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ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS ADVISORY FOR CHANNEL PARTNERS

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PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

50
QUALIFYING ROUNDS

3,700
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A notch above the norms

ANUSHREE DIXIT
EDITOR
ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM

The dynamism of the Middle East's IT Market can be certainly attributed to the rapid proliferation of emerging technologies into mainstream business, with some key use cases and PoC's at the disposal. Combined with some visible efforts from the region's channel ecosystem that has been pushing the conventions of service delivery, the region is at the threshold of some breakthrough innovations to come through its way.

Rules once written are being revisited, conventions are being defied and the norms are being taken to a new level. Customer-centricity has never been this important and we are seeing some practical efforts from the vendor side in re-setting the standards and criteria of typical service delivery. Enterprise Channel MEA's most recent presentation, The CIO 200—TECHtalk and META CIO Awards played a great role in further establishing this norm, or rather taking it a notch higher. Whilst the awards celebrated the amazing life and career span of CIOs in 4 innovative categories— Next-Gen, Leaders, Masters and Legends, the TECHtalk gave the solution providers and customers a great platform to come face-to-face and find answers for a CIOs challenge in real time.

We also had an opportunity to lend our ears and eyes to some great insights at the Epicor annual user conference – Epicor Insights 2018, held at Nashville from May 22-24. The ERP solution provider has put forward an interesting roadmap in catering to the need of an 'intelligent' business application and investing heavily in 'knowledge-on-demand' model for its products. Read in detail about the event on page 50.

Our cover story on Smart Cities, explores the norms of a basic smart city and need for any country to rise above it to create an all-round model. The June edition also features glimpses into rising realities of VR and the emergence of the Kingdom of Bahrain as a startup haven.

Since we are talking about the changing norms of the market in this edition, as the Editor for Enterprise Channels MEA, it gives me great pleasure to tell you that we have launched 'The Global CIO Forum' during The CIO 200 event (further insights inside). A platform that is all set to address a CIOs 360 degree needs. We truly understand the potential that technology holds in re-inventing the corporate wheel. The GLOBAL CIO FORUM grows IT leaders, speaks with one voice on issues facing CIOs, and builds a vendor-neutral community for safe exchange of ideas and best practices.

Its time to create a new 'Norm'.

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INTELLIGENT WEARABLES

Honeywell launched a handsfree, wearable technology that allows industrial workers to more safely, reliably and efficiently accomplish their tasks in the plant or the field. Honeywell Connected Plant Skills Insight Intelligent Wearables uses a head-mounted visual display that responds to voice and brings live data,

FEATURE STORY

AN ESCAPE INTO THE! VIRTUAL WORLD!


AHMAD KAJOOR, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER AT DUBAI MUNICIPALITY


FADY RICHMANY, SENIOR DIRECTOR AND GM, UAE, DELL EMC

Dubai Municipality Selects Dell EMC to Power Smart Services

Dubai Municipality revealed a strategic collaboration with Dell EMC to create an integrated and agile technology foundation. This landmark project aims at driving the city's advancing innovation agenda and contributing to the overarching goal of transforming Dubai into the world's smartest sustainable city by 2020, by offering digitally enabled services. Ahmad Kajoor, Chief Information Officer at Dubai Municipality said – "We are proud to announce this strategic step forward in our journey of transformation with Dell EMC. As an entity responsible for driving innovation-led initiatives across the city to enhance delivery of smart services and optimize use of resources, we needed an IT foundation that met the mandate for accelerated service excellence".

Fady Richmany, Senior Director and GM, UAE, Dell EMC said – "We thank Dubai Municipality for sharing their futuristic vision with us that aims to provide the citizens and the wider community with sustainable and improved services. By selecting Dell EMC's software-defined solutions, Dubai Municipality has not only established an optimized foundation to meet the current demands of the city, but also leveraged the powerful combination of world class technology critical to their ability to innovate and excel for generations to come. We take great pride in being a part of this smart transformation journey and empower IT to contribute to the vision of realizing a future-forward city."

ETISALAT LAUNCHES FIRST COMMERCIAL 5G NETWORK IN THE MENA

Etisalat launched the first commercial 5G wireless network in the UAE becoming the first telecom operator in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to achieve this technological milestone and set an industry benchmark. Etisalat will be the first operator to have a fully developed commercial 5G network available to provide gigabit internet services to its customers. The network will fuel enterprises digital transformation, IoT, smart cities and the fourth industrial revolution. In the first phase of the launch, 5G fixed wireless services will be provided in selected locations in UAE, which will gradually expand to other parts of the country depending on consumer demand and requirements. The commercial fixed devices and services will be available for consumers starting from September this year.

Saleh Al Abdooli, CEO, Etisalat Group applauded the efforts of the entire team, he said: "Today's announcement is a historic moment for the company as the commercial launch of the 5G network will set a milestone for the UAE. Etisalat today is the first telecom operator in the world to provide this ultra-high 5G C-band data speed as a commercial service over the wireless network.

SALEH AL ABDOOLI, CEO, ETISALAT GROUP

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GIAC CERTIFICATIONS

GDPR Presents Opportunity for Channel; Commvault

Commvault revealed continued business expansion by its ecosystem of channel partners worldwide as a result of the implementation of the Commvault Data Platform as the foundation of wider General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) solutions. The complexity of the IT & business challenge represented by GDPR has enabled Commvault partners to increase the level of strategic engagement and deliver increased value to customers. The Commvault Data Platform has fully integrated application frameworks, capabilities and packaged service offerings all specifically created to help organizations better protect and manage data across all workloads. As a result, Commvault customers are able to obtain better data insights for compliance, eDiscovery and a variety of other digital transformation use cases, including meeting GDPR and other regulatory requirements. Scott Strubel, Commvault Head of Worldwide Channels, said: "The complexities and regulatory requirements of GDPR are such that the channel has a real opportunity to step up and assume the position of technology champion and genuine trustee of GDPR delivery for organizations looking to May 25 and beyond. Through working closely with us, and using Commvault's advanced data protection offerings as the foundation for many of their broader GDPR technology offerings, our partners are not only growing their pipelines, but more importantly growing true, long-term, and successful, customer relationships."

SAP'S PUBLIC CLOUD DATA CENTER GOES LIVE IN KSA

SAP opened their first live Public Cloud Data Center in Saudi Arabia. The launch of the SAP Public Cloud Data Center, which was a part of SAP's 4-year SAR 285 million Saudi investment plan, was announced at SAP NOW, an event in Riyadh, with an audience of hundreds of C-suite leaders. The SAP Public Cloud Data Center is part of the wider Digital Hub, which additionally includes: an open digital platform supporting entrepreneurship, co-innovation with customers, partners, and the wider ecosystem to leverage cloud solutions to solve real world problems, and localization to support the Government's vision and journey into digital transformation. "Today's SAP Public Cloud Data Center launch will deliver a new level of cloud-based digital solutions to accelerate transformation and competitiveness to the Kingdom, underscoring our commitment to Saudi Vision 2030," said Ahmed Al-Faifi, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, SAP Middle East North. "Our in-country Public Cloud Data Center will enable Saudi public and private sector organizations to securely digitally transform their business."

CISCO INSPIRES THE NEXT-GENERATION OF WOMEN

Cisco hosted its annual Girls Power Tech event at its Dubai office, where female students from GEMS, SUNMARKE, DIA and Collegiate American School in the UAE had the opportunity to interact with Cisco executives, technology professionals and other women role models and peers, and hear inspiring stories about their careers and their vision of what the future holds.

Cisco's Girls Power Tech is a global mentoring initiative that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider educational and career paths in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and technology. As part of the initiative, Cisco employees worldwide spend the day with girls age 13 to 18 and engage with them through office visits, tours, presentations, and mentoring. Students get to meet women role models and men who are advocates for women in technology, learning about their career paths and lives in the technology field. They also get the chance to use Cisco's latest TelePresence and collaboration solutions to interact with other girls across the globe and with successful women working at Cisco and elsewhere.

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC, DANFOSS AND SOMFY PARTNER FOR CONNECTIVITY

Schneider Electric, Danfoss and Somfy are partnering to create a Connectivity Ecosystem that aims to accelerate the adoption of connectivity in residential, mid-size building and hotel markets. The partnership brings connectivity for smart homes and smart buildings to maturity by delivering efficient solutions that are easy to integrate and that work simply together. The connectivity solutions are supported by qualified installers, making them simple and easy for customers to deploy.

"Controlling lighting, heating and shutters together in one system is a real expertise that we can now jointly offer by combining more than 300 years of industry leadership – all backed by our extensive professional installer networks. In recent decades, we have also developed a high level of compatibility with other application leaders within HVAC equipment, access control, door entry systems and audio-video." said Lars Tveen, President Danfoss Heating Segment.

"We have already built established connectivity platforms based on our core applications and have experienced significant success with Schneider Electric's Wiser, KNX, C-Bus, Danfoss' Link and Somfy's TaHoma." said Philippe Delorme, Schneider Electric Executive Vice President for Buildings & IT Business. The benefits for hotel operations are seamless integration of systems, providing a consistent and excellent guest experience, while optimizing energy use without impacting customer comfort and health. The solution also allows hotel facility managers to control everything through a single integrated system.

DIFC Signs MoU with Accenture

Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Accenture to foster innovation in the financial services industry globally. Under the MoU, FinTech Hive at DIFC — the first financial technology accelerator in the MEASA region will collaborate with Accenture's FinTech Innovation Labs in New York, London and Hong Kong, to share resources and knowledge on the latest research and trends in financial technology. The agreement will help build long-term relationships across the accelerator's international initiatives, further cementing synergies between the DIFC and Accenture.

Arif Amiri, Chief Executive Officer of DIFC Authority said, "By teaming up with Accenture's FinTech Innovation Labs from around the world, we aim to utilise this demand to support innovation and growth as well as strengthen Dubai's position as one of the world's top 10 FinTech hubs."

Sushil Saluja, a senior managing director in Accenture's Financial Services practice, said, "Accenture will facilitate and create ties between the DIFC accelerator and our FinTech Innovation Labs in Europe, North America and Asia."

CITRIX ANALYTICS SERVICE PROACTIVELY ADDRESSES SECURITY THREATS

Citrix introduced Analytics Service that will provide visibility into company-wide user and entity behavior, system security, performance and operations, and simplify IT infrastructure. Using machine learning and artificial intelligence to detect anomalous behavior and potential threats, Citrix is now able to deliver actionable intelligence from the information gathered via our cloud services and on premises products to help customers proactively identify and manage internal and external threats. Citrix Analytics enables customers to adopt a risk-based security model, allowing them to dynamically balance the needs of users to have rapid access to data with IT's need to secure and govern the environment.

"With GDPR only a month away, companies must focus on knowing where their data is, who has access to it and implementing appropriate technical and organizational security controls. The Citrix Analytics service helps our customers design security into their systems and monitor the security of their data on an ongoing basis," Peter Lefkowitz, Citrix Chief Privacy and Digital Risk Officer.

60 SECONDS

DTP PARTNERS WITH QUINTIQ

Dubai Technology Partners (DTP), signed a partnership agreement with Quintiq, a Dassault Systèmes company. Due to the rapid growth of the aviation industry in the MENA region, this strategic alliance will allow DTP to extend its solution offering and provide its aviation customers with Quintiq's innovative planning and optimization solutions that will help to improve operations efficiency, increase productivity and ultimately positively impact passenger satisfaction and retention.

EVERTEAM PARTNERS WITH QLIK

Everteam partners with Qlik whereby Everteam Global services becomes an Authorized Qlik reseller in the Middle East. This partnership will combine Everteam's content services and information governance with Qlik's practical knowledge in BI data analytics. Everteam, with clients in MEA, Europe, US, and Asia expanded its product portfolio by partnering up with Qlik.

EATON, SAUDI ARAMCO PARTNER WITH IEEE

Eaton, the KSA Division of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), co-sponsored by Saudi Aramco, partnered last week to bring the newest updates in safety management to Saudi's technical workforce. The event titled 'Challenges and Mitigation in Arc Flash and PF Capacitor Applications' brought over 80 officials from some of Saudi's most respected organisations, such as Saudi Aramco as well as students from engineering institutions across the Kingdom.

UNIONPAY AND NETWORK INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATE

UnionPay International and Network International have extended their partnership to include online and contactless (NFC) payments across the country. UnionPay card customers in the UAE can now make purchases via UPOP (UnionPay Online Payment) at over 500 online merchants of Network International, the UAE's largest merchant acquirer. The companies have also collaborated on QuickPass, a secure, efficient and fast contactless payment service by UnionPay, in the UAE, substantially expanding QuickPass' acceptance reach in the country.

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Injazat and MDC BMS Launch Strategic Partnership "TARABOT"

Injazat Data Systems (Injazat) and MDC Business Management Services (MDC-BMS), along with Mubadala Investment Company's Enterprise Technology Services division, have revealed the establishing of "Project Tarabot", a strategic Joint initiative for building a Hybrid Cloud Platform in Abu Dhabi for the Mubadala Group of Companies.

The Hybrid Cloud platform will be aligned to the principle of in-country data sovereignty and will involve a Hybrid of cloud enabling platform technologies from key global vendors.

Project Tarabot will not only enable over 25+ MDC-BMS' existing clients and other Mubadala Group companies to maximize from the Hybrid Cloud Platform but also allow them to deploy new IT services faster and expand their scope of services to the end-users in a scalable and efficient manner. Project Tarabot shall introduce a transparent consumption-based model of "Pay as You Go" for the platform utilization, ease the CIOs and IT Heads from making IT related capital expenditure commitments and allow them to focus on delivering business aligned IT strategic initiatives for their respective organizations. Project Tarabot will be executed in a phased manner over 2018 and 2019. MDC-BMS will lead the IT shared service management functions on behalf Mubadala Group and transition the operational elements to Injazat and leverage the IT services thereof.

