

# Data availability - The next frontier

By  Kate Mollett

20 Aug 2018

The amount of data in our world has been exploding, and business reliance on the ability to analyse and use this data has become a key basis of competition, underpinning new waves of productivity growth, innovation, and customer loyalty.



Source: [pixabay.com](http://pixabay.com)

Leaders in every sector have to grapple with the implications of data, not just a few data-oriented managers. The increasing volume and detail of information captured by large organisations, the rise of social media, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have fuelled an exponential growth in data for the foreseeable future. But what happens when this data isn't available?

Data availability is ushering in a new age of data access, analysis, and insights to benefit organisations the world over. However, with Africa embracing connected devices in sectors as diverse as mining, healthcare, education, and agriculture, there is significant potential for the continent to leapfrog what is being done elsewhere in the world and apply its own iteration of 'hyper-availability – a next level demand for data uptime'.



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Organisations across the continent have an increased awareness of the importance of data availability. There is an understanding that their systems and processes need to be ready to deal with the influx of data and can recover when there is a disaster (man-made or otherwise).

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) especially, many organisations have legacy systems in place and are quite mature from an integration perspective.

However, these countries are looking for ways to operate more cost-effectively and have started to embrace hosted environments from an affordability perspective. This also means that they need to ensure that the processes are in place to guarantee the hyper-availability of data wherever and whenever it is needed.

Considering how mobile devices have permeated across industries, this is an essential part of the business continuity process. The more mature an organisation from a technology perspective, the more open it is to embrace solutions designed to ensure availability whether in a hosted, on-site, or hybrid environment.

## Beyond backup

In these countries, discussions have moved from pure data backup and recovery to those associated with hyper-availability. This encompasses not only availability but the analysis and security of that data, and the need to have it integrated into all aspects of the business environment.

Fortunately, the compliance and regulatory environments across Africa are pushing organisations to be more aware of hyper-availability requirements and the need to ensure private data remains secure. The security aspect of data means business across industry sectors are looking at the operational side of technology and the role it must play in hyper-availability.

From mines to production lines, connected devices to insurance, traditional IT infrastructure has evolved to something that requires more than just backup and recovery. Hyper-availability expands this traditional mindset with the realisation that downtime is not an option. Data has become the top priority of any organisation.

This sees the need to bridge the silo approach of old with a more comprehensive way of managing data in the hyper-available world.

## Convergence

More progressive businesses are embracing a deeper understanding of this data convergence and the importance of leveraging hyper-availability to not only be more competitive but also ensure strategic deliverables are met. Decision-makers are starting to take charge of their availability needs and responding to change faster than in the past.

Already, this has seen our Veeam roadshows in the region, designed to educate companies on the potential that being hyper-available unlocks, attract significant interest. Organisations want to unlock the next level of the availability value-chain by ensuring they can respond faster to data requirements in the digital environment.



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Being open to this hyper-availability approach is a vital step with many in the SADC region showing a willingness to explore the potential of the solutions. With digital awareness at an all-time high, the time is now to drive this new way of thinking.

This sees Africa being able to take the unique requirements of each specific market and integrate that with best practice from other global organisations.

The biggest mindset change required is that data is an asset that must permeate all facets of the business environment. In doing so, all departments inside the business can benefit from its analysis.

For an African business looking to jumpstart this hyper-available readiness, finding the convergence between legacy and digital will be vital. But that cannot begin without the willingness to change, and first, you must determine who will be your data champions.

Once that is in place, the rest will follow more naturally as part of a hyper-available business strategy.

## ABOUT KATE MOLLETT

Kate Mollett is senior regional director at Commvault, Africa South and East.

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