

Enterprise

CHANNELS

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ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS ADVISORY FOR CHANNEL PARTNERS

HOLISTIC SECURITY INNOVATIVE APPROACH

With a portfolio full of niche solutions and key initiatives in 2018, StarLink leadership is reaffirming the meaning of being a 'True VAD'./ 32



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Time for the BIG Meeting!



ANUSHREE DIXIT

EDITOR

ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM

It is the exciting part of year when the IT industry in the region gears up for the biggest industry rendezvous at the GITEX. Over 4000 booths will light up with bustling innovation in all domains of technology and welcome visitors from 120+ countries to unfold newer conversations and latest solutions around AI, blockchain, robotics, cloud and other mega trends.

October, as every year, is a very interesting month from a content perspective as well. As the pages of the magazine go up, so does the excitement of drafting those stories. It is quite fascinating to see how similar technologies have different connotations and how different organizations try to position themselves in unique ways during October. Many companies are pressurized with quarter ends and it is time for them to put the balance sheet on the table and scrutinize the growth and targets. As Nidal Othman, founder and MD of StarLink says in our cover feature "A growth, if not organic, is not a growth." StarLink, the regional value-added distributor for security, cloud and data center solutions through the story tell us about the "TRUE" meaning of VAD and what it means to handle diverse and competitive vendors in one portfolio. Our cover story on "The Virtual Advisors" talks in length about the growing impact of virtualization and how modern enterprises are surviving resource starvation, increased storage demand and need for higher efficiency.

Turn over the leaves of this issue for over forty stories on organizations that are re-imagining emerging technologies with some real references to showcase. You will also see many new faces and companies making it to the issue this month with a lot of emphasis on the channel ecosystem and how the infrastructure will grow in 2019. We have not missed the other players as well. As our readers know, October is the month where GEC Media Group puts out a platter of publication for the reader's choice. From tech and channel stories in Enterprise Channels to security discussions in Cyber Sentinels, from CIO use cases in The Titans to transformative stories in BT and all the way to our annual technology handbook InfraInsights..... we are spreading reach over to the entire ecosystem of solutions and services.

Hope you enjoy all the issues equally.

As the technology media partner for GITEX 2018, Enterprise Channels MEA is also looking forward to some great interactions at the show. Come meet us at Concourse 1 - CC 1-1

Enterprise CHANNELS MEA

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THE 'VIRTUAL' ADVISORS

While CIOs/IT Heads appreciate the evolution of virtualization and backup strategies, Enterprise Channels MEA spoke to a few virtualization experts on the recent trends, challenges and what the future holds in virtualization.

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COVER FEATURE
HOLISTIC SECURITY
INNOVATIVE APPROACH



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The GEC Security Symposium Concludes on a Grand Note!

The inaugural edition of GEC Security Symposium and CISO Awards 2018, a brand-new presentation of Cyber Sentinels, truly did explore the meaning of what end-to-end security means in a digital enterprise. Held at the V Hotel, Dubai on 5th September, the symposium was welcomed by Anushree Dixit, Editor of Cyber Sentinels. The event witnessed the vision of the security experts through keynotes and demonstrations and also presented the CISO and security awards to

the winners.

The prominent CISO speakers were George Eapen, Global CISO of Petrofac and Vivek Silla, Co-Founder of CISO platform. While Kalle Bjorn, Director Systems Engineering of Fortinet spoke on the security fabric for next-gen business transformation, Mohammed Al Moneer, Regional Director MENA for A 10 Networks shed light on automating the cyber defense and rethinking security in a smarter world. Vibin Shaju, Director of

Pre-Sales Southern Europe & MET, McAfee delivered an interesting topic on how Together is Power. The Symposium also had an exciting Business Transformation Powered Panel discussion. Business Transformation is the newly launched magazine by GEC Media Group which reflects the change to futuristic business. As a true extension to our existing tech and channel portfolios, BT talks the next gen business enablers and provides an unparalleled platform

for organizations that are breaking the ice ceiling and putting forward some realistic projects in transformation. The panel discussion was moderated by Arun Shankar, Editor of BT and the key panellists were Adam El Adama, CISO of ADNOC Sour Gas, Saqib Chaudhry, CISO of Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, Safdar Zaman, IT Director, Nakheel, Binoy Koonammavu, CEO of ValueMentor, Ali Sleiman, Technical Director of Infoblox and Tarek Kuzbari, Security Consultant.

MINISTRY OF AI SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH DELL EMC



His Excellency Omar Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, emphasized on the importance of providing opportunities for Emirati youth and encouraging them to develop new skillsets associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. HE Omar Sultan Al Olama's statement came on the back of signing

a strategic partnership agreement with Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice President, Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Dell EMC. According to the agreement, Dell EMC will train 500 Emirati students under a specialized AI programme, supervised by an executive team. "The agreement aims to develop

the skills of Emirati youth in AI technology, and offer graduates an opportunity to shape the future and manage AI processes. This move complements our plans to provide development opportunities to students in schools and universities through other initiatives such as the UAE AI Summer Camp," said Al Olama.

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Cisco signs MoU with TRA

Cisco signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates (TRA) to accelerate digital adoption and boost cooperation for the UAE's digital future. The MoU is a key addition to Cisco's Country Digital Acceleration (CDA) program in the UAE, which aims at building and enhancing a strategic relationship with national leadership, industry, and academia to help accelerate the national digitization agenda.

"Developing the UAE's digital infrastructure is one of the government's major drives. It is closely aligned with the leadership's directives to provide a favorable environment for technological development that enables future solutions, while contributing to the objectives of the national agenda and the UAE Vision 2021," said Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori,

TRA's Director General.

Al Mansoori added: "The MoU between the TRA and Cisco represents our interest in fostering the relation with globally leading partners to accelerate smart transformation in government work and in life on a wider scale. The public-private partnership is an imperative factor in ensuring the success of our strategies for the future, as we are working together to set the scene for the application of IoT, and the concepts of artificial intelligence."

Chuck Robbins, CEO and Chairman of Cisco commented: "Cisco is proud to support the UAE's efforts to transform into a digital economy. Working together, we will help create an ecosystem for innovation and job creation, and we look forward to many more years of cooperation and collaboration."

GOOGLE LAUNCHES DATA- SET SEARCH

Google launched a new search engine targeted at the data journalists, scientists and other user groups to find the datasets they need for their work.

The Dataset Search platform works similar to Google scholar, the company's search engine for academic studies. The new search engine enables users to find datasets stored thousands of repositories on the web with appropriate information or meta data tags as their otherwise known. It also lets the users find data sets wherever they are hosted, whether on a publisher's site, a digital library or an author's personal web page.

Google AI research scientist Natasha Noy mentioned in her blog post: "To create Dataset search, we developed guidelines for dataset providers to describe their data in a way that Google (and other search engines) can better understand the content of their pages. These guidelines include salient information about datasets: who created the dataset, when it was published, how the data was collected, what the terms are for using the data, etc."

NASDAQ MOVES LIVESTREAMING SERVICES TO MICROSOFT AZURE

To better serve its global clientele, which includes 4,000 listed companies, Nasdaq is moving its livestreaming services to Microsoft Azure and expanding them to Nasdaq offices in San Francisco, Stockholm, Sydney and Bangalore, India. The rollout is expected by the end of the year. The Nasdaq video tower has illuminated Times Square in New York City with 19 million LEDs and seven stories of multimedia screens. The billboard is both an iconic landmark and a celebrated medium for live broadcasts, vibrant ads and real-time market information during major events for Nasdaq-listed companies. "The Nasdaq Tower and MarketSite have become globally recognized as the home of Nasdaq," says Nelson Griggs, president of the Nasdaq Stock Exchange and executive vice president of Nasdaq corporate services.

"We host 200 to 300 events a year with clients, associations and other high-profile parties, but some of the most visible and exciting events for us are IPO days, when companies are going public, getting exposure to investors and expanding their brand," says Griggs. "It's a very momentous experience for the company."

DOLPHIN GROUP SELECTS EPICOR ERP

Dolphin Group has implemented the global enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, Epicor ERP. Dolphin Group has deployed Epicor ERP across the company's seven business units and eleven facilities in the UAE.

By breaking down data

siloes and facilitating visibility and transparency across departments, Epicor ERP is enabling Dolphin Group's employees to be more efficient, and make better, faster, day-to-day business critical decisions. Particularly for the operations team, modules such as planning and

scheduling, production management, service management, warehouse management, and manufacturing execution system (MES) have allowed them to deploy several industry best practices across the shop floor. This has resulted in lower material waste and improved prod-

uct quality and on time delivery (OTD). These operational improvements are expected to allow the company to add new product lines, expand operations, and grow revenue streams. "Dolphin Group is a great example of how regional small-to-medium size enterprises

can use an ERP solution to not only modernize their operations but also to gain a competitive advantage by being able to offer their customers a 'consumer-like' buying experience," concluded Andy Coussins, senior vice president and head of sales, international region at Epicor Software.

Relam Investment Launches 3rd Gen Blockchain Technology



SULTAN ALI LOOTAH,
CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF
HETACHAIN

Relam Investment has officially launched its 3rd Generation Blockchain technology ecosystem – HETACHAIN – and its ICO. The global launch started in Dubai, and will proceed to London and Turkey throughout 2018. HETACHAIN is a DPoS + BFT hybrid blockchain network focused on addressing the age-long scalability dilemma and pushing forth a truly democratically governed platform built for industry scale transactions while also uniquely designed for private users. With its array of features integrating

a blend of public and individual adoption-focused design through a multi-chain system, users can use HETACHAIN for both public and private blockchain preference.

The HETACHAIN ecosystem consists of smart contracts, HetaCoin, hot and cold Heta Wallets, Heta App Store, Blockchain feature-enablers and comprehensive solutions that enhance its applicability in smart banking, healthcare, e-commerce, trade, telecommunications, data management, investment, cash exchange, and remittance. “We are driving the whole world into a new ecosystem. HETACHAIN will be your enabler, your society, your business and your social life. HETACHAIN is designed to be a diversified ecosystem crossing various sectors such as; finance, healthcare, retail, trade, transport and will always upgrade with the changes happening in our societies. The ecosystem is empowered with a 3.0 Blockchain technology, and through it we will provide our Smart Contracts, HetaCoin, Heta Wallet and other technologies.” Mr. Sultan Ali Lootah, Chairman and CEO of HETACHAIN said.

JUNIPER NETWORKS EXPANDS PARTNERSHIP WITH ERICSSON

Juniper Networks expanded its 18-year partnership with Ericsson to deliver a comprehensive end-to-end 5G solution leveraging each company's complementary portfolios. Together, the companies are now offering service providers a complete 5G transport network solution with single pane of glass visibility to manage the new requirements of next-generation mobile service delivery. This deepened partnership aims to offer service providers a complete solution from radio to core for new-service delivery while managing mounting complexity. 5G is expected to be a game changer for the next generation of business and consumer services, but the increase in connectivity, network traffic and customer expectations will likely create new challenges for managing the mobile transport network in a cost-effective way. Evolving 5G use cases, including connected cars, AR/VR and 8K video streaming, and the associated 5G radio requirements needed to support these diverse applications can place additional demands across the network. Capacity, connectivity, latency, synchronization, reliability and security needs will all require tighter integration between the 5G radio, core and transport layers of an end-to-end mobile network.

60 SECONDS

HID GLOBAL ACQUIRES CROSSMATCH

HID Global has acquired Crossmatch. Crossmatch's portfolio of products includes biometric identity management hardware and software that complement HID's broad portfolio of trusted identity products and services, making HID Global one of the world's major providers of fingerprint biometric technologies. The Crossmatch commercial biometrics business extends HID's portfolio to include a broad array of single finger readers, modules, sensors and software developer kits (SDKs) for multiple vertical markets including – retail, financial, healthcare and OEM markets.

LA FRENCH TECH IS BACK TO GITEX

Business France, the national agency supporting the international development of the French economy, is organizing the French Tech Pavilion on the occasion of the 38th annual edition of GITEX. This year, Amadeus, will be the official partner of the French pavilion. It will reward the most innovative French exhibitor.

DICETEK PARTNERS WITH JEDOX

Jedox AG has partnered with Dicetek, which offers a broad range of SAP HANA, CRM, Big Data and Robotic Process Automation enterprise IT solutions, and partnering with Jedox adds a powerful Corporate Performance Management (CPM) component to the Dicetek Solutions Portfolio. Jedox simplifies planning, analysis and reporting within a single, integrated CPM software solution, empowering decision makers and business users across all departments and enabling them to work smarter, streamline business collaboration and make insight-based decisions with confidence.

NEC AND SOLACE COLLABORATE ON DATA CONNECTIVITY

NEC Corporation and Solace Corporation signed a global partnership in the development and provision of data connectivity. In this collaboration, NEC and Solace combine NEC's network solutions for enabling multi-access and optimizing networks with PubSub+ to provide total network and data connectivity.

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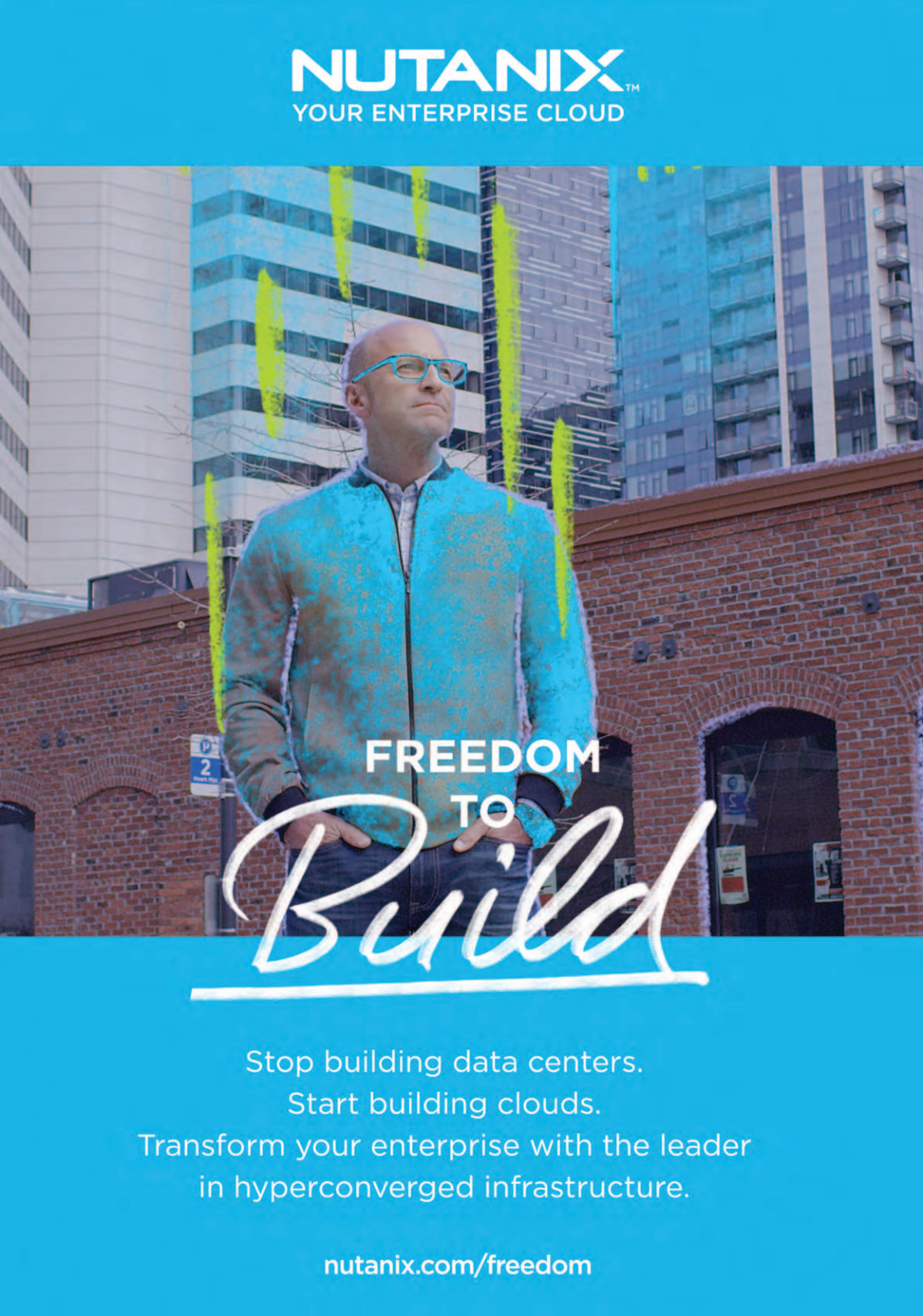
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HBMSU Launches Smart Advising System



DR. MANSOOR AL AWAR,
CHANCELLOR OF HBMSU

As part of its pioneering efforts to adopt technological innovation and promote creative thinking for smart learning and the knowledge industry, Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University (HBMSU) celebrated the launch of the Smart Advising System for its learners starting fall of 2018, reinforcing its position as the first university in the Arab World to adopt a new smart and innovating learning system that represents a key step in the path of smart learning, especially in the move to advise learners and helping them in a 24/7 interactive electronic environment. The university is the first in the region to create a smart learning system that will help learners choose the right pathways and courses to enhance the university's progress in keeping pace with the rapid developments of the 21st century. The new system represents a quality focused initiative that demonstrates HBMSU's position as the best model for the future of smart learning in the Arab World.

The Smart Advising System is a result of the "Innovation Lab in the smart learning future", which is strategically important as one of the innovative initiatives under the umbrella of HBMSU to provide a world-class interactive platform to stimulate innovation and establish bridges of communication and creative thinking in smart learning in the Arab World.

FUJITSU DEVELOPS PLATFORM TECHNOLOGY

Fujitsu Laboratories has developed a technology that offers both high speed data-processing and high-capacity storage in distributed storage systems, in order to speed up the processing of ever-increasing volumes of data.

Fujitsu Laboratories developed "Datafinic Computing," a technology for distributed storage systems that handles data processing while also fulfilling their original storage function, in order to speed up the processing of large volumes of data. With this technology, storage systems can process large volumes of data at high speeds, including unstructured data, enabling the efficient utilization of the ever-increasing amounts of data, in such cases as utilizing security camera video, analyzing logs from ICT systems, utilizing sensor data from cars, and analyzing genetic data.

AJMAN MEDIA CITY FREE ZONE LAUNCHES ELECTRONIC LICENSING SYSTEM

Ajman Media City Free Zone launches an electronic licensing service to serve and facilitate a global network of partners, representatives and potential investors based in any part of the world.

HE Mahmood Al Hashmi, C.E.O of Ajman

Media City Free Zone said: "We are committed to offer "Low investment, High returns and Maximum Comfort" to our potential customers, and partners globally and this feature enhances the ease of doing business as well as eliminates costs and save significant time

for everyone."

"Our latest feature, an electronic system will enable the investors to fulfill all requirements for setting up the business and acquire license in a safe, fast and secure environment."

"At the same time, we fully understand the

importance of creating comfort and trust among our investors. Utilising the latest a triple cryptography system, our electronic system successfully meets and adhere to the most stringent requirements on data security and confidentiality,

The Ajman Media City

Free Zone also launched a new 'electronic agents network', which allows international representative, business agents and partners all across the globe to be connected with the free zone and offer potential investors the complete set of services electronically.

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HDD image is tentative and subject to change

Expo 2020 empowers university students in UAE

University students in the UAE are being given an opportunity to help shape the future through an Expo 2020 Dubai programme that entrusts youth to develop creative solutions to global challenges that affect the region.

The second cycle of the University Innovation Programme (UIP), a key pillar of Expo 2020's innovation and partnership programme Expo Live, was launched. It calls on student teams to produce original ideas or prototypes that could benefit communities by positively impacting society, preserving the environment, or both.

Successful student teams will each receive a grant worth between AED 25,000 and AED

50,000 to help take their idea to the next level. Students will also receive guidance from their universities and Expo Live to advance research and development, create a business model, grow their team and potentially partner with other entities. Grantees may even have the chance to showcase their projects to millions of people at Expo 2020 Dubai. Yousuf Caires, Vice President – Expo Live, Expo 2020 Dubai, said: "Expo Live firmly believes that innovation can come from anywhere, to everyone – and this especially includes university students. We saw this during the first cycle of the UIP, when student teams across the UAE developed truly innovative projects that we are now helping to develop.

MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS SHOWCASES ADVANCED SOLUTIONS AT CC MENA

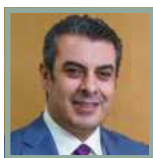
Motorola Solutions will launch highly advanced mission-critical solutions for creating a powerful state of safety for a digital society at Critical Communications MENA 2018. CC MENA 2018 highlights will include future-leading solutions for both public safety and commercial organisations focusing on real-time artificial intelligence (AI) at the edge, digital transformation of policing as well as integrated TETRA and LTE broadband networks. "Society, economy and public safety are undergoing a digital transformation. We provide public safety organisations and commercial customers with the right intelligence and tools to help them enhance their operational efficiency, responsiveness and safety," said Patrick Fitting, senior sales director for the Middle East at Motorola Solutions.



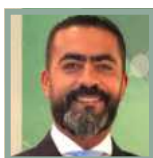
MOVEMENTS



FLORIAN WINTERSTEIN
becomes new CEO of
Jedox



GBM Appoints
EDDY ABBOUD as
General Manager for
Oman



Juniper Appoints
MOHAMED TANTAWI as
Service Provider Director



NUMBER GAME

\$92,075
mn

IaaS market
projected to reach
\$92,075 million by
2023: Allied Market
Research



WEB CLIPS

KONICA MINOLTA ACHIEVES ANOTHER MILESTONE

Konica Minolta has achieved another significant milestone in its label business with the announcement of the sale of the 250th unit of its AccurioLabel 190 full-digital toner press globally. A year ago, Konica Minolta had announced a "100th customer" milestone for its label press, indicating Konica Minolta's accelerating growth path within industrial printing. The Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 is designed to target small to mid-size label converters by offering affordable entry to digital printing.

ERICSSON AND TELSTRA TEST LONG-RANGE NB-IOT CONNECTION

Ericsson and Telstra have successfully deployed and tested Narrowband Internet of Things (NB-IoT) data connections up to 100km from a base-station in Telstra's commercial network – the longest-range NB-IoT connection of its kind, and a key milestone towards increasing Telstra's LTE footprint in rural and regional Australia. The technology breakthrough, designed by Ericsson, extends the 3GPP standards-based limit from around 40km out to 100km.

SAP TO AID NEW KUWAIT VISION 2035

Millions of Kuwait's residents and organizations will be able to benefit from a digital experience when it comes to electricity and water services, with the innovative smart meters partnership of SAP with the Ministry of Electricity and Water. As part of the partnership, the Ministry of Electricity and Water have started deploying the smart meters that will reach, by the end of the project, a total of 800,000 electrical meters and 300,000 water meters to homes and organizations across the country, helping to meet the New Kuwait Vision 2035 goals of effective governance.

