

# Network

An ITP Technology Publication MIDDLE EAST



## RIGHT CONNECTIONS

Discussing what lies in wait for local area networks

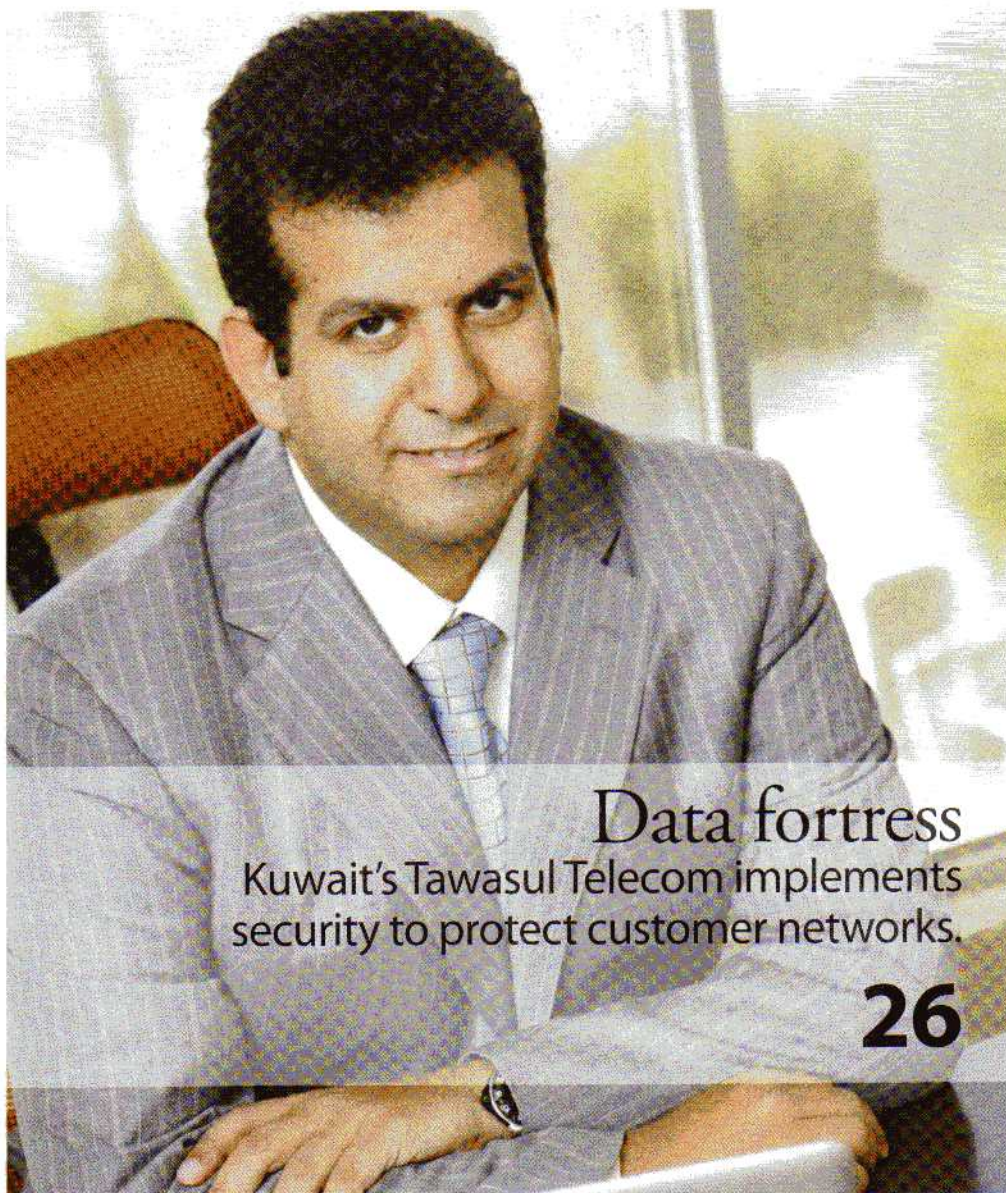
## DATA CENTRAL

Analysing a year's worth of datacentre transformation

# DATA FORTRESS

Kuwait's Tawasul Telecom implements security solutions to protect customer networks

DECEMBER 2008 VOLUME 14 ISSUE 12



**Data fortress**  
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**26**

## Right connections

**34** Local area networks are an integral part of an enterprise infrastructure, but a network is only as strong as its weakest link. NME looks back on the year to examine how enterprise networks have changed and gained in strength.