HR TECH MENA SUMMIT 2018 CONCLUDES IN DUBAI

The 4th edition of the HR Tech MENA Summit that brought over 350 attendees concluded at the Palazzo Versace in Dubai on May 8th, bringing the curtains down on two power-packed days of presentations and discussions around critical issues affecting the region's HR industry, particularly the impact of technology on workplace productivity and the skills needed for jobs of the future.

The annual Summit, organized by Dubai-based QnA International and officially supported by the UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, provided a rare opportunity for HR professionals in the Middle East to meet and interact with experts and technology leaders from around the world in order to keep themselves — and their organizations — abreast of the latest technological trends shaping the future of work. As part of a new format introduced at this year's edition, the panel discussions revolved around the themes of 'Talent Tech' and 'Learning and Development Tech' on Day 1. The topics on Day 2 included modern talent management practices and the different approaches in driving talent strategy in the digital age, to the rapidly changing role of a CLO (Chief Learning Officer) and the rising need for organizations to make the move from traditional to digital learning ecosystem.

FUTURE BLOCKCHAIN SUMMIT OPENS TO WORLD'S LARGEST GATHERING OF GLOBAL BLOCKCHAIN LEADERS

Future Blockchain Summit hosted by Smart Dubai and organised by Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), opened its doors on May 2nd. During her keynote speech at the opening, Her Excellency Dr Aisha Bint Butti Bin Bishr, Director General, Smart Dubai Office stated: "Launched by H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, the Dubai Blockchain Strategy is built on three key pillars – government efficiency, industry creation and global leadership. In the next two years, 100 percent of all applicable government service transactions will be executed via blockchain. We, at Smart Dubai, are excited to be the official partner of the Future Blockchain Summit where experts, decision makers and industry practitioners will shape the future of blockchain industry."

His Highness Sheikh Khaled Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Partners with GCOX to launch first full licensed celebrity token crypto exchange in the UAE.

"As the widespread adoption of blockchain technology increases, the Internet of Value will expand rapidly. Establishing the region's first ever celebrity tokens crypto exchange in the UAE will generate immense value that will benefit celebrities and their fans alike, and bring vast increases in security and transaction speed," said Chairman Sheikh Khaled Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

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Genesys brings the future of customer engagement

Genesys showcased artificial intelligence-powered customer experience innovations at CX-18 in Nashville, USA and the G-Summit in Dubai, UAE. The customer engagement solutions combine the power of human touch with artificial intelligence (AI) to enable the most predictive customer engagement yet to drive tangible business outcomes, including increased revenue, improved customer satisfaction and greater lead conversion. Since the start of 2017, nearly 700 companies replaced outdated contact centre systems with the Genesys Customer Experience platform. Almost ten percent were from the Middle East and Africa region. “Engaging with customers and understanding their preferences is crucial for businesses to differentiate today. To stay ahead, companies are shifting away from a laggard approach to solutions that utilize AI to enable predictive, contextual and efficient customer experiences.” said Mohamed Afifi, managing director of Genesys in the Middle East. Traditional AI solutions lack the human touch. The Genesys approach to AI is driven by the company’s Blended AI strategy, which combines bots and humans to solve customer problems faster. This is extended by Kate, the personification of Genesys AI, machine learning and real-time analytics, so organizations can deliver personalized, proactive and predictive experiences.

WORLD’S FIRST BARCO CERTIFIED CLICKSHARE TRAINING CENTER AT FVC, DUBAI

Barco has launched its first ClickShare Certified Training Center at FVC in Dubai. FVC is a value-added distributor that provides tangible solutions across essential areas of enterprise computing. Its Barco ClickShare Certified Training Center will provide customized ClickShare training sessions around the latest systems in collaboration technology.

The accreditation program aims to strengthen technology resellers’ relationships with their customers, through offering a more in-depth understanding of the capabilities of enterprise technology systems. With the launch of the first center now complete, Barco plans to accredit more distributors in APAC, EMEA and the US, due to widespread interest from resellers in these markets.

MOVEMENTS

Mimecast Appoints JEFF OGDEN as General Manager for Middle East

Veeam Appoints CLAUDE SCHUCK as Regional Manager Middle East & Cental Africa

Riverbed Appoints ANDY ELDER as Chief Sales Officer

Accenture Appoints KHALED AL-DHAHER as Country Managing Director

NUMBER GAME

$155bn

MENA’s IT spending to expand to USD 155 billion in 2018, Gartner

WEB CLIPS

ETORO ADDS EOS ONTO PLATFORM

eToro, added EOS onto its platform, bringing the total number of cryptocurrency assets available on the site to ten. EOS is the token linked to one of the infrastructures for decentralized applications. EOS is a blockchain-based, decentralized system that enables the development, hosting, and execution of commercial-scale decentralized applications (dApps) on its platform. It will now be available on the eToro platform alongside Bitcoin, Ethereum, Bitcoin Cash, XRP, Litecoin, Ethereum Classic, Dash, Stellar and NEO.

APPCENTRIX ENTERS MIDDLE EAST TO ADDRESS SECURITY

AppCentrix has expanded into the Middle East and signed a distribution agreement with ExtraHop. The company intends to capitalize on the region’s growing need for robust and competitively priced cyber security solutions by introducing its subscription-based managed services model that also drives strategic decision making by delivering data analysis for management insight.

UAE RANKED AS GLOBAL LEADER IN FIBER OPTIC NETWORKS

The UAE has the highest Fiber-to-the-Home penetration globally, with a coverage of 94.3%. A significant amount of this coverage is provided by Etisalat and as part of its commitment the service provider is continuously enhancing this network connectivity. Etisalat is working closely with R&M currently to upgrade and extend its FTTH network with the innovative SYNO dome closure solution from R&M.

EUROPEAN UNION’S GDPR TO REVOLUTIONISE DATA MANAGEMENT

The European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will revolutionise how our personal information is farmed and managed. Businesses, large and small, have had at least two years to prepare for seismic changes to the laws that govern consumers’ rights over data and the day of reckoning is finally here. The GDPR has underscored how fundamentally and increasingly complex it is to navigate the digital world. Some of the world’s largest companies have careened from one cataclysmic data breach to another and Facebook’s recent issues ensured GDPR went viral.

Bahrain Ministry of Foreign Affairs Implements Digital Transformation Project

Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with Batelco and Avaya, has transformed the ministry's communications and collaboration capabilities, with a strategic ICT implementation to connect all ministry employees around the world. The ministry worked closely with Avaya to transform its citizen services by integrating and digitalizing its communications and collaboration capabilities through a two-phased project. With zero interruption to services in the first phase, Batelco's on-the-ground professionals and the ministry's IT team deployed the latest Avaya solutions, linking all regional offices and the ministry in Manama. The second phase of the project is expected to be extended to all ministry employees and embassies around the world.

Commenting on the transformation, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HE Dr. Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa, said: "Responsibility for the safety of our citizens, and the sensitivity behind our work, requires ministry staff to be securely connected and collaborating at all times of the day. This implementation supports such work in line with the Bahrain Vision 2030, built on a foundation of digital adoption, and in commitment to the safety and happiness of citizens and residents who call the Kingdom home." "Being at the forefront of smart technology adoption is significantly improving the way in which government departments like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are able to meet the needs of their most important stakeholders. By connecting all its offices together through a holistic and flexible communications infrastructure, the ministry has shown yet again its commitment to its people, while ensuring efficiency in its operations," said Fadi Hani, Vice President for the Middle East, Africa and Turkey, Avaya.

SERVCORP LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE GLOBAL CO-WORKING TEMPLATE IN UAE

Servcorp launched an innovative new co-working space at Emirates Towers. The co-working space has been designed to deliver a collaborative office ecosystem, suited to the full gamut of business types from entrepreneurs and start-ups to large corporates. The move follows Servcorp's USD 16 million investment to enhance its workspace solutions around the world, which will see the new co-working template offer rolled out across its global network. Taine Moufarrige, Executive Director at Servcorp, said "The global workspace solutions segment has grown significantly in recent years as the changing dynamics in commercial property market have shifted a lot of focus towards flexible and shared workspaces. Co-working is playing a big part in this change. We have made a large investment into innovating in this space and the response from our business audience has been very positive."

CONSUMERS WILLING TO PUNISH AND REWARD DATA PROTECTORS

New findings from a global research study by Veritas Technologies, reveal that consumers have little trust in organizations to safeguard their personal data. With more and more companies suffering data breaches and hackers seemingly one step ahead, almost one in five (19 percent) consumers in the UAE believe most businesses don't know how to protect their personal data.

At the same time, the 2018 Veritas Global Data Privacy Consumer Study also shows that consumers intend to take bold steps in penalizing companies that don't safeguard their data, while rewarding those that do.

With the introduction of stringent compliance regulations that give people more power over their data—like the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)—many consumers are closely scrutinizing businesses and holding them accountable for the protection of their personal data.

The study, commissioned by Veritas and conducted by 3GEM, surveyed 12,500 people across 14 countries, including the UAE. It indicates that consumers intend to reward organizations that properly protect their personal data, and punish those that don't by shopping elsewhere or attacking brand reputations.

AIRBUS' TACTILON DABAT GRANTED WITH 'BEST EVOLUTION TO FUTURE BROADBAND' AWARD

Airbus' Tactilon Dabat has been awarded "Best evolution to future broadband" during the annual International Critical Communications Awards, at the Critical Communications World (CCW) in Berlin. The International Critical Communication Awards were initially established to celebrate the achievements of Tetra manufacturers and users. Split into 9 different categories, the awards have been designed to recognise excellence in the field of Tetra radio communications. In this category, the 11 judges from around the globe were looking for examples of industry-leading innovation and engineering ingenuity in the integration of future broadband capabilities with wireless solutions, products and services. They identified Airbus' Tactilon Dabat solution as the forerunner in the dual use of both Tetra and Broadband networks. "We are thrilled to have been granted this award, which is the ultimate recognition of the excellence of our products, and especially the Tactilon Dabat" said Eric Davalo, Head of Strategic Development for Secure Land Comunications at Airbus.

Noor Bank Enables New Mobile Payment Solution for Emaar

Noor Bank launched a new mobile payment solution for Emaar. As part of this roll-out, various iconic attractions of Emaar such as At the Top Burj Khalifa, Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo, VR Park and Dubai Ice Rink, can now accept seamless mobile payments from Chinese visitors using China's popular Alipay wallet. Noor Bank will handle all transaction settlements in collaboration with UB QFPay as a technical partner, a joint venture between Dubai-based United Brands and China-based QFPay.

John Iossifidis, Chief Executive Officer, Noor Bank, said, "We are pleased to deepen our relationship with Emaar by offering another value-added solution, which is seamless, safe and secure. The solution not only benefits Emaar's businesses but also many other luxury fashion brands, restaurants, entertainment venues, and hospitality outlets operating at key Emaar locations such as The Dubai Mall."

Ahmad Al Matrooshi, Managing Director of Emaar Properties, said: "The partnership with Noor Bank for mobile payments using Alipay will add to the convenience of visitors from China. With the number of Chinese tourists increasing year-on-year and Emaar's attractions being most sought-after by them, this will create significant value for them."

MALICIOUS APPS PERSISTENTLY APPEARING ON GOOGLE PLAY AND USING GOOGLE ICONS

Seven apps have been discovered reappearing on the Play store under a different name and publisher even after these have been reported. A set of apps has managed to reappear in the Play store even after having alerted Google and the original app was removed. The same code was published on Google Play with a slightly different name under a new publisher. This malware (Android.Reputation.1) appears on the Play Store hidden in at least seven apps in the U.S. offering fun, useful, and sometimes insidious features. These include emoji keyboard additions, space cleaners, calculators, app lockers, and call recorders. None of the samples actually functions as advertised on Google Play pages. Once the app is installed, it takes various measures to stay on the device, disappear, and erase its tracks. All of these apps have the same set of tricks designed to take advantage of the device user.

RED HAT UPDATES KVM POWERED VIRTUALIZATION

Red Hat made available its Virtualization 4.2, the newest release of its Kernel-based Virtual Machine (KVM)-powered virtualization platform. Built on the enterprise-grade backbone of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Red Hat Virtualization 4.2 offers significant product updates from a simplified user interface to new capabilities around virtual networking, pairing new capabilities with Red Hat's enterprise-grade reliability and support to lay a more stable foundation for IT innovation. Introduced in tandem with the new version is Red Hat Virtualization Suite, comprised of Red Hat Virtualization and Red Hat CloudForms, Red Hat's hybrid infrastructure management platform, offering a pre-integrated, simplified access point to open virtualization technologies combined with management.

Gunnar Hellekson, Director, Product management, Linux and Virtualization, Red Hat said – "Red Hat Virtualization allows our customers to access the economics, performance and agility they need from their virtualized infrastructure. With enhancements in Red Hat Virtualization 4.2 including improved user interface, user-managed networking, disaster recovery features and tighter integration with the rest of Red Hat's portfolio, we expect organizations to find it even easier to use and manage Red Hat Enterprise Linux hypervisor."