BARCO APPOINTS NEW VP

Barco appointed Ramzi Itani as the new Vice President of its Middle East and Africa operations. With a wealth of experience spanning more than 25 years in high-profile leadership positions in the IT industry, Ramzi will be responsible for developing and accelerating Barco's enterprise, entertainment and health-care client bases, to strengthen and expand its regional presence.

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Success Means “Being Happy” for UAE: LinkedIn Study

LinkedIn revealed the results of its new research study, in unison with the local roll-out of its global “In It Together” campaign.

The study asked people in the UAE and across the world how they define professional success, and who or what have been the reasons behind their career trajectories. Findings from the report have revealed a strong correlation between success and happiness, with 66 per cent of those surveyed in the UAE saying that success means “being happy”. Another top choice was “being healthy” (63 per cent), while “maintaining a work-life balance” was the third most popular answer (53 per cent).

Among the UAE’s expatriate professional

community, nearly 45 per cent (44.9) say they are “very successful” in the UAE work environment in comparison to their experiences in their home countries, while another 35.9 per cent describe themselves as “fairly successful”. Additionally, 57.3 per cent credit being exposed to different cultures for making them more creative, and 59 per cent say they have learned more thanks to that exposure. Other findings revealed that nearly 61 per cent (60.9) of UAE professionals have a workplace best friend, or ‘bestie’, who helps them better get through the day (50.8 per cent), makes them feel more confident (35.8 per cent), and plays a part in their career progression (32.8 per cent).

ADSSSA BRINGS TOGETHER ACADEMIC AND INDUSTRY WORLDS

The Abu Dhabi Smart Solutions & Services Authority, in partnership with Khalifa University for Science and Technology, recently organized a workshop covering the many uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The workshop, which reflects the strong ties between ADSSSA and local and international academic institutions, served as a strategic platform to exchange knowledge and experiences about AI and to discuss newer smart services aimed at facilitating the ‘Machine Learning’ process, including its eventual application across various fields. The event was attended by H.E. Dr. Rauda Al Saadi, Director General, ADSSSA and Dr. Arif Sultan Al Hammadi, Executive Vice President, Khalifa University for Science and Technology. Also present were senior officials and representatives from both entities.

During the workshop, a team from Khalifa University showcased a presentation about the most significant applications of ‘Machine Learning’, a branch of AI concerned with the design and development of technologies that allow computers to gain ‘learning’ skills and converting software applications to more accurate applications in predicting results.

TRIPLE SPOTLIGHTS FINTECH INNOVATION

Triple was the Smart Payment Partner of the Arab Future Cities Summit 2018. Digital payments are transforming customer experiences, bringing users the convenience and efficiency to carry out their transactions electronically. Innovation in FinTech has resulted in user-friendly solutions such as the Triple mobile wallet, and these innovations are recognized as key pillars of a smart city.

“At Triple, our aim was to accelerate regional cities’ journeys towards an inclusive, digital economy. We are working hard to create an enhanced connected experience for our mobile wallet users, making technology an integral part of daily life”, said Paolo Gagliardi, Chief Executive Officer, Triple. “The interest around – and commitment towards – a future in a Smart City is laying the foundation for significant innovation in solutions that will actually impact lives and business in these cities. We were proud to partner with the Arab Future Cities Summit to showcase our view of the future, and demonstrate what we have already built.”

SOLGARI & EMERGENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS REVEAL PARTNERSHIP IN MEA

Solgari and Emergent Telecommunications have partnered to bring Solgari services to local corporates & SMEs. Solgari provides our customers in 34 countries to date all the digital communication channels – including voice, WebRTC

video, chat, IM & SMS – in the cloud, while automatically addressing local and international compliance requirements through a per user per month SaaS model.

Emergent Telecommunications and affiliate telecom service provider companies,

are seeing significant business demand for cloud-based communications delivered over the top of their local networks making this a powerful partnership in one of the fastest growing regions for cloud adoption.

Countries in MEA region

and Pakistan are experiencing a major leap forward to the most modern technologies, such as the deployment of the LTE Advanced 4.5G network. This creates the opportunity to deliver modern communication solutions

such as Cloud Business Communications across the top of these networks to fast growing SMEs, local & multi-national corporates who are not encumbered with legacy technologies.



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Finesse will present Netcetera's blockchain solutions at GITEX



Technology unfolds sheets of innovation every day which changes the course of action for companies in the long run. To bridge this innovation gap, at this GITEX Finesse along with its partner Netcetera will showcase blockchain & digital transformation solutions.

Finesse, over the past few years, observed how digital transformation has paved its way and significantly impacted how businesses flourish, enhance their skill sets and improve customer

engagement. To help these businesses traverse their path of success, Finesse strives to bring customised digital solutions to match the demands and needs of their customers using blockchain technology.

Finesse is quite excited about hosting Netcetera as their Strategic Digital Partner for GITEX 2018 and according to Sunil Paul, Co-Founder & COO of Finesse, "Partnership with Netcetera will further enhance our digital portfolio and we will be showcasing our business solutions for Analytics, Blockchain & RPA to our visitors."

"Netcetera has been working extensively on exploring the potential of blockchain technologies in solving business challenges. This is a strategic partnership for us. Together with Finesse we will be able to apply our blockchain solution to the right business through our new product n-blocks", says Kiril Milev, Managing Director at Netcetera Middle East. n-blocks is harnessing the power of blockchain to revolutionise document handling and service delivery for governments and businesses. It has been designed to offer exceptional security, cost-efficiency, scalability and adaptability.

NEXANS TO DEMONSTRATE FTTO SOLUTIONS GITEX

Nexans will be participating at GITEX Technology Week 2018 and the company will showcase its Data Centre Innovations and Fibre-to-the-Office (FTTO) solutions in addition to highlighting its world-class LAN cabling solutions. Senior executives will be available at the event to share their knowledge, insights and success stories with visitors while experts from the company will hold product demonstrations for customers and partners.

"At GITEX this year, Nexans will bring forth its expansive portfolio of LAN cabling solutions and demonstrate the features of our best-of-breed products to customers and partners visiting our stand from around the world. GITEX Technology Week not only offers us the right platform to share our world-class innovations but also serves as a means to demonstrate our level of commitment to the region, our customers and partners," said Tarek Helmy, Regional Director Gulf and Middle East, South & East Africa at Nexans Cabling Solutions.

NEXIGN TO ESTABLISH MEA HEADQUARTERS IN UAE

Nexign plans to open the company's Middle East and Africa (MEA) headquarters in Dubai, UAE. As part of its expansion in the region, the company also appointed Ahmad Sayed as Regional Director, Middle East and Africa. Loukas Tzitzis, Chief Products and Marketing Officer at Nexign, said, "As we look to execute on our ambitious growth targets, one of the company's strategic goals for 2018-2020 is to enter the international BSS market and expand our customer base. Given the favourable fundamentals, strong government backing for adoption of technologies like 5G, blockchain and IoT and some of the digital transformation projects being currently undertaken by leading operators in Middle East and Africa, we believe that the region presents significant opportunities for Nexign." Operating as Peter-Service for the past 26 years, Nexign has established a strong and reliable track record of executing successful BSS transformation projects across all tiers at a significantly lower total cost of ownership (TCO) than the market average. In fact, to date, the company has completed over 120 projects for 50 major network operators, including the likes of MegaFon, Turkcell, and Rostelecom.

LENOVO REVEALS INTELLIGENT SOLUTIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

At Transform 2.0, Lenovo revealed a series of new products, partnerships and solutions designed for business customers that demonstrate the company's ongoing Intelligent Transformation strategy. The

strategy reflects Lenovo's unique business perspective on how to build end-to-end solutions with smart features that transform businesses and improve the user experience.

Intelligent Transforma-

tion will reinvent and restructure entire systems of production, management, and governance worldwide. It is driven by emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, augmented reality, the Internet

of Things, blockchain and 5G connectivity. Lenovo excels in these competencies – based in the cloud, distributed through infrastructure, including networks and delivered by devices.

The announcements respond to the appetite for new devices and computers that meet the demands of customers and consumers, harnessing the potential of data, cloud computing and machine learning.

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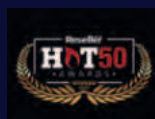
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Nedaa to Highlight Role of Public Safety LTE Network

Nedaa is all set to share its current critical communications tactics in the public safety domain when it participates for the sixth consecutive year at the Critical Communications Middle East and North Africa (CC MENA) Conference and Exhibition in Dubai. Nedaa, CCMENA 2018's Host Operator, is going to shed light on its 4G network infrastructure and the technology's crucial role in supporting public safety enforcement and emergency response initiatives.

To be held from September 24 to 25, 2018 at the Madinat Jumeirah, CCMENA will provide Nedaa a global venue to emphasize the importance of data connectivity in promoting real-time communications and achieving mission-critical objectives. Embracing the benefits of mobile

broadband-based services, Nedaa is already moving towards complementing existing TETRA infrastructure with LTE network to boost communications among public protection and disaster relief agencies as well as help accelerate Dubai's transition into a smart city. H.E. Mansoor Bu Osaiba, CEO, Nedaa, said: "New innovations in critical communications have been introduced over the recent years, thereby positively affecting vital fields and improving connectivity between concerned authorities. We are delighted to be taking part again in CCMENA during which we will reaffirm our full commitment to help further strengthen critical communications as a vital part of ensuring safety and order in local society."

CONSUMERS WOULD USE AI TO SAVE TIME AND MONEY; GARTNER

A recent survey by Gartner reveals that saving time and money are the top reasons why consumers would use artificial intelligence (AI). "AI is among the technologies that consumers consider using for tangible and more 'serious' benefits, as opposed to socializing, projecting self-image and having fun — three common reasons for using other personal technologies," said Stephanie Baghdassarian, research director at Gartner. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said they would use AI if it helps them save time by taking over some tasks. Fifty-three percent said they would use AI if it helps them save money. "We can think of AI being able to look for the best deal for a specific purchase, or find the best route to a particular destination, enabling to save money on toll payments and fuel," said Ms. Baghdassarian. Forty-seven percent would use AI if it gave them easier access to information, such as travel and transportation directions and details of their everyday consumption of goods.

ALIBABA CLOUD AND OBS UNVEIL INNOVATIVE CLOUD SOLUTIONS

Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) and Alibaba Cloud launched OBS Cloud, an innovative broadcasting solution that operates entirely on the cloud, to help transform the media industry for the digital era. Set to be in place for Tokyo 2020, the OBS Cloud aims to offer all the necessary cloud components, in specialized configurations, that can support the extremely demanding content production and delivery workflows of the broadcasting of the Olympic Games.

As the host broadcaster, OBS can now provide most of the visual and audio assets of the Olympic Games to all Rights Holding Broadcasters (RHBs) through the new cloud platform efficiently, effectively and securely. Broadcasters can also set up their own content creation, management and distribution systems on OBS Cloud, a solution that has been optimized to address the particular needs of the most demanding live multi-sport workflows.

VMWARE'S DIGITAL SUITE TO TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT GITEX

VMware will be exhibiting at GITEX Technology Week from October 14-18 2018, where it will be showcasing its latest innovations in cloud, networking & security and digital workspace technologies that

are seen as critical to the successful digital transformation of Middle Eastern organisations.

VMware will also be displaying its latest achievements across its VMware NSX networking

and security portfolio, to help regional customers implement a more secure, end-to-end software-based network architecture through a Virtual Cloud Network.

Ahmed Auda, Managing

Director – Middle East and North Africa, VMware, said: "Now is the time for organisations to build their digital foundation. Digital transformation is the top priority for Middle East CIOs, and GITEX offers

a great opportunity for us to showcase our solutions that deliver secure and exceptional digital and mobile experiences, which ultimately are critical for driving regional business competitiveness."



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IT IS TRANSFORMATION ALL THE WAY FOR DELL EMC AND THEIR PARTNERS AT THIS GITEX. HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE COMPANY AT THE SHOW.



MOHAMMED AMIN,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, MIDDLE
EAST, TURKEY & AFRICA AT DELL EMC

High growth areas

Dell Technologies is a leader in numerous high-growth areas of the \$2 trillion information technology market, with a portfolio, sales team and R&D organization across four globally recognized technology franchises –servers, storage, virtualization and PCs.

The Dell Technologies family of businesses includes Dell, Dell EMC, Pivotal, RSA, Secure-Works, Virtustream and VMware. It stands as a \$79.9 billion market leader with the industry's most expansive portfolio from the edge to the data center to the cloud.

Reasons for exhibiting at GITEX and what you aim to achieve at the show

Given the pace of progress in the Middle East with organizations preparing to enter this next era of human and machine partnerships, we believe that there is immense possibility on the horizon. It is a crucial time for businesses

to either grasp the mantle, transform their IT, workforce and security, and play a defining role in the future or be left behind. GITEX brings these critical conversations to the forefront and this year we will be demonstrating the unparalleled strength of Dell Technologies in enabling and shaping organizations in the UAE and the whole of Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) region to lead the frontlines of innovation.

Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice President, Middle East, Turkey & Africa at Dell EMC

"According to recent research by Dell Technologies, only 27% of regional businesses believe they are ingraining digital in all they do while nearly half (45%) don't know whether they'll be able to compete over the next decade, and the majority (68%) of businesses are struggling to keep-up with the pace of change. In this pivotal time, Dell Technologies partners with businesses to provide capabilities spanning strategy development, consultative services and solution deployment and support to help customers and partners drive the digital transformation of their businesses. With an attentive and relevant audience, GITEX is the perfect opportunity to share our latest news and plans for the near-term and the longer-term future, around products, solutions, initiatives, partnerships, and much more."

"By 2050, the world population will reach 10 billion people, compared to 7.6 billion today. This demographic boom, comes with big challenges that could lead to chaos. The Connected City presents the attractive opportunity of improving quality of life and facilitating a continuously innovative environment which not only caters to residents' needs, but is also able to predict their future requirements and demands. Today, future urbanism is not only a topic of interest but one of increasing relevance. Dell Technologies is committed to creating technologies that drive human progress and we look forward to the opportunities GITEX presents for collaboration and innovation towards future development."

Information on any regional contract wins or other success stories

Dell EMC recently collaborated with pioneering public organizations like Dubai Municipality

and Abu Dhabi Monitoring and Control Centre (ADMCC) to advance the nation's innovation agenda and facilitate the development of smart cities.

With the aim to embrace digital transformation to interconnect public and private services, increase innovation and efficiency, and provide credible measures to enhance safety and security of the citizens of the capital through surveillance cameras, ADMCC collaborated with Dell EMC to build an advanced control center.

The transformational project includes the deployment of 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. Leveraging Dell EMC ViPR Controller, storage automation software, to optimize the control center will reduce human error and the number of staff focusing on managing the infrastructure, compared to the existing setup. In addition, these scalable, secure and highly available solutions will enable ADMCC to meet their surveillance data needs and simplify management of unstructured data. This move comes in the light of enabling government agencies to better pre-empt and respond to emergencies and safeguard the city's inhabitants.

Dell EMC also announced a strategic collaboration with Dubai Municipality 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.

With a mandate to transform the IT foundation, Dubai Municipality worked with Dell EMC to implement their strategy and enable virtualization capabilities using software defined scale-out infrastructure. In addition to helping the entity in reducing the complexity of managing the IT infrastructure, the growing number of smart services and the resulting data, this solution also allows the IT staff to focus more on innovative projects, rather than maintain the infrastructure. ➡

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Re-inventing the Wheel on 'Wheels'

Can you compress and present innovation in a 60 m2 truck? Well this is what Schneider is exactly doing at this GITEX. As digital transformation and an era of smart city beckons, Schneider Electric with its 'Extended Enterprise' will be showcasing its extended capabilities in automation and next generation of connected realities.

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

Schneider Electric summarizes the year 2018 in a single phrase 'Walking the extra mile'.

Pursuing the digital agenda for energy management and automation, Schneider has been revamping the company's existing business models to increase customer efficiency, transforming the company's positioning, educating the customers about benefits of connected solutions and data analytics. Schneider went on to go a step beyond in delivering seamless end-user services.

"2018 has been a very challenging yet exciting year for us. Our focus has been on connecting the people and processes in an 'EcoStruxure'— as we call it. EcoStruxure is our IoT-enabled, plug and play, open, interoperable, architecture and platform. Through this we are taking our customers on a journey of our well-known products, which comprises the OT part, and add edge control on top of it to see how customers can connect everything together in one platform. From here we go to the third platform which we call as data analytics and asset management to give the relevant information."

Schneider's EcoStruxure delivers enhanced value around safety, reliability, efficiency, sustainability, and connectivity. It leverages advancements in IoT, mobility, sensing, cloud, analytics and cybersecurity to deliver Innovation at every level, from Connected Products, Edge Control to Apps, Analytics & Services. EcoStruxure has been deployed in 480,000+ sites, with the support of 20,000+ system integrators and developers, connecting over 1.6 million assets under manage-

ment through 40+ digital services.

"Data is the future currency. One who knows how to manage and monitor the data is in a position to understand and serve the customer better," says Hanan. "Digital transformation and industrialization is no more a buzzword. Customers have already started seeing the benefits of this and how it can help optimize the resources to increase business efficiency. Data management is key and not a luxury anymore. Businesses are using this critical data to retrieve information and accelerate business transformation and Schneider has been playing a critical role in this."

Hanan gives the example of one of their customer ADNOC, which has 16 operating companies. "ADNOC ADNOC had a diverse portfolio and varied standards of handling and managing data. They saw a huge potential for cost and time efficiency in this but did not know how they can drive it with a simplified solution. Schneider came in with one of our best software— Wonderware. With Wonderware's solution we connected all the assets of the company and collected information that were critical. With this, we went beyond the imaginations of the operations department, finance department, warehousing and logistics department. Now they have real time data that can actually pinpoint the problem areas and the consumption."

SCHNEIDER AND THE EXTENDED ENTERPRISE

It is the age of extension – as I would like to call it— where each and every vendor or solution provider has to widen its arms to be a part of the

bigger ecosystem. Technology cannot exist in isolation nor can solution providers. "Schneider is a part of an ecosystem, so we work very closely with the partners. We train and educate our partners to walk with us in this transformation journey. We need to continuously develop, which is not an easy one because partners can be VADs, resellers, systems integrators, or consultants. We need to develop them, and we call this the 'Extended Enterprise'. We are in an era of autonomous vehicles, but we cannot operate autonomously."

MAPPING THE KEY



HANAN DARWISH,
CLUSTER PRESIDENT – GULF AND PAKISTAN,
SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

GEOGRAPHIES

As the president for the Gulf region, Hanan says that every region develops in its own pace and the demands vary accordingly. “The cultures are varied in terms of investment and priority. For example, Kuwait is piloting smart metering, which is one of the large regional projects. We are also showcasing smart utilities in the UAE with Ministry of Infrastructure Development, DEWA, and SEWA. When the journey is with the customers, we walk in their own pace. We give them the

knowledge of what our capabilities are and what we have been doing in other region. Customers are the main drivers of our business model and we do not operate with a one-size-fits-all model. We are the trusted advisers for our customers. Our customers talk to our technical engineers and not to the sales team who help them with the technical competencies involved in complex projects.”

One of the greatest example for this would be the Raipur smart city project that Schneider initiated. Hanan says that they did the first smart city

in Raipur and we successfully converted a dream into reality with base investment. “They did not have a huge budget to invest. They just wanted the technology so we took their old equipments and updated it, rather than buying new ones. This is the kind of competency that the technical team has.”

INNOVATION HUB ON WHEELS

Hanan says that this year at Gitex, Schneider has shun tradition. “We are not going for the traditional booth where we just meet and greet customers. We have the Innovation Hub on Wheels that is approximately 60 square meters. This truck has toured the entire gulf region and shows the principle of a smart city. We shall also be showcasing some real use cases with it for key sectors such as transportation, utilities, oil and Gas etc.”

FINALLY

Hanan says that her vision would be realized when customers will start taking digitization not as a fashion but as a necessity for realizing business and cost efficiency. The organizations that digitally transform the soonest will rise to the top.” Hanan signs off. ➤



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A GLIMPSE INTO MICROSOFT SECURITY BRIEFING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 19TH FOR THE REGIONAL MEDIA.

According to Rob Lefferts, Corporate Vice President, Security of Microsoft, "Cybersecurity is the central challenge of the digital age. Without it, the most basic human rights like privacy cannot exist. Every day organizations take precious time and resources away from their core business mission to defend against and recover from cyberattacks. They operate dozens of complex disconnected tools, yet the gaps between those tools remain and threats get through. Their security teams struggle to keep up and skilled expertise is scarce."

Microsoft claims that they are walking with customers in the journey and are in a unique

position to help empower IT and unlock the security capabilities of the intelligent cloud to tip the scales in the cyber war.

Microsoft recently hosted a security briefing for regional media on September 19 at the Microsoft Office where speakers discussed about the security environment that companies are operating in, and how they think about securing data for companies, governments and people across the Middle East and Africa. The event was moderated by senior Microsoft spokespeople such as Mike Yeh, Microsoft Lawyer and Government Affairs Lead for Middle East and Africa, Cyril Voisin, Chief Security Advisor, EMEA, and a Customer panel discussion that highlighted

how the cloud is becoming a security imperative in addressing the most rigorous security and privacy demands of our customers.

Microsoft is focusing on three key areas. Running security operations that work for modern organizations, building enterprise-class technology, and driving partnerships for a heterogeneous world.

There is still a huge number of Middle East companies suffering from larger security losses than its global counterparts, as businesses in the region continuously grow. In fact, one of the most striking research recently carried out by Microsoft was that, at a time when security professionals are recommending next-generation identity-management techniques such as facial recognition, biometric identification and two-factor authentication and conditional access (2FA), just over 80% of large Gulf enterprises still use usernames and passwords as the exclusive means of log-in. As a result, these companies have placed a stress on technology infrastructure and put them front and centre of all cyberthreats and attacks.

Mike Yeh, Microsoft Lawyer and Government Affairs Lead for Middle East & Africa says, "As more and more organizations move from on-premise solutions to cloud, the question of compliance and policy increases today, more than ever. Me and my team at Microsoft are spending a lot of time with the government organizations in creating strategic framework for security and compliance. Today, over 120 countries in the world have a set data protection rule, still the adaption and best practices vary. We interact and engage with over 50-60 governments across the globe, so the idea is to identify what are the best practices that we can gather from different countries and help the government organizations. We share the similar vision as of the UAE government in approaching security steadfast. With futuristic solutions as AI and machine learning, we look forward to be, not only the trusted technology partner to the government but also the rightful policy advisors." 