## In brief

**4** All the latest networking news, including ISU's deployment of Foundry and Blue Coat solutions, Fujitsu Siemens' new labelling project, Batelco's NGN laboratory, MBRF's online network with Syria, and Juniper's latest datacentre solutions.

## Comment: In disguise

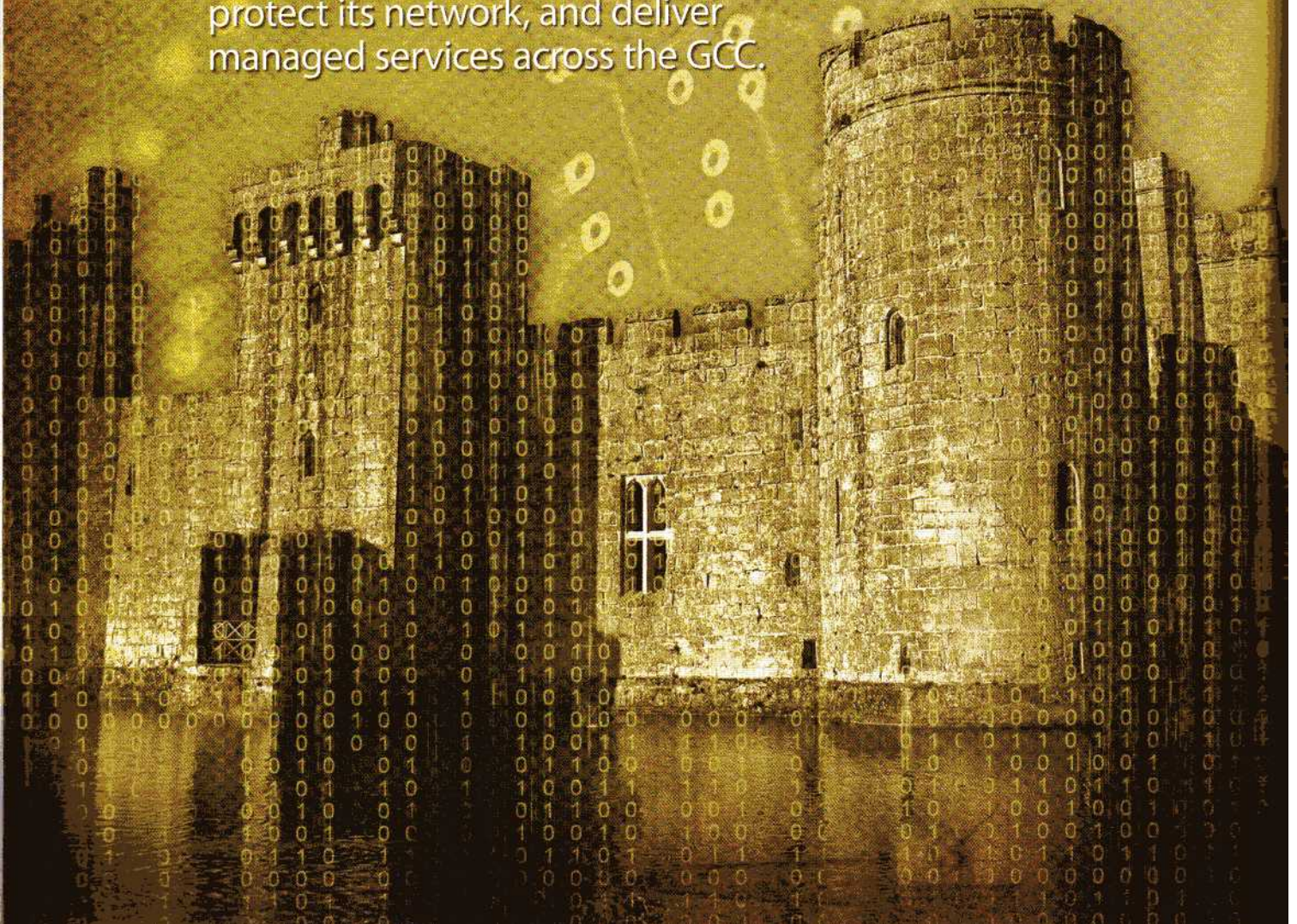
**10** The economic slowdown gives the technology industry in the region valuable time to reconsider decisions and brush up processes. It is up to the industry to use it wisely.