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH IN MSES WILL BE BUILT ON AN ECOSYSTEM PLATFORM- GARTNER

The top two business priorities for CIOs of midsize enterprises (MSEs) in 2018 are growth and digital transformation. However, 57 percent of MSEs are not yet delivering digital initiatives, according to findings from Gartner Inc's 2018 CIO Agenda Survey. "Digitalization has the benefit of expanding MSEs' market horizons — a critical success factor for this size of organization," said Luis Anavitarte, research vice president at Gartner. "As part of an overarching digital business technology platform, MSEs should build an ecosystem platform to strengthen their competitiveness and enable sustainable business growth." Digital business is supported by technology platforms in five areas — the ecosystem, customer experience, data and analytics, information system and Internet of Things (IoT). "As vital as these platforms are, it's important to recognize that they can be built incrementally. By focusing on the ecosystem platform, you can build the digital business technology platforms over time as your digital business expands — and may even find that they are not all needed," said Mr. Anavitarte.

SEAMLESS TRADING EXPERIENCE

"WITH SAXOTRADERPRO, CLIENTS CAN EXPECT TO GET A SEAMLESS TRADING EXPERIENCE AND THE ABILITY TO TRADE IN A MULTI-ASSET ENVIRONMENT,COMBINED WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF CONTROL THROUGH ADVANCED TRADING TOOLS"

CHRISTIAN HAMMER,
HEAD OF PLATFORMS, SAXO BANK

How is SaxoTraderPRO different from previous platforms?

SaxoTraderPRO is a new user-friendly professional grade trading platform for active traders and institutional clients, which is available for both Windows and Mac. While SaxoTraderGO is a platform catered to ordinary investors who need access on the go and cross-device functionality, SaxoTraderPRO has been designed for professional-level trading and is packed with advanced trading functionality, such as Enhanced Trade Ticket with one-click trading, shortcuts and many order types, including algo orders.

What innovations can clients expect that will make their experience more user-friendly?

With SaxoTraderPRO, clients can expect to get a seamless trading experience and the ability to trade in a multi-asset environment, combined with a high level of control through advanced trading tools, fast and reliable execution and extensive options for customizations to fit their individual trading needs. We have worked with the latest front-end technologies such as HTML5/JS/REACT which connect to a single REST API that clients can also access directly to develop their own bespoke functionalities.

What were the biggest challenges you faced during the development of this platform?

Most active traders and institutional clients want to have a set-up that is unique to them based on trading styles, strategy, or individual preferences. That is why a one-size-fits-all platform does not work for this segment of clients and why we put so much emphasis on customizability when we developed SaxoTraderPRO.

Two different prototypes were built, and A/B tested with three in-lab usability studies with prospective and existing clients. A BETA version was made available to selected international clients and internal staff 12 months before the official launch. This resulted in more than 500 ideas in a feedback process that allowed clients to interact with us directly. Many of these ideas have now been implemented in time for the official launch and the rest forming the basis of our development pipeline.

What are the benefits of building the platform with an Open API?

The main advantages of building SaxoTraderPRO on an Open API is that it enables rapid feature development and it allows outside developers, such as from white label client companies, the ability to have their own functionality programmed on top of our platform. What we see more and more from our white label partners is that they want to control the user journey of their clients much more, they are much more focused on making sure that their clients get a consistent and integrated user journey from their other net bank applications, or their own Android or IOS apps. In order to maintain this control, they utilize the Saxo Open API on our platform and their own developers build additional programming to suit their clients' needs.

What do you think is the next step in terms of technology for the finance industry? What kind of role and value do you think AI has in this industry?

Recent initiatives in robotics and AI will ensure that we are increasingly relevant to our clients and deliver a best in class digital client experience. Alongside this, we have also launched our digital asset management solution, SaxoSelect, and the market's first fully digital trading solution for both corporate and government bonds. We are also excited about the possibilities around Open Banking, even beyond the PSD2 requirements.

SMART CITY LOADING

With new age data storytelling, AR, VR and intense citizen involvement, imagine a city that is being built to respond to the needs to the citizens rather than just housing them. No, it is not a dream. GCC has taken the steps and results are just a street away.

■ BY:ANUSHREE DIXIT <ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM> ■ PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Back in school, there were scholar students and smart students. While the term scholar was usually associated to students scoring A+ grades in their academics, smart students were often the ones who were the B+ or A scorers (yes, not necessarily A+) but had a good hold of the all-round curriculum— be it sports, arts or researches.

WONDERING WHY THIS COMPARISON?

Well, a smart city according to expert opinions and several studies is one that not only implements state-of-the-art technologies to improve governance and government services, but also leverages ICT to the optimal limit for the best quality and ease of everyday life.

I couldn't take my eyes over the facts and figures that makes Vienna the smartest city in the world. The city on the Danube is reported to be an ace in all the aspects that defines a smart city— smart infrastructure, smart mobility, smart technology, green, sustainable, accessible and most livable.

Masdar city in Abu Dhabi broke the ice ceiling in the year 2008 and has set out on a journey to become the most planned smart and eco-friendly city. Through a number of smart investments and seeded capital, the city is pioneering a 'greenprint' for to reduce excess water consumption, energy and waste recycling.

MOBILE INTERNET SUBSCRIBER PENETRATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IS PROJECTED TO TOP

46%

BY 2020

"CITIES NEED TO CONSIDER INNOVATIVE POLICY AND REGULATORY APPROACHES, ENHANCED PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS TO COMMERCIALISE SMART CITY DATA."

-KATHERINE BRUCE,
SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR AT AESG

"AS CITIES EDUCATE THEMSELVES ABOUT SMART CITY APPLICATIONS AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, THEY CAN BEGIN BY ENSURING THAT THERE IS A COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL SUPPORT ALL PROJECTS."

-EHAB KANARY,
VICE PRESIDENT OF ENTERPRISE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, COMMSCOPE.

THE GCC SMART CITY BLUEPRINT

A rightful blend of three technologies, as of today, would be playing a detrimental role in how a future smart city will look like— IoT, AI and Blockchain. According to GSMA Intelligence's 2017 Mobile Economy report, mobile Internet subscriber penetration in the Middle East and North Africa reached 36% in 2016 and is projected to top 46% by 2020. In a previous report, GSMA Intelligence predicted 327 million smartphone connections in the Arab world – or around two thirds of the total connection base – by 2020.

Mobile internet solutions would hence be playing a key role in guaranteeing the expected quality of service. According to Wireless networking solution provider InfiNet Wireless, CCTV-based public safety system mentioned earlier would be a key aspect of any smart city. Real-time image-processing is computationally expensive. Low latency, reliability of data transfer and fast processing capabilities come together to deliver features such as instant facial recognition, ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) and a host of other crowd-based analytics services that ultimately translate into safer and more secure environments.

"Visibility of data plays another key role in the utilisation of advanced technology for planning, satellite imagery is an example of this where we have witnessed significant advances in both technical capability and data access. At AESG we can utilise satellite imagery to inform planning decisions from both an urban and environmental perspective," says Katherine Bruce, Sustainability Coordinator at AESG. AESG is a specialist consulting and commissioning firm headquartered in Dubai with offices in Abu Dhabi and London. Their services are represented in five core departments; Sustainability, Environmental, Fire and Facades, Energy and Commissioning.

Shams Hasan, Infrastructure Solutions Manager – Middle East, Turkey, and Africa (META), Dell EMC says, "As a catalyst and an orchestrator of transformation, leadership in the region has recognized the importance of bringing together disparate groups like citizens, academics, startups, technology vendors, public utilities and government owned businesses to develop robust solutions and innovate together. The PPP model has therefore evolved to be a crucial key to success which fuels a continuously innovative environment which not only caters to residents' needs, but is also able to predict their future requirements and demands."

Central to smart city success is for GCC governments to adopt an open data platform, which shares citywide data on a single platform. Governments worldwide, led by Copenhagen in

"TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION CONCRETE, THE CONNECTED CITY VISIONARIES HAVE TO KEEP THREE NECESSARY "I" CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONNECTED CITY IN MIND- INSTRUMENTED, INTERCONNECTED, INTELLIGENT"

-SHAMS HASAN, INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTIONS MANAGER – MIDDLE EAST, TURKEY, AND AFRICA (META), DELL EMC

Denmark, have in turn monetised such a platform, with a "City Data Exchange" that charges for organisations and developers to access and use the data.

MAPPING THE SMART CITY WITH 3D PRINTING

3D printing technology could revolutionize city construction and the ways in which cities function. While on one hand many countries have been slow to adopt mass 3D-printed city structures, many countries have been utilizing this technology in ways that improve transportation and alter how cities recycle. Last month, Dubai-based firm Cazza announced that it plans to build the world's first 3D-printed skyscraper in the United Arab Emirates.

3D printing can be one of the best contributor to the sustainability and eco-friendly goals of the region.

"Smart cities are inevitable, and as IoT technology advances, we will see more innovative projects for automating all kinds of civic activity. By starting the education process now and thinking about the right communications infrastructure to support new projects, cities can take the first step connecting their cities for the future," says Ehab Kanary, vice president of Enterprise, Middle East and Africa, CommScope.

According to AESG, the two main challenges in upscaling this innovative construction technique is hardware and design awareness. Firstly, the construction industry needs inexpensive and portable printers that are easy to assemble and can work in a variety of operating environments. And secondly, 3D printing needs to be further understood by architects and engineers at concept design. Further research is required in using this novel construction approach as a basis for design calculations and development.

PAVING THE PERFECT ROADS

Smart roads, parking spaces, traffic monitoring and surveillance are definitely the bedrocks for the future smart cities.

Let me take a quote from one of an interesting piece that I read on smart roads here. "So what about smart roads? Roads that think, feel and predict the needs of the people and the vehicles that travel on them? Roads that have an environmental conscience, charge our vehicles and help improve our safety? Roads that actually make a difference to the world?"

The thought itself strikes such a beautiful chords with the soul of a smart city. Shams says, "We have already begun to witness the adoption of technologies to optimize public services in the UAE. Abu Dhabi Monitoring and Control Centre (ADMCC) recently collaborated with Dell EMC to enhance the safety and security of citizens of the capital through surveillance cameras. These surveillance cameras are a critical building block of an intelligent city, which efficiently provide real-time data on a number of city services such as police and emergency services, electricity, water, lighting, and traffic management. ADMCC is working with Dell EMC to deploy industry-leading, highly available and space efficient solutions to build an advanced control center and manage mission critical applications, which can monitor and analyze video streams from surveillance cameras."

Ehab says, "While there are many smart city projects underway, the trend is a new one and cities must become educated about what a smart city means and how to implement one. Part of the responsibility for this education lies with the smart city ecosystem – equipment vendors, software developers, network service providers, and system integrators, for example – but it also lies with the cities themselves."

The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has announced a new smart transport strategy in 2017 2017-2021, which will ensure that Dubai is on track to transform 25 per cent of its road trips into autonomous by 2030. The road map will see the implementation of 34 projects ranging from autonomous drones, self-driving buses and taxis as well as other innovative projects like expansion of pedestrian crossings, roadside sales and information kiosks.

ACCEPTANCE OF SOCIETY VS TECHNOLOGY READINESS

According to Katherine, Cities do share many similarities, although there is not a one-solution-fits-all for smart city initiatives. Each application of technology is unique to overcoming a specific problem in a city. "The technology is ready; however, acceptance of society is critical to the success of the smart city. In particular, cities need to consider innovative policy and regulatory approaches, enhanced public-private sector partnerships and opportunities for innovative business models to commercialise smart city data."

Ehab says, "At CommScope, we face challenges for the future head on. We work with customers to help accommodate explosive data needs and solve their most fundamental communications challenges. Our aim is to empower customers in all regions of the world to anticipate what's next and push the boundaries of what's possible."

According to a Smartopolis report, Society is progressively moving towards a socio-technical ecosystem in which the physical and virtual dimensions of life are more and more intertwined and where people interaction, more often than not, takes place with or is mediated by information and communication technology. The report also states that Cities become smart cities if ICT is used to solve their problems e.g. mobility, energy, housing, or health.

FINALLY

As we began with, smart city is no more a dream. It is realizable and fairly realized goal. Experts are predicting this trend to rise further by 2020. The only obstacle in this journey will be the core of the platforms on which the smart city is built -A core that is not ready for change . But gradually this is also changing and cities as well as the infrastructure is getting ripe to welcome the revolutions.

How AI Based Machine Learning Will Affect IT Security

Many articles are already predicting the demise of human workers as a result of AI making inroads into our lives because we are on the verge of true artificial intelligence. But when it comes to the biggest challenges facing business, these technologies are yet to have their big breakthrough.

RABIH ITANI, REGIONAL BDM - SECURITY, MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY, ARUBA - HPE COMPANY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been a hot topic of discussion in many industries for a while now, with healthcare, retail and hospitality, to name but a few, starting to speculate on the massive opportunities its development could bring to how their business is run, and how customers interact with those businesses. Having grown into one of our biggest international threats of 2018 with attacks spanning the globe and affecting every country including Middle East ones, a new defence is being developed that will allow companies to tackle the latest threats as soon as they appear on the network.

This new defence is based on machine learning, a key component of a security framework that can move as quickly as those who are looking to breach the network. Machine learning is a fundamental part of an AI system. Machine learning enables AI to detect patterns in all sorts of data sources and create behaviours based on recognized patterns.

HOW DOES MACHINE LEARNING IMPROVE SECURITY?

Using machine learning for UEBA (user entity and behavioural analytics), IT managers can create standard profiles for each device on the network. Sales managers get access to Salesforce anytime anywhere, finance teams get access to Financial Information Systems using specific devices at specific locations, and so on. The profile of each user becomes quickly personalised, and as soon as a user or entity behaves in a way that strays outside of their profile, the machine sees it, and raises the risk score of that user or entity and may accordingly send an alert, which in many cases will require the user/entity to re-authenticate. In the case of a malevolent attack, the intruder will be isolated from the rest of the network, to limit any potential damage that might have occurred.

