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OF INNOVATION

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of The Datasat Group

DATASAT

A lot has changed in 25 years

I'm very proud to think that we've been responsible for a small part of that change. We've had great customers over the last 25 years. They've set us challenges and we've been able to rise to meet them. We've been able to work together to create the right solutions.

When we started, the satellite services market was very new. It provided opportunities to do new things. As the Group has grown, we've always looked at where we can do new things that give great results. It's seen us look at what can be achieved in communications and entertainment solutions.

Today, I know that the Datasat Group still has the pioneering spirit. We want to exceed our customers' expectations – even surprise them – by thinking differently and creating solutions that enhance the experience of individuals and organisations.

Communications, content and entertainment technologies are blurring. We increasingly expect to receive voice, data and rich media information via a single source – a single network – whether at home, in the office or anywhere we want it.

It's exciting and rewarding to work in partnership with customers to deliver solutions that meet their requirements. It's what has got us to where we are today and it's what will take us to where we're going in the future.

Phil Emmel
Founder & Managing Director
The Datasat Group
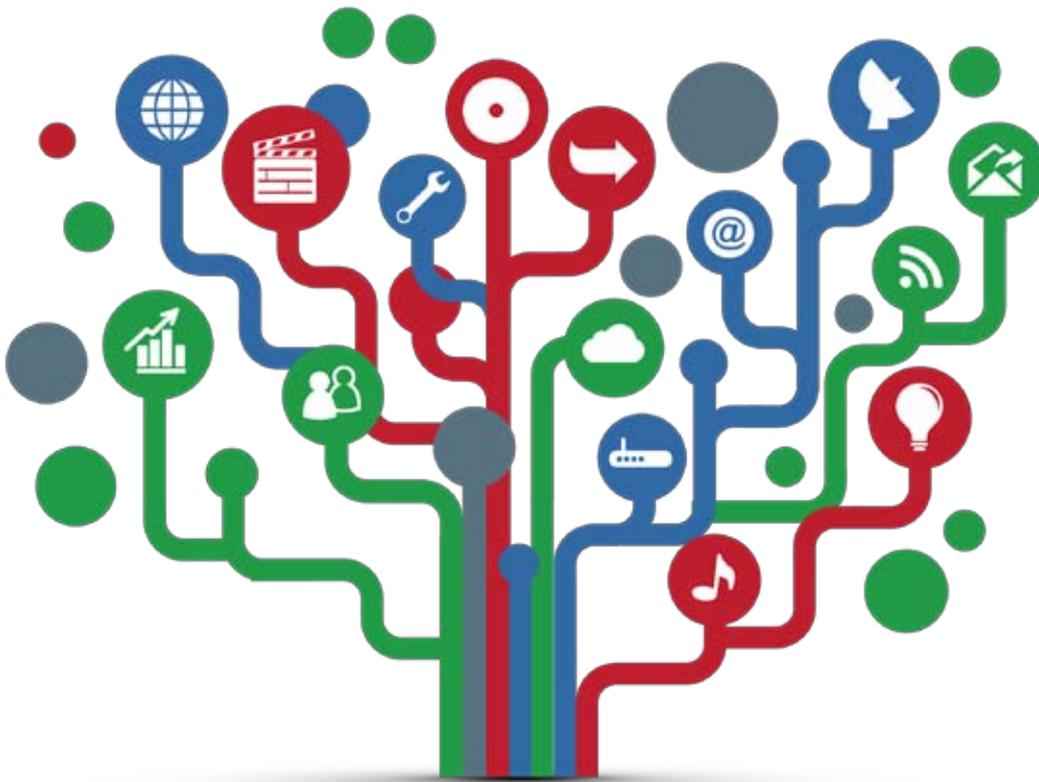
Sound thinking, intelligent solutions

Very few companies can claim to be an early pioneer of satellite service provision while having won an Oscar. Fewer still can also claim to have developed its own wireless technologies while delivering a new level of audio capabilities for home cinema. It has been a busy 25 years at the Datasat Group.

In 2012, Investec named the Datasat Group as one of the fastest growing UK companies in its prestigious Hot 100 list. It represents a recognition of the journey that the Group has taken since its humble origins in 1987. Sporting little but ambitious schemes and bad hair cuts, a small group of engineers established a company to service the growing market for satellite communications. Today, the Group has offices in three continents and customers in over 70 countries worldwide.

With the maturity of the satellite market today, it is difficult to believe just how pioneering was some of the early work of the Datasat Group. It helped establish the satellite network for a UK television company and was involved in introducing real-time trading systems into the city of London. The company consistently demonstrated a willingness to innovate and a determination to provide a solution to meet customer requirements – even if that meant creating it themselves.

Inspiration & Innovation

Our early days established two key elements that have driven the Group ever since: Focused innovation and customer-centric solutions. Every part of the company is committed to delivering bespoke solutions to meet the needs of their customers. Where the products or services that exist don't meet our customer requirements, we develop solutions that will. Key examples of the approach include:

- We have developed a satellite-based global distribution system for digital cinema

- We have developed a switching system to build resilience and performance for a national emergency network

- We have developed rugged wireless systems optimised for video and rich media content

- We have developed digital audio formats used on virtually every movie released today

- We have developed breakthrough audio processors for luxury home cinema

From its beginnings in satellite communications, the Datasat Group has grown to provide a range of communications, content and entertainment solutions and services. We bring the same sense of innovation to every aspect of the business.

Enhancing the possibilities of wireless technology

In 2009, the Datasat Group noticed that more customers were requesting wireless solutions for low cost, flexible last-mile connectivity. We quickly found that none with the correct capabilities existed. Rather than compromise with the technologies available, we developed our own.