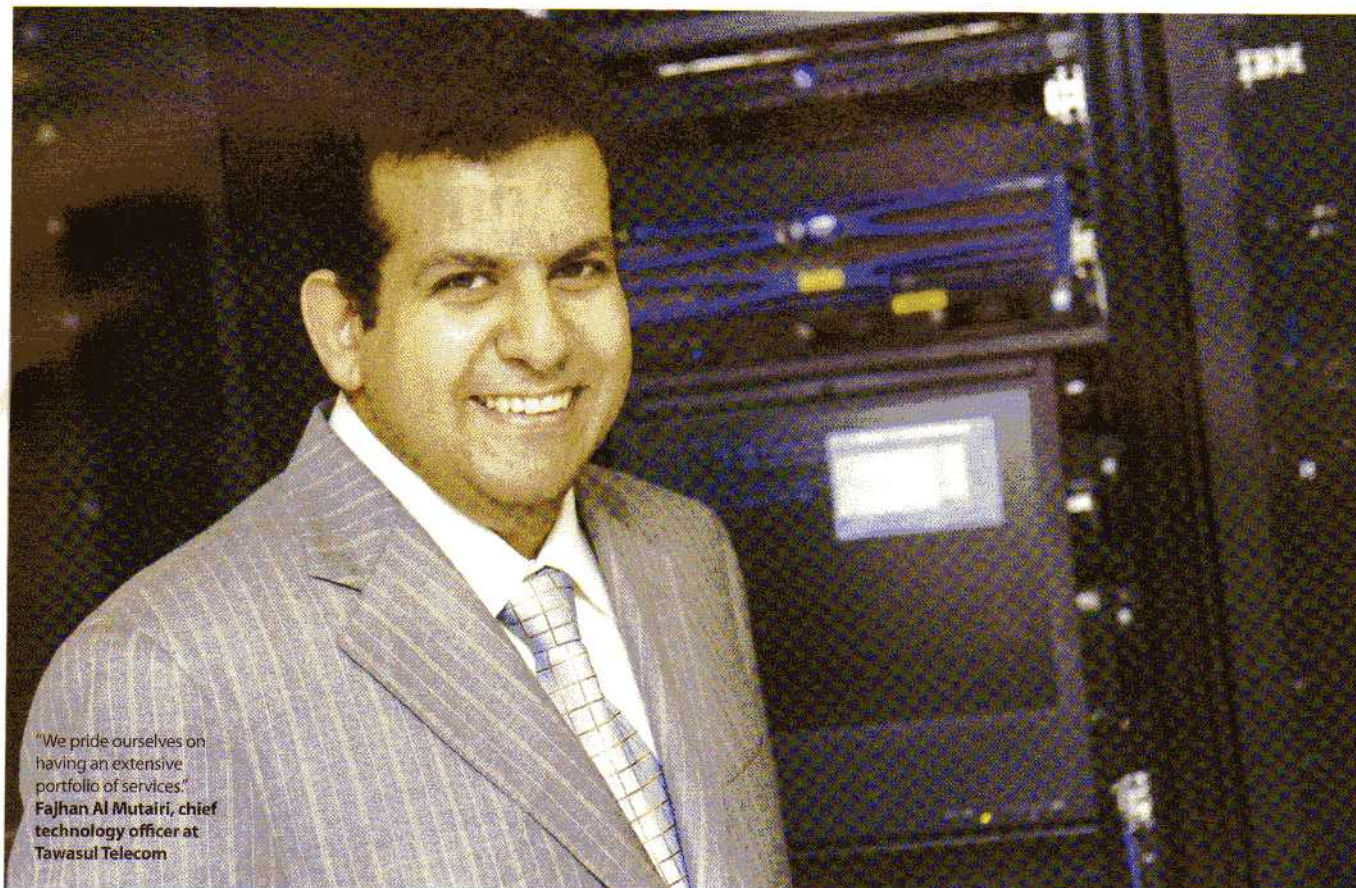
## In depth: Aiming high

**14** Backed by the recent launch of three enterprise solutions, virtualisation major VMWare states that the future holds huge promise for the company in the Middle East.

