

Damian Milkins of datacentre specialist ControlCircle tells *eGaming Review* how technology can help gaming companies through the credit crunch

VIRTUAL SANITY

BY **DAMIAN MILKINS**,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
CONTROLCIRCLE

GAMING COMPANY EXECUTIVES ARE probably more worried this unprecedented fourth quarter of 2008 with the credit crunch and the re-writing of the rulebook of capitalism than they are about technology. Regulation, access to capital and the fickle habits of ever more choosy online punters are probably keeping you up late at night a bit more than, say, server consolidation issues. And as for 'virtualisation' – isn't that a rubbish single from Jamiroquai?

Joking aside, we completely agree that your focus quite rightly has to be 100% on business – but once the dust has settled, thinking about the v-word might actually help you deal with the credit crunch too – at least partly.

Your very own internet

IT people love jargon, so forget virtualisation for a moment and call it: 'Turn your network into your own internet'. Any better? The internet is one massive computer. But the computers in your corporate HQ are just discrete, black boxes with lights that you need to pay people to install, program, maintain, and sell off. As a recent appropriately clichéd Australian business person I sat next to on a plane said, 'Buy computers and you have just bought yourself connections that go wrong.'

Why am I telling you all this? Remember, I promised to help you deal with the credit crunch. A good way of dealing with unpredictable times is to be able to react as flexibly as circumstances require. (Or dictate?) You may need to slim down or resource up to deal with de-

abstract but incredibly powerful high-performance computer on an as-needed basis.

That's why you need to know what virtualisation is. This is a technique now firmly up and running that turns bunches of servers and storage technologies into mini-internets.

Put your trust in ControlCircle

Now forget what I just said. It turns out you don't even need to know that much, really. Because it isn't your job to know about virtualisation let alone the philosophical abstraction that is the network of networks – the internet.

That's my job – or rather, the job of companies like mine that exist to provide high-level enterprise-class computing resources remotely to companies like yours. You can find out more at controlcircle.com but for now all you need to know is that we act as a trusted service provider to a set of enterprise-class datacentres that offer you all the computing power resources – that mini-internet stuff – that you could want.

Our clients include such global leaders as KPMG, RR Donnelley, Rightmove.co.uk and Saga. And gaming companies too, big ones. One such client has over a million registered customers, 300 bets a second and handles five million transactions a day. This client has told us that using our specialist services has meant it can cut the time it takes to launch a new product to the market by six weeks. Another major online gaming company client was able to use our services to open a whole new Southern European country-operation in literally weeks.

The point being: they didn't need to hire their own people to do any of this or build their own datacentres or even look up 'virtualisation' on wikipedia. They were too busy – in good ways – concentrating on building and defending successful businesses and market share.

So what am I saying? Technology is not your enemy; it isn't necessarily your friend. But it is ours. Use specialists to help simplify your life as much as possible. And use the latest IT approaches to make your IT service provision as flexible and eager to please as your credit card used to be. In tough times, there's a need not so much to be tough as knowing when to let experts make your life that little bit simpler – if even just enough to let you get back to watch the 24-hour global financial meltdown reality TV show.

"Technology is not your enemy; it isn't necessarily your friend. But it is ours"

mand as it is today, not next week, let alone what the business plan the bank manager bought into a million years ago (July) says we'll be doing.

And as providers of a fast, responsive, rich online consumer service, that has to be available 24/7, performing consistently and measurably – you need your own internet. You need to be able to harness a diffuse,