

# Grasping the infrastructure opportunities presented by deregulation

**T**he convergence of voice and data, the advent of options such as unified communications and the drive towards cost-efficiency has led many organisations to seek a one-stop service offering. Of course, to successfully deliver an end-to-end service of this nature requires genuine depth of expertise, best-of-breed equipment, a next-generation service provider and, crucially, the ability to build the necessary infrastructure.

As an organisation that offers a broad range of integrated telecommunications solutions, Plessey is in the position of being able to provide site build and infrastructure establishment solutions that include everything from towers and masts to civil works and equipment shelters.

“We specialise in the deployment of fibre-optic cable for transmission backbone and metro networks. “Plessey is also able to offer microwave transmission solutions, both point-to-point and point-to-multipoint services. However, the real benefit we have is that, as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dimension Data, we are able to work together with our parent company and fellow subsidiary Internet Solutions to deliver a complete end-to-end solution to customers,” says Howard Earley, COO of Plessey.

“Naturally, the synergies between these organisations are enormously beneficial when it comes to delivering to the exact needs of a customer. Whether working on our own or delivering on a project in close collaboration with Dimension Data, we focus on meeting customer requirements exactly.”

Earley states that this is a very exciting time for Plessey, as the landing of the various undersea cables is the first step

in the delivery of true broadband to the country. However, he points out that the international cables are only one part of the solution. Without terrestrial fibre backbones connecting the major South African cities to these undersea cables, there will still be too many bottlenecks for the real benefits of the increased bandwidth to be felt.

“Several of our clients understand the need to reduce these bottlenecks and deliver long-haul fibre networks. For this reason, they have asked Plessey to project-manage the laying of fibre, while Dimension Data will provide the equipment to light up the fibre. Finally, the day-to-day management of the infrastructure will be handled jointly by our two organisations,” he says.

“By leveraging our strong knowledge base and drawing on our large reserve of local and continental experiences, we will be able to ensure the right solution is delivered to suit all of our customers’ particular needs.

“The recent acquisition of Dimension Data by NTT means we are also now allied to one of the biggest players in the global fibre market. This is yet another string to our bow, as it means we will gain access to NTT’s latest products and solutions, as well as the company’s vast international reservoir of intellectual capital,” continues Earley.

He says that the future thus remains bright for Plessey. Looking at the proposed regulatory changes that are likely to impact the market, he indicates that as new operators enter the South African market, or as existing players seek to deliver services to new areas, business will boom. Market deregulation will provide a welcome boost to the South African telecoms industry as a whole, he says, but as an infrastructure



**Howard Earley**, COO of Plessey

provider, Plessey will be ideally positioned to capitalise on this.

“The near future is also going to see a move towards greater environmental concerns. Going green will no longer be a ‘nice to have’, it will be a must. Clearly we will have our hands full, dealing with the new technologies such environmental concerns will be driving and with implementing solutions that improve overall power consumption.

“Between the new opportunities introduced thanks to deregulation and the changes brought about by green concerns, I expect the next five years to be very busy ones for us. While this no doubt presents us with a whole slew of new challenges, it also opens the door for some wonderful business opportunities,” concludes Earley. **E**

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