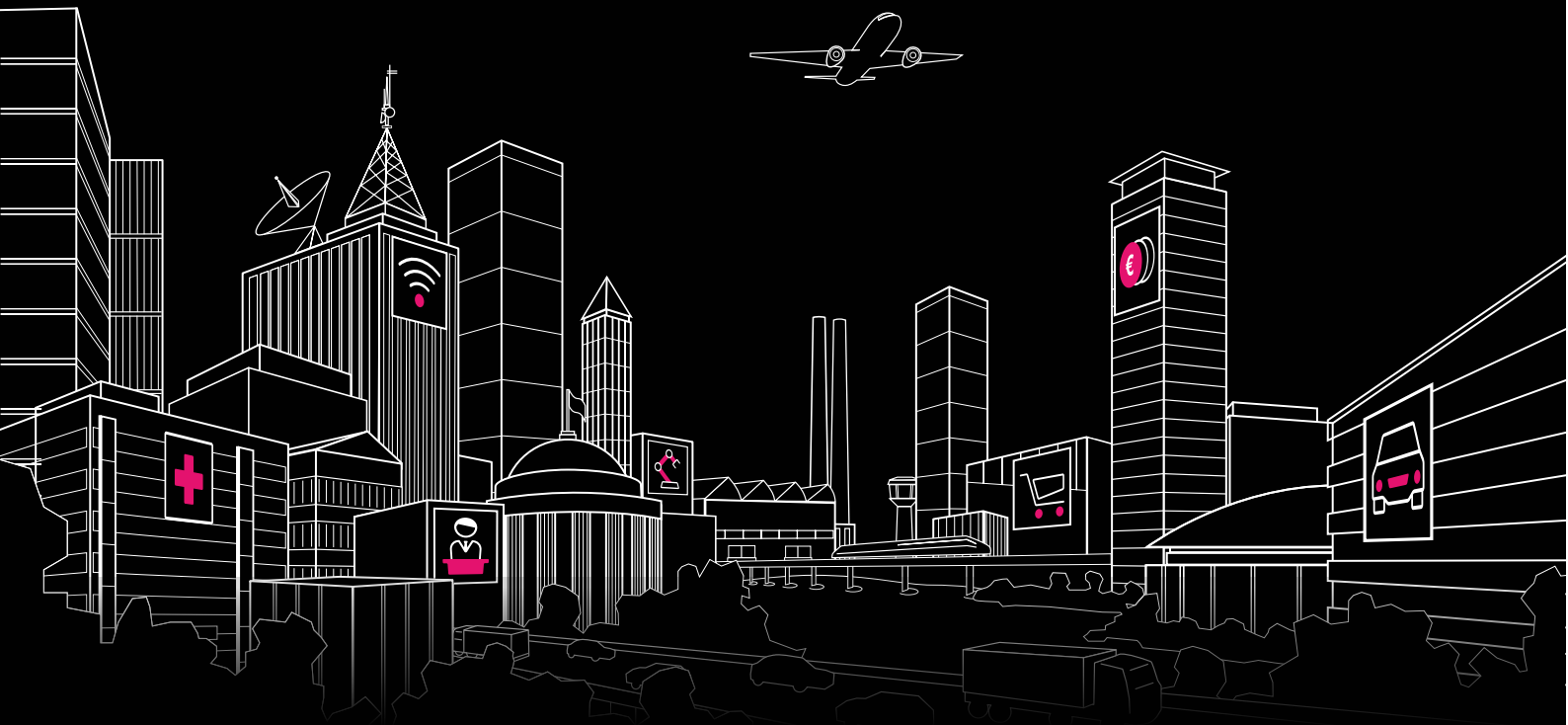
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HARISH CHIB,
VICE PRESIDENT, MIDDLE EAST &
AFRICA, SOPHOS

? How has this year been for the company?

Within this year, we have made strong progress in both our enduser and network security offerings. We have added significant customer value and expanded our market opportunity across our product line. Last October, we launched a major upgrade to the Sophos XG Firewall with enhanced performance and new synchronized security features. We were also able to integrate “deep learning”, the advanced machine learning technology into Sophos Sandstorm sandboxing in XG. In January 2018, we launched an advanced upgrade to our successful Intercept X next-

generation endpoint offering, which now delivers unrivalled detection of unknown malware based on our advanced approach to the use of artificial intelligence in cybersecurity. Additionally, as the pioneer of synchronized security we continue to execute against our vision for a security system where products can directly share status and threat information. We have enabled more of our portfolio with the capability to share information directly to automate and improve the time taken to respond to potential threats. Managed through our flagship cloud management platform Sophos Central, synchronized security now offers even more effective and comprehensive security for customers. Channel partners have embraced this innovation and see it as a unique market differentiator and a successful proposition for their customers.

? What are the various solutions you go to the market with? And how have they leveraged your position in the market?

We are a leading global provider of cloud-enabled enduser and network security solutions, offering end-to-end protection against known and unknown IT security threats through products that are easy to install, configure, update and maintain.

As part of our synchronized security strategy, we develop an innovative portfolio of endpoint, network, encryption, web, email and mobile security solutions that works better together. Sophos is independently recognised as a leader for Endpoint and Network Security both by industry analysts and channel organisations.

? What does your partner ecosystem look like?

We sell exclusively through our channel of more than 39,000 resellers worldwide and are dedicated to the growth and success of partners. We have a strong focus on innovation for partners. We are constantly innovating technology that benefits partners. 100 percent of Sophos sales are driven by the channel. Sophos is the only company in

the security market with “Channel” as part of its mission statement.

? In a sentence, define your organizations prime mission and vision?

To be the best in the world at delivering innovative, simple and highly-effective cybersecurity solutions to IT professionals and the channel that serves them.

? If you are participating in GITEX, what are you planning to showcase this year?

At GITEX 2018, we plan to highlight our deep learning innovation and demonstrate how organizations can use predictive security to change the way their IT operations protect their users and assets.

Deep learning is a powerful, groundbreaking tool for keeping unknown threats at bay. It is the latest evolution of machine learning, which delivers a massively scalable detection model that is able to learn the entire observable threat landscape.

? How are your solutions aligning with the GITEX theme – ‘Experience Future Urbanism’?

Coincidentally this year our theme is “See The Future” under which we will highlight the future of cybersecurity. The deep learning capabilities integrated into our security solutions provide a proactive multi-layered approach to combat advanced threats. Predictive protection by deep learning is certainly the future of cybersecurity. We will demonstrate how organizations can use predictive security to change the way their IT operations protect their users and assets.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019?

Technology innovation will remain a key growth driver. We will continue the significant pace of innovation across our product portfolio. We will also continue to support and invest in our regional channel partners. ➔

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INNOVATIONS FOR TOMORROW & BEYOND

EXPANSION INTO NEW TERRITORIES, NEW SOLUTIONS/PARTNERS, ADDITIONAL TECH HIRING.... FINESSE CONTINUES TO GROW YEAR ON YEAR. LET US READ THE ROADMAP OF THE COMPANY IN THE WORDS OF SUNIL PAUL, THE COMPANY'S CO-FOUNDER AND COO



SUNIL PAUL,
CO-FOUNDER AND COO,
FINESSE

Finesse, over the past few years, observed how digital transformation has paved its way and significantly impacted how businesses flourish, enhance their skill sets and improve customer engagement. To help these businesses traverse their path of success, Finesse strives to bring customised digital solutions to match the demands and needs of their customers using blockchain technology.

Technology unfolds sheets of innovation every day which changes the course of action for companies in the long run. To bridge this innovation gap, at this GITEX Finesse along with

its partner Netcetera will showcase blockchain & digital transformation solutions.

? How has this year been for the company?

The year has proved to be definitely growing for Finesse both in terms of revenue as well as customer acquisitions. The year witnessed many positive outcomes for us. We got to engage with some of the most prominent enterprises and were able to offer our digital portfolio which will pave way for their business transformation while adapting new technologies.

? What are the various solutions you go to the market with? And how have they leveraged your position in the market?

Our strategy is to effectively enhance our digital solution portfolio and expand geographical reach further across the globe. We have plans to increase location flags on the map for us. For the market, our teams are meticulously working on bringing customized solutions for our clients. You will always find us introducing disruptive business solutions specifically targeted at regional clients

? What does your partner ecosystem look like?

It feels good to mention that our partner ecosystem is constantly evolving and we are committed to bring in the best of business technology solutions to the region. We will be introducing a suite of new solutions for Blockchain, robotic process automation, AI & Chatbots, BI & Analytics together with CRM at GITEX 2018.

? In a sentence, define your organizations prime mission and vision?

Finesse has always stood by its vision of building a world-class institution. We strive to positively impact the lives of people and bring remarkable changes in the way people see and embrace technology. Also, as part of our mission we are committed to empower the healthcare and education domains and genuinely trying to fill the gaps here. We would sincerely invite you to look at our vision & mission clearly specified in www.finessedirect.com/aboutus

? If you participating in GITEX, what are you planning to showcase this year?

GITEX has always been an imperative platform for us. This year also Finesse will showcase innovative & interesting digital focus solutions at our booth located at Hall No.7. You will find the finest of the solutions in Analytics, Blockchain, RPA, CEM/CRM and more. Our expert team will be available there to present live demos of our solutions portfolio.

? How are your solutions aligning with the GITEX theme – 'Experience Future Urbanism'?

Technology keeps on advancing every day here, and GITEX brings every innovation under one roof. Finesse at GITEX this year is bringing solutions which, I'm sure will add to the innovations for tomorrow and beyond.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019?

Finesse has a clear roadmap towards the coming years as we continue to grow substantially year after year. In the coming months you will see us expanding into new territories while adding up to our solutions/partner ecosystem with additional tech hiring. ↗



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HOLISTIC SECURITY

StarLink comes with a 'no-compromise' tag when it is about meeting the diverse security needs of the modern enterprise. With a portfolio of innovative solutions and key initiatives in 2018 - StarLink Innovation Centre, StarLink Academy, StarLink Marketplace, the leadership is re-affirming the meaning of being a 'TRUE' VAD



INNOVATIVE APPROACH

■ WORDS: ANUSHREE DIXIT <ANUSHREE@GECMEDIAGROUP.COM>

It is the year of Zayed—the year of innovation. When StarLink announced the opening of its 'Innovation Centre' in the country, the leadership of the company were silently beckoning an era of change in traditional distribution. When the discussion on security took a step out of the boardroom a few years back, traditional distributors were seen losing the edge over the customers and eventually

fell into the chasm of providing security that was wanted vs security that was needed.

While other significant value-added distributors are going with prefixes like 'Leading', 'Only', 'Trusted'....etc. StarLink has always called themselves a 'True' VAD. Definitely distinctive? Or too good to be 'true'? Let the story unfold in this candid conversation with the Founders of StarLink - Nidal Othman and Mahmoud Nimer.

INCREMENTAL VS FULFILLMENT

According to Nidal, StarLink rightfully deserves to be called a 'True VAD' owing to the contribution towards the distribution market. "Many traditional VADs were aligning on fulfillment business but StarLink has always focused on incremental business for vendors and partners. On the other hand, Moreover, the quality of

services we offer in terms of pre-sales, post-sales support and training makes us different from others. Furthermore, we have built a strong foundation at the headquarters with huge investments in infrastructure and niche resources, thereby empowering our teams in bringing the best offerings to the region”

LEGACY VS CORE

While competitors in the market are trying to expand their arms and reach to other offerings and domains, StarLink is still very much rooted to their core offerings. So, I ask Nidal how they are bridging the thin line of difference between being termed as a legacy VAD or a rooted-to-core VAD?

With a very enthusiastic grin, Nidal says, “We still look at ourselves as a start-up. This helps us keep the energy up within the team. Every year we innovate our services and our go-to-market strategy with new concepts. For the past thirteen years, GITEX has been our platform to launch these new initiatives and take them to our vendor and partner communities. To be innovative in whatever we do is key and we believe that there is always room for improvement and enhancement.”

EVOLUTION VS CONTINUATION

The term ‘value’ in value-added distribution means different to each distributor. Nidal breaks StarLink’s evolution as a value-added distributor into three generations.

“Since inception, i.e. from the year 2005 to 2010 ‘value’ for us was all about focusing on introducing new vendors and technologies to this region. These vendors appreciated us as their extended sales and marketing teams on-the-ground since they did not have local presence. The next five years were about expanding our footprint and portfolio in META to encompass a wider set of technologies to cater to the evolving IT security demands of the region. The third generation has us focused on further strengthening our portfolio to become a leading VAD in security, data center and cloud. The journey has started and we have achieved some significant milestones that will be announced in GITEX.”

INNOVATION VS COMPETITION

The last few years were dominated by buzzwords and nearly everyone wanted to be in the race of living up to the buzzwords. Emerging technologies like AI, machine learning, robotics, blockchain etc., compelled organization to redefine their business structure and the VADs,

STARLINK INNOVATION CENTRE

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to re-visit their service delivery models.

Mahmoud Nimer says that, being a market leader in security, StarLink has always understood the pulse of the market and catered to the holistic need of customers and partners. “In 2018 we invested heavily into two areas – StarLink Marketplace and StarLink Innovation Centre. The marketplace addresses the challenges and opportunities for the born-in-the-cloud partners and allows them to transact with us in the marketplace through subscription-based models. Twenty out of the forty vendors that we have, are enrolled in this subscription-based offering. Currently 1% of our total turnover is from the marketplace and we expect it to go up to 5% in 2019.”

Nidal adds, “Artificial Intelligence and machine learning are the strong reasons behind starting the innovation centre. We are the first distributor to open an innovation centre in the region and we are proud of this milestone that further reiterates our commitment to our vendors, partners and customers alike. The R&D team of the innovation centre customizes and integrates the existing solutions of vendors with AI and machine learning and makes it smarter. We have added a few vendors to our SIC— Security Intelligence Center—to make the solutions smarter and competent.

Mahmoud says that these emerging technologies are not theory anymore. Customers are facing challenges related to human interactions and AI has emerged as a perfect tool that covers this gap. “Many customers were looking for solutions that could be integrated with their existing ones and this is why we came up with the innovation centre. We have been very successful thus far.”

Nidal says that unlike other players who often rush into adopting trends blindly, StarLink’s growth and expansion are well researched and deliberate to meet the ever-changing demands of the market.”

According to Mahmoud, if an organization is not ready for an expansion they should not venture in for the sake of it. “This year we entered into the OT security and industrial security landscape as we saw a gap in the market in addressing the security needs of this segment. We integrated the right resources, right technologies and expanded into that domain.”

IT SECURITY SPEND OPTIMIZATION

One of the key messages that customers and partners can expect from StarLink at this GITEX is about optimizing their IT security spend. Mahmoud says, “The new StarLink Security

1 1 0 0 +
PARTNERS

2 2 0 0 +
CUSTOMERS

3 5 0 +
EMPLOYEES

1 6
COUNTRIES

Strategy that we are rolling out provokes customers to think of the key business drivers that lead to potential IT spend - whether it is changing trends, breaches, risks or compliance. Once these requirements are identified, they are mapped to the best-suited solutions and technologies thus helping them in their IT security spending decision-making."

Nidal added, "We are trying to simplify the investment in technology by erasing the gap between a CISO and a CIO. In our innovation centre we have built a management dashboard that gives the CISO full visibility into the entire lifecycle of the solution deployed. At a given time he can see what breaches have been successfully blocked and by which solutions, what could have been the cost of the breach or compliance failure

and how much the business saved preventing the same."

"It took eight months for us to build this dashboard from scratch, and we are very proud of it" adds Nidal.

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

Today, StarLink has close to forty vendors on board who offer diverse security solutions. As a VAD, it is a matter of great responsibility to make sure that all vendors are given the equal ROI and attention as well as customer exposure.

"We have created a great infrastructure within StarLink that comprises of 12 business units, product managers, dedicated pre-sales, sales and support teams. Each business unit empowers the vendor in their market reach and acts as an independent stakeholder to deliver the vendor expectations. We are a hundred percent channel driven company however, we also have 'direct touch' with our end-user community to drive business opportunities." Says Nidal.

StarLink's Customer Success Team is also yet another key differentiator that sets the VAD apart. With this team, StarLink makes sure that customer retention is more than 90% as the team is in constant touch with the customer throughout the tenure rather than just at the time of renewal. "We deployed this team in 2014 with a goal of customer retention and the interaction with the customers was predominantly at renewal time. However, this department has now evolved to be the largest business unit within StarLink where 50 plus personnel are dedicated toward customer retention, professional services,



trainings and technical support. We have the best resources and our Customer Success Managers are advocates who ensure that our customers leverage the right service and resource to help them achieve their business goals." Says Mahmoud Nimer.

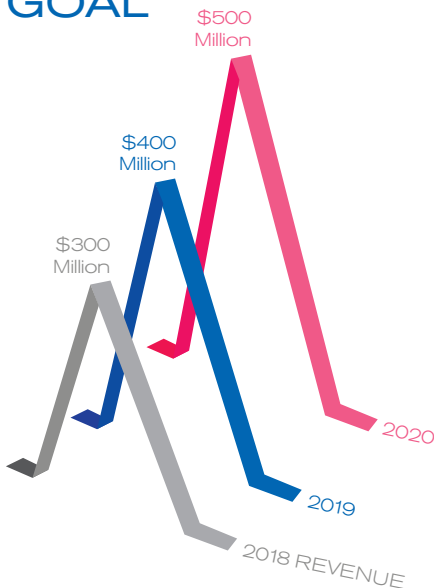
StarLink teams are structured in such a way that everyone benefits from an opportunity through teamwork. Multiple resources could touch the same opportunities and lead it to fruition, together! This structure is unique to StarLink. We practice the ethos of 'All for one and one for all' added Nidal.

FINALLY

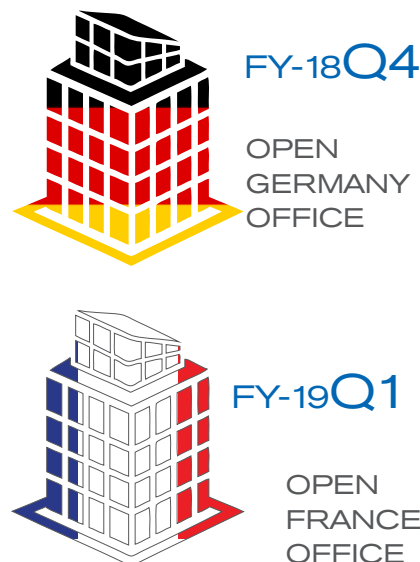
At GITEX this year, StarLink has a bigger presence showcasing 18 of its vendors and their diverse product portfolio. "We look forward to welcoming our vendors, customers and partners again this year to a bigger and more successful Gitex," says Mahmoud Nimer.

With its competitive solution lifecycle, the VAD is definitely on a trek to innovation and business acceleration. They are excited about their 2020 vision of achieving \$500 million target and we wish them well. 🚀

REVENUE GOAL



EXPANSION



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WAEEL MUSTAFA,
AREA VICE PRESIDENT, COMMVAULT

? How has this year been for the company?

This year we unveiled Commvault Advance, a transformational initiative designed to drive sustained business performance. We concluded our fiscal year achieving quarterly software and products revenue of \$83.5 million, representing 7% growth year over year, and total revenues of \$184.9 million, which increased 11% year over year.

? What are the various solutions you go to the market with? And how have they leveraged your position in the market?

Commvault recently announced new, simplified

product, pricing, and packaging that makes it easier than ever before to buy, implement and sell our solutions.

Commvault's newly-packaged product set combines new innovations and capabilities, while consolidating more than 20+ offerings into four powerful products. They include Commvault Complete Backup & Recovery, which can be deployed across a wide range of locations and workloads: hybrid environments include on-premises and multiple cloud providers; physical servers; virtual machines; as well as applications and databases.

They also include Commvault HyperScale Technology, which is available in two forms: a Commvault-branded integrated appliance, or as a software solution. This is a critical success factor for us in Gulf region and EMEA with significant increase in demand, while allowing customers to strategically decouple their data strategy from their infrastructure where cost, business efficiency and compliance requirements demand.

Finally, there is Commvault Orchestrate and Commvault Activate. Commvault Orchestrate allows customers to extend the value of their data sitting in secondary storage, while Commvault Activate supports compliance with privacy regulations by detecting and taking action on data risks, use data insights to drive file efficiencies and accountability.

? What does your partner ecosystem look like?

In support of the company's strategic commitment to become a more partner-led business, Commvault has undertaken a major redeployment of resources across its sales, partner and field marketing organizations to create new teams dedicated to Commvault's four routes to market: Alliance Partners, Value Added Resellers (VARs) and Distributors, Service Providers and Global Systems Integrators (GSIs).

In direct support of making Commvault simpler and more profitable for our partners to work with, we have implemented changes across Gulf and EMEA. These include the creation

of a new Partner Success Desk that provides partners with easier, faster access to Commvault support and resources, as well as a robust Partner Demand Center, which gives partners access to Commvault's marketing concierge team to help activate and execute marketing campaigns.

? What are you planning to showcase at GITEX this year?

At GITEX, Commvault will discuss the findings of its recent IDC customer value survey; showing how customers are achieving faster, more reliable backup and restore operations, reduced downtime and increased productivity.

Commvault will also showcase its four new simplified product offerings for complete, scalable backup and recovery and modern data management solutions, along with new scale-out solution options, as well as its latest partner program enhancements, and regional customer announcements.

? How are your solutions aligning with the GITEX theme – 'Experience Future Urbanism'?

Commvault is continuously aligning its solutions with the latest industry opportunities for organizations, ensuring that they can adapt their data to new regulations and requirements in order to further advance their vision of the future.

'Commvault Advantage' helps customers to avoid the pitfalls of point products that silo data. Siloed data is the enemy of progress. Many companies like Emirates Steel and organisations like Dubai Municipality greatly benefit from innovating and adapting to the challenges of new regulatory requirements, or expectations around new urban experiences.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019?

Three priorities for Commvault heading into 2019 are simplicity, partners, and expansion. We seek to continue simplifying our product line, while continuing to grow revenues and thereby reach more partners and more customers. ➡



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Disrupting the Cybersecurity Landscape in the MENA region

When Nidal Taha, President of Z Services initiated to bring the concept of Multi-tenant cloud to the region in 2009, competitors and peers brushed-off the idea. Today, the company protects more than 500,000 active users in diverse industries and is the only company in the Middle East and North Africa to offer an in-country, multi-tenant cloud security-as-a-service architecture. Excerpts from the interview with Nidal.

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

FEW STORIES HAVE TO BEGIN FROM THE END.

Recently, I walked out of Z Services office in Dubai with a 'culture'—a souvenir that speaks loudly about the Arabic tradition of the Middle East. Nidal Taha, President of Z Services, bid farewell to me with three little cups in a Z Services box. The traditional coffee cups symbolized the assurance of protection extended by the host to the guest or members of the tribe. The cups symbolize trust, protection and assurance.