Machines are capable of analysing millions of individual packets of data plus thousands of system logs and possibly business context data (such as HR records), making a truly individual approach to security possible, which is more than can be said for the ability of a human IT team. With the machine doing the brunt of the monitoring work within the network, the human agent need not intervene until an entity risk score gets above threshold. This automatic monitoring offers IT staff exceptional time savings, which means they can get on with tackling other IT issues throughout the organisation.

SECURITY'S POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE

With AI based machine learning introduced in the workplace, security teams stand to benefit greatly. The technology isn't here to replace the human element in security operations; it will augment the human's intelligence, allowing staff to make better decisions based on the quality of the actions being proposed and the forensics data being furnished. Permissions, for instance, won't be automated by artificial intelligence; it will flag the request to a human agent, who can use the information gathered, and knowledge of the actor, to make an informed decision.

These developments could ultimately change the range of jobs on offer within IT security. Security staff will move from being the operational proponent within the network, to making the decisions that could determine the security of the network. On the other hand, the Security Manager might become the Policy Manager, determining the various policies and credentials necessary to access business networks.

Whilst the approaches of human workers might change during the course of the roll-out of this technology throughout enterprises, their work will be no less important. They will still need to build security into the core of the network, regardless of the technology already in place.


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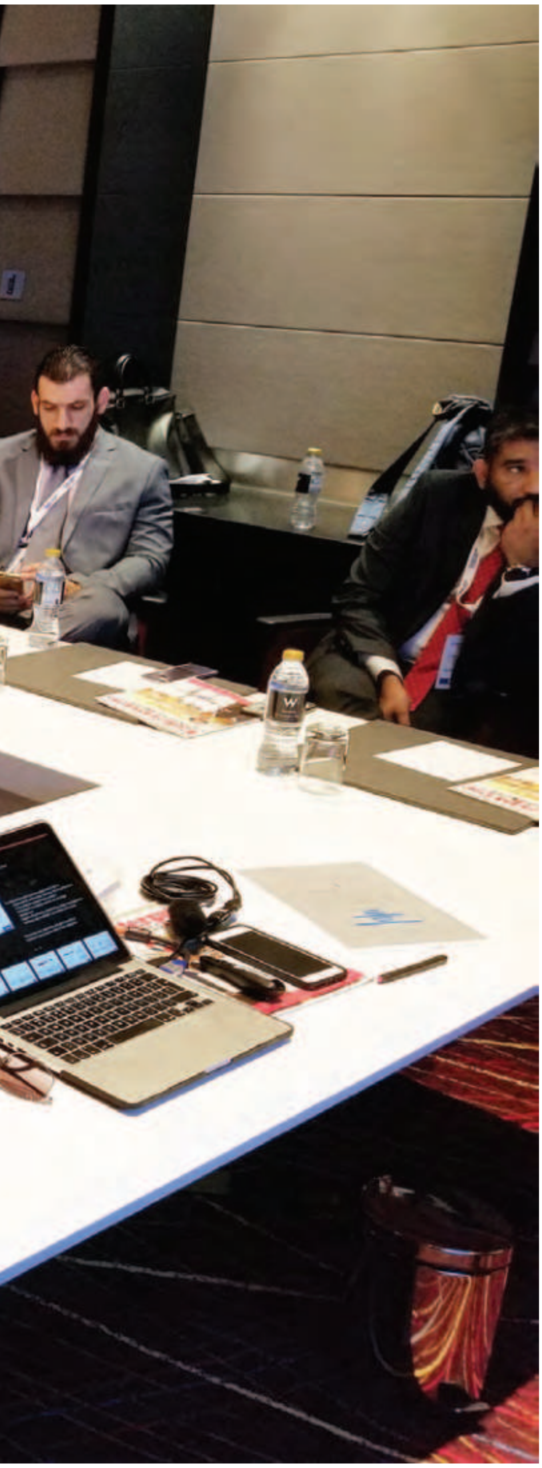
HYPERCONVERGENCE REDEFINED

Held at W Hotel, Al Habtoor City - Dubai on May 7th 2018, the hyperconvergence redefined opened to a full house CIOs and IT Heads from various verticals to discuss on the hyperconverged infrastructure solutions that can deliver performance, scale and efficiency.Organized by Enterprise Channels MEA in association with Pivot3, the roundtable focused on how a smarter approach to hyperconverged infrastructure can help businesses realize its true potential.

Legacy infrastructure, operations, and traditional data center architectures are not sufficient to meet the demands of a digital business today. Smarter infrastructure solutions are the next big leap that organizations should take in order to foster innovation and stay ahead of the competition.

The Pivot3 team represented by Ron Nash – CEO, Mike Beevor – Technical Marketing Director, Carly Stephens – Marketing Manager and Anand Chakravarthi – Area



Vice President, emphasized on the challenges of traditional data centre infrastructure and how the CIO's can benefit from Pivot3's simplified solutions in unified storage, computing and networking platforms.

The key focus of the roundtable was on CIO's strategy in implementing a simple, intelligent and automated hyperconverged infrastructure solution to align IT with business outcomes and stay ahead of the competition.

Ron Nash in his closing note spoke about the key competitive aspects of Pivot3 ad what makes them stand apart from their competitors.

STORAGE FOR TOMORROW, DESIGNED TODAY

TOSHIBA IS ALL GEARED UP FOR THE INFORMATION EXPLOSION WHICH WILL PRODUCE 166ZB OF DATA BY 2025. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ECMEA, SANTOSH VARGHESE FROM TOSHIBA TALKS ABOUT THEIR RECENT LAUNCH -'GO AFRICA' STRATEGY AND THEIR UPCOMING PLANS FOR THE YEAR.

SANTOSH VARGHESE,
VP, GM MEA - DIGITAL PRODUCTS & SOLUTIONS , TOSHIBA GULF FZE

? What are the key market trends impacting the growth of storage and surveillance market this year?

- Expansion of social infrastructure: Malls , Hotels and Public Infrastructure across GCC. EXPO 2020 and Neom city in Saudi are good examples

- Government regulatory norms for mandatory installation of video surveillance system
- Government and Private sector look for improved look for improved technologies to protect assets and business
- Government drive to provide safe and secure Security.
- Regulations for retention of footage for a period of 180 days fuel the growth of Surveillance Storage
- High Definition 4K Video Footage require large capacity of Surveillance Storage

? In your recently held UAE round table, there were some anti-cloud opinions. What is your stand on this and how good an option is cloud storage for video surveillance systems?

- Data Security issues
- Band Width issues mainly in Africa and other ME countries
- Downtime issues
- Lack of in depth analytic software for Surveillance

These are the main issues that may impact cloud storage for Video Surveillance

? Tell us about your 'Go Africa' strategy that you recently launched in Rwanda.

Go Africa is a TGFZ strategy to expand into Africa region .This initiative was launched in 2015 and we have been able to Go Wide –Go Deep in Africa region developing various segment which includes B2C and B2B .

Recently we had a channel event which was attended by 100 Channel partners and B2B customers . It was a good networking opportunity to listen to the VOC's of the local Rwanda market

? What is your 2018 go to market strategy? Are you planning to strengthen your customer base or channel partner base and how?

For FY -18 2018 Our focus will be to expand our Surveillance storage business and Near Line storage Enterprise business focusing on Cloud and Data Storage Segment .

Toshiba is the only Storage Vendor to have a complete end to end solution for Storage from micro SD cards to High Capacity 14TB CMR HDD for Enterprise applications. With our complete range of products we will be able to cater all segments and all vertical applications that require storage. Today everything and anything which is connected requires storage and Toshiba is geared up for the information explosion which will produce 166ZB of data by 2025

CIO 200 AWARDS

TECHTALK AND META CIO AWARDS

The CIO 200 TECHtalk and META CIO Awards held at the Armani Hotel, Burj Khalifa on the 10th of May 2018 was a celebration of the top 200 CIOs of the industry. The event celebrated the achievements and the path breaking projects of the CIOs and IT Heads from UAE, Oman, and Turkey in the first edition of the roadshow. The awards which was a celebration of the digital transformation leaders and their undeniable merit in leading this revolution was one of the largest gatherings of CIOs in the region. The event was held under the patronage of The Private Office of His Highness Sheikh Saeed Bin Ahmed Al Maktoum and was inaugurated by Mr Hisham Al Gurg, the CEO of The Private Office.

"Technology is great but not by itself and not on its own. It is only great with business sense on how to use technology to make people's lives easier, happier, more productive. I advise you to start your company one day after serving for your company and country for a while and be very open to innovation from start-ups and young entrepreneurs. Also, at least allocate 1 day a month for young people or start-ups and even people within your team to come and share innovative ideas. I hope this will be another beginning and start for many of you to take this opportunity and learn new things and open new doors to next era of technology," commented Mr. Hisham Al Gurg.

Apart from the awards, the ceremony was made lively with major attractions like TECH-Talk, the Knowledge Window, Live Chat Counter etc. The main attraction of the ceremony was the "CIO of the year" Award. Ashith Piriyattiath, Group Head of IT at Al Masah Capital and Ahmed Ebrahim Al Ahmad, CIO of Nakheel, were crowned as the prestigious CIOs of the year Award. They were chosen from the top eight CIOs shortlisted by the editorial team. The top eight finalists were; Esam AlFalasi, Director IT, Ministry of Economy; Mahmoud Kamal, Group CIO at Habtoor Hospitality; Ahmed Kajoor, Director IT of Dubai Municipality; Ajay Rathi, Director IT, Meraas Holding; Ashith Piriyattiath, Group Head of IT at Al Masah Capital; Kumar Prasoon, Group CIO of Al Safeer Group; and Ahmed Ebrahim AlAhmad, CIO of Nakheel. The winners were chosen on the basis of the number of votes received as well as the sustainability and excellence of the project details submitted to the jury. The esteemed jury for the 2018 Awards were - Dr. Jassim Haji, Technology Leader from Bahrain, Mohammed Mahnashi, ICT Advisor at Ministry of Finance - KSA and Dr. Usman Zafar, CEO of DUC International Consulting.

During the event, the Global CIO Forum— a never before seen single marketplace for a CIOs 360-degree need, was also launched by the CEO of GEC Media Group, Ronak Samantaray. During the launch, he said, "As a responsible media, we are committed to evolve with the dynamic market and bring out products and solutions that not only present a mirror to the industry but also hold the capacity to transform the entire ecosystem."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INTEGRATE INFLUENCE IMPACT

A SINGLE MARKETPLACE FOR A CIO'S 360 DEGREE NEEDS

Amongst a star-studded CIO gathering at The Armani Hotel, Burj Khalifa, GEC Media Group launched the much awaited 'Global CIO Forum' on 10th Mat 2018. The unveiling was witnessed by the crème-de-la-crème of the IT industry including Mr. Hisham Al Gurg, CEO of The Private Office of Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum and other VVIP delegates from leading Ministries and Government organizations in the country. The Global CIO Forum is a never-seen and one-of-a-kind single marketplace for a CIO's 360-degree needs. The GLOBAL CIO FORUM represents IT Executives and CIOs globally. Currently working in META region and with expansion plans globally, the GLOBAL CIO FORUM is a nonprofit community of CIOs and IT leaders whose mission is to facilitate networking, sharing of best practices and executive development, and to collaborate on issues faced by the CIOs/IT Executives. The forum grows IT leaders, speaks with one voice on issues facing CIOs, and builds a vendor-neutral community for safe exchange of ideas and best practices.

The launch and unveiling was done by Ronak Samantaray, CEO of GEC Media Group. Addressing the delegates, he said "GEC Media group has always believed in swimming against the tide. Right from bringing innovative products to the marketplace to designing futuristic events. We have pioneered magazines like The Titans that has been the most well-established go-to-CIO magazine in the region so far. As a responsible media, we are committed to evolve with the dynamic market and bring out products and solutions that not only present a mirror to the industry but also hold the capacity to transform the entire ecosystem. We truly understand the potential that technology holds in re-inventing the corporate wheel. Today, the role of a CIO is one of the most critical one in today's business and industry. CIOs hold the future of innovation, productivity and competitiveness in their hands."

FOCUS BAHRAIN

Bahrain a startup's haven

Bahrain's position in Middle East ICT market is prominent, urging many companies to make the country their base. ICT, being the prime business driver, has opened up avenues to infinite areas of scientific studies and techniques used for various fields thereby pushing market growth.

■ BY: C V ARYA DEVI <ARYA@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM> PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Bahrain was ranked second in 2017 by World Bank in terms of ease of doing business last year in the Middle East and Africa region. This ranking can be attributed to the growth in the number of startups in the last three years. According to the data by the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB), the startup growth rate is 50 percentage increase over the past three years.

ICT AND BAHRAIN

ICT plays a vital role in the economic growth of Bahrain and government is hence boosting this opportunity. Bahrain is now leading in GCC region being the first to liberalise its ICT sector and creating a flexible and open policy. It is considered to be the only country in the region to adopt a structured market model and supportive framework in the ICT sector. These attributed to Bahrain being ranked first in the region by the UN in the e-government development index. The EDB revealed that the inward investment of Bahrain was $733 million last year and that 54% of total inward investment was of ICT sector.

Bahrain's new regulatory sandbox for FinTech industry will also benefit the market. A regulatory sandbox is a framework and process that aids in the development of the FinTech industry. The country, which is an established financial hub in the GCC/Middle East region is positioning itself as the FinTech hub of the region.

BAHRAIN MARKET AND GLOBAL REACH

The reach of Bahrain to other GCC countries is further enhanced with the aid of BITEX. BITEX, a technology exhibition held alongside with the MEET ICT Conference brings all ICT companies under one roof to display their latest trends. It aims in bringing together all the ICT business companies for building a strong hold. With more than 500 participants attending the conference, GCC's top ICT decision makers and ICT enthusiast will gather at the event.

