

Jean James, Microsoft and Lina Tayara, Lets Talk Tech

Data centers: the perfect storm



Lina Tayara
Managing Editor @ Lets Talk Tech | Experienced PD, Marketing Communications

41 articles

September 18, 2023

Data centers are a thriving ecosystem in growth and evolution mode to be fit for purpose of a digital age compounded by an energy and climate crisis.

They are also a cottage industry, little known outside of the players in the sector who hold the world's data and are plugged into grids around the world. This opens up occasional scaremongering in the media. I share here the perspective of a hyperscaler.

Microsoft wants to accelerate carbon free energy technology

I caught up with [Sean James, Microsoft](#) Senior Director of Data Center Research, during [Platform Markets Group #PlatformGlobal](#) congress in Antibes on 4 September where experts driving the next evolution for data centers meet to exchange knowledge and explore collaborations.

I asked him what should people know about data centers and their relevance in the context of the vexing questions of our time. Data growth, energy and water scarcity, and carbon emissions being challenges faced around the world.

Sean believes that as data centers are at the heart of these challenges, they are also part of the solutions. How?

Maxed grid and carbon emissions

Sean situation analysis that data centers are out-growing energy supplies, there will not be enough energy to power what data centers want to do in the next 10 years, echoes the industry woes globally.

That's not just power hungry AI technology, as there will be others too.

The clock to decarbonise is also ticking and regulations need to be modernised to enable carbon free technologies.

Microsoft is not letting a good crisis go to waste

Sean participated in "The Power Roundtable: the future is carbon free energy" session chaired by Simon Tucker, Managing Partner, [Infosys](#) with co-panelists [Eric Lamendour](#), Head of Low Carbon Data Centre, [ENGIE - Energy Market](#), [Paul Stein](#), Chairman, [Rolls-Royce SMR](#), [Oded Gour-Lavie](#), CEO, NT-TAO and Professor [Svitlana Lyubchik](#).

He spoke on how the energy and climate crisis are an opportunity for the power hungry industry to accelerate decarbonisation and revolutionise carbon free energy, for other sectors as well.

Accelerating carbon free energy technology

Thought leader trends and insights are sought after. In this context, especially by the digital infrastructure and energy industries. Sharing what was gleaned to amplify the learnings outside of the physical event, of particular interest to sector leaders, climate tech start ups and to inform the general public of salient conversations:

- It's a great time in the data center industry and the energy industry because of new ideas on how to power the world, carbon free.
- It's a great opportunity for the data center industry to help the energy industry accelerate new carbon free energy technology.
- The data center industry's very expensive buildings with critical power and cooling can be early adopters of new carbon free energy technology.
- Microsoft data centers are rolling out renewable diesel. Hydrogen and small modular reactors are down the road.
- Microsoft and other hyperscalers are going to do what is possible with what is commercially available across the gamut not just with energy.
- Renewable diesel is available now, there is more sustainable concrete to buy, using mass timber framing instead of steel.
- Hyperscalers like Microsoft are going to be early adopters of new carbon free energy tech.
- The problem is the timeline is many decades long. We dont have generations to solve CO2 emissions.
- Nobody is doing the driving and that's the problem.
- Hyperscalers are going to take leadership, the risk of being early adopters and investing in carbon free energy technology.

The video interview

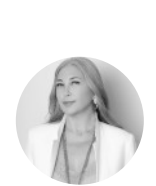
The video of our conversation can be found on our YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/XwFtoY5grHY>

The interview was recorded in Antibes Palais des Congres during Platform Global event. The background is hence lively! We used subtitles for ease of following the conversation.

#digital #infrastructure #engineer #datacenter #Microsoft #hydrogen #climatetech #energy #CO2emissions #smr #nuclearenergy #power #cooling #data

Published by



Lina Tayara
Managing Editor @ Lets Talk Tech | Experienced PD, Marketing Communi...
Published · 7mo

41 articles

The perfect storm faced by data centers globally in this digital age is compounded by energy and climate crisis. The perspective of a hyperscaler of how this presents an opportunity for the industry to accelerate decarbonisation and how Microsoft is willing to be early adopters of carbon free energy solutions. The video interview filmed at [Platform Markets Group #PlatformGlobal #antibes](#) is here <https://lnkd.in/eJFVHQvY>. #digital #infrastructure #energy #climateactionnow #co2emissions #decarbonation #datacenter #energytech #ai #microsoft #hydrogen #smr #powergrid #cooling

Patrick Gunning and 10 others

Reactions