As the mission statement of Z Services reads, the company is driven by a purpose to make everyone cyber-secure. Deeply rooted in the culture of the Middle East, the company believes that they are here to provide non-compromised, in-country, security-as-a-service to the region. "People often downplay the importance of investment in up-to-date security, but I would say it is more important to remain abreast of the momentum of trends and developments in the security space," says Nidal.

Less than a decade ago, many companies spoke about trends to address the evolving security issues and increasing CAPEX, but Z Services pioneered a new approach—its flagship multi-tenant cloud service with data stored locally, and accessible through a subscription model.

THE BEGINNING

"In 2010, when cloud was still in its theoretical phase, I saw the future of this service—the promise of multitenancy. We became the catalyst, by working with customers to use our in-country

services rather than having their data sit outside their geography."

The urge to realize this vision started when Nidal, who worked in a different company then, lost two customers to a solution provider who devised an integrated service from multiple vendors for optimized cost and better flexibility. Internal discussions only resulted in roadblocks, due to reluctance to venture into the security-as-a-service model.

What followed was the birth of Z Services. It was the year 2011 and customers still found the concept of cloud computing more of a theory than practical, and were hesitant about entrusting their data to a third-party provider. "At the time, cloud computing was seen as a buzzword, and organizations did not realize that Cloud was the engine to offer things as-a-service. At the very founding of Z Services, I identified the right partner and solution set—the first of many—and I took it to Saudi, Kuwait, UAE, Egypt, Bahrain etc. I went to educate customers on cloud security access and explained how they can reduce CAPEX by paying in the range of 30 per cent as OPEX, as an example. It was an idea whose time had come, and was the first of its kind in the region."

As one of the most critical partners for wider customer fulfilment, telecommunication service providers were the first partner of choice for Nidal. "I had conversations with regional telcos to offer the Z Services cloud advantage on their secure data center. I was sure that if telcos would adopt, people will consider going for it

and believe in it. The telcos tested it for twelve months, and we passed all the reliability and flexibility tests."

The multi-tenant cloud security is designed to provide organizations with services beyond traditional security. Z Services offers in-country, multitenant architecture that comprises web, email, cloud, application, endpoint security gateways and much more. It offers a Single Security UI for your organisation, irrespective of number of branches, locations or mobile users in the region or worldwide and it provides direct to



NIDAL TAHA,
PRESIDENT OF Z SERVICES

COMING TOGETHER

A number of security vendors who are transforming themselves as service providers and even security-focused start-ups are knocking at Z Services' doors, looking to add capabilities or reach the customer base. "Our focus is still on core security rather than the full spectrum. Most organisations are moving their critical applications to the Internet, and as interaction with the Internet increases, so does their vulnerability."

Z Services has also set its sights on the regional SMB sector. "The SMB sector has been neglected for long, and served mostly by antivirus and firewall solutions. We are gearing up to redefining security for those sectors as well."

EVOLVING

With the experience that Z Services has gained in the security-as-a-service space, imminent plans include consumer Internet Protection as-a-Service, particularly targeted towards ensuring safety of children from cyberbullying, chatting with strangers, and more.

Concentrated on regional leadership for now, Nidal and Z Services see cultural understanding and local relevance as key drivers of growth, an ethos that will inform future expansion as well. The future will see more market-focused R&D, and newer go-to-market strategies for newer audiences. "It's an exciting time for the security industry in the MENA region, and at Z Services, we are proud to be at the forefront of this excitement," Nidal concludes. ■

the net security and protections.

It's built and rolled-out specifically for the MENA region. It is also the only Middle East-based internet security-as-a-service cloud infrastructure with unique SLAs for faster internet response, end-user security experiences, security protection, and per-country customer retention logging and reporting

Some of the key features of the multi-tenant architecture are: Access to the world's best cybersecurity technology, reengineered especially for the region

and specific requirements; Cost-effective, 100% cloud-based subscription service, and; unrivalled data protection, visibility, and control.

Nidal says, "With this, we became the first service provider in the MENA region to offer security-as-a-service. We invested time and effort in educating the market and validating the offering. We took our customers' perspectives towards establishing this ecosystem, and steadily became the reference for cloud computing. Till today, we are probably the only one with this breadth and depth."

Reforming entertainment with the blockchain philosophy

As blockchain continues to make headlines, it is how and why blockchain will fundamentally revolutionise the way we think about applying technology that captives our imagination.



■ JUN KANG, FOUNDER OF Z-POP DREAM PROJECT

Z-POP DREAM is leading the way in re-defining how we audiences' function and identify ourselves in the entertainment industry.

TACKLING FAN DISEMPOWERMENT AND INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABILITY

Amidst Hollywood's public fall from grace post-Weinstein, the K-Pop industry too has not been spared its fair share of scandals and bad press. At the 2017 MAMA (Mnet Asian Music Awards) awards show alone, savvy netizens were quick to pinpoint discrepancies in biased voting results to the point that Mnet had to respond to avoid a potential crisis communication fiasco.

At the heart of such stories lie a common human principle that had been violated – trust.

Fans are left in the dark about the mechanisms behind the voting processes and industry professionals involved are not held fully accountable to their decisions or indiscretions. It is no wonder that the public image of pop-stars are a stark contrast to their private lives. The devil is in the details.

For an industry that is fan driven, this lack of transparency and openness in management culture threatens the implicit trust that keeps the entertainment industry ecosystem functioning well.

Z-POP DREAM radically challenges the established entertainment rules altogether by empowering the fan – from passive consumer to proactive investor.

"This project will provide fans with a sense of

ownership and in turn, create a long-lasting love, loyalty and support to their stars. Each time fans use a ZPOP token; fans accumulate voting power. Fans will be given a chance to exercise their power through Z-POP Online.

These votes will play a crucial role in decisive events such as auditions and award ceremonies. ... The project makes the voting transparency and trustworthy, ensuring the fans hold the destiny of their favourite Stars in their very own hands. The Z-POP DREAM Project offers fans the opportunity to grow talent and create stars."

Z-POP Dream's Tokenisation incentive principle represents a methodical approach. Harnessing blockchain to reform entertainment management culture in a digital age where authenticity and transparency have more economic ramifications than ever before.

FROM SIMPLY K-POP FANS TO BUILDING A GLOBAL CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

In 1965, British arts minister, Jennie Lee, introduced her seminal white paper, A Policy for the Arts - First Steps. Lee proposed the suggestion of cultivating the arts in everyday british life through a mix of government incentives and localised grassroot initiatives.

The intention was to create a flourishing British arts culture that could serve as exemplar expressions of soft power cultural democracy.

In some ways, it did work. The Spice Girls, S Club 7, and Westlife did capture the imaginations of our youth in the late-nineties. And then they

faded into nostalgic memory.

Why faded then? Possibly just by the fact that we were generally passive consumers of pop culture in the past. Today, we are no longer passive consumer-fans, but active digital natives on the lookout for something different.

This is where the beauty of blockchain comes into play. Just by principles alone, decentralised authority offers every node in the chain equal governance power and agency to make a choice. That is a radical principle.

For the entertainment industry that has traditionally been built on centralised hierarchy, and proven to profitable operating in such a system, Z-POP DREAM is different and brave to be a leader in empowering the grassroots fans and investors to create a more sustainable music industry.

From the early days of K-Pop to the global phenomenon of Hallyu (roughly translatable to Korean Wave) today, we see that K-Pop is no more merely a wave within pop culture history, but a tangible example of organic cultural democracy in action on the international stage driven by audience participation.

And it will continue to grow as our lives continue to operate in the digital world.

Z-POP DREAM is taking Jennie Lee's 1965 idealism into a conceivable reality with blockchain technology. One can only imagine the magnitude of change Z-POP Dream will bring to the future of fan participation. Disrupt or be disrupted. ➤



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Tintri

ON TOP WITH ONTAP

THE PARTNERSHIP OF NETAPP AND NVIDIA IS A MUCH TALKED ON SUBJECT IN THE MARKET AS THEY ARE ON TOP WITH THEIR ONTAP AI PRODUCT.



**HOSEB
DERMANILIAN,**

EMEA INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS
MANAGER, AIML AND BIG DATA,
NETAPP



**MARC
DOMENECH,**

COUNTRY MANAGER – UAE,
NVIDIA

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

DC predicts that more than 44 zettabytes of digital data will be created by 2020. Many storage solution providers lack the tools to collate, process and transfer AI model data efficiently. Enterprises also lack the optimization of data science.

NetApp and NVIDIA jointly came out with a solution to this crisis and that is the ONTAP

AI. The product powered by NVIDIA DGX supercomputers and NetApp AFF A800 cloud-connected all-flash storage is said to help customers achieve real business impact with AI.

“NetApp has a huge presence in the market. We have a lot of customers who are hungry to talk to NVIDIA and deploy DGX. We are pretty much aligned and combining the sales

force together,” said Hoseb Dermanilian, EMEA Industry Solutions Manager, AI/ML, Big Data, NetApp.

At the core of Ontap AI is NVIDIA’s DGX-1, an AI supercomputer that’s optimized for deep learning. DGX-1 sports up to 256B of GPU RAM and eight Tesla V100s Tensor Core GPUs configured in a hybrid cube-mesh topology using NVIDIA NVLink.

“GPU servers today is empowering AI. AI platform is critical to business which needs reliability, availability and serviceability. The DGX-2 powered with DGX software enables accelerated deployment,” said Marc Domenech, Country Manager, UAE, NVIDIA.” added Mr Domenech.

In this disruptive market, ONTAP AI combines the world’s most powerful GPU solutions with the world’s fastest and most cloud-connected flash systems and software. But with AI in this market, people are into the question.

“The market is disruptive. Like many people imagine, AI is not going to cut out the human resources. But it is not the case, if you think about it, especially in medication people are using AI not to replace doctors but to help doctors,” said Mr Dermanilian.

The DGX supercomputers of NVIDIA plays a huge role in this product. “One of the DGX-1 is equal to the power of 140 CPU servers. DGX-2’s power is equal to 300 CPU servers,” said Mr Domenech. “Data scientist should be efficient. They know what they want. We don’t talk to them, they talk to us,” added Mr Domenech.

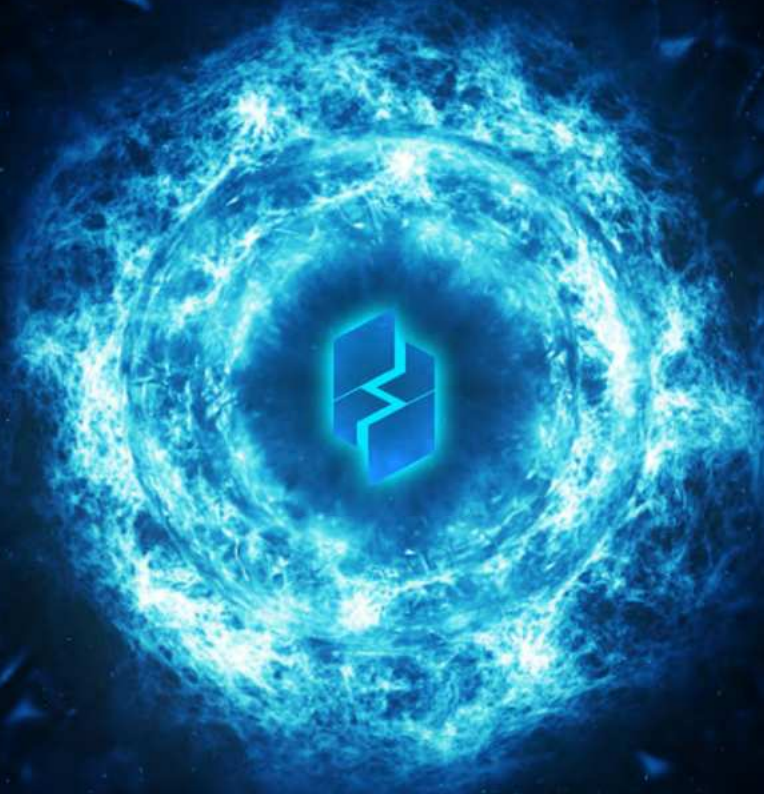
NetApp’s cloud is also on the forefront to contribution. “People are starting on cloud when they don’t have the investment. Here, when people are putting more data into the cloud, the bottleneck and cost makes people move back into the premise. That is why NetApp’s contribution is important as we have the ONTAP AI working on the cloud and also on premise. The customers can start using on cloud and whenever he feels ready to use the on premise, he can use the NetApp features and move to on premise,” said Mr Dermanilian.

With companies, coming out with solutions by collaboration, customers are sighing in relief. ➡



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JANARDAN DALMIA,
PARTNER & CEO, TRUKKIN

? Tell us a bit about your role and how you got here. How has your role changed from its inception to the present day?

My role is to be able to articulate my vision and strategy to a highly enthusiastic team of people and make available all the resources required to achieve that. As a CEO, one must focus on all the aspects of the business rather than just one thing. While setting up a business everything must be done from scratch. Setting up is not easy. Also, I came from an investment banking background where the working style is very different. I feel it almost took a year or two to hit the reset button moving from a corporate full-time employment to a start-up way of operating things. It seemed like a big jump at first but once I made the leap I was sure I had made a good decision.

? Which are the industries that you cater to? Apart from UAE, what is your market reach in the rest of the GCC?

At AITS we are proud to offer one platform, with various solutions that caters to all verticals of the market such as Food and beverage, Water and waste water, Oil and gas, smart cities, power and utilities, chemicals, metals mining and minerals, plus life science! we take pride in having a well experienced team that covers all the Middle East and North Africa region, especially KSA and Bahrain markets, where we have operations in Riyadh.

? How do you look back at 2017? What are the highlights you are proud of? What could have gone better?

Being one of the earliest companies to enter the tech-based transportation industry, Trukkin has introduced a revolutionary Service Standard in the cargo movement landscape. Trukkin not only provides you a seamless mode of connectivity to the best of the Drivers and Truckers but also ensures that your cargo and container loads are delivered hassle-free to your customers.

We only launched in Mid-2017 and in a short span of time we have completed over 7,500+ commercial truck journeys and moved over 2 million tonnes of goods. We have been operational in UAE and KSA in the first year of operations itself. We feel that we have been working hard and executing well to achieve this and our team is proud of this.

? Where do you think this company is heading and what needs to be done?

I feel we are on to building something great which has the potential to be a very large company in the coming years. Logistics remain at the core of the very economy. Goods must move around, and if well presented, they

will jump on the most convenient means of transportation around. It is also an industry where the development or enhancement in terms of tech has been negligible and remains a huge potential opportunity. We want to ensure we work on developing the most user-friendly tech enabled services that increases efficiency for both shippers and transporters.

? Much of the information that is available to your competitors is also available to your customers. How has that changed the way you operate?

We are committed to making significant investments in the field of technology, which will enhance commercial transport and make it more efficient and transparent. At the end the service should speak for itself. We have been providing some value add to the customers in the right manner and that is the reason why we have been probably able to deliver more than 7,500+ shipments already and be able to attract companies like Batic from KSA to be a partner in our company.

? What is the biggest challenge that a CEO needs to tackle?

I wish there was a simple answer to this question. As a CEO, there are multiple challenges regularly. You are the chief fire fighter. But if I must pin down on one of the biggest challenges is to be able to look for the right talent who can not only understand your vision and strategy clearly but help execute it. Getting people to adopt to new ways of doing things which requires initially for them to come out of the comfort zone is always challenging. As a start-up, one is taking a leap of faith without knowing the outcome and only hoping for a positive one. So, finding, managing, developing and nurturing the right team is probably the biggest challenge. 

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How to Use Correlation to Evolve the Troubleshooting Process

Today's IT environments are more varied and complex than ever before. As a result, data center performance issues—whether they're related to applications, network, storage, virtualization, web, or the cloud—are becoming increasingly difficult to resolve.



■ SASCHA GIESE, HEAD GEEK, SOLARWINDS

TROUBLESHOOTING IN TODAY'S IT WORLD

In IT, troubleshooting is the fine art of pinpointing the root cause of an issue within the data center. Right, being an artist helps! Identifying the source of the problem means that the underlying cause and effect of the incident are understood. With this information, IT professionals can then work to ensure that similar issues do not arise in the future to further impact data center performance. A simple process: solve it, and make sure it doesn't happen again.

In traditional IT environments, where servers are hosted on-premises, IT professionals have abided by the following eight steps when troubleshooting:

- Define the problem
- Gather and analyze any relevant information
- Construct a hypothesis or likely cause of the problem
- Devise a plan to remediate
- Implement the plan
- Observe the results and recreate the plan to reproduce the same results
- Repeat steps 2 – 6 as necessary
- Determine the root cause and document it for further reference

Today, however, technologies such as cloud, virtualization, hybrid IT, and hyper converged infrastructure have fundamentally transformed IT environments and add loads of moving parts. As a result, troubleshooting across these distributed systems is now more critical, and far more intricate, than ever before.

IT professionals are trained to look into different layers at the same time to find a root cause, but they now lack the visibility and time to perform all the steps for each and every issue.

Working alongside CSPs means that IT professionals have difficulty accessing certain areas of infrastructure that are now hosted off-premises. When too many things happen at the same time, issues are being remedied as fast as possible, without the necessary root-cause analysis to prevent future problems arising. This is just firefighting!

FINDING THE VALUE IN CORRELATION

Correlation is where that element of art is really coming into play, connecting variables to see if they have any impact on the cause of a performance issue or incident. Seasoned IT professionals most likely have an idea of what's going on, but they need data to prove it.

They can use correlation to track and compare a variety of key metrics, such as network performance counters and application performance counters, over a period of time, to pinpoint the cause of an issue, and then remediate it. For example, correlating network latency and bandwidth data with virtual machine compute utilization and application specific-data can help identify the cause of an issue relating to distributed application performance. It's not always a faulty network, after all.

With the correct method and the right tools, correlation can be used to make troubleshooting

a far more efficient and effective process. This approach will not guarantee that you immediately arrive at the root cause of an issue, but it can make the process of getting there much quicker. Here are some tips to help ensure that your correlating approach is as accurate as possible:

Monitor with discipline. Effective correlating first requires a high level of expertise and familiarity with your environment. The best way to accomplish this is by properly monitoring your data center across the entire application stack.

Use your tools. To aid the process, use automated monitoring tools to condense time-series metrics and historical performance metrics into a single dashboard.

Collaboration is key. Maintaining effective working relationships with service providers enhances the overall visibility of your environment, and helps ensure that issues can be properly remediated and correlated.

Use the eight troubleshooting steps. Using the above mentioned eight steps alongside correlation helps ensure that they evolve to properly address the challenges posed by today's IT environments.

TROUBLESHOOTING TO MEET TODAY'S REQUIREMENTS

Correlation can become an integral part to the troubleshooting process within distributed environments. This approach can help ensure that IT professionals have the time and efficiency to successfully maintain system uptime, and avoid unnecessary hurdles. ➔

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THE 'VIRTUAL' ADVISORS



While CIOs/IT Heads appreciate the evolution of virtualization and backup strategies, Enterprise Channels MEA spoke to a few virtualization experts on the recent trends, challenges and what the future holds in virtualization.

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

In today's efficient workplace, virtualization has become a prominent player. Enterprises of all kinds are looking to expand and enhance the way they function and virtualization offers exceptional opportunities to cut down redundancies and implement new ways to improve operations. Virtualization which has been there for more than three decades has had a larger outreach only in the last ten years with top technological organizations like Microsoft or VMware having their own hypervisors. With the emergence of multicore processors, workloads have grown enormously, making way to a number of cloud technologies as



“UNDERSTANDING SIZING OF ON-PREMISE SERVERS, AND CLOUD SERVERS IS A BIG ISSUE. THIS OFTEN REQUIRES A LOT OF CLIENT AND INDUSTRY EDUCATION,”

ALTAF ALIMOHAMED,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, COBWEB
SOLUTIONS UAE



“FOUR KEY CHALLENGES TYPICALLY ARISE WHEN IT ORGANIZATIONS MIGRATE TO A VIRTUALIZED ENVIRONMENT; RESOURCE STARVATION, LACK OF APPLICATION AWARENESS, INCREASED STORAGE REQUIREMENTS AND CONGESTED STORAGE NETWORK,”

FADY RICHMANY,
SENIOR DIRECTOR & GM - UAE, DELL EMC.

well. According to the Market Research Future, the server virtualization market alone is expected to grow at approximately USD 8 Billion by 2023 at 7% CAGR between 2017 and 2023.

VIRTUALIZATION – CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Any CIO/CISO would know that every solution

introduces challenges of its own. Virtualization is no different. The biggest challenges are in sizing and technical understanding says Altaf Alimohamed, Managing Director of Cobweb Solutions UAE. “In terms of sizing: in the old on-prem DCs, servers were built to scale the largest workload even if the server resources remained under-utilized most of the time. With virtual servers, users do not need to scale the server to suit the largest workload, it can be sized with the most optimum server usage, with scalable limits which can automatically expand as and when needed, and then scale back down once the load reduces back to normal. In terms of technical understanding - understanding sizing of on-premise servers, and cloud servers is a big issue. This often requires a lot of client and industry education.”

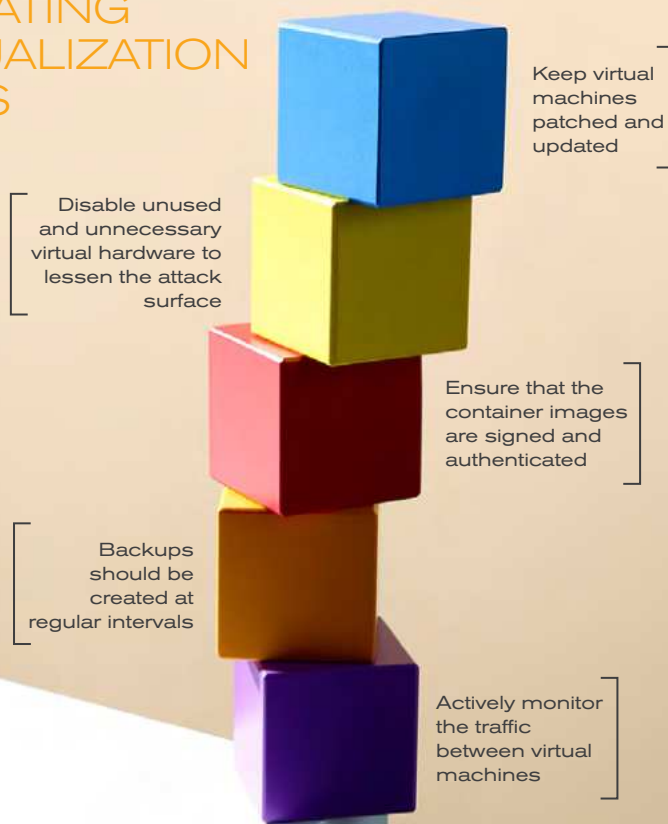
But any business opting for this technology is bound to experience dramatic benefits in return. With its potential to reduce costs, virtualization offers to be an attractive solution for businesses looking to save expenditure and generate the value from IT investments. For enterprises still looking to adopt this technology, following are the other added benefits –

Better Disaster Recovery – Virtualization makes disaster recovery easier. Data on the servers are much more uniform and can be restored to a wider array of computer hardware setups.

