

# AT THE SHARP END



**Jason Connolly** is a director of Next Generation IT. With over 20 years experience within the IT industry, he has seen how quickly the sector has grown. He joined Next Generation IT, which was established in 2003 by Tom Heyworth and Matt Hale, in 2010 and has helped grow the company into one of the island's leading IT specialists.

## WHAT SETS NEXT GENERATION IT APART FROM OTHER PROVIDERS?

Next Generation IT's reputation is built on delivering a reliable, boutique service that is personalised to the client. Businesses need their IT provider to be very proactive, to be part of the team and have a flexible approach. The very personal service we offer means that our clients get to know our staff who have the knowledge and experience to meet expectations.

## IS THERE ONE SERVICE YOU OFFER MORE THAN OTHERS?

We offer a comprehensive range of IT services to a diverse mix of clients but in recent years we have seen a rise in the number of companies seeking help in managing their whole IT requirement. Clients want their operations to be as successful and as efficient as possible. Local businesses have a high dependency on IT as their work is document and e-mail intensive and they need to be compliant with legislation relating to the storage and maintenance of corporate records. By employing an IT company, they are able to access professional IT staff without the overheads of non-revenue staff.

Many of our clients rely entirely on us to meet their IT needs and challenges. This gives them access to skilled and professional IT staff, whilst reducing spend and allowing them to focus on their core business.

## WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT COMPANIES NEED TO INVEST IN?

Email and document management is becoming increasingly popular as it allows records and correspondence to be organised into one, centralised electronic system. This provides the capability to scan paper files and correspondence, and integrate with office applications such as Microsoft Word and Excel so that all documents can be stored together, indexed and searched using words or phrases. Recently, document management systems have adapted to provide tight integration with e-mail software enabling e-mails to be quickly filed against a client without significantly interrupting the sending and receiving process.



JASON CONNOLLY

## HOW CAN COMPANIES REDUCE IT CAPITAL AND OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE?

In Next Generation IT's experience, the way to make savings is to do things properly the first time; listen to a customer's requirements and deliver well thought-out systems that perform and last. Virtualisation, more than any other technology, has enabled us to create efficient and robust IT systems, that eliminate duplication and waste, reduce IT complexity and streamline support.

Hosted or cloud based systems can also be beneficial and one example of where this works well is disaster recovery. Resilient IT systems, which can continue to work even after hardware failures, mean that 90% of invocations can be avoided altogether. For the other 10%, we provide an innovative virtual DR system, where we regularly take an image of each customer's IT systems, and restore to our hosted systems at Next Generation IT. In the event of a disaster, we can bring the client's IT systems up in a fraction of the time taken to rebuild their systems from scratch and restore it.

## SHOULD WE ALL BE IN THE CLOUD?

With the hype surrounding cloud computing, companies could be forgiven for thinking that everyone should be in the cloud. Cloud computing is a general term for anything that involves delivering hosted services over the internet, and is beneficial in certain circumstances e.g. to minimise capital costs in a start-up business. This enables organisations to flexibly buy in specific applications, or their entire IT systems, without investing in infrastructure.

For many organisations, it is imperative that they retain control of their data and that information is kept within the jurisdiction. NGIT provides a local public cloud service called Office Anywhere, where all hardware, software, support and maintenance is provided locally and clients can access their fully-managed system from anywhere in the world. We monitor and maintain the system and backup all data.

As a business grows, limitations in flexibility and performance of public clouds mean that a dedicated system is more suitable. The good news is that all of the benefits of cloud computing are available through a traditional outsourcing model and an in-house private cloud using virtualisation technology.