With more than 50 companies exhibiting in the exhibition there were representatives from government sectors, ICT companies, startup and international companies. With international companies onboard, the market range of Bahrain is expanding tremendously. Bahrain market, although small, has a wide range of market and a range of IT companies, distributors, consultancies etc. The 'World Economic Forum Global Information Technology report' ranks Bahrain as the first in MENA for ICT readiness.

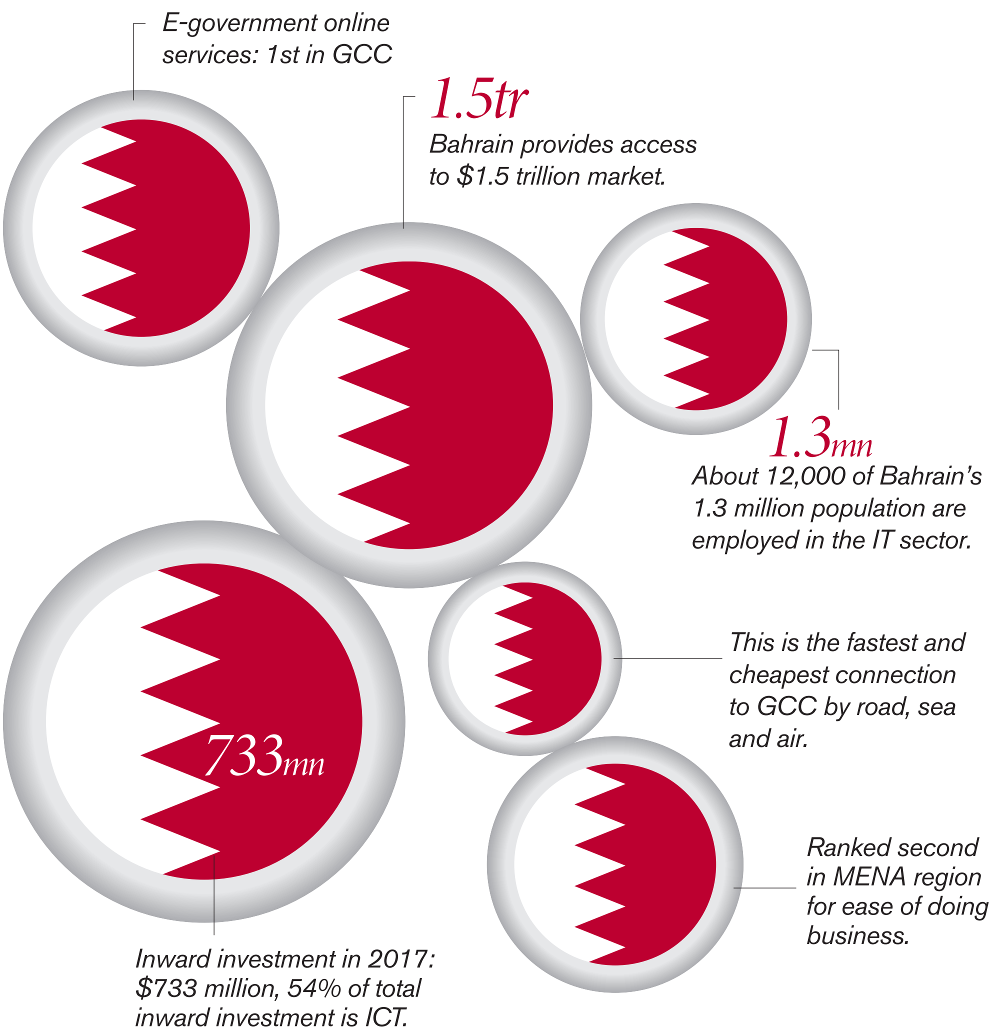
Bahrain which lies in the heart of the Gulf, provides access to $1.5 trillion market. The central location gives access to the regional and international market in Bahrain. This is the fastest and cheapest connection to GCC by road, sea and air. The trade agreement with the GCC countries is also impressive.

"Bahrain has long had one of the most open and advanced ICT markets in the Middle East, so it's no surprise that artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and other emerging technologies are making their way deeper into daily life.."

-FATEN HALABI,
REGIONAL SALES LEADER – AVAYA

"Startups are a key sector for Bahrain, with our Startup Focus program supporting entrepreneurs whose ideas are based on Big Data, predictive, or real-time analytics."

-DR HICHEM MAYA,
HEAD OF INDUSTRIES, SAP MENA.



The Economic Development Board forcasted the value of the total IT market in the Middle East to reach $200 billion.

STARTUP FRIENDLY COUNTRY

Bahrain is a startup friendly country with active and supportive communities. Bahrain is being a global hub for entrepreneurship due to the support from numerous business incubators and accelerators. The stratup ecosystem in Bahrain helps a nurturing startup with suitable incubators or accelerators. "Startups are a key sector for Bahrain, with our Startup Focus program supporting entrepreneurs whose ideas are based on Big Data, predictive, or real-time analytics." says Dr Hichem Maya, Head of Industries, SAP MENA.

One among the various accelerator in Bahrain is C5 Accelerate. They develop a cloud accelerator cluster alongside Amazon Web Services and breed startups to meet the potential growth created by the geographic expansion of AWS. AWS is a cutting edge cloud service innovation offered by Amazon. They announced their plans to set up a cluster of cloud data centers (Region) in Bahrain during the first 'Technology week pavilion' in Bahrain.

Cloud storage which aides in fast retrieval of data is also cost saving. For a company, especially those in financial, gaming or media sector, to stay ahead in the competition, speed in an essential criteria. With the implementation of cloud technology, the implementation and maintenance of an onsite data centre infrastructure can be eliminated inturn saving expenses. For startups and Small scale enterprises, this cost saving method is a boon. Bahrain iGA has moved a few projects from traditional storage to the cloud and has reported better efficiency and significant saving of time and cost.

Bahrain is cost effective in terms of rental, utilities, telecommunication, manpower etc. The cost of doing business in Bahrain is around 30-40% less when compared to Dubai or Qatar, but at the same time has the reach to the GCC countries too.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN FUTURE

With many projects already completed and many upcoming projects like AWS, the country's digital market ecosystem is expected to reap positive results. With easy access to more than a trillion dollar market and forward thinking government which works closely with businesses and startups, the economic growth of the country and profit of the companies are expected to increase rapidly.

Cyber Resilience for Email

JEFF OGDEN, GM- MIDDLE EAST. MIMECAST

? How has the year begun for Mimecast? Please brief us on the recent research findings.

It is the beginning of our fiscal year. Email is the most important threat to our customers. 92% of the threats that come to organizations is through email. In the recent reports, we witnessed 22% increase in targeted threats, the targets being CIOs, CEOs, etc. Last year we witnessed 10 of the core destruction incidents. These incidents typically take 3 days to recover from the attack and is a reputation as well as financial loss. The report also stated that 19% of the organizations said that they have lost customers.

? Email security are not taken very seriously by a few organizations? What advice would you give to those organizations?

Email is the most critical application that businesses have. So, organizations have to invest more time and money in securing email infrastructure. 34% of the customers in the Middle East have migrated to Office 365 and the cloud. The third factor is to recover from the incidents. We are focusing this year on cyber resilience. With this we are helping customers, cyber resilient on premise and cyber resilient on the cloud as well.

? In 2018, what would be the combined efforts of Mimecast and your channel partners in addressing these threats?

We are doing something called ESRA which is effectively Email Security Assessment Risk - an inspection of email security systems to uncover the number, type and severity of threats getting into organizations. It is a very simple process. Today, we are identifying 50% more threats than the incumbent suppliers today. We can educate customers in how weak they are in this area. We also help customers to look at 3 areas – Security from defense point of view, cyber redundancy and educating the users as we go through the process.

Converged Endpoint Protection

RICK MCELROY, SECURITY STRATEGIST FROM CARBON BLACK

While the term 'prediction' and 'security' may often seem as paradoxes, Carbon Black is revisiting the paradox with its latest offering around the Cb Predictive Security Cloud. We had an opportunity to sit down with Rick McElroy, Security Strategist from Carbon Black on the first day of GISEC 2018 and get to know more insights into this.

"Think of the Predictive Security Cloud as one sensor that directly reports to the cloud and possess the ability to predict the next attack and meticulously cast you out of it. We are ushering the ultimate power of cloud with this security solution," said Rick.

At GISEC 2018, Carbon Black will showcase the Cb Predictive Security Cloud, a converged endpoint protection platform that delivers next-generation security and IT operations services through the cloud and ensures products and services are delivered in an effective and timely manner.

"The mindset of the attackers have changed. They are planting things like memory injection and launching power shells in organizations. Being able to have an end-to-end visibility into the cyber chain and be able to disrupt it as fast as possible is very important for the organizations today."

The Predictive Security is all about collecting the right set of data from the endpoint, fusing that with threat intel and using other source of information like patch level on a system or vulnerabilities that affect the system.

Carbon Black Security Do: Get Visibility into the entire cyber chain

Security DON'T: Stop clicking on 'all' things and stop trusting 'all' people

State of the Art Security

YASER AL KURDI, SALES ENGINEER, EPM.

"Epm stands for Emirates Photo Marketing. We are based in Abu Dhabi and we have branches in Dubai and Ajman. We are in the market since 1983 and we do a business in low current solutions like access control, CCTV and time attendance. We are also strong in asset tracking system and smart solutions for real time location monitoring."

With 30+ years of experience, EPM is a leading distributor of innovative security solutions and imaging solutions from renowned brands around the world. Their diversity in product portfolio with state of the art security and surveillance solutions makes us a one-stop solution for various re-sellers and end users.

"We have some major projects in the UAE like— we do ID card printing for all the departments of the Ministry of Interior from AUH to Fujairah. We print over 15 million cards yearly and we do huge business in access control. We have contract with Abu Dhabi Police for access control solutions for all their buildings. We also some great references like Dubai Courts, Dubai Municipality, Taxi Dubai etc."

Major partner HID, platinum partners for asset tracking and access control. Blue vison for real time location-based monitoring. We also partnered with TPS which is a global brand in time attendance, gold partner with many CCTV manufacturers like Samsung.

Digital Forensics in Focus

LT COL BRYAN MIRANDA, DIRECTOR TECHNICAL, DIGITAL INSIGHTS

An Emirati company owned by Mr. Al Zaffin, the former IT Director of Dubai Municipality, Digital Insights is debuting at GISEC 2018. Though just 4-month-old, the company already stands out as a competition in the market. Digital Insights offers a wide range of consulting services with focus on digital forensics and offensive assessments equipped with the necessary tools and expertise to help secure the business. Addressing themselves as the digital forensic experts, Lt Col Bryan Miranda, Director Technical says "We identify, preserve and analyse any data in any computer, device or network to help protect the businesses from inappropriate data use or data loss. We provide digital forensic investigation services to the public and private sectors in the GCC."

The company also provides a full range of Cyber Security Incident Response solutions from advice to data collection, remediation, expert services, etc. In an interesting way Bryan explains "Forensics in Arabic language means medical investigation. We are here to help the customers who have had incidents to bring back their data in the original state and to prevent such incidents from taking place again."

Digital Insights also performs cyber threat hunting in order to keep up with the deluge of new cyber threats and malware attacks. They also provide state of the art application security testing which is critical in protecting both the applications and the organizations.

Preventing Internal Data Breaches

ORHAN YILDIRIM, VP - SALES SUPPORT & OPERATIONS

Established in 2007, Krontech produces and integrates advanced technology software in the fields of Access Control Systems, Network Packet Brokerage, Streaming Analytics, Fast Data & Real Time Data Processing, and Next-generation Security and Audit. Orhan YILDIRIM, VP – Sales Support and Operations says – "We offer solutions mainly in the cybersecurity domain. The most popular product that we are showcasing is the Single Connect which is a privileged access management tool." Single Connect is used as an information security and governance tool to prevent internal data breaches and internal attacks through the use of privileged accounts. It enables IT managers and network admins to efficiently secure the access, control configurations and indisputably record all activities in the data center or network infrastructure, in which any breach in privileged accounts access might have material impact on business continuity.

There are many reports that state that hackers follow several steps to a successful hacking. 80% of the hackers are stealing the password of a privileged account. Krontech secures the privileged accounts with a password manager. The benefits of a password manager are - It eliminates embedded passwords that are stored in unencrypted text files, DB or in source code. Passwords generated by Single Connect ensure maximum strength. It eliminates usage of non-expire passwords. Single Connect changes the password after every usage, one-time-password. Password is not shared among employees, because nobody knows/sees the password. Password is stored securely, in a vault.

The Power of Assured Identity

RICHARD BECHALANY, REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR, MIDDLE EAST CROSSMATCH

'The world identifies with us.' Crossmatch goes with this tagline that testifies its strong commitment to the industry in providing cutting edge secure identity and authentication solutions. In an exclusive conversation with Richard Bechalany, Regional Sales Director, Middle East Crossmatch, he says that they are one of the pioneering organizations in the world to provide a complete identity, secure access and biometric identity solutions that solve complex security challenges in an ever-changing world.

"We are well known in the world for some cutting-edge projects like the US border entry authentication. Any person travelling to the US and landing in any of the airports in the US has to feed his fingerprints into our devices."

Apart from a strong global presence with offices in various locations, Crossmatch also has a very rooted base in the MEA region. The opening of the Dubai office in summer of 2017 further testifies the commitment of the company towards the region. They have a strong customer base in the region that includes some big names viz; Emirates Identity Authority, Abu Dhabi Police, Dubai Police, National Information Center of Saudi. "We also provide strong authentication solutions allowing companies to protect their applications, digital assets etc."

