks thoroughly. The infrastructure of DataCloud has been specially designed to offer

large capacities at a very high density of 22kW in an energy-efficient way.

The critical equipment and applications in the data centre must be operational and available at every moment. To have this assurance, DataCloud is using Cisco’s Nexus technology.

## SOLUTION

For its brand new data centre, DataCloud invested in a flexible and future-oriented network platform from Cisco. The 10 Gigabit Ethernet switches from Cisco’s Nexus range play a key role here. These support the use of virtualization, Web 2.0 applications and cloud computing. DataCloud currently has Nexus 5000 and Nexus 1000 switches, connected to a redundant set of Catalyst 6500 switches. The Nexus 5000 switch also offers support for the FCoE standard (Fibre Channel over Ethernet). This allows the number of cables, adapters and access levels in a data centre to be reduced significantly.

“We chose a complete Cisco design for our data centre,” says Dominick De Boever. “Not just because of the superior computing power but also to provide maximum protection for our customers’

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Dominick De Boever, Managing Director DataCloud

data. Switching is an essential part of this design and Cisco’s Nexus offers a whole range of advantages for a growing data centre such as ours. So for instance it is possible to create a large bandwidth between servers and storage for our customers in a completely redundant way.”

Cisco’s Nexus 5000 also offers DataCloud a number of internal benefits, such as the opportunity to save on costs, expand the data centre and work with a single ‘unified fabric’ thanks to FCoE. “We are a challenger in the market and so we have to fully prove ourselves. So it helps to have Cisco’s reliable technology on your side.”

“The Nexus 5000 is our core data centre switch, the Catalyst 6500 offers additional services. As we grow further, we will probably add



a Nexus 7000 with 10G gates. The Catalyst will then be used for other functions. That is the beauty of a modular architecture – you can evolve with the changing requirements without any problems,” observes Dominick De Boever.

DataCloud itself takes care of the management of the infrastructure of its data centre. The company employs a number of specialists certified by Cisco. “So we didn’t have to call in a partner to install and configure everything.” DataCloud will also soon become a Cisco Premier Certified Partner for Data Centre Network Infrastructure. This is a quality label that indicates DataCloud’s knowledge and experience in the area of data centres.

DataCloud also teamed up with Cisco for the firewall and routing. The work is protected with an ASA 5500. The data centre specialist had already previously installed an IP telephony system from Cisco. “Working in just one environment, where you just have to speak one language, makes the management a lot simpler and what’s more it ensures greater transparency. So as far as our network is concerned, you could just call it an end-to-end Cisco infrastructure: we use Cisco technology both in our data centre and in our office network, and not just for switching and WLAN but also for telephony,” says De Boever. “We also offer Disaster Recovery Office Space, which is completely based on Cisco.”

## USER BENEFITS

DataCloud is a newcomer. It did not decide to take over an existing data centre, but built itself a completely new complex from scratch; one that meets all future requirements.

The decision about the technology provider was made quickly. “Besides Cisco there were two other candidates in the running, which were comparable in price. The difference lay in the transparency of their offer. Because they had incorporated more than one brand in their proposal, we got a patchwork of management systems. This is something we wanted to avoid at all costs. And right away this was the first good reason for choosing Cisco,” explains Dominick De Boever.

“Even more important for us is the support we receive. Cisco’s helpdesk is located in Belgium, not in some far-off country. We work with a small team and we should always be able to call for help when necessary. Now we have four years of support with Cisco Capital EasyLease 0%. As an SME just starting out, this formula allows you to lease Cisco systems or support for four years at zero percent interest. EasyLease gives us the opportunity to work with the best technology and support and still enable our company to grow.”

DataCloud stands out from its competitors by offering data centre infrastructure with a high density. Being able to offer as much computing power as possible in a very limited space is all down to virtualization with blade servers. The infrastructure is very reliable, which means that DataCloud can guarantee very high availability (‘five nines’) of its services.

DataCloud’s initial target market consisted of medium-sized companies in West Flanders and East Flanders. This target group soon expanded when multinational companies and integrators also wanted to rent private cages. “Large companies turned out to be interested in private cages with a high density. I hadn’t initially expected this, but I do somehow understand it,” says Dominick De Boever. “We were immediately able to offer the best and latest infrastructure, which carries the quality guarantee of Cisco. Our strongest point is the high density we offer. In the Belgian market it is unusual to be able to rent 20 racks, each capable of dealing with 20 kilowatts, and which are actually very difficult to cool. One of our techniques for making this possible is ‘fresh air cooling’, where we work in symbiosis with the outside temperature and so cool in an energy-efficient way.”

“We try to stand out from our competitors by working with innovative technology that is nevertheless very reliable. As soon as our customers hear that we equipped our data centre with Cisco equipment, it just removes any barriers, because we are working with a trusted brand. Ultimately this is what counts, also for our customers,” concludes Dominick De Boever.