Greater Flexibility – It allows the businesses to run multiple applications and operating systems on the same hardware.

Ossama Eldeeb, Regional Channel Director - Middle East, Turkey and North Africa of VMware says – “By virtualizing storage and networking and adding a layer of management and automation, organizations can have a real Software-defined data center (SDDC) and reap the benefits that comes with digital transforma-

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“VIRTUALIZATION ALLOWS FOR MUCH MORE PRODUCTIVE USE OF IT EQUIPMENT, RESULTING IN MUCH HIGHER EFFICIENCY, LOWER ENERGY USE AND ENERGY COST MITIGATION,”

OSSAMA ELDEEB,
REGIONAL CHANNEL DIRECTOR – METNA,
VMWARE

tion from cost savings to agility and flexibility. Virtualization allows for much more productive use of IT equipment, resulting in much higher efficiency, lower energy use and energy cost mitigation.”

But with an attractive solution comes unattractive risks as well. So, how secure is this growing technology?

Virtualization – What are the Security Risks?

With any technology, security can be a major obstacle for greater adoption. I remember an incident that took place in the year 2014. An attacker sent customers of browser-based testing vendor – ‘BrowserStack’ an email about the company’s virtual machine security. The email appeared to be sent from the company and stated – “We have no firewalls in place, and our password policies are atrocious... it is almost certain all of your data

has been compromised.” While the company denied the truth and claims made in the email, the incident spurred many to question whether adequate steps to ensure a secure virtual environment were being taken by the company.

A survey by the SANS Institute in 2017, reported that 15% of the organizations data was breached due to unsecure applications in the past two years, and as many as 10% of organizations said that no security testing at all was being done on their mission-critical applications. Ossama believes that Middle East CIOs understand that despite increased cybersecurity spend, it’s more important to change traditional security models to secure applications.

Here are some best practices that CIOs should take into consideration in securing their infrastructure and applications. (See Fig 1)

HOW SHOULD A CIO BACKUP HIS ARCHITECTURE?

Unlike the strategies of old, where backup fulfilled the purpose of ‘just in case’, the CIOs today need to consider backup & recovery as part of their wider cyber-resilience strategy. They need a system that will scale easily, so that data never goes un protected. Recovery point objectives (RPO) and recovery time objectives (RTO), along with cost and business impacts should be the fundamental issues to be addressed in designing any back-up architecture. Fady Richmany, Senior Director and General Manager – UAE at Dell EMC accurately explains the steps that the IT decision heads need to follow in order to design and optimize their backup architecture. He says - “Establish a baseline and high-level strategy of the data protection program; Recommend improvements and provide strategic and design insights for the existing backup environment; Identify areas that can impact the ability to recover critical applications and operations; Evaluate the components of the ongoing backup strategy and future growth requirements; Implement a solution that reduces costs, accelerates the organization’s evolution to a data protection-as-a-service model and offers significant improvements to your architecture.”

FINALLY

It is important for organizations to grow and benefit from the latest technological advances available to them. Based on our research and the answers from the experts, it is clear that virtualization has changed the way IT works and its aim is to safeguard business. What’s Next? Wait and watch! Meanwhile, lets virtualize! 🚀



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Prepare for Your Containerization Project

Technical professionals must follow these steps to avoid wasted resources and docker container abandonment.



■ ANNA BELAK, PRINCIPAL RESEARCH ANALYST, GARTNER

Containers are appropriate in several real world use cases. For example, containers allow for relatively easy migration of workloads from on-premises infrastructure to the cloud or between two different cloud providers. This type of migration can be permanent as part of a cloud strategy or temporary, such as in the case of cloud bursting.

Because containers provide workload isolation while sharing the OS, they enable system administrators to run several versions of an application on the same server without interference. This aspect of containerization can also be leveraged from a server consolidation perspective.

In order for technical professionals to deploy a successful containerization initiative, Gartner recognizes four steps for them to complete before initiating any containerization projects.

STEP NO. 1: PREPARE FOR CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AND FILL SKILLS GAPS

Container adoption in the enterprise cannot be owned and administered by a single team. As containerization projects are time-consuming and can be costly, successful completion requires buy-in from all relevant teams, such as security, infrastructure and operations, networking and application development.

New technology implementations also entail a lot of work so it is important for technical professionals to foster active collaboration between the teams involved in the project — especially those from application development and infrastructure and operations. We recognize that DevOps-minded organizations are better equipped to handle the challenges of containerization as containers provide a technology framework that is

consistent with the DevOps methodology.

Many solutions required for deploying containers in production are offered as commercially supported, open-source-based products with enterprise licenses. Whether an organization decides to deploy open-source components or commercial products only, its teams will need to adopt new operational models to manage containers successfully. Technical professionals must provide appropriate training for their personnel to ensure a quick onramp and long-term consistency in managing these new and complex solutions.

STEP NO. 2: DEVELOP YOUR INFRASTRUCTURE AUTOMATION PROFICIENCY

Container deployments require automation and management via common line interfaces (CLI) or application programming interface (API). Due to high degree of container life cycle churn, rapid startup and shutdown, containers are too difficult to manage manually at scale. Although container management solutions offer dashboards that provide visibility into the deployment, most operational tasks must still be performed through a CLI or API.

STEP NO. 3: SOLIDIFY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INITIATIVE OBJECTIVES

To successfully extract business value from containers, which are themselves a piece of technology, organizations must set realistic goals. They should develop both primary and secondary goals and avoid focusing any projects around low-impact initiatives.

Primary goals are those you would ideally like

to achieve as a direct result of your containerization initiative. They are high-impact and:

- address major existing pain points
- create quantifiable cost savings opportunities
- enable teams to tangibly improve the delivery of products or services to internal or external customers.

Secondary objectives are medium-impact goals. They can still be attained if the primary objective fails, or peripheral objectives are achieved automatically or with minimal, additional effort as a result of embarking on the primary objective.

Commonly discussed low-impact goals are how to save money on licensing fees or to avoid paying the 'virtualization tax.' Although a containerization initiative can, in some cases yield this result, the investment is not worth it. However, an application refactoring initiative that increases agility, operational efficiency and customer satisfaction is more likely to be worth the investment and may have additional positive effects, such as reduced infrastructure costs.

STEP NO. 4: SELECT CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS

This final step consists of carefully selecting which applications are appropriate candidates for the refactoring process or deciding whether a net new application should be deployed in containers. Once determined, develop your teams' skill sets on a simple containerization project. Equip them with new knowledge and tools to enable developers and operators to predict potential pitfalls in future projects and feel more comfortable selecting good candidate applications for subsequent initiatives. ➡



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BALANCING SECURITY WITH BUSINESS

AS THE HEAD OF CYBER SECURITY CENTER - BATELCO, SHIVANTHAN BALENDRA ENSURES THAT SECURITY IS EMBEDDED BY DESIGN AND CARRIED OUT TO MEET THE ORGANIZATION'S SPECIFIC NEEDS.



**SHIVANTHAN
BALENDRA,**

HEAD - CYBER SECURITY CENTER,
BATELCO

? Can you please describe your role as a Cyber Security Advisor for Batelco?

As head of Cyber Security Center, my role is to ensure the adequate deployment, development and management of security measures across the organization through an established and well maintained Corporate Vision, Strategy, Security Stack and long-term roadmap. The role is tightly integrated with all other business units to ensure security is embedded by design and carried out to meet the organizations specific needs.

? Talking about the year you began, till now, how have your roles and responsibilities changed/evolved?

Definitely. Security and its management practices have evolved year on year, thanks to the rapid transformation of the industry. When I started my career as a security professional, emphasis was mostly on security architecture and access control. This has greatly evolved with time with the rapid advancement of adversaries and the technologies to counteract spanning across Cyber threat management, Intelligence, Security Governance, Security assurance, Risk management, Data protection and many more.

? Humans are considered to be the weakest link in any breach. How do you create employee awareness in your company?

Creating employee awareness is a crucial undertaking to any organization that is serious about security and need to be carefully planned and managed under the Governance framework of the organization. It is crucial to make employees aware of their DOs and DONT's, dealing with emerging security threats, reacting to security crisis situations and practice good security hygiene as part of the core values and culture of the organization through constant and relevant security awareness sessions, newsletters, brochures, e-learning, Drills, Rehearsals, SMS/E-mail alerts etc.

? With so many breaches taking places, how well is Batelco prepared to defend the attacks if taken place?

Maintaining an up-to-date inventory of your assets, complete visibility across your network infrastructure while keeping your security controls continuously evaluated against technological advancements, complemented by up-to-date security processes and policies for Incident management along with continuously investing in the skillset development of the security personnel and motivation towards their long term retention in the organization are the key

tactics that assist us defending threats in a timely manner minimizing its potential impact.

? Do you face any budget constraints when it comes to security spending?

Budget constraints are a norm and are becoming more prevalent in security management, which delivers revenue protection as opposed to generation in most cases. With the fierce competition in the section and global financial crisis, organizations have become extremely vigilant of their spending and have focused majority of their efforts into investments that provide highest returns to their shareholders. Many top level executives still view security as a cost to the organization as opposed to an enabler to their business. Cloud based models, Design optimization, Automation & Orchestration and creating new revenue streams through security service offerings helps overcome this hurdle.

? Have more than a decade experience, what would be your suggestions/advice to the next gen CISOs?

Security needs to be addressed as a business issue as opposed to IT. Modern day security challenges require a collaborative and coordinative approach to succeed. Fundamental security practices were in most cases overlooked over advanced capabilities which had led to majority of large scale security breaches. Security should be managed as a process rather than a project with a start and end date and should be discussed at board level that resonate across the whole organization in a top down manner to be most effective. The biggest challenge for security is top management support and awareness. A CISO must be a well-rounded person who has exposure into strategic, technical, financial and governance aspects of security to be able to demonstrate unbiased leadership in managing security in the best interest of the company. ➡

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EDGE OF THE CLOUD: SILVER LINING

When there was too much expense being spend on data storage, cloud came to the rescue. When the cloud was being slow, now edge computing is here to the rescue. But is edge computing the silver lining to this cloud? Read more.

■ BY: C V ARYA DEVI ■ PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

IoT cannot be called a buzzword anymore, but it is a booming market and growth is seen more than anticipated. Proof? There is a computing platform that is solely designed for decentralizing data processing and to handle data generated by IoT and that is the 'Edge Computing'.

DATA AVALANCHE

The data produced by IoT and AI devices is so immense that I would have to refer it to an

avalanche. Let me give you a small example. A driverless car is estimated to send around 25 GB of data to the cloud every hour. 96% of this data is said to be true but irrelevant. With so much data going in and out of the cloud, the latency or response rate tends to be low. And that in turn makes the 4% of data which is relevant to be slow.

"As mobile devices and Internet-connected devices proliferate, data is growing in volume and velocity. According to IDC research, by

2025, approximately 80 billion devices will be connected to the Internet. These devices will generate data constantly and today's cloud-based computing architectures won't be able to handle the data explosion as they are not designed for the volume, variety, and velocity of data that the IoT generates," said Osama Al-Zoubi, Chief Technology Officer, Cisco Middle East and Africa.

With this platform, the data is analyzed before sending it to the cloud. It is the nut



“Devices will generate data constantly and today’s cloud-based computing architectures won’t be able to handle the data explosion as they are not designed for the volume, variety, and velocity of data that the IoT generates,”

OSAMA AL-ZOUBI,
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, CISCO
MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA.

factory where the shell is cracked and only the nut is being send up. But we don't need to set up a new nut factory for this. Most of the providers of cloud services provide lot services as well, whether it is Amazon, Google or Azure. But it is worrisome on the financial interest of the customers. Cloud providers charge the customers on the amount of data processed hence the customers trying to send up less.

Edge computing which came in as a baby helping hand for cloud is now taking in a slight

upper hand. Well there was never-ending battle between cloud computing and edge computing. Here arises a question, who will win this race of computing? Well better brains made the best of both worlds. The result- Fog Computing. This is a concept that shows there is no battle. It is related to IoT and the sending of data to the Cloud: The cloud-edge computing.

“We believe that cloud & edge will coexist and complete each other to deliver on key business priorities and outcomes. In a world where there

is no single cloud and where applications and their developers play a more critical role than ever, organizations are challenged to find the right people, processes, and tools to simplify the complexities of a multicloud world and quickly innovate,” added Mr Osama Al-Zoubi.

This concept is something Dell believes in. So here, there is a platform between The Cloud and the item collecting the data (the Cloud's edge). This platform is known as an IoT Cloud edge Processing device or a Cloud Edge Gateway. It is a Fog Computing device. With this process, only the meaningful data is taken which in turn lowers the data volume. Another benefit of this is that calculations are performed on the data before it is being sent. The “deal with it later” attitude is no present here. Well on customer side, another great look out is that its lowers the bandwidth cost. And there is also real-time processing.

DEATH OR RE-BIRTH

We have been writing about “death of datacenter” for a while now, with rise in cloud. However, now it is time to look into it and see if we are



“Clearly, the number of devices outnumber people. When devices and computers start talking to each other, they create extreme stress on any network. We see this stress only becoming more profound,”

EHAB KANARY,
VICE PRESIDENT OF ENTERPRISE
FOR MEA, COMMSCOPE.

looking for a re-birth. Maybe datacenter will be a ‘phoenix that arises from its ashes’ in technology. With the rise in edge computing we can see an advent of rapidly growing array of smaller data centers which is closer to the population.

There is a trend of increased demand for real-time data processing for enterprises. As mentioned earlier, the power of next generation business innovation is a driving surge of data producers.

“Clearly, the number of devices outnumber people. When devices and computers start talking to each other, they create extreme stress on any network. We see this stress only becoming more profound,” said Ehab Kanary, vice president of Enterprise for MEA, CommScope.

“Edge computing is attracting investment, both from the telecoms and cloud sectors as well as vertical sectors like retail and manufacturing. At their 2017 Data Centre Conference, Gartner forecasted that 40% of large enterprises will be



“Vast quantities of video are coming online and at higher quality levels with much larger audiences watching simultaneously. Unsecured IoT devices are being co-opted into bot armies that can launch attacks from the Edge with enormous volumes of traffic,”

ENRIQUE DUVOS,
DIRECTOR, PRODUCT MARKETING,
AKAMAI TECHNOLOGIES.

integrating edge computing principles into their projects by 2021. The current figure is at less than 1%, so we’re anticipating continued interest from customers. And no wonder, because the demand for a better and faster customer experience is constantly increasing, along with latency as our networks grow and become more widely distributed,” he added.

It is expected that more data will need to be analyzed in real time. Almost 20% of data created will be real-time in nature rather than being sent to the core of the network for processing. This in turn makes enterprises to build on their central cloud computing architecture.

This will reshape the traditional infrastructure data center. There will then be a new role for data center as there will be smaller data centers closer to the population. There will be slow change in data center infrastructure, as it will become more distributed. There will probably be more storage hubs in regional markets and smaller cities. It can also be in a way of micro data centers bolted onto parts of existing communications infrastructure, like telecom towers.

REALLY REAL-TIME

That brings us into the telecom sector. Telecom and healthcare are the two main sectors which is said to be the largest producers of data. Need for analyzing data in near real-time is important for these sectors.

In our previous issue, in the Healthcare and Wearables story, I mentioned about the changes in the healthcare industry through emerging tech-

nologies and IoT. This is making the healthcare industry smarter and more preventive, personalized and responsive. And as these techs advance data production increases and makes it hard to manage. This makes many to turn their focus to edge computing to help solve their challenges. It is very helpful to the healthcare industry as more and more sensitive data are present and the processing and storage capabilities are placed near the edge of the network perimeter and improves the speed and latency.

With more data and computing and storage in place, guess what is the major headache faced by many? Security.

“With greater connectivity also comes greater risk. That’s because there is far more demand at the edge of the Internet than ever before. Billions of devices are coming online and they connect at the edge. Vast quantities of video are coming online and at higher quality levels with much larger audiences watching simultaneously. Unsecured IoT devices are being co-opted into bot armies that can launch attacks from the Edge with enormous volumes of traffic,” said Enrique Duvos, Director, Product Marketing, Akamai Technologies. “This explosive growth is putting tremendous pressure on the core of the Internet, which has grown in capacity, but not nearly as rapidly as demand and capacity at the edge of the Internet, where the Akamai platform resides,” he further added.

As the idea of edge computing is still nascent in modern IT, the significant security challenges are still under research. 🔴



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Harnessing the Power of Cloud for your Business



■ SAM TAYAN MANAGING DIRECTOR SAGE MIDDLE EAST

With the Fourth Industrial Revolution well underway, our world is getting increasingly digitalised. Technology is altering the way we live and work at a dizzying pace, and concepts such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, virtual reality, blockchain, big data and the internet of things have become part of everyday conversations.

Cloud computing technology today plays an increasingly important role in fuelling the innovations we see around us. A rising number of companies – from one-person startups to multinational corporations – are exploring cloud computing because it impacts every dimension of the business and has a significant transformative effect.

Adoption of cloud computing is becoming a strategic decision for organisations across the globe. CIOs indicated in a 2016 survey by KPMG, that the top two primary reasons for adopting cloud computing were to improve agility and responsiveness, and accelerate product development and innovation. Saving money came in third, indicating that rather than looking for immediate cost savings, CIOs are now taking a longer term and more strategic perspective.

The cloud is best known for its storage capabilities, but can actually do much more than that. Cloud-based business solutions can incorporate all types of functions, from accounting and invoicing to HR and payroll systems, allowing companies to reap benefits ranging from enhanced productivity and flexibility to advanced business intelligence.

The two key strengths of cloud services are flexibility and mobility. Cloud systems are smartphone- and tablet-friendly, enabling business leaders and employees to perform

their tasks on the go, which is invaluable in today's dynamic work environment. The future is mobile, and cloud business management solutions empower users to run their companies from the palm of their hand.

Does cloud computing slow down productivity?

A common misconception about cloud computing is that it slows down productivity. In fact, cloud computing services streamline business processes and facilitate collaboration for companies operating in multiple countries or across the supply chain. They also ensure that employees can access data wherever they are.

Today, the tech marketplace offers full suites of cloud-based business management software that allows seamless operations across the organisation via a unified platform with a single portal and common thread. In fact, a 2017 report by Gartner predicted that more than half of the global enterprises using the cloud today will adopt an all-in cloud strategy by 2021.

Implementing such an integrated system is more efficient than a piecemeal approach towards cloud adoption, as it eliminates the need for new evaluations for each product and vendor. Moreover, when coupled with other emerging technologies, such as machine learning, big data and blockchain, an ecosystem based on cloud computing has the potential to transform businesses. Artificial Intelligence is

already benefitting companies and the wider society through reducing the burden of administrative tasks and enhancing the performance of the workforce.

Is moving to the cloud worth the expense?

The longstanding belief that enterprises require substantial capital investment to shift to the cloud could not be further from the truth. Cloud-based services are suitable for companies at any stage of the business lifecycle and can be scaled up whenever needed, allowing decision makers to plan their budgets and minimise costs. In addition, cloud solutions are now available on a monthly subscription or pay-per-use basis.

There are also significant cost benefits associated with cloud-based services. A Sage study launched in September 2017, entitled *Sweating the Small Stuff*, revealed that small companies spend more than five per cent of their total capacity and as many as 120 days on routine admin tasks annually. These can be conveniently automated through cloud-based business solutions and intelligence. Enterprises of all shapes and sizes need solutions that boost productivity, improve competitiveness, and deliver insights as well as opportunities. Today's customers have grown to expect companies to respond to their needs at lightning speed, and the business cloud ecosystem makes it all possible. ➤

Cyber Security Advisory Services

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Vulnerability Assessment
Penetration Testing
Web Application Security
Mobile Application Security
Wireless security Testing
Social Engineering
Threat Hunting

BLUE TEAM DEFENSIVE SECURITY

Infrastructure Protection
Network Security Protection
System Security Protection
Cloud Security Protection
Endpoint Security Protection
Application Security Protection
Vulnerability Management

WHITE TEAM ADVISORY & CONSULTING

Identity and Access Management
Data Protection Program
Cloud Security Assessment
Security Architecture
Data Center Design & Blueprint
Blockchain, AI & Big Data
NESA, DISR, ISO 27001:2013, PCI-DSS

PURPLE TEAM SECURITY OPERATIONS

SIEM & SOC Consulting
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Compliance Monitoring
Threat Adversary Simulation
Purple Teaming
Threat Intelligence
Incident Response Playbook



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SOLUTION TO AN UNAWARE PROBLEM

THERE ARE VARIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE MARKET WHICH ARE YET TO BE TACKLED. BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE UNAWARE THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM? READ ON TO KNOW MORE.



MUHAMMAD ILYAS,

FOUNDER & DIRECTOR,
DEVICEBEE TECHNOLOGIES

■ BY: C V ARYA DEVI

It may have happened with many of us. We go to an office, we fill out forms with our personal and official details before meeting the person we came looking for, and we leave it at the admin desk. Have we ever wondered what happens to this data later on? Most of the times it gets accumulated in the storeroom or in a never ending excel sheet. This is a problem we were unaware of. And here is a solution to this problem.

An interesting conversation with Mr Muhammad Ilyas, Founder and Director of Devicebee Technologies, showed us a unique product “Istaqbaal”. This is one of the new enterprise product that the company is coming out with.

“One of the product which is out in the market is “Istaqbaal”. It is a word from Arabic and Turkish

which means to welcome or greet someone. It is a digital product which allows the visitors to check in at the main reception area using a platform,” said Mr Ilyas. “Even though we live in 21st century, we still have to fill out forms in the reception area. The data becomes a junk in the storerooms. “Istaqbaal” is an iPad placed in the main reception area where the visitor can enter the details of themselves. When the recipient name is selected, immediately the host is notified that the guest is present with the details from the ID card and the live picture. All these data are stored in the cloud. These data can be extracted and used for future analysis,” he added.

This product is now trending with one of the government customer of the company. The

company has many government and enterprise customers who come to them through the word of mouth.

“Two months back we were invited by a big government customer who reached to us through a loop of recommendations. Customers review us on authentic websites,” said Mr Ilyas.

The company do not have fixed products. All our products are customized as different companies require different requirements. So they say that every single customer is taken care of in a different way.

