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## IT Life: The Data Storage Philosophy

Duncan Macrae, January 22, 2016, 6:27 am



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**Sof Socratous details the tech adventures of a Seagate EMEA VP**

***Tell us about your company, how long have you been in IT and what are your areas of expertise?***

I'm the EMEA VP of Seagate, a data storage solutions provider, and we develop some really amazing products that help consumers and businesses to create, share and preserve their most critical data and memories.

For me, one of the most exciting projects Seagate has worked on is developing our Kinetic storage platform with CERN openLab. CERN creates data at a truly astounding rate, so it's one of the biggest storage challenges in the world – it's been great to partner with them to help find solutions to that challenge.

I started as a marketing executive for Fujitsu Europe, responsible for developing and implementing marketing strategies before I joined Maxtor Europe Limited. I've been with Seagate for nearly 10 years now and I've developed expertise in sales and marketing strategies across Europe and into some emerging markets. The main thing I've learned is that there is no such thing as "one size fits all" when it comes to appealing to customers in different countries and local markets.



***What's your favourite IT project that you've ever worked on?***

I really enjoyed working with one of our Direct Integration partners to deliver entry-level PC solutions for developing countries. This was a challenging project because we needed to find a way to work with government to build schools, including delivering electricity to power the students' and teachers' laptops and ensure even the most remote areas of these countries had access. For all the challenges this presented, it was nothing compared to the reward of seeing how IT and the industry as a whole can be a gateway to education for children.

***What technologies were you involved with ten years ago?***

It was all about getting drives into laptops and desktops ten years ago. I still remember when the biggest hard drive you could buy had a 5.2GB capacity that cost a few hundred pounds when I started in the industry 20 years ago! Everyone thought "wow – how will anyone fill that up?"

Now, you can get an 8TB cloud storage device that lets you stream instantly from your device, a 6TB NAS hard drive for your business storage, or a video surveillance drive that helps facilitate intelligent analysis of customer behaviours that can improve your business operations. The business landscape for storage has changed so much in just a decade.

***What tech do you expect to be using in ten years' time?***

It's going to be more about wearables (clothes, watches, etc.), and Machine to Machine data creation & communication. In the near future, my car will talk to my Smartphone – and advise it about where I should park due to convenience and cost. My Smartphone will track both my food intake and movement, and advise me of the health risks I may face through data analysis & statistics – while at the same time informing my doctor who can keep track of my health, and my life insurance company, who can then decide what my premiums should be! It will become more expensive to live unhealthily, and fast food chains will probably be offering healthy options.

### ***What do you think is the greatest challenge for an IT company or department today?***

I think the greatest challenge that IT departments and companies face today is ensuring that their data is protected and secure, particularly as more and more companies move to the cloud and introduce BYOD as part of their IT policy. Those developments present huge opportunities – for instance, Big Data allows a company to analyse its business and uncover trends and patterns to help your company grow, and cloud storage can provide employees with more flexibility about when and where they work.

That said, IT departments need to be prepared to safeguard this sensitive information, and to educate employees on the steps they should take to ensure their data is protected. IT security needs to be a culture within companies, and an integral part of any IT management plan.

### ***To Cloud or not to Cloud?***

I think a hybrid solution is the best option, offering local and off-site data storage and access. Ultimately it comes down to security and local data laws and guidelines, so companies need to assess what's best for them and their everyday needs.

### ***Who is your tech hero and who is your tech villain?***

**Martin Cooper** gets my vote for tech hero for inventing the first handheld mobile phone. The handset of the future is owed to his invention in 1973.

As for my villain, this would be all unsolicited online data. Young people become more exposed than they should be because access is granted too easily.

### ***What's your favourite device ever made and what do you use the most?***

Without a doubt, this has to be the smartphone. I manage my entire life with my smartphone! It's my social life, my calendar, my camera, my alarm, my to-do list, my accountant and even my supermarket. It means I can go about my everyday so seamlessly, and even means I can have a peaceful meal because it keeps my kids entertained (and quiet).

The set-top box for on-demand movies would be a close second. I remember how much I hated VHS recorders – pausing, rewinding and recording TV is a real game-changer.

## ***Apart from your own, which company do you admire the most and why?***

It's a toss-up between **IBM** and Apple. Both IBM and Apple have been able to reinvent themselves in very different ways – IBM moved from hardware to software solutions while Apple moved from a niche market to capturing a broad consumer audience. I think the attraction behind Apple is their ability to deliver a product that no one knew they had to have until they had it.

## ***What did you want to be when you were a child?***

One childhood dream was becoming an architect, because I really admired how much my uncle enjoyed his job and I was always impressed with the new projects or designs he was working on. I'm also a die-hard Arsenal supporter so that usually means one thing when you're a boy and footie fan – you wanted to play professionally for your favourite team. Sadly my skills weren't quite at that level! But I do get to live this dream in a way as a coach for TFA under 10s, which I do every weekend.

***How much do you know about data storage? [Take our quiz to find out!](#)***

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## Duncan Macrae

Duncan MacRae is chief editor at NetMediaEurope, editing TechWeekEurope and ChannelBiz. He previously edited Computer Business Review's print/digital magazines and CBR Online, as well as Arabian Computer News in the UAE.

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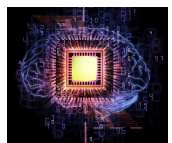
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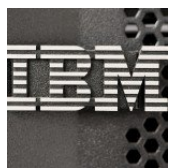
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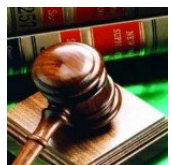
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