A Cyber
VIEW

Imagine handling the data on ten million people, six million companies, and nearly a million financial statements every year. Consider the amount of personal and economic data in your hands and the challenges and sensitivities of data integrity and safety.

PAOLO GHEZZI
InfoCamere CEO

Your most **important** work is always **ahead** of you, never behind you

With this sophisticated network, vast quantities of information are now available in real-time, based on an infrastructure that guarantees business continuity around the clock within the highest standards of data security, as Paolo warns that protection of privacy is one of the biggest issues for the company, as it is for the rest of the world.

More worldwide changes

The online nature of the platform was of great help to businesses during the pandemic too.

"We have been using virtualized desktop resources based on a cloud architecture, so you only need a connection and browser to access our data wherever you are, so working from home during the pandemic was not a problem."

The company generally fared well through the crisis. InfoCamere had 24 percent of its 1050 staff already experimenting with a hybrid working culture before COVID hit. When the crisis came, they were able to act quickly and to help others. "It's not easy for a public administration to close its offices, but we were able to set 6000 employees of the Chambers, plus 97 percent of our own personnel to work from home in about a week."

As a leader, Paolo has an inclusive and down-to-earth style. Not only does he know the company's history inside out, principally because he has lived it, but he takes personal interest in every employee and finds this approach works well for him. "I do not have to put on any kind of front of formality; I can simply be myself. Authenticity has many more positive aspects than negative ones."

Milestones

Paolo's longstanding career means that he has a keen eye for spotting milestones in the industry. He discusses how the smartphone has democratised data, allowing many more people to use the InfoCamere database. Whereas previously, entrepreneurs had to apply for pdf files containing the information that they requested and needed office equipment to read them, now they can simply access the very latest data using their phones. This means that "even the tiniest of start-ups, involving even just a single person who might not necessarily have access to sophisticated computer equipment, can still access InfoCamere's database and share its content using WhatsApp from their mobile phone." Paolo smiles as he describes how that may mean that sole traders with little expertise in IT might have to be taught to use their smartphone app by their children. "Still, their access to the business world can now take place ➜

T hat's just a day in the life of Paolo Ghezzi, CEO of Info-Camere S.C.p.A, the IT company for the Italian Chambers of Commerce. InfoCamere manages the high speed and high security communication network that connects every Chamber of Commerce in Italy and their public registers with their branch offices, all in real-time. This digital network assists the Chambers with managing the complex administrative procedures associated with member companies' dealings.

The flow of business

Paolo has been working for the organisation since 1995. The company prides itself on facilitating the smooth flow and promotion of business within Italy, while also allowing overseas companies to form networks with Italian organisations. Through their online Business Register-Registro Imprese Telematico, users can access lists of companies and their profiles and annual accounts, allowing the formation of both national and international relationships on the grounds of trusted and certified information.

Regarded as one of the leading executives in the technology industry in Europe, Paolo originally started as a network engineer for Cerved, a company that later gave birth to InfoCamere. With a combination of technical skills that he learnt at the University of Pisa—"It had a very strong faculty of computer science around that time"—Paolo progressed to senior engineer, then to commercial director and vice general director before becoming CEO in 2015. He describes the feeling of having been "born into the company" and that he grew up with the company and the Internet at the same time, having

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started in the business before the Internet as we know it even existed.

Birth of the cyber age

Paolo explains how in the earliest days, the company was conceived to provide the connecting network infrastructure for a limited number of Chambers. "We were called to be the physical network itself. We had a big mainframe and phone lines, and we started with just that architecture."

Then came a period of big change through the growth of the Internet. "I was called on to build a network to connect all of the Chambers of Commerce offices in Italy." Creating the infrastructure and processes to enable online access to public business information proved a huge task. "Chambers of Commerce in Italy are public entities, and each one is responsible for its own business register. Our team connected and standardised every registry so that they could talk to each other, creating the one national register that exists today."

Cutting-edge technology has facilitated the creation of this centralised data centre, founded on iframe, full visualisation, and real-time data.