The result was a range of rugged and resilient wireless solutions which are optimised for video and rich media traffic to uniquely meet the needs of today's wireless network applications. We have been able to enhance the security, performance and coverage of outdoor WiFi networks. Our solutions address a wide range of customer applications such as video surveillance for public and private organisations, voice and data offload for telecom providers, and multi-service networks for remote communities.

Find out more at www.datasattechnologies.com

Case Study

Delivering an innovative Newspaper Distribution Network

Putting together a daily international newspaper – especially one with many regional variations – requires a high performance, highly resilient and cost-effective network. A publisher with offices in London and Saudi Arabia approached Datasat to design and build voice and data infrastructure to enable effective communications between its three hub sites as well as file transfer to printing facilities in remote locations including Jeddah, Riyadh, Damman, Cairo, Casablanca and Frankfurt.

The network needed to be able to accommodate the exchange of high definition content, collation of the final newspaper and transfer to printing presses on different continents. In addition, telephone networking and video conferencing were required over the same infrastructure.

A VSAT satellite network provided the most secure and reliable approach to meeting the publisher's requirements. However, the challenge was to ensure final copy was transferred to the presses cost-effectively and without data loss. Datasat developed a unique file transfer protocol and fully redundant configuration so that files could be transmitted over the minimum space segment and any lost data automatically re-transmitted to ensure successful file transfer every time.

File transfer was only one innovative aspect of our solution. We developed an automatic switch that allows for the use of a single half duplex link over the satellite network. This allowed two-way communications between London and Riyadh for the transfer of very large files containing high definition magazine content, while saving 50% in bandwidth.

This link also allowed for a video conferencing network without the expense of a full duplex link. When not in use, the video conferencing bandwidth was automatically redeployed for file transfer. A similar approach was established where the telephone network was able to dynamically allocate under-utilised bandwidth to be used as a LAN bridge between the publisher's three hub sites. The result was that the network delivered full LAN connectivity at no extra cost.

The network was fully managed from Datasat's Network Operations Centre in the UK from where the company could easily monitor and control any remote earth station or VSAT link. It is an example of how Datasat employs focused innovation to meet customer requirements.

Converging technologies

For years voice and data networks were treated as very separate entities. Now, integrated voice and data networks are commonplace. At the same time, video information has become an increasingly important traffic over networks. In fact, the latest estimates suggest that video is now the most common traffic over the Internet.

In addition, the development of mobile and wireless networks has added to the options available in delivering communications wherever and whenever it is needed. We have now reached a point where the flow of information happens at an incredible pace. Almost everybody on the planet has easy access to digital information. In mature economies, the Internet is all pervasive at home and in the office. In Africa, there are almost more mobile handsets than people in some countries.

We can now truly say that we live in the information age. But as access to information is expected, the line between information and entertainment begins to disappear. In some areas, Internet use is surpassing TV viewing as a main leisure activity. Technologies are converging and adapting to allow us to do more with the information, content and entertainment resources available to us.

Today, a network is unlikely to be based on a single technology but be a hybrid of communications technologies that allow organisations to achieve the coverage, performance and availability they need. The Datasat Group extended its communications capabilities to include wireless, TETRA and terrestrial technologies as well as satellite.

Next generation of networks

We recognise that to design, build, manage and maintain high quality global communications infrastructure requires the flexibility to deliver voice, data, video and rich media content to our customers' specifications.

These are the networks that will be used to deliver the next wave of entertainment and content applications in areas such as:

- End-to-end movie distribution from studio to home cinema

- Entertainment and educational content distribution to remote communities and remote installations such as mining operations

- Real-time video surveillance transmitted to in-transit first responders and emergency vehicles

- Live events streamed to smartphones and handheld devices

- Tailored adverts and promotions streams to prospective customers at shopping areas, festivals and sporting events

The next 25?

The Datasat Group is committed to continuing to develop the entertainment and communications solutions and services that will help organisations and individuals get the most from this convergence of technologies. Our experience over the past quarter of a century means we are ideally positioned to ensure our customers have access to the optimum solutions for their needs.

We would like to thank everyone that has made the last 25 years so enjoyable. We look forward to working with you as you face your next challenges.

25 Years of Achievement

1987   Datasat Communications is formed

1991   DTS (Digital Theater Systems) is formed

1993   Jurassic Park becomes the first movie to feature DTS sound

1996   DTS sound wins an Oscar for scientific achievement

2000   Datasat Communications begins providing satellite services for large global embassy network

2000   DTS Digital Sound is featured on all major Hollywood films

2004   Datasat Communications begins to provide VSAT satellite services to UK emergency services network

2004   Datasat Communications builds content sharing and distribution broadcast network for SAIC to enable Iraqi Media Networks

2007   Datasat Communications named the 13th largest independent provider of Teleport services in the world

2007   Datasat Communications commenced operations for a major news network organisation's European distribution service

2008   DTS sells cinema arm to the Datasat Group. It becomes Datasat Digital Entertainment

2009   Datasat Digital Entertainment launches AP20, professional cinema audio processing solution

2011   Barco and Datasat partner on Auro3D. Datasat develops the AP24 3D to deliver audio processing for 3D sound

2012   The Datasat Group named in the Investec Hot 100 list of UK companies

2012   Datasat Digital Entertainment launches the RS20i, the first home cinema audio processor built on professional cinema processing technology

2012   Datasat Technologies launches the QuadraFlex DN100 and DN200 range of carrier grade WiFi systems

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