Security with a Difference

IAN JONES, DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR, WESTCON SECURITY

Westcon-Comstor is set to shake the market with some big announcements coming their way in 2018. At GISEC 2018, we got a chance to sit down with Ian Jones, Divisional Director, Security at Westcon ME.

"It has been a great opening for us at GISEC and we could meet some meaningful customers. The security market is changing continuously and when it comes to change, we as a VAD have always been at the forefront of it," says Ian.

One of the biggest announcement is our global cloud market place rollout and addition of some major vendor to the portfolio. Apart from that the VAD has been heavily focusing on its 'EDGE'. EDGE is Westcon-Comstor's approach to every opportunity and their commitment to every partner. It provides a framework to help partners engage and onboard with our core services, develop their business with our portfolio of vendors, grow their business through new solutions, technologies, marketing and services, and extend their business by unlocking more profitable opportunities and expanding into new markets.

Visit Westcon Security at GISEC 2018 to learn about the security portfolio comprising of vendors like Palo Alto Networks, Symantec, Arbor Networks, F5 Networks, ForeScout and SonicWall among others. You can also get a chance to win Apple iPad and other exciting prizes by sharing new leads.

Capturing the Market with the Right Resources

DANIEL BERNARD, VP BUSINESS AND CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT, SENTINELONE

In conversation with Daniel Bernard, VP Business and Corporate Development, SentinelOne.

"2018 has been a great market for us so far and we are seeing a great traction for our next-generation endpoint security solutions. The convergence of protection and visibility in one unified agent deployable on premise and on cloud has been one of the factors driving this demand. We are uniquely positioned in the market to offer this. Our customers are attracted towards this and we help them uproot the legacy with our cutting edge solutions." Talking about some common customer pain points that the vendor witnessed in 2018, Daniel says, "One recurring pain point is time. There are too many products to try and test and the problems are not solved. So the solution to the problem is a solution that actually solves the problem and saves them the time.

"Exclusive Networks has played a great role in establishing our position in the market and we owe them a great share of our success. We have a portfolio of proven solutions that are much in demand in the region and with Exclusive Networks we now have the right kind of resources to capture that demand. We have 36 transacting channel partners in the region and there is an appetite to drive further investment in the channel."

Key Focus - Ensuring Customer's Sucess

BINOY KOONAMMAVU, CEO & PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, VALUEMENTOR

In its 5th year, BinoyKoonammavu, CEO &PrinicipalConsulatnt for ValueMentor recalls how they started as a security testing company. "Security testing was one of our key forte and still continues to be a key service offering to the customers in this region. We matured our services into the advisory, then into the managed services, etc. We have customers coming back to us for the services we are offering which is resulting in good customer attention. Its overall good experience on how we are growing in this market. We started offering GDPR services in UK last year. We are offering services to companies in Ireland, Poland and other European Union countries."

Managed Security Services is one of the new services that the company is offering to their customers in this region. Also, application security is one of the initial offerings that they have in the market. "We have a team of 40 security testers who are recognized by Oracle, Microsoft, etc for finding zero-day vulnerabilities. We have an elite team of zero-day hunters," says Binoy.

For GDPR perspective, the company is experienced in gthe market as they are already doing it for the EU countries. They have developed a framework called 'Adapt'. "The adapt framework focuses on doing the assessment initially, then designing and aligning the controls with the business processes, also practicing those controls implemented and eventually the continuous testing of the processes. So the adapt framework gives value to the customers from a GDPR life cycle management perspective. The data life cycle is the most important thing in the GDPR and we facilitate that activities for the customers. Our typical offering starts with GDPR readiness assessment which means understanding whether the organization is ready for a GDPR from a existing infrastructure perspective," he adds. Too many customers is not the focus of ValueMentor. "Though we would like to have more customers on board, our key focus or mantra is ensuring the customers success.

Rearchitecting Endpoint Security

In conversation with Evan Davidson, Vice President Sales EMEA, Cylance.

"GISEC has been very exciting for us. We have set up a team here that would be operating full-fledged in a few weeks and we are establishing a firm foot in the Middle East region. It is an exciting time for us at Cylance."

"Our key focus offerings are woven around AI based security, specifically in machine learning. This helps us in building very sophisticated software and prevention of cyberattacks on the endpoint. In a nutshell, we are a data science company. The concept of AI in security is all about moving things to predictive levels. AI will build a model that will help us in decoding the threat and help us discover what 'malicious' looks like. We can be very predictive around threats that have been both seen and unseen in the past once we apply that concept to the endpoint. We are helping our customer today against threats that has not been even created today."

Talking about their venture into the MEA market, Evan says, "MEA is still an emerging market for us but we have recently secured a major customer which is a great news for us. We have some great partner investments. In a broader term, our business has grown over 400% this fiscal year and we expect to replicate that in this region as well."

At GISEC, the focus is on our core prevention platform that provides prevention, detection and response capabilities. It is a solution for the endpoint and we are selling it as a platform for the customers. We have tried to rearchitect how customers think about endpoint security today."

Security DO: Embrace technology such as AI with security stack

Security DON'T: Don't always trust the humans, we are the weakest links.

Evolving with the Customers

MOHAMMED MOBASSERI, CEO, EMT DISTRIBUTION

In today's present day what does the word "value" mean for you as a VAD?

In terms of value, we are trying to build a proper report, proper solution selectors for the partners and customers so when they come to us or to our partners, they know exactly what they want, what problems they have and what we can offer them. For instance, we have created a table of different kinds of threats in the world and then what a customer wants to achieve from their point of view. Once customers by fill out this form, we can come up with a report about the suitable solutions for them. Beside that we are running lot of trainings. A good number of IT managers, are not security guys, but are still responsible for security. So we try to train them and make them understand what the basic challenges are and how they can evolve from an IT manager to an IT security manager.

In 2017 and 2018 so far, which countries has been your highest growth market?

In terms of growth, UAE and Saudi, the rest of GCC and African region was good for us. But Turkey is a strong hold. We started Turkey with a couple of products and we now have reach and distribution.

A few words on the MSP division.

We are joining our hands with a European company who has been doing MSP distributions for the past 10 years and we shall try to replicate the same thing for the META region as well.

Deception Technology for New Threat Model

JAMIE BUTLER, CTO, ENDGAME

What kind of fraction are you seeing in deception technology in this region?

We focus more on the prevention on of an attack so we stimulate in order to test preventions now specifically focusing on deceiving the attacker or figuring out what they are going to do and ways to prevent that. There is a new threat model for the region and the world in general.

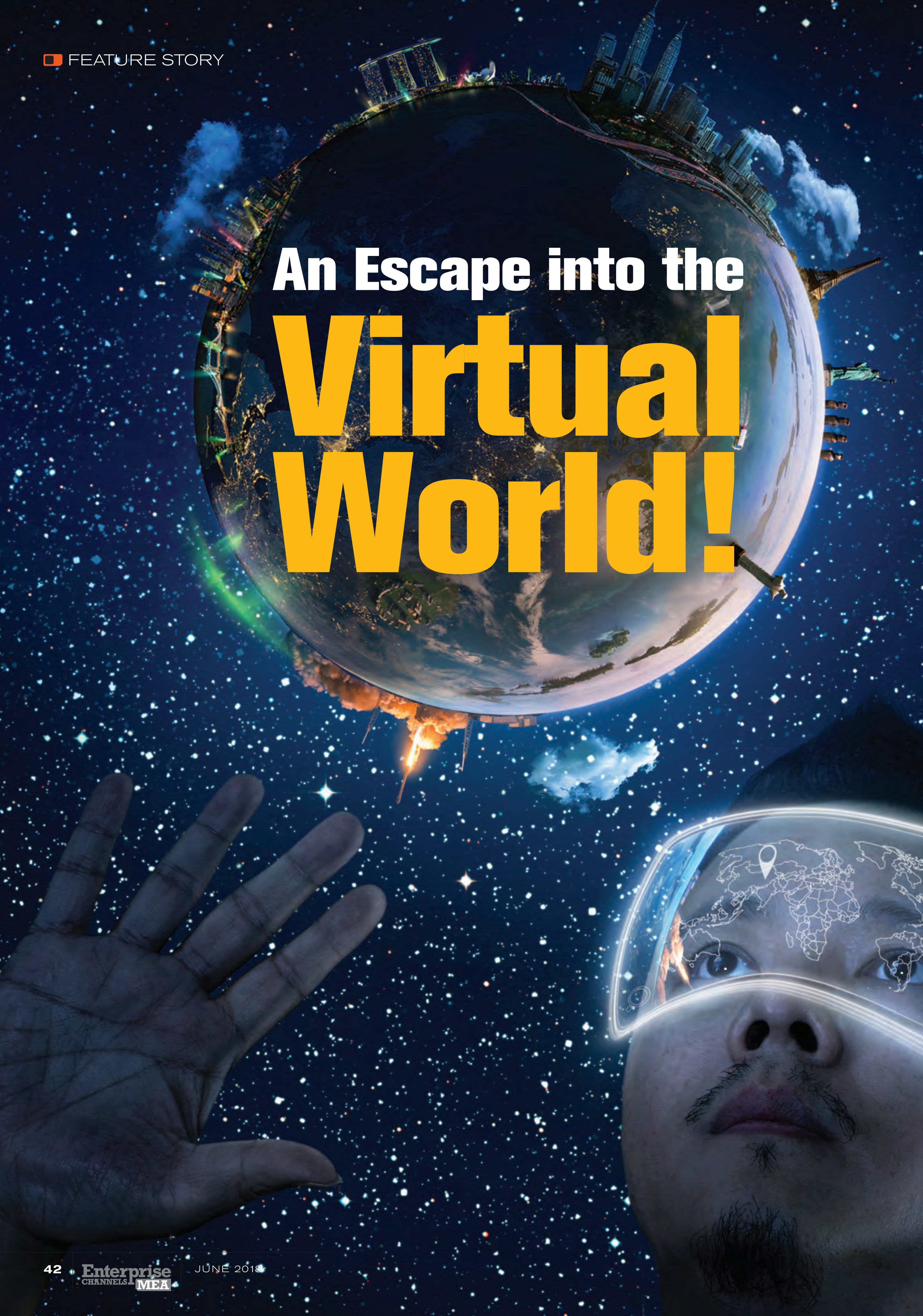
A few words on the new threat model.

This attack model is looking at the advisories, taking a step back, looking at their tactics, techniques and focusing on that instead of the tools.

What would be one security 'do' and one security 'don't'?

Security don't would be to rely on signatures and IOCs. They are not sufficient, they are not the complete picture. A security do is to reduce complexity in your environment.

An Escape into the Virtual World!



From remote workplaces, which will help organizations to set up meetings in a virtual world to training employees in the same way, the virtual reality market is expected to be a vital component for the organizations by 2025.

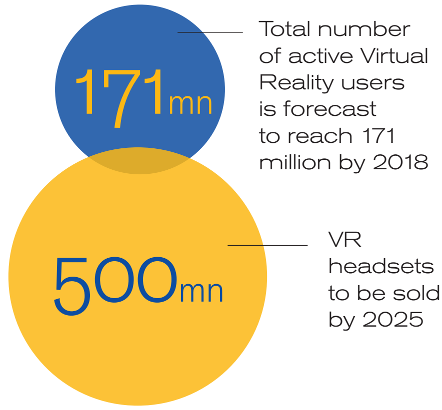
BY: DIVSHA BHAT <DIVSHA@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM> ■ PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

In the light of growing interest and passion for technologies, virtual reality has sparked great attraction in the region. At the recently held Future Blockchain Summit 2018, I had the opportunity to experience the live demo of virtual galleries. While the virtual coaster ride was exciting, the free fall from a plane was equally spine tingling. It is no surprise that many organizations in the Middle East are investing in virtual reality. According to International Data Corporation, the Middle East and Africa market for augmented and virtual reality is expected to grow to $6 billion by 2020.

CIO SPEAK

LARSEN D'SOUZA,
IT MANAGER, AL NAJAH EDUCATION

Virtual Reality / Augmented Reality is the next big thing and will very well be the future of the Technology industry in any vertical. Business Owners and CEOs might want to take a '3-D' look at their respective businesses to see how best new brand of working will fit their business and the image its eventually projects to their clients – who are their most important stakeholders. I see Education, Engineering, civil flight training, military training, simulation being main centers for advancement and introducing Virtual Reality patterns to the rest of the world. And I truly believe companies like Microsoft, Google, Facebook will be straining at the leash to find out how they can introduce more appealing, economic and business specific VR technology. Let's have no doubt about the fact that, whether we like it or not VR/AR technology is here to stay and will be an irreplaceable part of day to day operations at the work place or even at home.



VIRTUAL WORLDS OF UAE

Not many days ago, I read, how at a business school in Berlin, executives from some of Germany's biggest companies are locked in a room, then observed as they try to escape. The room is digitally created. The executives are playing a 45-minute virtual reality game used in executive education courses to teach leadership and specifically how to lead in a digital world. Virtual Reality is truly, on the edge of becoming a reality all over the world.

The Middle East is not far behind. The United Arab Emirates has always been a step ahead in adopting new technologies. Nokia and UAE based telecommunications service provider du, showcased 360-degree virtual reality video streaming for the first time in the Middle East at GITEX 2016 in Dubai. The country has come a long way since then in the adoption of this technology.