D≪LL Technologies
PROGRESS MADE REAL

105 ML €
REVENUE

1.054
EMPLOYEES

1
REGISTERED
OFFICE
IN ROME

1
OFFICE AND
DATACENTER
IN PADUA

1
OFFICE AND
DATACENTER
(REDUNDANT)
IN MILAN

1
OFFICE
IN BARI

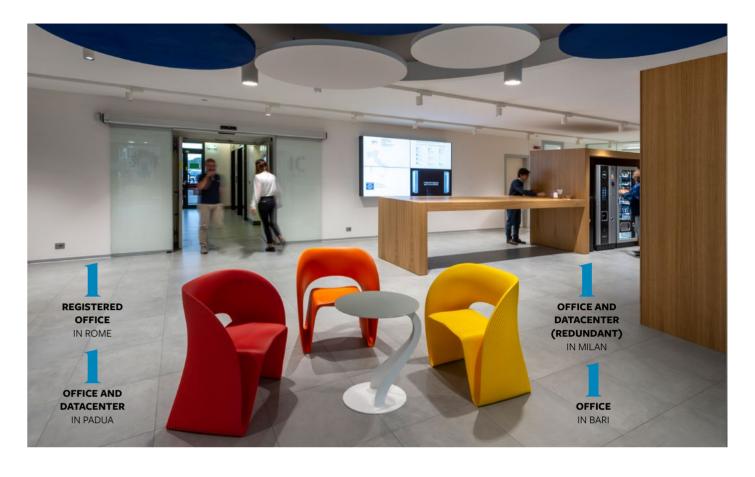from the comfort of their living rooms or anywhere else during the day."

InfoCamere also provides support to and promotes new companies. "We have set up a specific part of our business register to highlight detailed information on start-ups and innovation. At the moment we have about 15.000 of these companies listed in our database, and their number increases every day. One can see who is working in AI, who is doing research in blockchain, who has focused on the circular economy and who is connecting with the world because there are no business borders in the digital world."

Focusing on a positive future

Like an increasing number of forward-thinking CEOs, Paolo is future-focused on sustainability. "We are much involved in developing a green approach to manage our structures and organise our daily life. So we have been working on our data centre, on environmental qualifications and green investments, shifting towards renewable energy sources to run both the data centre and office facilities."

Internally, InfoCamere has deployed four

PRIMARY DC PHYSICAL AREA	1.300MQ	
SUPERVISION	video | h24x surveillance | 365days/year	
ELECTRICAL REDUNDANCY	UPS e Generator Unitssurveillance Overall power 3.800 KVA	
A ENERGY EFFICIENCY	1,71 1,5(2018) | PUE	
PHYSICAL SECURITY	Anti-intrusion, fire prevention and access control system	
TOTAL STORAGE CAPACITY	> 10.000 T8	
PRIMARY DC SERVER	3600 systems physical and virtual	
REDUNDANT NETWORKS	CCIAA NETWORK: 4 x 10 Gbps + 10x 1 Gbps INTERNET: 2x 10Gbps INTRANET PD-MI: 4 x 10 Gbps	
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WORKSTATIONS	Approx. 10.000	
DAILY OPERATION	114 million	
SERVICES DELIVERED LEVEL	154 services, with 99,97% availability	

connected programmes called the '4Ps', which focus on: Place-the workplace, People-the human capital, Planet-the overall environment, and Platform-the IT architecture of the company. The company has set sustainability goals for each of these key business areas. While InfoCamere already uses state-of-the-art technologies, Paolo insists on using ten percent of their annual turnover for innovation, to keep the business at the forefront of new technologies coming down the road, such as blockchain and distributed databases.

Partnerships are another focus for the company into the future. Paolo sees that one of the company's future major investment effort will be in security, and this is perhaps where they will challenge their suppliers to meet their needs for the very best in technology solutions. "We are a demanding company, and we ask our suppliers to be the best too."

Even though the IT industry has been one of the hardest hits over recent years, and the digital landscape is transforming at an alarming pace, Paolo is positive about the future. "There are very big opportunities for IT companies in the 'new normal.' The world has completely changed, and it will continue at a faster pace. Everyone now is aware that technology is a very important part of the future and that we have passed a point of no return. What we need is a wider commitment in governing the digital transformation within a strong framework of accountability and trust."

But Paolo won't let our interview end on data and technology alone. He brings it back to the essence of his leadership style, reminding us that in business, "It is the human-centric approach that can be the solution to build a better future. We can be optimistic and believe in science, innovation and technology to help us, but

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the human factor will always come first." He's right about that.

Strong Partnership

InfoCamere needs to develop supply relationships, in the technological field, which guarantee - first of all - absolute reliability and therefore a very high level of service. Moreover, these relationships must allow the development of evolution and innovation paths, essential for introducing better levels of performance, the search for further energy efficiency, and solutions that guarantee governance in a systemic vision of the various technological components.

In this perspective, the collaboration with Dell Technologies is certainly one of the most satisfactory that InfoCamere has developed over time. Given the position of excellence that Dell Technologies represents in the market, the solutions of this supplier have been adopted in areas essential to the functioning of InfoCamere's datacentre: we are talking about Server / Storage (all layers) / Backup Storage (security) devices. We are pleased to think about this situation as a "technological partnership". ⊘