

Case Study Portus Data Centers

Kunde: Init7

Industry: Internet Service Provider

Use Case: Internet services, access services, backbone infrastructure

Website: www.init7.net



Closer to the network, closer to the customer

When a core router fails and no in-house technician is available, a single question determines the length of the outage: Who answers the phone? Init7, a successful internet provider in Switzerland, has made this question a key selection criterion for its data center partners. The answer led the company to Portus Data Centers and to a collaboration that demonstrates the capabilities of regional edge colocation sites.

For over 25 years, Init7 has been operating as an independent internet provider based in Winterthur, serving both residential and business customers in the national and international markets. The company has achieved the coveted number 1 ranking in the Bilanz Telekom rating for the eighth consecutive year in the category "Best Internet Provider for Residential Customers."

96 percent of all point-to-point fiber optic connections in Switzerland run on infrastructure that Init7 directly operates or manages. This is the core of a business model based on physical control of the network. Approximately 40 core Points of Presence (PoPs) in data centers and 406 access PoPs in exchanges support an independent IP backbone supplying residential and business customers with bandwidths from 1G to 100G.

Init7 has a presence throughout the network, but not everywhere with its own staff. Remote hands – that is, reliable, expert personnel from the respective data center operator – is a fundamental operational requirement. And this is precisely where the real story of the collaboration with Portus Data Centers begins.

A network owned by Switzerland

Init7 sees itself as an eyeball network: The goal is to keep data traffic as local as possible, minimize detours and take latency seriously as a quality indicator. Anyone promising their end customers connections with specific gigabit speeds cannot afford data packets traveling unnecessarily long distances before reaching their destination.

The consequence of this philosophy is a decentralized infrastructure: core routers at regional locations, peering connections as close as possible to the endpoint and exchange connections via local internet exchanges. For Init7, edge colocation is therefore the logical translation of the network design into a physical location strategy.

In addition, Init7 employs a conscious approach to risk diversification: it strategically distributes its PoP infrastructure across multiple regional providers to mitigate risks and limit dependencies.

The Problem with Large Data Center Providers

Anyone who has dealt with large international data center operators over many years develops a keen sense of their systemic weaknesses. Many large data center providers have highly standardized their processes, often to the detriment of the end customer. Anita Meyer, Head of Network and Infrastructure at Init7, has 14 years of experience negotiating colocation contracts and has observed recurring patterns with numerous providers.

Contracts with automatic price increase clauses which are barely comprehensible to the customer. Support that operates exclusively through formal ticketing systems, even for the simplest physical tasks like hardware disposal. And a lack of flexibility for customer requirements beyond the standard catalog.

Flexibility, optimal connectivity and complete control

After a thorough evaluation of the services and contract terms offered by several providers, Init7 chose Portus Data Centers as their colocation data center operator. This decision was based on several factors:

First: Responsiveness. The regional structure translates to low latency and shorter decision-making processes which is particularly noticeable when speed is essential. Second: Flexibility. Requirements outside the standard catalog can be constructively addressed with a regional partner. Third: Cost transparency. There are no annual price increases and no opaque fee structures. Fourth: Reliability. Portus Data Centers provides a consistent point of contact that keeps its promises and remains available in the event of a disruption. This is indispensable for an internet provider like Init7 in critical situations.

"Personally, I greatly appreciate having a trustworthy contact whose word I can rely on instead of having to accept inexplicable price increases every year."

Anita Meyer, Head of Network and Infrastructure.

Portus Data Centers offers internet providers something that traditional hyperscaler models cannot: complete control over their own hardware while simultaneously utilizing a professional data center environment. At Portus Data Centers, the provider's infrastructure operates in an environment specifically designed for the needs of business-critical applications. This includes redundant power supplies, efficient cooling solutions and a stable network connection that functions reliably even under heavy load.

Custom-Made Cables, Real Added Value

How a provider behaves in the event of a disruption only becomes apparent when it matters most. During a critical incident at Init7, Portus Data Centers remained reachable with a dedicated contact person throughout the entire outage. No changes in the support team, no loss of context, no need to explain the situation again. For extended disruptions, where pressure and the need for information increase, this continuity is invaluable.

In another instance, the Portus team once again demonstrated its expertise and flexibility: When a non-standard console cable was required for a specific connection, the technical team manufactured it directly on-site. The alternative – an external ordering process, delivery time and further downtime – was thus quickly eliminated.

"When you rely on local support in a difficult situation you want to have the best possible partner by your side. In our experience, Portus fully meets this expectation."

Anita Meyer, Head of Network and Infrastructure.

Conclusion: Regionality as a Strategic Advantage

The collaboration between Init7 and Portus Data Centers demonstrates that colocation is not just about technology, but also about proximity, reliability and practical support. Edge locations with regional providers are strategically more advantageous for a latency-critical fiber optic network like Init7's than centralized hyperscalers: Short distances reduce latency and downtime. Those operating critical infrastructure cannot afford anonymous processes and global dependencies in cloud or data center environments. Furthermore, with Portus Data Centers, Init7 has gained a colocation partner that meets the increasing demands for scalability, availability and security.