In December 2017, At the Top, Burj Khalifa launched the virtual reality experience that triggers the real feel of scaling 160 habitable floors of the world's tallest tower, as well as the climb to its highest point, the spire. The Dubai Mall has also opened a virtual reality park where the visitors can experience skydiving, dune bash and also enjoy a close encounter with scorpions, snakes and other creatures. The park sends visitors in an unforgettable journey/rides.

While most people are busy with using virtual reality into gaming and entertainment, an entire different audience is ready to build the future of business using the same technology – the enterprise. Many organizations have begun to test and deploy this technology.

Last year, a Dubai based technology agency specializing in virtual reality partnered with IKEA to develop virtual shopping experience by IKEA POPUP concept throughout the Middle East. Visitors to the pop-ups can create their own virtual living room by placing IKEA products in the scene using VR technologies to facilitate home furnishing experience.

This year, GEMS Modern Academy and Jumeirah English Speaking school in Dubai embraced this technology which they call a powerful learning tool. Students can time travel and learn about historical events or learn languages like French and Spanish by engaging into a conversation with a virtual person.

Beyond retail, beyond education, virtual reality benefits many other sectors. For workers in factories or those who perform on field can benefit from this technology which offers the ability to collaborate with colleagues from remote locations who can guide or troubleshoot any issues. Businesses can incorporate virtual reality for meetings/interviews and conferences. If an employee/candidate is unable to attend and a meeting or an interview, virtual reality could be a great tool. With many advantages, there comes disadvantages as well. So, how safe is this technology for the users or the enterprises?

WITHOUT RISK, THERE IS NO REWARD

Virtual reality does open new doors and experiences on how we see the world, but we should also not forget that this is still a technology in progress. A quick look at the VR device safety manual will provide warnings for users to stay seated always and away from any objects. Cybersickness is also a well-documented ailment of VR. For students, a demanding virtual environment can trigger great fascination and might not pay attention to the learning incentive. A virtual world is exciting but whether or not it becomes an addictive trap is within our control.

Amid all the warnings, enterprises see a hope in using this technology. Larsen D'Souza, IT Manager of Al Najah Education believes that the time is not very far when CIOs will approach business owners to embrace this technology. He explains this with an interesting example. "When the CIO's would eventually approach business owners and the board to embrace changes, a critical question from the board or any CEO would be 'How do you see the ROI on such a capital-intensive move'? Instead of a formal presentation, what if the CEO could view and extract information from a hologram viewed through an AR Headset. The most exciting part for us in the tech industry is that the potential and capability of the AR/VR platform has not even in my view touched 10% yet and the very best is yet to arrive," he says.

So, does that mean everyone will soon have VR glasses on their nose?

VIRTUAL REALITY – 2018 AND BEYOND

Virtual Reality is here to stay and has already started to change the face of the business world and researchers predict that it won't be long before enterprise start using VR devices in the day to day activities. By 2020, virtual reality is forecasted to become one of the best industries with a value of more than 160 billion dollars. While we wait and watch the predictions, shall we take a quick trip to Paris?

Blockchain in a New Light

While we all would agree to the fact that Blockchain is a nascent technology that is still making its way to core business models, Clan 5 says that they are taking a step ahead and beyond. The company goes by the tagline –'An integrated ecosystem for autonomous systems & decentralized applications' that claims to make blockchain technology function beyond current implementation. We explore more on this in an exclusive rendezvous with Yashvant Keshwala, Founder and CEO of Clan 5.

YASHVANT KESHWALA, FOUNDER AND CEO OF CLAN5

BY:ANUSHREE DIXIT <ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM>

I met Yashvant Keshwala, the founder and CEO of Clan5 at the recently held Future Blockchain Summit at the Dubai World Trade Center. The young CEO's attributes and a forward-looking thoughts and vision strikingly matched the young technology— Blockchain— and the potential that it stores for the future business models.

Those who have been to the exhibition would definitely recall the busy stands and massive footfall. Blockchain newbies and legacy vendors who had newbie blockchain solutions were having a gala time getting the attention of the visitors for this much hyped technology. The name 'Clan5' quite attracted me and I took myself to the booth and spent a brief ten minutes. I am penning the rest in the article.

My first question to Yashvant was the origin of the name of the company— What is Clan and what is 5?

"We studied a large number of blockchain platforms and realised that we were not the only ones facing difficulties, everyone else was facing similar problem because there were vital parts that were missing hence resulting in a gap in the mass adoption of blockchain technology through decentralised applications and autonomous systems. After 1.5+ years of rigorous digging and testing, we devised an entirely new approach to address the common problem thus, Clan 5 was born. Clan5 provides you the best of the both the worlds— the private ledger and public ledger— with our Hybrid ledger. Our ecosystem features a one-of-its-kind hierarchical ledger and consensus mechanism Proof of Audit that allows users to have a incomparable blend of private and public ledger. This creates a decentralized structure that resembles a native family or clan follow respective rules and order. 5 represents the 5 universal applications, SWAID, AI, IoT, Chief Deployer and Projects which empower developers to build decentralised applications and autonomous systems with great ease. According to Yashvant, Clan 5 ecosystem empowers users with advanced blockchain software and hardware tools to control and store their own data securely and privately.

Since blockchain is expected to disrupt the financial sector the most, Clan5 is prepping up to reach to some uncharted territories with its SmartWallet & ID (SWAID) solution. According to Yashvant, although we are breathing and living in a digital world, still the percentage of unbanked people forms a very striking number. With SmartWallet Clan 5 aims to bank the unbanked using blockchain and offer them the humane privilege of accessing financial services – anytime, anywhere on any device.

"We see a great appetite for our solutions and services in the market. We have a strong base in India and the Middle East will definitely be a go-to-market for us in the upcoming quarters. We would be interested in striking meaningful conversations with Supply chain partners and businesses that require artificial intelligence and IoT integration as that is our forte."

Clan5 is also looking for partners to engage with on the hardware side. "We are looking for hardware manufacturers to partner with. Our solutions can be embedded into their devices and given as a complete product to the market. We currently do not have a base in the Middle East market, but we have initiated some good conversations during the Future Blockchain Summit."

NURTURING INNOVATION

NETAPP HAS UNDERTAKEN MEASURES TO BUILD AN ENVIRONMENT THAT NURTURES TALENT, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION AS WELL AS LEVELS UP THE SKILLS OF THEIR PEOPLE. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH FADI KANAFANI, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA, NETAPP WHO SHARES THE ORGANIZATION'S ROADMAP FOR 2018 AND ENHANCEMENTS TO THEIR PORTFOLIO.

FADI KANAFANI,

REGIONAL DIRECTOR - MEA, NETAPP

? We are 5 months down 2018, what kind of challenges and opportunities have you seen in the market as NetApp?

We have seen numerous opportunities on the back of intensive digital transformation and evolution. But we have also witnessed major challenges, chief of which is the value added tax (VAT) implementation in the UAE. It impacts a firm's technology, operations, financial management, and account practices. Many organizations, for one, are uncertain on their data storage capacity, as the law requires one to maintain their VAT records for at least five years. It is the first time that the regional industry is dealing with taxation so it is highly likely that some businesses are not VAT-ready. This is one aspect that the industry must address. At NetApp, we have undertaken measures to build an environment that nurtures talent, creativity, and innovation as well as level up the skills of our people.

? Data is the king of any organization and NetApp has been weaving some visible use-cases around the same. What would you like to tell your readers about your advancements in the same?

Data-driven organizations have an upper hand in the ongoing digital transformation that is taking place across verticals. Many businesses are now going this path. It is for this reason that NetApp has teamed up with Ducati MotoGP this year to improve performance and security through modernized data management solutions powered by Flash technology on and off the track.

Moreover, we have also collaborated with Saudi Telecom Company and Kuwait's Equate Petrochemical Company. Through our partnerships, both STC and Equate are able to rely on NetApp's reliable, high-performing, scalable, and secure platforms.

? How is your 2018 roadmap aligned to the voice of your customers? What enhancements or additions are you planning to add to your portfolio?

We recently unveiled the NetApp Cloud Volumes to provide customers with a fully-managed, cloud-native file storage service that's integrated with Google Cloud Platform (GCP). This partnership combines the reach of NetApp's world-class data services, backed by hundreds of thousands of customers, with Google Cloud's leadership in application development, analytics and machine learning.

Moreover, we joined forces with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft Azure to further expand our portfolio and enhance customer experience. The NetApp FabricPool feature automatically tiers cold data from primary storage to AWS and Azure, reducing capacity costs, increasing efficiency, and leveraging the cloud. Simultaneously, we also launched a high performance, cloud-connected flash system to power artificial intelligence (AI) and compute-intensive applications, as well as innovative new software to guarantee superior cloud-architected infrastructure for data retention compliance.

? Tell us about your CIO 200 experience. What kind of active customer interaction did you have?

CIO 200 served as an excellent event and a great platform for us to meet and network with the most successful CIOs of top companies in the region, end users, and like-minded peers. As we showcased our portfolio, we were able to address key challenges facing the industry, our customers, and partners in this age of digital transformation. As a platinum partner of the event, we look forward to capitalizing on similar great opportunities and we would also like to send the winners our warm congratulations.

SEAMLESS VIGILANCE

WHEN MOST OF THE ORGANIZATIONS FAIL TO KEEP A CHECK ON THE NUMBER OF PRIVILEGE ACCOUNTS OR IDENTITIES AVAILABLE IN THEIR NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE, ARCON, BEING A THOUGHT LEADER IN THE INDUSTRY HELPS IN ADDRESSING THESE PAIN POINTS.

ANIL BHANDARI,
CHIEF MENTOR & CEO ARCON TECHSOLUTIONS PVT LTD

? We are 5 months down 2018, what kind of challenges and opportunities have you seen in the market as ARCON?

In most of the cases, organizations fail to keep a check on the number of privilege accounts or identities available in their network infrastructure. These accounts are mostly vulnerable to unauthorized access as these are the keys to target systems with highly confidential information. However, the organizations are still lax in deploying PAM. Being a thought leader in the industry, ARCON has been participating in several round table conferences and summits to address these pain points. Misuse of privileged access is common among the top five most-feared cyber crimes today. Hence it provides an excellent opportunity to grow especially when the compliance framework is becoming increasingly stringent mandating the reinforcement of access controls across the target systems within an enterprise.

? Access control - A must for government organizations! Explain.

In every spheres of government sector such as Defence, IT, Finance, Real Estate, privilege access control is necessary for seamless vigilance of any suspicious activity and prevention of data breaches. The key accounts that pave the way for confidential data should be super protected with a robust security framework. The access control tool fulfills the requirements by monitoring the end-user activities and notifying any unusual behavior in real-time. ARCON believes Access Control is a must because Government organizations store highly sensitive data which is related to national security and nation building initiative. Just imagine, how it can harm a country if a strategic blueprint or highly sensitive information is compromised by an insider or a malicious third party due to compromised access control.

? How is your 2018 road-map aligned to the voice of your customers? What enhancements or additions are you planning to your portfolio?

Our Research and Development team are working day in and out to keep updated with the newest challenges faced by an enterprise. In order to enhance IT efficiency, and improve resilience against perceived information security threats, we have added highly effective features like Privileged Elevation and Delegation Management (PEDM), AD Bridging, SSH Keys etc. in our PAM solution. In addition, Real-time monitoring, threat analytics and granular level control including robust privileged password vaulting ensures security of information assets.

? Tell us about your CIO 200 experience. what kind of active customer interaction did you have?

We had an incredible experience at CIO 200 2018, Dubai. Though it was a CIO event, we had mixed visitors in our booth. Most of them took utmost interest to know our technological expertise and latest research on cyber security space. We made most of the good networking opportunity and acquired relevant knowledge of MEA market and business trends. We look forward to be a part of this grand event in future too.

EMPOWERING PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS WITH BLOCKCHAIN

ESTABLISHED IN 2017, NIMONIKS AIMS TO BE ONE OF THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE BLOCKCHAIN AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SPACE. HARIBASKER SRINIVASAN, FOUNDER OF NIMONIKS SHARES WITH ECMEA THE SUCCESS STORIES OF THE ORGANIZATION AND THEIR STRATEGIES FOR THE YEAR.

HARIBASKER SRINIVASAN,

FOUNDER, NIMONIKS

? Could you please provide a brief on Nimoniks? When was the company established and what are your key mission and values?

Nimoniks operates in the InsureTech space with our iCover micro-insurance delivery platform powered by Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence. We also provide professional services and technical expertise to organizations deploying Blockchain-based solutions. Nimoniks takes pride in building practical solutions using Blockchain technology. Established in 2017, our mission is to be one of the key players in the Blockchain and AI space.

? Take us through your products portfolio. What are your offerings for the modern enterprises?

Our main product iCover is a Micro-insurance platform powered by Blockchain and enriched with patent - pending Artificial Intelligence and Risk-Sharing features. This is a new way of looking at risk sharing for coverage providers by leveraging the power of Blockchain.

We also built our proprietary Blockchain based Digital Identity platform that counters Piracy through trusted identity management. Pirate block, our Digital Identity platform is designed for SaaS based subscription providers, content streaming services and web-based license key subscriptions.

? How do you see Blockchain as a disrupting power for the next-gen enterprises? How are your solutions backing up the same?

Blockchain is already disrupting many industries but the true value to enterprise lies in the Blockchain ecosystem. Once companies start viewing Blockchain as an economy versus a storage platform it will propel the next-gen enterprise. Our solutions reflect our beliefs since we build practical ecosystems through Blockchain versus treating it as a storage platform.

? Would you like to share some of your success stories so far?

I don't know where to begin, we are a two year old company but have two products in Blockchain, several consulting engagements with fortune 500 companies, speaking with multiple insurance companies to collaborate on our iCover platform and working with government organizations in several countries. We recently partnered with a popular education provider to disrupt the education space.