# Data fortress

Kuwait's Tawasul Telecom has deployed security solutions to protect its network, and deliver managed services across the GCC.





"We pride ourselves on having an extensive portfolio of services."  
**Fajhan Al Mutairi, chief technology officer at Tawasul Telecom**

Tawasul Telecoms is an information and communications technology solutions provider with an intriguing edge. Based in Kuwait, it has points of presence across the GCC, including remote offices in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar. It operates a multi protocol labelling service (MPLS) network, which is designed to provide connectivity along with value added services, to its clients across the region.

"We believe that our edge is provided by the fact that we are the first company in the region to operate a single MPLS network, dedicated to covering the entire GCC," says Fajhan Al Mutairi, chief technology officer at Tawasul Telecom.

Tawasul's core offering is centred on virtual private network (VPN) solutions which are used by its customers to connect to their respective locations across the region.

"On top of the VPN solutions we have layered a variety of services that our clients can use to add value to their purchase. These services include hosted solutions as well as network solutions," says Al Mutairi.

Along with these, Tawasul also provides outsourced services, including managed security services (MSS). Customers are able to choose from Tawasul's mFirewall NET and mFirewall CPE services when it comes to on-site and in-network security solutions.

Included in the MSS offering is the provision and management of all the hardware and software components of the client's security.

Tawasul's network operations centre (NOC) is responsible for this, as well as the 24/7 monitoring, management and troubleshooting of the customers' networks and infrastructure. This service can be accessed through either the company VPN or a standard internet connection.

"We pride ourselves on having an extensive portfolio of services. Our network solutions

include internet and transit services, while hosted solutions comprise, among other things, hosted servers and operating systems. The outsourcing of solutions gives us the ability to

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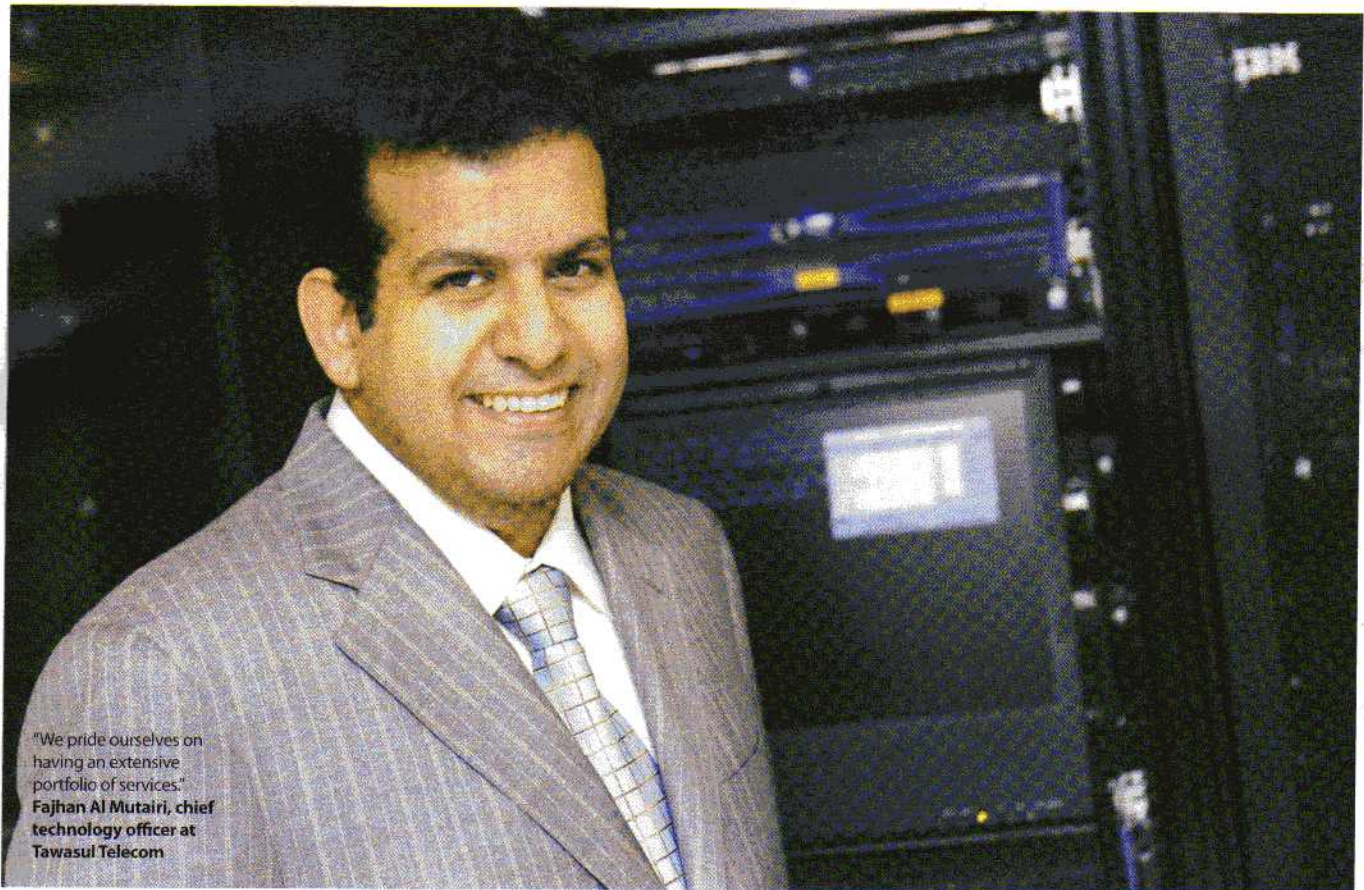
We implemented the solutions just a few months after opening the company and it took just under four weeks for it all to be put in place. The solutions went live around 18 months back, and we could not be happier with the performance.