“In Enterprise everyone is going digital. One of our core strength is the startups as people are entering into this ecosystem and they come up new ideas. Technology solution is not a job or a source of income. It is something that we may try and experiment. We have to adopt ourselves to the needs of the market and how the market is working. We have worked with Majid Al Futtaim, LG Electronics, Shal Holm group etc.” he said.

Mr Ilyas further justified his statement by giving out an example of one of his customers. “A customer approached us with huge unstructured data at his disposal which was being managed manually and stored on excel sheets and emails. This made it difficult to segregate data or track it. We build a specific enterprise mobility solution for them. They are happily using it and deployed it in more than 5 countries now and going to roll it over the entire region.”

The company portfolio includes tailor made products and services only. They take up any services related to technology and go step by step. ➤

Many Challenges One **Partner**

AT A GLANCE

750+ CLIENTS

Clients in GCC,
Levant, North
Africa & the Indian
Sub-continent

15+ COUNTRIES

Supporting our
valuable clients
in 15+ countries

9.8 / 10

In Customer
Satisfaction Index

7 AWARDS

won in the last
18 months

OUR SOLUTIONS

Threat Exposure Management

RAPID7

Email Authentication
As A Service

EmailAuth.io™

EDR & Threat Hunting

ENDGAME.

Employee Powered
Information Security

HumanFirewall.io™

Business Risk Intelligence (BRI)

 **FLASHPOINT**

Third Party Risk
Management Platform

 **SecurityScorecard**

Deception & Response Platform

Attivo
NETWORKS.

IT Management &
Monitoring Tools

solarwinds 

Pikcio to Showcase Blockchain Innovation at GITEX

Pikcio brings GDPR compliant customer data handling solutions on the blockchain to GITEX 2018



■ CYRIL GHANEM, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE - MIDDLE EAST, PIKCIO

Customer data is the internet's new currency. For companies, collecting, authenticating and protecting their customers data is an effort amounting to billions of dollars each year. Traditional data handling solutions are not built with newly implemented, data protection legislation like GDPR in mind, resulting in an increase of processing costs and time as well as poor customer satisfaction and ROI.

Pikcio has developed a customer data exchange platform on its own custom built, fully GDPR compliant blockchain, that seamlessly solves all these issues.

Pikcio is able to offer 100% digital native solutions for every organization facing complex processes to collect, verify and classify customer data.

For businesses, our fully GDPR compliant, customer data exchange has many benefits: It is customizable, it permits companies to benefit from a non-invasive infrastructure, a reduced third-party dependence and a stronger, faster & cheaper user identification. It eliminates redundancies & enhances data collaboration across departments and business lines.

Pikciochain is a data agnostic platform, in order to manage and handle a wide range of use cases and products. It handles both corporate and personal data. The first solutions have been developed in the banking, insurance and health care sectors. However, Pikciochain is an open platform where every corporation can create its own solution.

As an example, for the banking & insurance sectors, our shared ledger platform benefits all stakeholders by :

- Enabling greater transparency :
Immutable ledger that enables sharing of KYC information across banks
- Reducing operational inefficiencies :
Reduces customer onboarding time by 50-75 percent and enhances customer experience
- Ensuring up-to-date customer data :
A single source for customer data reduces potential for fraud.

Founded in 2014, Pikcio is present in 10 different countries including the US, Japan, & France, our MENA operations are run from Bahrain Fintech Bay.

"Know your Customer (KYC) is playing an increasingly important role in large institutions and governments; Growing efficiency by ensuring an effective service between public sector, private sector and consumer is a clear objective of many governments around the world.

Pikcio solution for governments offers a digital wallet centered around Consumer's digital identity based on blockchain technology. Thanks to a shared and secured access to dApps (decentralized applications) on the Pikcio Chain, Public sector entities collaborate seamlessly to better service private sector and Consumers, avoiding redundancy of efforts and manual checks. Direct impacts are enhanced customer satisfaction, cost reduction and increased trust in the quality and effectiveness of Public Sector. The potential of blockchain and DLT (Distributed Ledger Technology) is being explored by governments all around the world. In the public sector, the number of entities testing solutions based on blockchain technology is increasing at a rapid pace," commented Cyril Ghanem, Customer Experience - Middle East, Pikcio. ➡



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EXAGRID OFFERS FULL APPLIANCES IN A SCALE-OUT STORAGE ARCHITECTURE, SO – UNLIKE COMPETITIVE SOLUTIONS – COMPUTE IS ADDED WITH CAPACITY. THIS APPROACH KEEPS THE BACKUP WINDOW FIXED IN LENGTH REGARDLESS OF DATA GROWTH, AND ELIMINATES FORKLIFT UPGRADES AND PRODUCT OBSOLESCENCE



BILL ANDREWS,
CEO, EXAGRID

? How has this year been for the company?

ExaGrid continues to grow year over year, and will grow in excess of 20% in 2018 as compared to 2017.

? What are the various solutions you go to the market with? And how have they

leveraged your position in the market?

ExaGrid offers hyper-converged secondary storage for backup with data deduplication and is focused on the mid-market to large enterprise customers with 30 terabytes to petabytes of data. ExaGrid is the only solution on the market that offers data deduplication without negative impact on

backup performance and restore performance.

All other deduplication solutions perform deduplication inline, which slows backups down and, in addition, they only store deduplicated data that needs to be rehydrated for each restore request, resulting in hours to days to restore data. ExaGrid has a unique “landing zone” where backups are stored and then deduplicated after they are committed to the landing zone. Since ExaGrid does not perform deduplication online, its solution is at least 3X faster for backups than its closest competitor. The most recent data remains in the landing zone in an unduplicated form, ready to be restored with no time-consuming data rehydration required. ExaGrid restores the most recent backup data at over 20X any other deduplication solution.

ExaGrid offers full appliances in a scale-out storage architecture, so – unlike competitive solutions – compute is added with capacity. This approach keeps the backup window fixed in length regardless of data growth, and eliminates forklift upgrades and product obsolescence. In summary, ExaGrid is the only backup storage solution with data deduplication that not only stores data efficiently but does so with no impact on backup and restore performance, offers full scalability, and has a low cost up front and over time.

? What does your partner ecosystem look like?

ExaGrid sells through resellers worldwide. ExaGrid also has distributors in every country and serves the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia Pacific.

? In a sentence, define your organizations prime mission and vision?

- To make backup up storage reliable and invisible.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019?

ExaGrid will be rolling out the following:

- NetBackup Accelerator support
- Active directory support
- Multi-hop for tertiary data centers
- Replication to Microsoft Azure for disaster recovery
- Improved reporting
- Next level of Enterprise management. 



THE CHANGE TO FUTURISTIC BUSINESS

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SOLUTIONS FOR ALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS

WITH STATE OF THE ART FACILITIES IN UAE AND SAUDI ARABIA, EMPA BUSINESS SOLUTIONS SERVES THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA) REGION. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TAREK TARAZI, GM OF THE COMPANY.



TAREK TARAZI,
GM, EMPA BUSINESS SOLUTIONS LLC

? In 2016, EMPA Business Solutions took a big leap in the IT field.

Please share in brief the company's history and its journey so far?

EMPA Business Solutions is a UAE based master Value added distributor of advanced imaging and printing hardware and software solutions. Since Empa Bs was created, scanning has been its core activity. As a Value added distributor, Empa Bs now references one of the widest ranges of professional scanners and capture and image processing software. Empa Bs expertise is expressed through customised follow-up in the choice, implementa-

tion and use of these scanning solutions.

A solid network of partners supports Empa Bs business. As a distributor / integrator of scanning solutions, Empa Bs acts as an interface between hardware and software vendors and resellers networks. It takes advantage of this strategic position, to stimulate the market and effectively support organisations throughout their paperless projects.

? The market has transformed from products to solutions and services. How has EMPA aligned with this transformation?

The world is going paperless! Previously the prerogative of large corporations and departments, digitisation has become more democratic and now applies to all organisations, regardless of size or sector. Faced with growing volumes of paper processed every day, digitisation is a solution to several problems.

Constrained by the economic situation, some organisations have reduced their budget allocated to manual processing whereas others strive to modernise them. The aim? Reducing document printing costs: consumables (toners, paper, envelopes, etc.), franking, physical storage... not forgetting related costs linked to the reproduction of documents and printer management.

Changes in regulations help to speed up the paperless process. This optimises tracking of documents and their content, secures them and also offers better protection against risks and fraud. Enhanced scanning quality also guarantees better use of documents, by also establishing their integrity.

The new market trends with such a technology, a legacy channel type, will not be able to adopt and drive such a niche technology creating a need for a specialized channel and more

importantly a specialized value-added center of excellence that will support the channel and their customers.

? Tell us about your go to market strategy and your major partnerships.

Build a specialized IT Performance channel to deliver DMS solutions to serve our valued customer's desire to adopt mega trends

- Build Internal Readiness for Sales, Pre-Sales and Channel
- Rationalize Channel Landscape & Specialize
- Create Interest
- Create run-rate business from active resellers
- Focus on top performing specialized VARs – Business Plans/Account Mapping

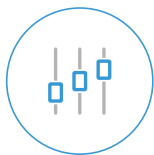
? As mentioned by you in our conversation, GITEX is more for the vendors than channel partners. Why do you think so?

GITEX represents the ideal venue for vendors to engage with existing and potential partners, as well as meet industry professionals and end users." to address all their IT Performance Challenges that facing all types of sector, Decision makers and buyers will seek to use the event to improve the value proposition of their offerings while enhancing the cost efficiency of their operations.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019 and beyond?

Will continue to lend Strategic Assistance to its network of Channel Partners, Value Added Resellers and End Users while remaining dedicated to their respective objectives, thereby contributing to a Qualitative evolution of the Industry in these markets. ➡

INTELLIGENT HYBRID CLOUD SOLUTIONS



Policy-based Intelligence

Automate application performance, data protection and cloud management



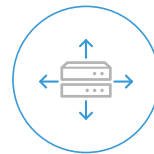
Breakthrough Performance

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Hybrid Cloud Deployment

Solutions optimized for on-premises, edge and cloud environments



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Scale compute, IO performance and capacity together or independently

Pivot3's simple and efficient hybrid cloud solutions are powered by the industry's only policy-based Intelligence Engine to meet the performance, scale and resiliency requirements of datacenter, edge and cloud computing environments to guarantee the delivery of business services.

To learn more about Pivot3, visit www.pivot3.com.

VERTICAL SOLUTIONS ON HORIZONTAL PLATFORMS

BEING A Y AXIS TO THE X AXIS IS NOT AN EASY TASK. IT IS AN IMMENSE TASK TO BUILD A VERTICAL SOLUTION ON AN ALREADY FAMOUS HORIZONTAL PLATFORM AND BUSINESS EXPERTS GULF IS DOING IT. READ MORE.



**JOHNNY
YOUSSEF,**

MANAGING PARTNER, BUSINESS
EXPERTS GULF

“UAE GOVERNMENT, WITHOUT DOUBT IS A VERY SMART AND ROBUST GOVERNMENT WITH SO MANY INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES AND MAKES SURE THAT THE RESIDENTS ARE HAPPY ”

■ BY: C V ARYA DEVI

Business Experts Gulf is one of the top Microsoft's Dynamics Gold Partners in UAE as well as other GCC countries. From customer relationship management (CRM) software to enterprise resource planning (ERP), from supply chain management to business intelligence and reporting, BEMEA has a business solution that's just right for the customers.

To keep up with this market and its trends, the company is now in the process of creating vertical solutions to the horizontal platforms of Microsoft.

Microsoft is one of those software which is used by almost everyone, but with changing needs and market trends, companies redo and recreate tailor made products. "Microsoft ERP is usually a horizontal platform, we have built verticals on

property management and HR/payroll on top of it. The biggest challenge every company faces is manpower. For Microsoft, there is no localisation for the Middle East," he added.

"We have various other initiatives based on the market's requirement. Now we have many clients who moved their whole set of environment to the cloud. We do offer other cloud hosting services too apart from Microsoft cloud service as there are some clients who prefer private cloud services according to their budget," he said.

This is one such market where even the government is going cloud. So, in order to keep up with this trend, being innovative is essential. "We see a lot of demand coming in from the government in going cloud. There is continuity, the infrastructure server, no need of any upfront money, scalability,

no need of in-house employees. Any application that you do on premise now, Microsoft has the provision to do upto the cloud. As an add on, Microsoft is giving the comfort of life with minimal cost" said Youssef.

With the company having the target of being one of the top three partners of Microsoft in Gulf, they are on a mission to excel. "In the year 2015-16, we got the best partner in UAE position from Microsoft," he said.

Youssef further said that UAE is one such market where trend for technology is there but the education of it is absent. "In Europe, technology is being educated in schools and colleges and people are aware of it. But here, people are not educated enough in terms of IT. When Microsoft launches new products, it will take ages for the people to understand and the partners to get adopted. The technology aspect in this area is getting better."

"Whether it be ordering food or for banking facilities, the demand of digitalization, technology, automation, business application, is getting high. Positive side is the increase in number of requirements in the market, especially with the declaration by H.H Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Expo 2020."

The company is also all geared up to live Expo 2020 and expects to see more demand and requirements for latest technologies. 🚀

Data Breaches Will Continue & Intensify

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UNIFIED PROTECTION

EXPONENTIAL DATA GROWTH, RISING STORAGE COSTS, COMPLEX CLOUD MIGRATIONS AND STRINGENT REGULATIONS ARE FORCING ORGANIZATIONS TODAY TO FIND EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICAL WAYS TO RETOOL THEMSELVES FOR THE DIGITAL WORLD.



MANSOOR IBRAHIM
DISTRIBUTION SUCCESS MANAGER,
ME, VERITAS

IT staff face daily questions about whether their data is protected appropriately, whether it can or should be deleted and whether they're missing lower cost storage opportunities. The first step in managing data is to better understand it. Veritas makes it easier and less expensive for enterprises to modernize all aspects of data management—whether on-premises or in the cloud.

Veritas focuses on four pillars of data management -

DATA PROTECTION

Wannacry was the biggest ransomware attack of 2017 affecting more than 300,000 organizations globally. Ransomware is a huge threat to any organization and its operations if preventive measurements are not put in place. For enterprise IT organizations who need a reliable solution to protect their mission-critical data, legacy and next-generation workloads, scales gracefully to petabyte levels, and offers a simple, self-service experience that any administrator can use to protect and recover their own data.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

Defensibly deleting data requires classification and so many organizations typically just keep the data—forever. Digital discovery takes time and is costly. Digital compliance is complicated by the move to the cloud—even more repositories to manage with yet more tools. Veritas GDPR framework is a whole offer focused on the following steps: Locate, Search, Minimize, Protect, Monitor.

CLOUD ADOPTION & MIGRATION

Shifting a workload to the cloud is shifting the resource, not the responsibility. A strong data portability/migration solution helps prevent hardware and cloud-vendor lock-in. If you look at Migration orchestration – today's workloads are complex. We help migrated entire business services with Pre-migration testing – verify works before going live and Failback support in case these don't go as expected. The same tool

we offer for migration and failback also protects you from cloud vendor lock in – you can migrate your workloads between clouds

REDUCING STORAGE GROWTH AND COSTS

We help organizations know what they have, where it is, who has access to it, and how long it should be kept.

- 41% of unstructured data is at least 3 years old
- 33% is Redundant, Obsolete, or Trivial (ROT)
- 52% is Dark Data

Veritas research is shining light on the effectiveness of data hoarding practices bring. We help customers visualize their data so they make business decisions to reduce cost (tiering / deleting), save time (policy-based automation), and risk (understanding what is where and who has access). Software Defined Storage (SDS) allows flexibility and leveraging of existing storage investments, utilizing commodity hardware. Buy hardware on your schedule, rather than when a lease expires.

Veritas helps turn your data challenge into comprehensive information management for your business.

360 Degree View of Data Management Overview -

- Data Visibility: Knowing what you have, where it is, and how long it should be kept.
- Data Protection: Ensuring you can recover your data when you need it.
- Data Portability: Seamlessly moving your data from one place to another.
- Storage Optimization: Avoid vendor lock-in and ensure you get the most from our existing storage investments.
- Business Continuity: Expanding your capability both on premise and into the cloud.
- Digital Compliance: Making sure you have the information and tools needed to address compliance requirements.

At the heart is our ability to classify what you have, informing policy-based automation of your data protection, governance, and availability, wherever that data resides. 

Top System Integrator 2017
Wireless vendor of the year 2018

BITS SECURE IT INFRASTRUCTURE



Innovative Solutions



SLA Driven Support



Latest Tech Designs

24/7 NOC & SOC



Certified Engineers



Creating the next-generation communication platforms for professionals



■ SELIM BOURI, VP AND HEAD OF MENA & ASIA PACIFIC OF SECURE LAND COMMUNICATIONS, AIRBUS

Airbus provides secure high-end communication systems for governmental organisations and supports large events, such as the Hajj or the Abu Dhabi Formula 1 race

Torn between modernity and growth on the one hand, and migration along with security threats on the other, Middle Eastern nations and industries demand reliable technology to keep control of their operations. One of the things that are essential to keep them going are resilient mobile communication tools which are completely secure.

Based in Abu Dhabi, UAE, the Secure Land Communications, business unit of Airbus, is a leading supplier of secure and reliable communication systems being used everywhere in the region. Although this brand name is widely associated with aircrafts and helicopters, the regional community of professional communication technicians knows that Airbus is a global supplier of various communication solutions. Whether we speak of national networks, or local site solutions, important organisations have selected customized networks: the Ministries of Interior in Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and Bahrain have chosen Airbus systems. The Police and Defence forces in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and elsewhere also use Airbus technology. On top of that, fire brigades, rescue services, airports, and oil companies work with Airbus. Concretely, the Dubai Metro, Burj Khalifa, Dubai Parks and Resorts, Emaar, and Saudi Aramco in KSA operate their business with Airbus communication networks, to name a few.

“Our success is based on our experience and highly reliable technology. In the past years we have established proven solutions in the region mainly based on the narrowband Tetra technology in the region. And now that we are on the edge towards a new era of professional communication, the Middle East is a vanguard to deploy new broadband solutions,” explains Selim Bouri, Vice- President and Head of Middle East and Asia-Pacific of Secure Land Communications at Airbus. He points out that it is all about integrating innovations, such as multimedia functions, into existing systems. We make sure that our platforms really work in critical situations. And that’s reason why customers decide for us.”

A good case in point is the Hajj and the Abu Dhabi formula 1 race. For years, Airbus has supported these events with their reliable and secure technology to help the security personnel operate their tasks efficiently – and the Airbus equipment has worked impeccably. As far as the formula 1 race is concerned, this one of the top level events which Airbus has often accompanied in many places around the world, for instance the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, the Asian Games 2010 in Guangzhou, and the Munich Security Conference.

By turning the eyes towards the future, Airbus is offering next-generation tools to help public safety and industrial users benefit from multimedia communication. The Tactilon Dabat, a

smartphone and Tetra device in one, is pivotal to profit from both safe narrowband and secure broadband networks simultaneously. More and more applications for public safety users evolve in the Airbus ecosystem, which brings certified digital solutions facilitating the daily life of policemen, fire fighters, oil workers or paramedics. “It’s astonishing because the Tactilon Dabat helps carry fewer devices but, at the same time, users will have many more functions on only one device,” explains Selim Bouri. He’s not the only one who is thrilled by the device. Experts were captured when they had been analyzing it. So, it is no coincidence that the Tactilon Dabat has won two awards lately: the International Critical Communications Award 2018 in the category “Best Evolution to Future Broadband” and the Intersec Award 2018 in the category “Innovative Security Product of the Year”.

Furthermore, the company equally works closely with governmental organisations or telecom companies such as: STC Specialized in KSA or Professional Communication Corporation - Nedaa in the United Arab Emirates, and provides specific solutions for industries or governments. Finally, most of the Airbus equipment, such as the terminals or accessories, can be ordered through the local resellers, such as Atlas Telecom (UAE), DDIT (KSA), Global Projects General Trading Co (Kuwait) or SERT (Lebanon). ➔

FOUNDED IN 2009, VALTO HAS EXCELLED IN INCORPORATING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES AT THE WORKPLACE TO HELP OUR CLIENTS SCALE TO LARGER HEIGHTS.

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Testimonials

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-HR, SOCIETE GENERALE.

"VALTO has been engaged with us in document digitisation. Their services were satisfactory and deserve mentioning."
-AGM, SBI

"When it comes to document digitisation, VALTO is the reliable name. They are subject matter experts and it gives us pleasure to recommend them"
-FM, HITACHI.

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ONE PLATFORM, VARIOUS SOLUTIONS

WITH THE BELIEF THAT AUTOMATION WORKS FOR EVERYONE, AITS PROVIDES INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. THEIR INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION AND DIGITAL FACTORY SOLUTIONS INTEGRATE FOUR LEVELS OF AUTOMATION WHILE ENSURING THE ABSOLUTE AVAILABILITY OF THOSE SYSTEMS.



NADER EL HAMMAD,

MARKETING MANAGER, AITS - MENA

? Tell us more about AITS. What are the innovative technologies of the Fourth Industrial revolution that you provide?

AITS Provides Innovative Technologies of The Fourth Industrial Revolution. Our Advanced Industrial Automation and Digital Factory Solutions Integrate the Four Levels of Automation While Ensuring the Absolute Availability of Those Systems. Impacting lives and preparing for a smart world, our leading technologies such as Wonderware, Stratus, Dream report, Omron, Kepware and IV&C guarantee reaching the Goals of Increased Productivity, Performance, Quality and Energy Efficiency.

? Which are the industries that you cater to? Apart from UAE, what is your market reach in the rest of

the GCC?

At AITS, we are proud to offer one platform, with various solutions that caters to all verticals of the market such as Food and beverage, Water and waste water, Oil and gas, smart cities, power and utilities, chemicals, metals mining and minerals, plus life science! We take pride in having a well experienced team that covers all the Middle East and North Africa region, especially KSA and Bahrain markets, where we have operations in Riyadh.

? Tell us in brief about your technology partners?

We are always thinking about offering the best solutions to our customers, hence we made sure to partner with pioneers in technologies of the industrial automation world.

For example, Wonderware is listed as the HMI number 1 in the world and we doubt that anyone in this market haven't used or heard about Wonderware at some point of their lives. with great testimonials from Wonderware users across the globe, we at AITS, make sure to support this reputation with the best support and offerings we can bring into the market.

On the other hand, Stratus technologies has been a pioneer in offering an uptime world all the time, ensuring all critical application are available up to 99.99999% of the time! saving the companies a hefty amount of money and preventing them from facing downtime. The name of Stratus technologies has been linked to Fault tolerant systems around the world!

