

'Firms preparing for GDPR by merging with or buying competitors'

COMPANIES are merging or buying competitors in part to make it easier to manage new data protection regulations, a local IT expert has said. Jason Connolly, director at Next Generation IT, pictured, said the way companies prepare for GDPR and local law changes would either enable competitive advantage or create 'burdensome red tape' for local firms. He described it as a 'great opportunity' or a 'giant millstone'. 'We've seen a sharp increase in mergers and acquisitions as businesses scramble to achieve critical mass to afford the increasing levels of compliance and paperwork,' he said. GDPR was having a positive impact on his own hosting business, Mr Connolly added.

'Clients are taking advantage of the robust, secure, controlled, audited and monitored hosted environment we've designed to meet the data protection principles and follow best practices mandated in the new law.'

John Davidson, chief information officer at insurance company FCG, said that as a data-driven business it was looking



forward to GDPR and 'exploring the new opportunities this will bring for our business and our jurisdiction'. 'Many people I have spoken to regard this as onerous or a "cost of doing business", but I and FCG look at the new regulation as an opportunity, not only by potentially helping businesses store and secure their data, but also as one which raises the profile of information and cyber security to board level and thus creates a market for a new style of insurance and assurance proposition,' he said. Mr Connolly added that the tech sector in the UK and the islands had been 'destabilised' by Brexit. Tech firms rely on free movement of labour, he said, and a relatively small UK marketplace, and sterling's devaluation, had made technology products, licences and services more expensive since the leave vote in June 2016.