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Tawasul's internal IT team is charged with handling provision of the company's various services. The team comprises 30 engineers, divided into separate units.

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"Managed security services are extremely important to Tawasul," Fajhan Al Mutairi, chief technology officer at Tawasul Telecom

putting in place the right solution set and creating an appropriate environment to make true its goal.

#### Starting blocks

Established literally from scratch a little over two years ago the service provider was looking to implement security solutions that would not only protect its own internal infrastructure but also form the building block of its MSS solutions for clients.

"We needed to install firewalls within our own network, which would provide controlled connectivity based on the specific user and the information they are allowed access to. In terms of our operations as an MSS provider, we wanted to offer clients reliable and robust network security solutions without them having to take on their own specialised security staff," explains Al Mutairi.

Control of the Tawasul network is accomplished through the enforcement of a security policy and connectivity model based on the least privilege principle, wherein users are given minimal permission to access the various sections of the network.

Tawasul's intention to use its own internal security solutions as a marketable, profit-making offering meant that they had to progress cautiously and with care when it came to the actual selection of the solution that would best fit.

After evaluating the various vendors and security solutions available in the market, Tawasul decided on the deployment of Fortinet's integrated multi-threat solutions.

This included two FortiGate-800 and two FortiGate-500A appliances. Tawasul also deployed a single FortiGate-200A appliance and a FortiAnalyzer device, bundled together with FortiManager.

There were a number of key features and attributes that the telecoms operator considered before making the decision to go with the FortiGate devices.

"We chose Fortinet for a variety of reasons, not least of which was the fact that many of our European engineers had previously worked with the company's products and had reported positively on them. This gave us a lot of confidence about the brand and what it had to offer in terms of security features," says Al Mutairi.

"More importantly though, is the simple fact that Fortinet's FortiGate appliances met both our own infrastructure requirements in our headquarters, as well as those of our customers' premises," continues Al Mutairi.

Tawasul was also attracted to the fact that FortiGate appliances provided a full suite of security functions,

ranging from firewalls through to antivirus and intrusion prevention. The appliances also offer virtualisation capabilities. Each device can be divided to provide the company with multiple and separately provisioned virtual domains.

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#### Tawasul names MSS benefits

- Ultimate customisation of the security service and flexible change management means that the solution can grow and adapt
- Advanced response management means that any security violation triggers an alarm at the NOC
- Permanent threats will see countermeasures initiated and, can in extreme cases, lead to the disconnection of the customer's network from the internet
- Tawasul offers regular service maintenance, with all hardware and software included
- Simple and transparent billing is done on a monthly basis based on the selected solution, the number of customer's sites and the bandwidth selected per site
- One-stop shopping means that the user is provided with the complete solution end-to-end by Tawasul, including all service parts and components

