

Could 2020 be the year of the multi-DC?

By [Tony Bartlett](#)

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2019 was a remarkable time of progression for the data centre market. It was the year when Microsoft launched local Azure sites, officially inducting South Africa into the world of hyperscalars.



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Third-party data centre sites such as Teraco have been growing tremendously, breaking ground for new sites as demand surges. Both are benefitting from the consolidation and centralisation of workloads.

Many enterprise companies have successfully moved development and test environments, as well as fit for purpose production workloads, into the cloud.

These trends didn't start in 2019, but the year revealed how comfortable and prepared the market has become with the nexus between cloud and data centre operations. This relationship will only continue to grow in 2020 as everyone becomes better equipped with examples and experience to start exploiting the many facets of the cloud era.

But what will define this year's contribution to that momentum?

Multi-cloud, multi-data centre and hybrid cloud: these are the trends to watch in 2020. Most enterprises will utilise them in a combination of on-premise and off-premise private cloud, edge and public clouds. Many workloads need to remain on-premise, and several are being brought even closer to the action, considered edge deployments.



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We can expect to see a proliferation of edge data centres, particularly as companies continue to transform and gain insights from the huge amount of data that is being generated at the edge.

Edge sites will become increasingly more relevant where massive volumes of machine, telemetry and other data are being generated. R&D centres, manufacturing facilities, warehouses and hospitals are but a few examples of where edge sites will be beneficial. To analyse these masses of data for real-time data processing and decision-making, it makes sense for the processing to happen as close to the data source as possible. This trend will also drive AI and ML initiatives.

2020 is the year of multi-cloud

Most customers will have workloads running in multiple clouds, these include the cloud platforms of the hyper-scalars and on-premise cloud. Hyper-converged (HCI) and Converged Infrastructure platforms are best suited for on-premise cloud deployments and growth on these platforms will continue to outpace traditional landing platforms.

Managing multiple clouds does present its own challenges – company resources need to be skilled to manage the operational processes for each of these cloud providers in addition to their own on-premise cloud operations.



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2020 will also be the year when technology investments grow to introduce 5G and other emerging technologies. Artificial intelligence, such as machine learning, is spreading fast. Businesses appetite for meaningful outcomes from data will promote a smart mesh across societies, powered by 5G, private LTE networks supported by SD-WAN technologies.

Analysts expect South Africa's data centre market to keep growing in 2020, despite the demanding economic conditions - or perhaps due to them. Companies will continue to experiment with cloud workloads to see if they can get better value or save money. But 2020 will also continue delivering hard lessons to everyone. Companies that don't put in the due diligence, or expect a lift-and-shift operation to provide massive gains effortlessly, will continue to burn their fingers.

Customers are becoming more informed about optimum placement of workloads and providers are more experienced to help them make the right choices. During 2020, those choices will focus more on multi-cloud environments across different data centres, edge locations and intelligent connectivity provided through software-defined WAN networking.

2020 will be the year of multiple data centres - the multi-DC. It may be an HCI system at a factory, a core set of servers at a hosted location or cloud-native workloads sitting at hyperscalars. It will likely be all of those and more, supporting the smart meshes that will power the future.

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