Omron offers state-of-the-art control equipment and systems for factory automation. With products ranging from sensors and controllers to network products for interconnecting devices, Omron helps manufacturers worldwide enhance quality, safety and the environment by promoting manufacturing innovation.

Dream Report is a real time reporting generator solution based on a configurable end user interface. Its unique concept combines 5 key functions, and positions Dream Report™ as

the most convenient reporting solution for the industrial automation.

As for IV&C, we know for a fact that it is the global market leader in industrial network video, driving the integration of digital video with SCADA applications. IVC products and solutions focus on industrial surveillance and monitoring solutions for security, productivity, and safety applications- all based on innovative, and open technology platforms.

With Kepware, we deliver the industry with leading communications platform that provides a single source of industrial automation data to all of the user's applications. The platform's design allows users to connect, manage, monitor, and control diverse automation devices and software applications through one intuitive user interface.

? Industrialization has generated great opportunities in the UAE. How do you plan to leverage on this?

I recall that at the world's first Global Manufacturing and Industrialization Summit, it was announced that the manufacturing sector will contribute 25 per cent towards the country's GDP by 2025. Having that in mind, and with such great technologies in our portfolio, AITS will make sure to support its End Users and System Integrators in offering the best fit solutions for such growth. Leveraging on the success cases that our technologies have earned worldwide, we can implement such successful methods in the local market to keep up with the market trends whether in Manufacturing sector or in the Smart Cities path.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019? What new technology or partnerships can we look forward to?

We continuously and pro-actively keep adding complementing technologies to our portfolio. We listen carefully to the market needs and cater for that accordingly. AITS has big goals and will remain actively connecting its users with the right solutions! 🔥

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GROWING WITH THE UAE

WITH OVER 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE REGION, TELEPHONY PROVIDES END TO END ICT SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES. ENTERPRISE CHANNELS MEA IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DR. MOHAMED SHAFI ABDULLA, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE COMPANY.



DR. MOHAMED SHAFI ABDULLA,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, TELEPHONY

? What are some of the major solutions and services provided by Telephony?

Telephony provides end-to-end ICT solutions and services with over 15 years of experience serving both public and private sectors in UAE and its region. Some of the major solutions and services provided are Telecom Infrastructure and Services, ICT Infrastructure and Services, ICT Networking & Securities and Services, Cloud & Data Center Solutions and Services, ELV, CCTV, Security Solutions and Services, Mobility & Converged Solutions, IoT and Smart Solutions, Artificial Intelligent Powered Smart Solutions, Managed services and Feasibility and Market Research & Study.

? How has the year been so far for Telephony?

Telephony has been growing rapidly since its inception in UAE. With the support of all our customers and the efficient staffs, the year-over-year growth of every 9th year is equal to past 8 years.

? With so many new technologies like Blockchain, AI etc. in the industry, what is the new arena that you are entering into and adding into the portfolio before Expo 2020?

We have entered into a few new arena which includes TechKnowProcess (TKP), FRP Future Readiness Platforms, Banafsology and Data Science for SEP (Sustainability Engagement Platform). All these add a big difference to the already impressive portfolio of Telephony.

? Expo 2020 is said to be the biggest promise for Dubai. How is Telephony prepping to tackle Expo 2020?

We are prepping ourselves to tackle the Expo 2020 in the best possible way. 'Grow with UAE: Spread the growth to all potential growth regions' is the vision of Telephony. The major potential growth regions here are GCC, Africa, CIS countries, ASEAN, Southern India, UK.

? The Cloud Report by Dubai Silicon Oasis Authority (DSOA) says that 70% of startups in Dubai currently use cloud computing and 24% build their startups on the cloud. With even the Government moving into the cloud platform, what is your cloud portfolio that is an edge on the competition?

We are in the process of introducing a strategic partnership and plan to be one of the best choice for customers two utilise our BFC (Business Facilitation Centers).

? Brief on the top most important project of Telephony?

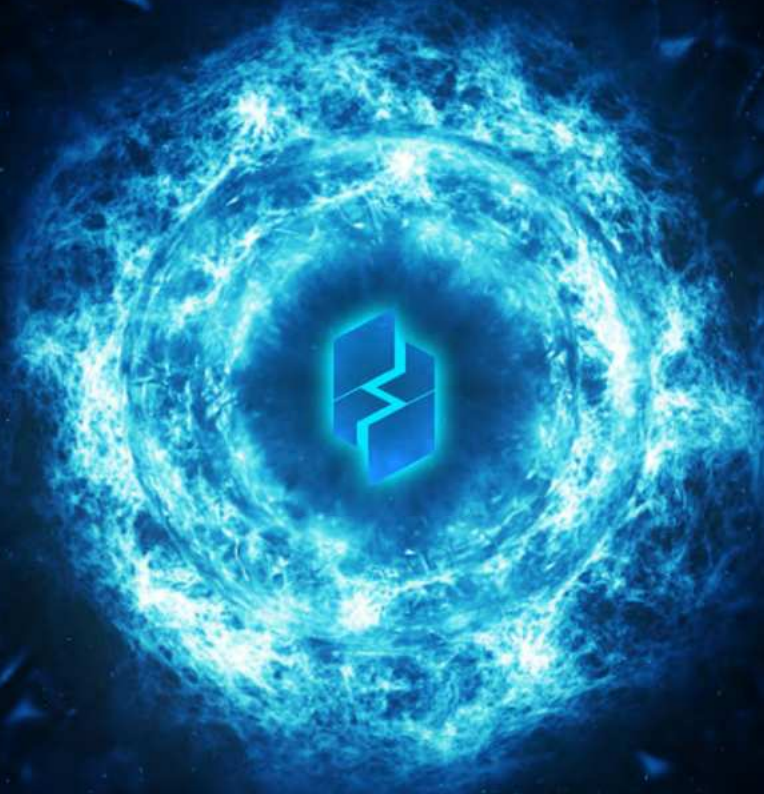
We have worked with few major end users in the region. Some of them are as follows:

- Datacenter and Network Security solutions for Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MOID)
- KhaleejTimes: Unified Communication Solutions with 24x7 Managed services.
- **Medcare Hospital:**
 - (a) Converged Healthcare Solution and IoT Ready Platform.
 - (b) Centralized management of converged network in a single platform. (Multiple clinics and hospitals)
- **Aster Hospital:**
 - (a) Converged Healthcare Solution and IoT Ready Platform. (Passive and Active)
 - (b) Complete hospital video surveillance solutions and access control.
- **Sharjah Municipality :**
 - (a) Deployment of unified communication solutions for various locations.
 - (b) Contact center solution for municipality hotline.
 - (c) IT infrastructure passive on various locations.
 - (d) Complete video surveillance solutions.
- Khorfakkan Municipality: Unified communication and collaboration solution to enable effective communication between staffs and management.
- FTTH fiber rollout Project for Etisalat across United Arab Emirates.
- Service provisioning and assurance project for Du Dubai.
- Etisalat 3G /4G Network Modernization: Roll out of 3G/4G modernization for Abu Dhabi and Western Region with 300+ sites
- Etisalat/ Du In Build Solution (IBS) Design, Implementation and Optimization for 100+ high rise commercial & residential towers and government offices
- **DEWA Smart Metering:** Implantation of communication solution for smart water meters. ➡



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EMPOWERING INNOVATORS

2018 HAS BEEN A YEAR OF PROGRESS FOR PURE STORAGE. EXPANSION OF LOCAL TEAM AND CUSTOMER BASE, SIGNING UP KEY CHANNEL PARTNERS, NEW PARTNER PROGRAMS... WHAT'S MORE TO COME? READ ON...



CHRISTIAN PUTZ,
DIRECTOR - EEMA, PURE STORAGE

? How has this year been for the company?

2018 has been a year of 'progress' for us in the Middle East—we expanded the local team, signed up key channel partners and most importantly, expanded our customer base, particularly in the BFSI sector.

? What are the various solutions you go to the market with? And how have they leveraged your position in the market?

Our Data-Centric Architecture is an end-to-end product suite, that enables enterprise storage teams to deliver elastic block, file, and object data services to power their multi-cloud environments. It's a consolidated, shared platform for data purpose-built to drive both traditional and new stack modes of IT, with the speed and agility

to simplify everything, empower developers, and deliver next-gen AI and analytics.

Pure Data-Centric Architecture is powered by our shared accelerated storage arrays: FlashArray for block data, FlashBlade for file and object data, FlashStac for CI ARI for integrated AI-ready infrastructure, and our Evergreen Storage model for upgrades and refreshes.

? What does your partner ecosystem look like?

Pure has always been committed to a 100% channel business model and we work closely with a select number of distributors and a number of key partners across the Middle East. The new Pure Partner Program that went into effect on August 1, 2018 is a testament to our commitment to our regional partners. We made strategic investments in the tools and resources needed to achieve a partner program that attracts, enables and retains top partners. The program includes new training, certifications, support and incentives, and rewards partners who build a Pure practice and lead with Pure in the market.

? In a sentence, define your organizations prime mission and vision?

Pure empowers innovators to drive better customer experiences, new business models, faster innovation and time-to-market, and higher productivity-driven results.

? What are you showcasing at GITEX this year?

At GITEX, we will be showcasing a host of new data-centric solutions for enterprises at every stage of their lifecycle including:

- The new FlashArray//X product line, the first family of all-flash arrays purpose-built for Shared Accelerated Storage.
- FlashBlade™, the industry's most advanced scale-out storage, architected to accelerate modern workloads and simplify infrastructure.
- ARI(Artificial Intelligence Ready Infrastructure) and ARI Mini, architected by Pure Storage and NVIDIA, are the industry's first integrated

AI-ready infrastructures for deploying deep learning at scale. Built on Pure Storage FlashBlade and NVIDIA DGX-1, and with use cases across genomics, machine learning, AI, IoT and many more, FlashBlade—and now ARI and ARI Mini—power today's most complex workloads and make AI-at-scale simple and accessible for all enterprises.

- FlashStack™, Pure Storage's converged infrastructure (CI) solution developed jointly with Cisco.

? How are your solutions aligning with the GITEX theme – 'Experience Future Urbanism'?

Future urbanism is being fuelled by mega trends like AI and cloud and data is central to enterprises' ability to leverage these technologies. To innovate and survive in a business environment that is increasingly data-driven, organizations must design infrastructure with data in mind and have complete, real-time access to that data.

Unfortunately, today's mainstream solutions were designed for the world of disk and have historically helped create silos of data. This is where I believe we have a competitive advantage and can help enterprises in the across the Middle East maximize value of their data. With our data hub built on Pure Storage FlashBlade™—we've created a central storage system that satisfies current and future application requirements with a modern platform designed to work on our customers' behalf.

? What is your roadmap for the year 2019?

Recently, we announced our vision to modernize storage architecture for unstructured, data-intensive workloads. In line with this vision, as we head in to 2019, our goal is to work closely with our regional partner network to expand our customer base by targeting enterprises for which the ability to harness value of their data is central to business growth. These include cloud and SaaS providers, enterprises in the Global 2000 and businesses with next generation use cases like AI. ➡



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*2017 onsite survey conducted through a third party company

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WITH VOLUME OF DATA INVOLVED IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS, FIRST BIT GIVES THEIR CUSTOMERS GREATER VISIBILITY AND CONTROL ACROSS VARIOUS FUNCTIONS. ENTERPRISE CHANNELS MEA IN A CHAT WITH THE HEAD OF AUTOMATION & SALES DEPARTMENT OF THE COMPANY - EVGENII PODBORSKII.



**EVGENII
PODBORSKII,**
HEAD OF AUTOMATION & SALES
DEPARTMENT, FIRST BIT

? How has First BIT helped customers helped transform their business processes? Mention some of your major successful projects.

First BIT has a complete range of solutions tailored to address the business needs of organizations from SMEs to enterprise. We provide them a tool through a single, integrated solution that allows them to optimize their processes, where they get more done with less (time and expense).

This is done by truly understanding the customers' business needs. Upon analysis of the problem at hand, we follow three guidelines for providing the right solution: (1) simple automation –for less complex business requirement where their process is simply automated from manual to computer generated; (2) consulting –where we give recommendation based on

our experience from previous projects of similar nature; (3) implementation based on strict legislation –automation in full accordance to the local legislation such as VAT.

? Tell us in brief about your solutions and services.

We provide two business solutions –accounting and ERP automation.

In accounting automation, we designed a full cycle accounting software with local users, local legislation, and industry standards in mind. With First BIT Accounting, our customers can automate their VAT calculation based on the UAE law giving them complete audit and tax compliance. Our customers can manage their accounting functions based on IFRS standards ensuring them they are working with a solution with high standard level.

Our ERP automation helps organizations manage their entire business. We offer a full cycle not only of accounting processes, but also that of purchasing, supply chain, inventory & warehouse, data intelligence. Through ERP automation, we try to involve all employees of the organization to work in the same system allowing them to directly share information and communicate with each other with ease.

In terms of services, we closely work with our partners for the implementation of our solutions.

? Customers are looking for ready-made solutions which provide ease of usage and guarantee high levels of security. How are you meeting this demand of the customers?

For First BIT Accounting cloud version, we don't require on-premise installation. We set up everything online and provide our customers easy access to the system. In just half an hour upon confirmation, our customers can start working in the system. While the customers are using the solution, we guarantee they can work effectively provided the trainings conducted with our trusted partners. Our partners conduct customer

evaluation, where we try modify our solution according to first-hand recommendations.

We are proud of our secured cloud infrastructure. We guarantee less susceptibility to data loss even more by creating different back up levels across different servers. All our data is kept in Dubai, which gives customers a more reliable connection for quick data access.

? How is your pre-sales and post-sales support?

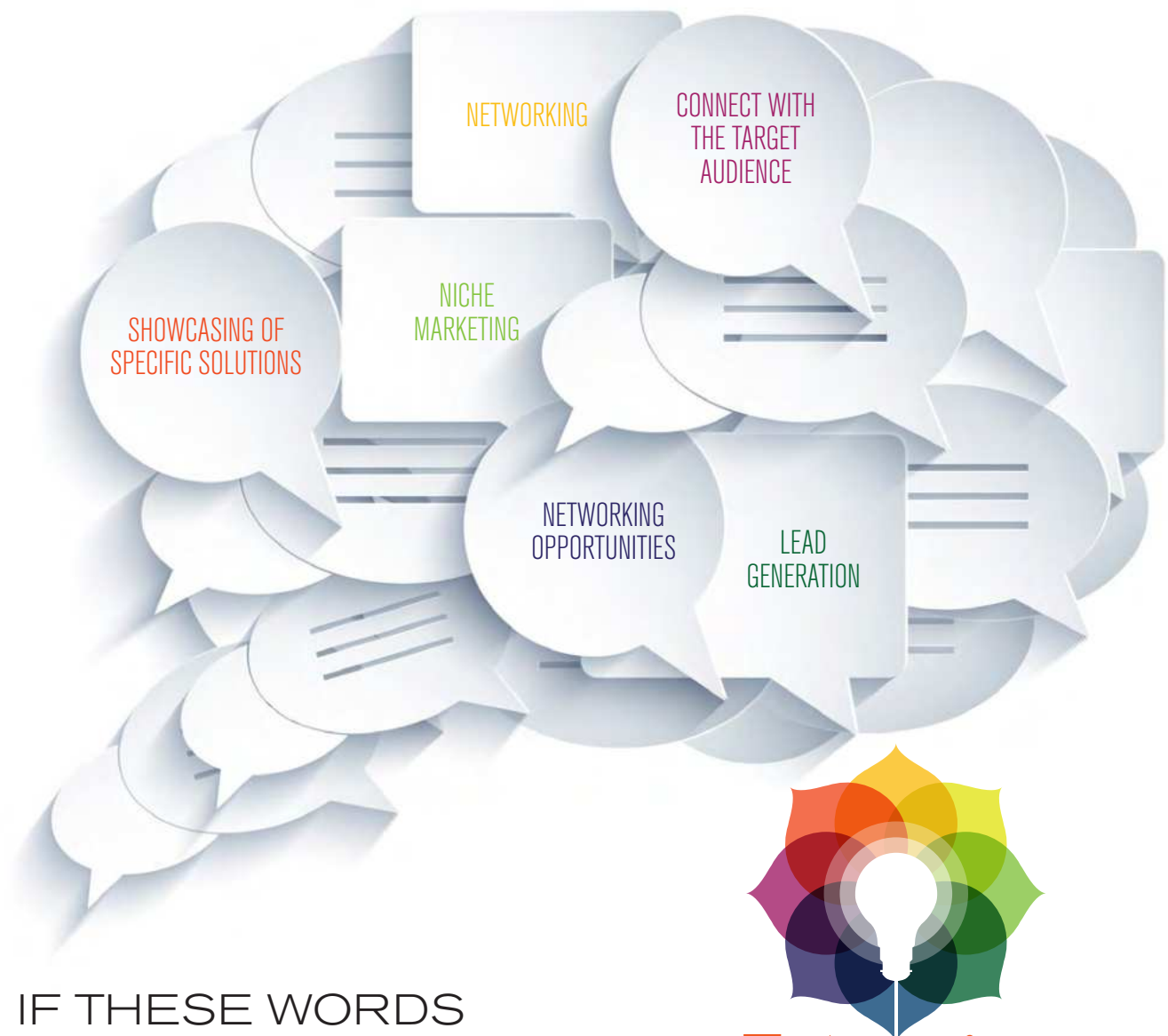
We provide trainings for our partners to ensure that they properly install, implement, and support our customers with the highest level of customer services and support. For more complex projects, we work with our partners in doing pre-sales. In terms of post-sale, we provide first and second lines of support through our partners with their customer hotline and dedicated technical support specialist. In instances where our customers' problems are not solved at these levels, we provide "Vendor Support," where we directly analyze their problem and provide necessary resolution.

? Give us 3 reason why customers should choose First BIT.

We don't try to sell as many licenses as possible, we provide actual solutions. Our approach is to really understand the problems of our customers so we can provide a tailor-fit solution. We don't just do the work for the customer, but we also try to work with the customers.

We know what we do and we know how to do it. We are not a newbie in the field of business automation. First BIT has been operating for more than 20 years now. We are present in more than 5 countries, where we have developed solutions according each of the local market's needs. We created customized solutions for different industries.

We care about what we do. We don't just aim to solve the problems our customers, we aim to make them grow. We are working to achieve the goals aimed at the development and creation of new opportunities for our clients. 🚀



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Over the past few years, the region has seen a tremendous rise in Start-ups, especially in the technology industry. FinTech start-ups are one of the best examples. A significant reason behind the success of those were the willingness of the owners to shun legacy and accept change as the constant. The competition is immense, but for any start-up, it is important to envision the future and plan well in advance for the next ten years.

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

Sky is not the limit” – This phrase connects extremely well with Dubai. The UAE has been at the forefront in adopting new and smart technologies. The country offers an ideal environment for encouraging

businesses with its well-developed infrastructure. According to a report, tech start-ups in the Middle East and North Africa attracted \$ 650 million of funding in 2017 with 76% going to UAE based firms.

AN IDEAL PLATFORM

With its focus on innovation to drive digital transformation in the country, UAE has created the ideal platform for start up companies that bring in innovative tech driven efficiencies and capabilities. One of the examples is the launch of the ‘Maharati’ system, by The Ministry of Health & Prevention. It is a healthcare learning and management system. Apart from strengthening the UAE’s health industry, ‘Maharati’ also seeks to build a smart e-learning system and sustain effective local and global partnerships to keep up with future changes. Biswajit Deva Sharma, Founder of Polymath Technologies believes that there is an excellent ecosystem here for start-ups. “UAE government are one of the biggest proponents of SMEs, there is a great ecosystem of international incubators, also there is a diverse diaspora of people living in UAE – which accelerates the global reach.”

Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chair-



“WE BELIEVE START-UPS MUST CONSTANTLY BE TESTING THEIR IDEAS, ITERATE AND KEEP CUSTOMER INTEREST ALWAYS AT THE FOREFRONT OF EVERYTHING ELSE”

-SHIKHA VARSHNEY,
FOUNDER, POLYMATH
TECHNOLOGIES



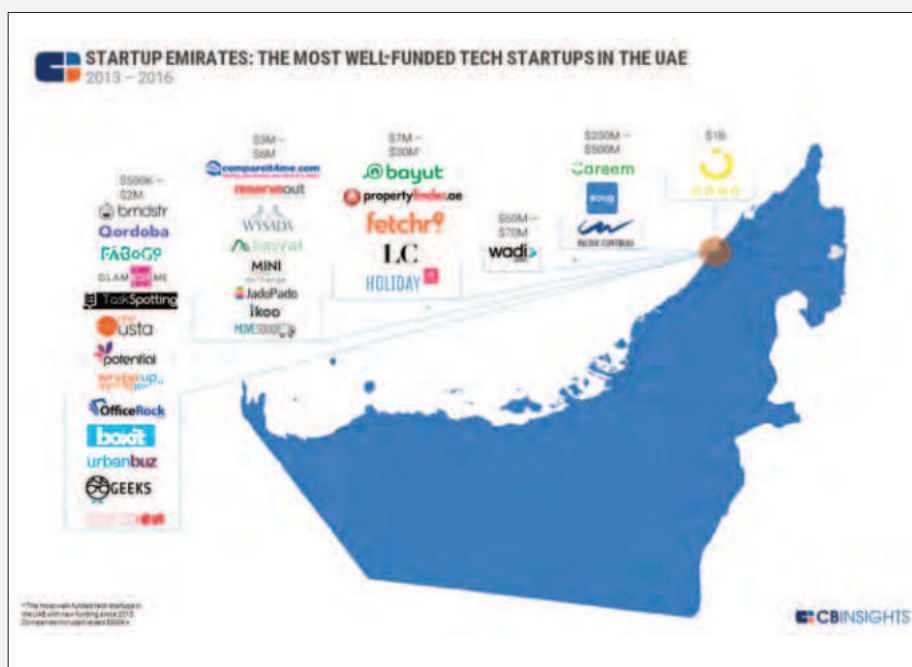
“UAE GOVERNMENT ARE ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROPONENTS OF SMES, THERE IS A GREAT ECOSYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL INCUBATORS, ALSO THERE IS A DIVERSE DIASPORA OF PEOPLE LIVING IN UAE”

-BISWAJIT DEVA SHARMA,
FOUNDER, POLYMATH
TECHNOLOGIES



“INVESTING IN MORE START-UPS CAN FORM THE FOUNDATION OF FUTURE TECH DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION TO EMERGE FROM THE REGION”

-PRABHU RAMACHANDRAN,
FOUNDER & CEO, FACILIO



man of the Dubai Executive Council, said that the UAE has adopted strategies for promoting creativity and enabling enterprise in emerging sectors according to reports. “Dubai and the UAE provide the ideal platform for innovative entrepreneurs and digital start-ups to grow globally,” he said.