? Which are the various industries that you cater to?

Our product iCover is built for the Insurance industry but our consulting practice is industry agnostic, we pretty much cater to any industry that could benefit from Blockchain.

? What is your global go-to-market strategy, especially for the Middle East? Do you go with your partners or directly approach the customers?

Our strategy is to go with partners, we are building alliances and strategic partnerships in multiple markets. The hospitality is overwhelming in the middle east market; we are collaborating with some great partners in the Middle East.

? What does your 2018 roadmap look like?

Our 2018 roadmap is more than what we expected on the product and consulting front, its going to be an exciting and busy year.

Delivering Game Changing Results

"Our Focus Is Not Driven By Mere Box Selling And We Are Very Much Driven By Value Rather Than Volume"

MOHANBABU MURUGESAN, BUSINESS HEAD - MIDDLE EAST, BITS SECURE IT INFRASTRUCTURE LLC

Bits Secure I.T focus on delivering converged technologies for Data center infrastructure management, Managed IT Services, Networking, Server, Storage, Unified communications and cyber security.

To enable our customers to succeed, Bits Secure provide a wide spectrum of on-premises or cloud hosted services, spanning across Unified communications, Cloud DR, big data, virtualization, security and enterprise mobility which are highly scalable and robust.

Future proof & secured method beyond managing the network infrastructure transmits in the necessity of the SOC.

This progression approach delivers a real-time view of how patrons are undergoing each amenity. It examines amenities, threats, performance and guarantees business continuity for the customers.

We aim to create a sense of trust with our clients, while we also maintain a symbiotic relationship between the sales and services teams of Milestone. We have a clear chain of communication, which ensures better results for customers. Our highly skilled team of technical and installation experts provide 24/7 customer service. Our focus is not driven by mere box selling, and we are very much driven by value rather than volume.

Significant growth and changes in the technologies helps us to shape the future of our industry. We believe, mixed reality will be a key player in transforming the way we do business today. We are constantly improving and deploying innovative solutions to enhance our services through technology in line with the industry and to provide better experiences for our customers.

When it comes to data security, Data hacker's attack in this region brings more attention for organizations to invest and focus on security. Preventive approach towards cybersecurity is the right way to battle against these threats.

Industry expert pegged IoT as next revolution however Hackers will continue to use IoT devices to facilitate DDoS attacks. We are looking at it from a consumer perspective rather than a developer perspective, it's not just about implementing a bunch of random devices that can talk to each other, we're intending to build real intelligence within this network with standard security. It's about bringing artificial intelligence into play, instigating blockchain for security reasons and then packaging all the smart services together in to one key for the advantage of our clients.

Bits Secure fetch our decades of knowledge to support you design, implement and function a world-class NOC/SOC. Bits can support to make complete system architecture, corporal draught forecasting, tools assortment, customization, operational progress and practice establishment of your NOC/SOC.

Bits Secure I.T team is highly trained and certified with extensive experience across all product solutions and continuously proving our ability by delivering project with Complete customer satisfaction. Our Maintenance team manage business critical I.T infrastructure round the clock to ensure maximum stability, performance and availability.

We vaunt number of patrons who have gained the benefits of Bits Secure services.

Bits Secure, Key benefit is that it understands technology, data and networking; and with the accurate kind of data at its disposal, Bits Secure can benefit the Customers to progress truly game - changing results.

Poised For Futuristic Transformation

From remote workplaces, which will help organizations to set up meetings in a virtual world to training employees in the same way, the virtual reality market is expected to be a vital component for the organizations by 2025.

BY: ANUSHREE DIXIT <ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM>

Nashville was home and host to some breakthrough ERP innovations, announcements, and customer interactions as Epicor hosted the 2018 edition of its annual user conference.

Themed around the concept of 'The Muscles to move the industry", the conference showcased Epicor's vision in providing modern enterprises with intelligent business platform that are cloud, IoT, mobility and predictive analytics ready. Enterprise Channels MEA had the opportunity to talk to Epicor leaderships and a few of their partners and cus-

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unveiled Epicor Kinetic Design

Partnership with Microsoft Azure for cloud deployments

Announced the latest versions Epicor Prophet 21 and Epicor Eclipse

2018 Epicor Customer Excellence Awards program for the Americas region

Introduces New Alliance ISV Partner Program, Solution Gallery, and Developer Hub

3000+ customers

STEVE MURPHY,
CEO, EPICOR

"Cloud is the way ahead and we shall not be surprised if 20% of our business will come from cloud in the next couple of years. Going forward with our partnership with Microsoft Azure, we are sure that this number will rise and we will be seeing more and more customers realizing the benefits of cloud and the cost effectiveness that it can deliver. Going by the flow of the economy, manufacturing sector is the greatest contributor and hence our prime focus has always been that sector. Moving forward, the market can see Epicor inclining tremendously towards the other sectors as well. We believe that the time is ripe and we have always been the voice of our customers."

tomers who had come from different parts of the world to attend the global event. We are putting together some of the key highlights and conversations that took place during the event.

During the event, Epicor announced its latest version of Epicor Prophet 21 and Epicor Eclipse that helps customers succeed by providing timely solutions to new business challenges. Keeping current with software typically involves significant time, effort, risk, and cost; however, Epicor has greatly reduced these factors by releasing the right tools and programs that make it easy to upgrade. Epicor has also expanded strategic partnership with Microsoft to deliver Epicor enterprise-class solutions globally on the Microsoft Azure platform. Epicor will initially standardize cloud deployment of its Epicor ERP and Epicor Prophet 21 enterprise resource planning (ERP) suites on Microsoft Azure, empowering customers to drive faster growth and innovation as they move to digitally transform their businesses. According to Epicor, innovative ERP solutions, combined with Industry 4.0 developments, are already helping to automate production lines, streamline supply chains, and provide the intelligent data, manufacturers and distributors need to react quickly to changing consumer demands.

LEN GAMBLA,
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING AT VINNELL ARABIA

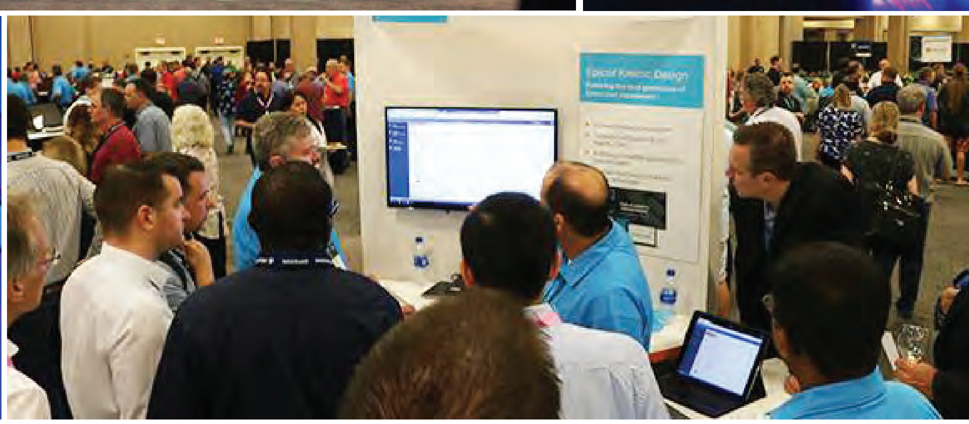
"Partnering with Epicor came down to three key factors. First, given our decision to move to the cloud, security was a critical consideration—the security features available in Epicor Cloud ERP meet the highest industry standards and surpassed the requirements mandated by our security team. Second, Epicor was able to demonstrate true 'value-add'—besides meeting all our basic business requirements, after a review of our operations, the Epicor team was able to highlight several areas where Epicor Cloud ERP could help us realize process improvements and cost savings. Finally, Epicor was able to deliver extremely detailed scope of work documents, risk management plans, and project milestone schedules, prior to any contract being signed. This not only demonstrated the Epicor team's level of expertise and professionalism but also its commitment to being a true business partner for growth, rather than just a software vendor."

ARSHID ZAB,
IT MANAGER AT DOLPHIN GROUP

"Our number one priority was finding a vendor that offered an industry-specific solution with a strong track record of success in the region. This is what really sets Epicor apart from most other vendors in the market. Epicor ERP offers a rich feature set and robust functionality—out-of-the-box—to meet the unique requirements of discrete manufacturers like us. The second reason we decided to partner with Epicor is their sales support and in-house professional services. Based on previous, less-than-ideal experiences with partners, it was essential that the vendor we chose was easy to work with and able to directly manage the entire engagement— from pre-sales, to implementation, to after-sales support."

SCOTT HAYS,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PRODUCT MARKETING, EPICOR SOFTWARE

"Epicor Insights 2018 is all about revisiting our commitment to the customers and our partners as we continue to deliver cloud-enabled, industry-specific functionality, globalization and localization, mobility, and action-oriented analytics, with continued improvements in customer experience, ease-of-use, and performance. We are in the process of onboarding a user adoption theory that will aid our professional services team to improve our post-deployment services. Epicor products have always been easy to learn and easy to use and we are heavily investing in this 'knowledge on demand' model. Geographically, we are seeing high growth in the MENA region and we are also steadily investing in India, Thailand etc. Discrete manufacturing, apart from other sectors, has always been our major focus area and we will continue the same."



INTELLIGENT WEARABLES

Honeywell launched a handsfree, wearable technology that allows industrial workers to more safely, reliably and efficiently accomplish their tasks in the plant or the field. Honeywell Connected Plant Skills Insight Intelligent Wearables uses a head-mounted visual display that responds to voice and brings live data, documents, work procedures, as well as health and safety information into view. It also connects field workers with remote experts in real time.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Guided work instruction and procedures plus visualization of documents to facilitate field work.
- Real-time IIOT data made available to the field worker.
- Learning on-demand and on-site through playback of video, captured by expert operators working on similar tasks, searchable using voice.
- Instant access to remote experts via video chat, who can see what the field worker sees, and can provide advice, share documents, or annotate the video feed.
- Geo-localization, navigation and asset visualization: Locates a field operator in the plant and provides navigation and visualization as required for a task.
- Locates workers in the plant and guides them to an assembly point using geo-localization.
- Detects a man-down, identifying the location and notifying the emergency team for assistance.

PLEASE SEND YOUR FEEDBACK AT INFO@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM

INKJET MULTI-FUNCTION CENTRES

Brother Gulf has launched the new Inkjet Multi-function centres. Its range of office and home printers comes in four models, which include the DCP-T310 (print, copy, scan), DCP-T710W (print, copy, scan with wireless connectivity) and the MFC-T910DW (2-sided print, copy, scan and fax with Ethernet and wireless connectivity).

KEY CAPABILITIES

- DCP-T310: Print head: Piezo with 70 nozzles x 3
Memory capacity: 128mb
LCD Display:16 characters x 1 line
Power source: AC 220 to 240 V 50/60 Hz
- DCP-T710W: Print head: Piezo with 210 nozzles x 3
Memory capacity: 128 mb
LCD Display:16 characters x 1 line
Power source: AC 220 to 240 V 50/60 Hz
- MFC-T910DW: Print head: Piezo with 210 nozzles x 3
Memory capacity: 128 mb
LCD Display: 1.8 in. (44.9 mm) TFT Colour LCD
Power source: AC 220 to 240 V 50/60 Hz

VELOP DUAL BAND MESH WIFI SYSTEM

Linksys launched the latest addition in the family of Velop Whole Home WiFi Mesh Systems, the new Velop Dual-Band Mesh WiFi System. The new Velop Dual-Band Series is a smaller and more affordable WiFi System that is designed and built as the world's first entry-level flexible WiFi System. It also provides all the same powerful software features found in the Velop Tri-Band offerings including Intelligent Mesh, advanced parental controls, website blocking, Amazon Alexa compatibility, as well as ease of use and set up with the Linksys App but in a smaller form factor with Dual-Band technology at a more affordable price.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Compatible with any ISP modem or gateway
- Interoperable and interchangeable
- Easy upgradability based on customers
- Dual-Band AC 2x2 802.11ac Wave 2 with MU-MIMO radio configuration with combined speed up to 1300 Mbps
- Built to connect with each other over Wi-Fi or wired Ethernet
- Auto configure to connect in multiple different mesh topologies
- Simplifies Wi-Fi networking and optimizes end-to-end performance
- Adapts to a user's WiFi needs
- Self-heals and optimizes to consistently deliver fast, flawless Wi-Fi everywhere in home
- Velop users can use both the Tri-Band and Dual-Band versions on the same network
- Adding a Dual-Band node to an existing Tri-Band mesh network is an affordable way to extend coveraged support.

MTE110S PCIeN-VMe M.2 SSD

Transcend Information, launched itsMTE110S PCIe SSD featuring the PCI Express Gen3 x4 interface supported by the latest NVMe standard, to unleash next-generation performance. The MTE110S PCIe SSD aims at high-end applications, such as digital audio/video production, gaming, and enterprise use, which require constant processing heavy workloads with no system lags or slowdowns of any kind. Powered by 3D NAND flash memory, the MTE110S PCIe SSD delivers not only fast transfer speeds but unmatched reliability.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Uses four lanes for transmitting and receiving data simultaneously
- Offers vastly improved read and write speeds over 2D planar NAND
- Performance of up to 1,800MB/s read and 1,500MB/s write
- Guarantees superior endurance
- Higher reliability
- Is engineered with LDPC (Low-Density Parity Check) coding
- High-quality TLC NAND flash chips
- User-Friendly SSD Utility Suite
- Designed to monitor your SSD's health
- Comes in 128GB, 256GB and 512GB capacities