Careers in the Digital Economy
What have Data Centres Ever Done for Me?

Case study:
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Did you intend to work in the data centre sector? How did you end up here?
Having worked as an IT consultant, marketing manager and ops director until my late 20s, I was not expecting to forge a career in data centres. But this is exactly what happened when I decided to start 4D Data Centres in 2007 with a school friend, David Barker. He had driven through an industrial estate in Byfleet and noticed a sign saying “data centre for sale”. It turned out to be a newly built DC owned by DHL which they were looking to get rid of due to a European wide consolidation project. Along with some financial support from an angel investor, David and I had the right mix of skills to set up, market and manage it.

What do you like about working in the sector? What opportunities do you think data centres offer?
In the early years, for lack of a large technical and operations team, we were very hands-on with the day to day running of the data centre. While this led to many long hours, it gave us both a good insight into all aspects of operating a 24 x 7 facility. 4D has now been operating for over eleven years, and in the intervening period we’ve filled our Byfleet site and opened a new facility near Gatwick. Working within the data centre sector can be very challenging as you are on-call 365 days a year. But it also very rewarding, as you get to work in an industry which embraces cutting edge technology.

What advice would you give to young people trying to decide on a career?
For graduates considering a career in technology, data centres are an excellent place to start. You get exposure to a wide range of disciplines including networking, server admin, facilities and tech support. If you’re fortunate enough to work in a colocation data centre, you get to support hundreds of companies - all of which have different technical demands.

Editor’s note: 4D Data Centres won a prestigious DataCloud Award in 2018 and Jack was also the individual winner of a techUK Data Centre Programme Award in 2015