Recently, Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) launched a new commercial license framework for technology start-ups across all sectors, wherein eligible enterprises can receive a full operational license at an annual cost of US\$700. ADGM believes that with the new license, emerging tech ventures in the region can enjoy “globally recognized international operating standards” that other ADGM-associated entities currently benefit from, giving the start-ups an ideal environment for growing alongside established

enterprises.

“The UAE has a very evolved digital transformation strategy, and a very aggressive vision for Smart Cities. This is steering all sectors towards adopting technologies like AI & IoT to remain competitive, and in step with this progressive vision. This has greatly helped Facilio, which utilizes IoT and AI to help commercial building portfolios achieve better visibility into and control over facility operations, maintenance, sustainability management, and the tenant experience – all the elements that the country is driving towards,” said Prabhu Ramachandran, Founder and CEO of Facilio.

But starting a business can be exciting as well as daunting and the start-ups would probably come across unexpected challenges. How do they overcome them?

“One of the key issues probably most start-ups face, is to create a constant and sustainable source of revenue and cash. Revenue and cash directly depend on market access. We’ve seen there are a lot of good ideas which couldn’t make mainstream, only because the right market wasn’t aware of this. We believe market access, and an ecosystem around connecting buyers and sellers would potentially be the most important challenge to overcome,” said Shikha Varshney, Founder, Polymath Technologies.

Prabhu puts across the three-pronged approach to overcome the challenges. First is to study the market in minute detail, to identify the exact pain-points of all stakeholders before developing the product. Next is to test, refine, repeat the product with these stakeholders several times, to reach a final solution. And last is to continue to educate the market and industry about the compelling and disruptive benefits of the technology.

The start-ups can play a significant role in changing the business landscape of a nation. They need to be encouraged in the form of funding, robust infrastructure and a supportive ecosystem. For this, the UAE government has created a number of initiatives for the start-up sectors. Investing more in start-ups can form the foundation of future tech driven transformation to emerge from the region. So, if you are planning to invest in a start-up, bring it on! ■

CAPTURING THE EDGE

ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION IS HELPING COMPANIES ACROSS MANY INDUSTRIES, DIGITIZE THEIR OPERATION AND IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE TO COMPETE IN TODAY'S MARKETPLACE. HOZEFA SAYLAWALA, DIRECTOR OF SALES FOR THE COMPANY SHARES MORE INSIGHTS FOR OUR READERS.



HOZEFA SAYLAWALA,

DIRECTOR - SALES, MIDDLE EAST,
ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES

business outcomes

Together with our global ecosystem of partners, Zebra scanners, mobile computers, printers, software, services, analytics and solutions are used to intelligently connect company assets, data and people in collaborative mobile workflows. Zebra offers our customers purpose-driven design for the enterprise and data-powered environments delivered by a solution ecosystem. As a result, businesses can sense what's happening, analyze or anticipate the implication, and make best-action decisions based on real-time guidance.

? What are the various solutions you go to the market with? And how have they leveraged your position in the market?

Zebra Technologies Corporation an innovator at the edge of the enterprise with solutions and partners that enable businesses to gain a performance edge, is helping companies across many industries digitize their operations and improve their performance to stay relevant and compete in today's marketplace.

While innovation began at the core of the enterprise, today it is exploding at "the edge," where employees make real-time decisions and interact directly with the people they serve. With expertise in technology that transforms the way work gets done, Zebra is empowering the front line to be better, faster, and smarter.

? In a sentence, define your organizations prime mission and vision?

As digital technology transforms the edge of the enterprise, Zebra helps companies "capture their edge" by delivering real-time data insight when and where it's needed.

? If you participating in GITEX, what are you planning to showcase this year?

Zebra will showcase its portfolio for the retail, transport, manufacturing and healthcare industries at GITEX 2018 on 14-18 October, stand number A5-15.

Among the solutions that will be on display at GITEX are Zebra SmartPack™ Trailer, a load planning solution providing transportation and logistics customers with real-time operational visibility into their loading operations and Zebra MotionWorks™, the industry's most comprehensive portfolio of business-class location solutions to track and manage assets in real time. Zebra's latest addition to its Android portfolio, the TC25, a new rugged smartphone specifically designed for small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) empowering field mobility workers will be featured, as well as the ET55 tablet and the latest ZQ600 mobile printers designed for high-volume label and receipt printing applications used in the retail, transportation and logistics, and manufacturing industries.

? How has this year been for the company?

Zebra has a rich legacy of guiding enterprises through digital transformation and arming them with the tools they need to succeed. In today's on-demand economy, this means ensuring front-line workers have technology that amplifies their skills, maximizes their productivity and reduces errors. Whether it's improving efficiency on the warehouse floor or delivering a package faster, our solutions enable businesses to 'capture their edge' and drive digital innovation for better

? What does your partner ecosystem look like?

Zebra has a strong partner ecosystem in the region – at GITEX, there will be five dedicated presentation zones including Zebra application partners – Scan Technology L.L.C., Sygic, Ivanti, CUBES International and Decode- demonstrating how digital technology transforms the edge of the enterprise, along with Zebra distributors - Ingram Micro, Jarltech and Westcon Middle East.

? How are your solutions aligning with the GITEX theme – 'Experience Future Urbanism'?

Zebra's latest addition to its Android portfolio, the TC25, a new rugged smartphone specifically designed for small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) empowering field mobility workers will be featured, as well as the ET55 tablet and the latest ZQ600 mobile printers designed for high-volume label and receipt printing applications used in the retail, transportation and logistics, and manufacturing industries. ➔



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EVOLVING WITH THE CHANNEL FROM TRANSACTION TO VALUE



In this market, it is best to be with someone who can lead you to success by providing all that you need. So, channel partners are the ones you need to zero in on.

■ BY: C V ARYA DEVI ■ PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

The market is ruled by channel partners, because they know best," is a common statement in the industry. Once was a time when a vendor used to come out with a product/ solution and they themselves will market the same. Time has changed, so has the approach. There are plenty of firms who now only goes with channel only approach. Smart people does that. Why? Because channels know the market best and has the maximum reach.

The market is battleground with lots of competition. So when someone enters into a war, does that person want a wish of good luck and a pat on the back? NO. They want weapons, tools and tactics to tackle the battleground. This is exactly what channel partnerships provide.

It is commonly said that today's technology will be an ancient history tomorrow. With changing technology comes new customer needs. It is important for companies to enhance operations to focus on competitive advantages and be effective towards addressing customers' needs.

The market and heavy cash flows are present in the B2B market and not in the B2C ones. Across this industry, the purchases and mode of purchasing are changing and fast. Across this digital era, B2B organisations are looking for channel partners who can improve direct customer buying experience, as it is quite impractical to reach everyone and innovate at the same time.

Once was a time in the B2B market that the manufacturers did the marketing and the partners did the selling. But that time has faded away.

Now B2B companies are looking to have an omnichannel, ecosystem-based sales model. This is a method that is said to ensure consistency and transparency across all channels. This is important to those vendors who work with multiple channels so as to not have any disputes. This will also encourage channel partners to execute their own sales strategies, which was not so common before.

Even when vendors are investing in partners, keep an eye that the present trend is in investing on small number of capable partners. Before, many of the indirect sales done by vendors revolved around deploying value added resellers (VARs), distributors or other resellers to deliver and install on-premise solutions at the end-customers end. ➡

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[illegible]

It's time for a change. Let's take a look at some of these bad habits, and how they can be broken.

The first bad habit involves agents performing work that doesn't make sense. Consider that much of a contact center's work volume is consumed by common, repeated customer requests. These types of inquiries are ripe for answers delivered via self-service. Self-service can take many forms—knowledge base articles, automated solutions, chatbots, and online communities are all examples. Customers can help themselves and reduce or even eliminate the need for agents to address those issues.

IGNORING THE ROOT CAUSE

Consider the example of a customer calling for information about a product or service. Let's assume it's because usage instructions in the product manual are unclear: perhaps they are poorly written or have entirely omitted a step. While this is a fairly easy issue to address with self-service—as updated information in a knowledge base article or making an updated manual in PDF format available for download—it's still not convenient for customers.

- Future calls, chats, emails and other live assistance is eliminated, resulting in cost savings.
- The customer experience improves because customers no longer encounter this roadblock.

The last habit to break might be hardest. It is breaking from the reactive mode of customer service—waiting for customers to contact you

There are three phases to proactive service:

- The key to all this is keeping customers informed. Sharing information with customers during these phases can take many forms. Customers can be kept notified via email. A recorded message might be played in the telephone queue. A pop-up message could be shown on the customer service website. An in-app notification could be presented. Consider what channels make sense for your customers and communicate accordingly.

If your customer service is like others, it's not alone in suffering from all three of these bad habits. Start with addressing the common problems through self-service and automation. From there, move on to working with teams across your company to address the root cause of issues. Delivering proactive solutions becomes faster and easier when customer service is working beyond its walls to fix problems. In the end, when you have overcome these bad habits, you will find that not only has your overall customer service improved but your customer experience has as well.



Your Data. Multiple Clouds. One 360 Approach.

Data Visibility

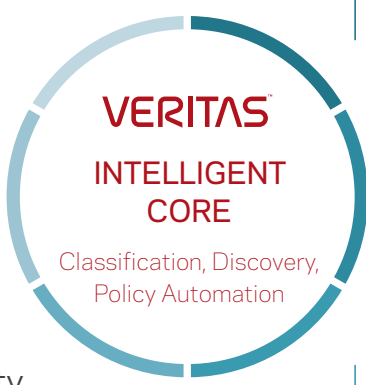
Gain granular understanding of the entire unstructured data landscape.

Data Protection

Ensure data recoverability for any workload; enable self-service access to virtual data copies.

Compliance Readiness

Prove regulatory compliance, automate archiving and respond to eDiscovery matters.



VERITAS[®] INTELLIGENT CORE

Classification, Discovery,
Policy Automation

Data/Workload Portability

Ensure freedom of data/workload movement and migration across locations and platforms.

Business Continuity

Minimize interruptions with one-click failover to any environment.

Storage Optimization

Boost performance, scalability and availability across any storage while dramatically reducing cost.

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FREEDOM OF COMMUNICATION

WITH COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS, DVCOM IS WELL POSITIONED TO CONTINUE DOMINATING IN THE OPEN SOURCE, UC AND COLLABORATIONS, CALL CENTRE AND SECURITY SEGMENTS, SAYS RENJAN GEORGE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, DVCOM TECHNOLOGY



RENJAN GEORGE,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, DVCOM
TECHNOLOGY

? What are the solutions or qualities that separate you from your competition? In what areas does your organization perform exceptionally?

DVCOM Technology is a specialist VAD in the Middle East that represents some of the most dynamic ICT vendors and solutions offerings in unified communications, networking, physical security and audio-visual conferencing solutions. As a VAD of products and solutions from vendors namely Yealink, DrayTek, Yeastar, Milesight, 2N, Loway, XCALLY, and Cyberdata we are uniquely positioned to serve the Middle East channel market.

? What are you planning to showcase at GITEX this year? Tell us about your partnerships.

This year we have planned to exhibit more solutions to our visitors especially in the managed service space. We will be demoing a network management platform that can monitor an organisations network, servers and applications in a secure and reliable way.

Our new SD-WAN solutions will also be on display as digital transformation warrants seamless connectivity of any user to the network infrastructure.

We are pioneers in the Open Source Communication solutions and we will showcase a host of solutions in this space. Namely, INTACT based Multi-Tenant Solution, Debt Collection Solution, Outbound Calling solution, Call Centre Platform and others.

We will launch collaboration solutions from our latest Vendor, Newline Interactive. TRU TOUCH series collaboration displays, the VN Series and the new X Series, highlighting the 4K UHD panel, optical bonding technology, and the most importantly its In-Glass touch technology that provide an amazing visual experience and touch sensitivity all packed in a slim and elegant design.

In addition to S-series PBX, Yeastar will demonstrate its robust centralized platform for Remote management and configuration of customer-premises PBXs.

DrayTek will exhibit its latest product lines including dual band router, LTE router, access point and switch. The highlight will be VigorACS 2, a powerful centralized management software for configuring, monitoring, and maintenance of multiple Vigor devices from a single portal.

Yealink a global provider of enterprise communication and collaboration solutions will showcase its Video and Voice Communication solutions. In addition to VC500 and VC800 for medium to large meeting rooms, Yealink will also display the New Huddle Room VC Solution, the VC200, to Bring More Flexibility to One-Stop Video Conferencing. Yealink T5 Smart

Android Phones, T4S series and enterprise-grade conference phone CP960 will be the eye-catching device for all our customer and visitors.

XCALLY team will be available for live presentation of their Omnichannel solution for Inbound, Outbound and Blended Contact Centres, with ATI API for integrations, WebRTC, Drag and Drop Asterisk IVR and more.

Loway, a swiss based provider of call center queue reporting and dialling solutions for Asterisk will showcase their contact center solutions.

? Since how long are you participating at GITEX? What do you plan to take away from the show this year?

For us as DVCOM, GITEX is an important platform not only because it brings us together with our vendor and channel partners to interact, but it's the perfect avenue, where the entire Middle East IT industry engages, exchanges ideas and innovation, and finds solutions to some of the challenges the region is facing. We have been participating at GITEX for over ten years.

Essentially, the main motivation is to offer our channel partners a platform where they can bring their end user clients to experience the solutions we supply in the market hands-on. This year, we have a full packed line up of partner and end user client meetings as we will be launching a few new products from our vendor partners.

? What were your company's milestones in 2018?

Although business has been slow in the Middle East IT market, DVCOM was able to maintain steady graph of business despite the challenging market conditions. We will utilise our participation at GITEX Technology Week 2018, to cement our alliances with vendors and channel partners, build better relationships with end user customers to help our reseller partners to close deals and create more brand awareness about the new vendors we have brought on board and how DVCOM is going to help these vendors to strengthen their regional presence in the Middle East. ➡



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Autonomous IT - Helping businesses realise their dreams



■ ABDUL RAHMAN AL THEHAIBAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AT ORACLE MIDDLE EAST

When you make a telephone call, you probably don't think about the networks that carry it. You just make the call and expect to be put through. In the app world, it's a very different situation.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of apps in use today that let you communicate with other users, but very few let you send messages to users of other apps. That's the current nature of the beast, and app developers are apt to build silos to retain their users within their ecosystem.

At their core, all of these apps are built on the same digital foundations, so the problem of interconnectivity is not unsolvable. But the effort required to connect them together has meant that no one has made significant strides towards doing so.

UNTIL NOW.

Start-up company, Virtual Artifacts (VA), has just launched its Hibe Mobile Application Network (Hibe), powered by Oracle's new autonomous cloud services.

Hibe creates a platform into which developers connect their apps. From there they can network and grow their own connections with other apps in the same way as you would friend users on social network. The result is that their end users can then communicate with their peers on different apps.

Oracle's autonomous technology is helping make this vision possible. And it's not just startups that are seeing the ben-

efits. Autonomous technology is enabling other businesses to bring new initiatives to market much faster than ever before.

And the specialist sports data firm QLX is using Oracle's autonomous data technology to help it bring critical ticketing, point-of-sale and merchandising data into its systems faster, more reliably, and more securely. That means that data can be more readily used to create great experiences for sports fans.

At Virtual Artifacts, chief operating officer Stephane Lamoureux says autonomous technology is enabling his team to shift its focus from the backend of the platform to building out functionality at scale.

"What this does is give me the ability to properly grow on a global basis," Lamoureux says. "Autonomous technology is enabling our team to shift its focus from the backend of the platform to building out functionality. ... We can put more people in the front end focusing on product, knowing that 80 per cent of our operations will be well managed and automated in the background by Oracle.

What this does is give us the ability to properly grow on a global basis and also move our products much faster without having to worry about a backend infrastructure."

Virtual Artifacts is also using Oracle technology to support its AI-driven privacy engine, which is at the core of the Hibe platform, giving users control of what happens to their data, including things like what advertising they can be shown.

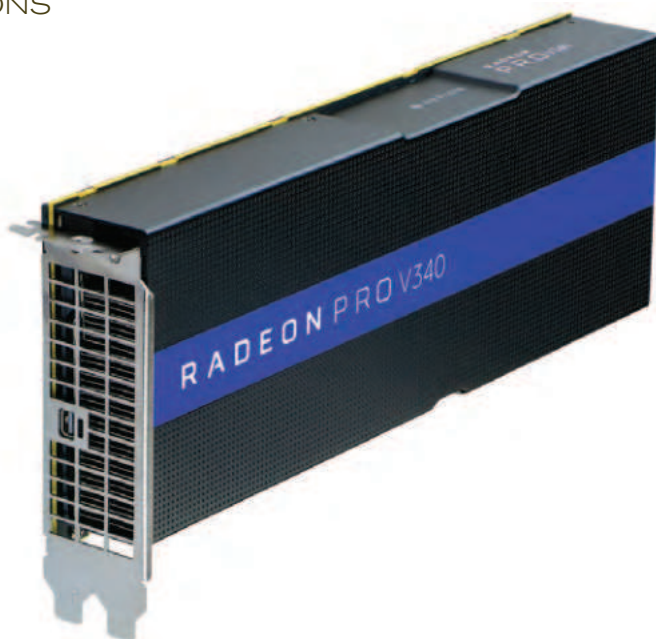
Autonomous technology is being used to ease the management and backup of data. This enables Virtual Artifacts to handle massive leaps in workload as each new app is connected, and bring hundreds of thousands or even millions of new users on to the platform.

Autonomous technology will bring greater security and reliability to the platform, including automated security analytics to provide real time insight into what is happening on the platform globally.

"All of this stuff will be automated," Lamoureux says.

But most importantly, autonomous technology is enabling Lamoureux and his team to realise their dream of a fully-connected app world more quickly.

"The ease of management in the backend will give us the ability to spin out new products much faster, and we can be a lot more agile with what the users are coming back with." 🔥



RADEON PRO V340 GRAPHICS CARD

AMD launched the Radeon Pro V340 graphics card, a high-performance dual-GPU Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) solution purpose-built to power and accelerate the most demanding datacenter visualization workloads, including CAD, design, Desktop as a Service (DaaS) and rendering.

The AMD Radeon Pro V340 graphics card is a dual-GPU solution based on the advanced AMD "Vega" architecture, optimized to deliver extreme performance and high user density for virtualized environments. It is the first VDI hardware solution equipped with 32GB of ultra-fast, second-generation high-bandwidth memory, providing massive amounts of memory and bandwidth for today's most complex design and media workloads. The AMD Radeon Pro V340 graphics card is enabled by AMD MxGPU Technology, the industry's only hardware-based GPU virtualization solution, which is based on the industry-standard SR-IOV (Single Root I/O Virtualization) technology. Combining software and hardware technologies that deliver virtualized graphics for the modern cloud, AMD MxGPU delivers fast, stable and predictable performance with the industry's highest user density, without requiring recurring end-user license fees.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Supports up to 32 1GB virtual machines
- Up to 33 percent more than the other solution
- The ability to compress independent video streams in both H.264 and H.265 formats
- Provides design and manufacturing users with the video quality
- Empowers IT managers to eliminate CPU bottlenecks
- HBM2 memory with Error Correcting Code (ECC)
- Better power efficiency than other solutions
- Allows fast paging apps to run incredibly fast
- Provides secure boot and encrypted storage capabilities



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ALARIS S2040 SCANNER

Alaris is expanding its S2000 Scanner line with the addition of the Alaris S2040 Scanner. It is built to let anyone capture information anywhere, with superior image quality and data accuracy

The new 40 page-per-minute device delivers all the embedded image processing power of the S2050 and S2070 Scanners at a lower price point for customers who want a more affordable option. The Alaris S2040 Scanner offers fast and reliable scanning, versatile media handling, and intelligent, automated features to simplify scanning and optimise business processes.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- Embedded Image Processing delivers crisp, high-quality images
- Active Feed technology perfectly aligns pages to avoid misfeeds and multifeeds.
- Perfect Page optimizes image quality on every page
- Supports the Alaris Passport Accessory and the Integrated A4/Legal Size Flatbed Accessory.





V3 Cockpit Smart VTM and V3 Mobility

Emerico showcasing its suite of advanced digital solutions including the V3 Cockpit Smart VTM and V3 Mobility. The V3 Cockpit Smart VTM combines traditional ATM features such as cash withdrawal and deposits with over-the-counter services such as loan applications, opening of bank accounts, and instant cheque and credit/debit card issuance.

The V3 Mobility with iPad connects and engage with customers anywhere in the world. Bringing services and acquiring customers on-the-go, it offers state-of-the-art EMV (Europay, MasterCard and Visa) compatibility for easier payments and transactions with built-in encryption technology.

Emerico is also highlighting its line of Mobile solutions with the launch of the Windows and iOS tablet with integrated payment, Emirates Identity Authority Card (EIDA) and fingerprint verification. It will also be equipped with Mobile Device Management (MDM), and security features (PCI-DSS) that enable easy integration with any payment gateway.

KEY CAPABILITIES

V3 SMART VTM WITH IPAD

- Video Conference
- Signature Secure Authentication
- EMV Payment
- Biometric (Iris, Facial, Fingerprint)
- Cheque Printing
- Instant Card Issuance (EMV/Non-EMV)
- Document Scanning (Passport, ID Card, etc)
- Remote Dual Screen Control
- OCR Reading (MRZ, 1D, 2D)
- Cash Transactions

V3 MOBILITY WITH IPAD

- EMV Pinpad & Contact/Contactless Smart Card Reader
- Fingerprint Scanner
- 1D/2D Passport MRZ Scanner
- Thermal Receipt Scanner



Altronix eBridge 16 port Ethernet

Altronix is showcasing the new eBridge1600F 16-port PoE receiver with integral PoE switch at GSX 2018. The new and innovative eBridge1600F power and transmission solution further bridges the infrastructure gap by integrating coax, Ethernet and fiber along with PoE eliminating the cost and labor associated with installing new network cabling.

Altronix eBridge1600F is an all-in-one, head-end solution for upgrading coax to IP that combines a PoE+ switch and EoC Receiver into a single integrated unit. It features 16 Ethernet ports rated at 100Mbps (full duplex up to 300m without repeaters) with 30W full power per port (500W total power), one 1Gb SFP (fiber port), and two 1Gb Ethernet uplinks. Additional features include a built-in battery charger, and embedded LINQ Technology to monitor, control and report power/diagnostics from anywhere over the network connection.

KEY CAPABILITIES

- PoE+ switch and EoC Receiver combined into a single integrated unit
- Ports rated at 100Mbps
- Full duplex up to 300m without repeaters
- 30W full power per port
- 500W total power
- 1Gb SFP
- Two 1Gb Ethernet uplinks
- Built-in battery charger
- Embedded LINQ Technology to monitor, control and report power/diagnostics from anywhere

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