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ONE STEP BEYOND

COP28 finally led to the decision to move away from fossil fuels – but AI has emerged as the key technology in building a better world for the ‘greater good’.

ORANGE BUSINESS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

DELL TECHNOLOGIES
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

VMWARE
VICE PRESIDENT



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**Generative AI
looks set to be
a key driver for
further innovation
in 2024, but such
is evolving nature
of the technology
industry, another
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stage at any time."**

EDITORIAL

TIME FOR CHANGE

December has arrived, and so to has the final edition of CNME for 2023.

It's been another incredible year for the IT and technology ecosystem across the Middle East region.

Investment in the region in terms of technology continues to grow exponentially year-on-year, and that has primarily been driven by a 'digital first' approach that is being pursued by countries all over the Gulf region.

From a global perspective in 2023, a major shift in the technology landscape has undoubtedly been the introduction of Generative AI.

Fuelled by the introduction of ChatGPT by OpenAI, we have seen a plethora of Generative AI applications enter the mainstream over the last 12 months.

In February, Microsoft launched its Microsoft Copilot and Bing AI Chat, and other technology leaders have followed suit, and are now looking at ways in which they can incorporate and implement Generative AI into their solutions, products and applications.

Generative AI looks set to be a key driver for further innovation in 2024, but such is evolving nature of the technology industry, another new concept could emerge and take centre stage at any time.

The front cover of December's edition of CNME is dedicated to the role played by AI and other technologies in terms of combating climate change.

COP28, which was held in Dubai earlier this month was a resounding success following the decision to transition away from fossil fuels after 28 years of climate negotiations.

The focus of our front cover story was the announcement made by World Wide Technology (WWT) during the COP28 summit. It's AI for the Greater Good program has been designed to help climate tech entrepreneurs solve our world's greatest challenges.

In addition to this, the organisation is also leveraging AI to tackle child hunger and food security.

As always, there is a number of excellent interviews in December's magazine, and two of those that stand out are with Dell Technologies and Orange Business.

CNME spoke to John Byrne, President of Dell's sales operations, and industry veteran Mohammed Amin to learn how the global technology leaders plan to capitalise on the burgeoning opportunities that are emerging in the Generative AI space.

Byrne has been with Dell for the last eight years, and said that company has an unwavering commitment to impacting human life through technology.

Anas Naim was appointed as the new Managing Director for Orange Business across the MEA region back in April.

Orange Business have enjoyed huge success in the smart cities space in the Middle East over the last number of years, and that was further evidenced by their new agreement with the King Abdullah Financial District (KAJD) - which Naim described as one of the most iconic real estate projects in the world.

Naim also said how the advent of Gen AI had led to a third wave of smart cities known to industry leaders as 'cognitive cities'.

There are also excellent interviews with HPE and eHDF, Zoom and VMware and some excellent prediction insights from a whole host of technology leaders.

CPI Media Group would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank ALL our clients and partners for their support in 2023.

We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

We look forward to working with you again in 2024. 🍀

Mark Forker
Editor

Solar Powered Camera

No network cable required

Powered by solar energy, this kit sets up without any electrical wiring.

Easy installation

Easy set up without mechanical equipment-reducing the installation costs and time.

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PROVEN Solution to reshape business landscape with innovative AR offerings

PROVEN Solution, a leading enterprise focused on innovative technological solutions in AI, robotics, and AR/VR, has announced its plans to strengthen their Augmented Reality (AR) offerings, demonstrating ongoing advancements and technological breakthroughs.

PROVEN Solution has been strategically observing the expanding capabilities of AR, recognizing its potential to revolutionize products and customer projects.

Over the past year, the company has intensively evaluated AR's escalating potential, particularly propelled by recent hardware advancements, making it increasingly market adaptable.

"AR represents an unprecedented opportunity for us and our strategy involves a dual approach," says Pavel Makarevich, VP of PROVEN Solution. "We are committed to developing our proprietary AR products while tailoring customized applications for our clientele. We envision a landscape where a fusion of virtual and physical elements not only enhances knowledge acquisition but also provides a hands-on, interactive experience across diverse sectors such as education, healthcare, and training."



Above and 'Beyon' – New Money SuperApp launched in the UAE

Beyon Money, part of Beyon Group, is launching the Beyon Money SuperApp in the UAE, taking its innovative customer-focused financial services outside of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in line with the company's ambitious regional expansion plans.

With unique financial services, Beyon Money will enable UAE customers to access a range of financial solutions with exceptional digital offerings in the UAE market.

Beyon Money will launch its Personal Financial Management services enabling customers to link their UAE bank accounts in the App, view all their transactions in one place, and access financial insights to observe their spending habits.



Roberto Mancone, CEO of Beyon Money stated, "We have been sharply focussed on expanding regionally and are thrilled to announce the launch of Beyon Money for the UAE market. This is a major step forward for Beyon Money and a key milestone in our strategic plans."

Omnix International launches new Generative Conversational AI solution

Omnix International, an end-to-end digital solutions and services pioneer, introduces an innovative Generative Conversational AI solution, a cutting-edge AI-driven technology that integrates both Conversational AI and Generative AI.

The solution utilizes AI, machine learning (ML), and Natural Language Processing (NLP), enabling it to increase operational efficiency and lays the groundwork for a future where intelligent systems autonomously can evolve and innovate.

Conversational AI is developed on a no-code authoring platform that enables bi-directional communication between humans and applications through a native connector. It comes with robust training tools and learning mechanisms, which continuously improve the performance and knowledge of virtual assistants.

Additionally, it is equipped with advanced capabilities that enable it to differentiate intent, extract context, and



acknowledge sentiment, providing an elevated conversational experience.

Conversational AI further excels in knowledge, vision, search, and voice processing. These features enable intelligent recommendations, semantic searches, image recognition with remarkable accuracy rates, and voice-based verifications.

AmiViz forges strategic alliance with Threatcop

AmiViz, the Middle East region's first enterprise B2B marketplace for cybersecurity, has announced its strategic partnership with Threatcop, a pioneer in People Security Management Category.

Threatcop products and solutions will now be available in the AmiViz B2B marketplace to resellers from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and Egypt, among others in the region through the AmiViz online portal or AmiViz mobile app.

As cyber threats continue to evolve and become more sophisticated,

organizations worldwide are increasingly recognizing the need for comprehensive security measures.

Threatcop has been at the forefront of addressing these challenges, offering



state-of-the-art solutions designed to protect businesses from internal and external threats. By pioneering the comprehensive People Security Management (PSM) and the exclusive AAPE Framework,

Threatcop is committed to shaping a future where human behaviour is a cornerstone of robust cybersecurity.

Threatcop believes this framework empowers organizations to achieve proactive defence, enhance employee awareness, and build a resilient security posture against modern cyber threats.

World Wide Technology and VAST Data appoint Omar Mir as Senior Advisor

World Wide Technology (WWT), one of the world's largest privately held technology innovation companies and VAST Data, the data platform company for the AI era, have announced that Omar Mir, WWT President, has been appointed as Senior Advisor for VAST Data EMEA.

With significant subject matter expertise in AI and a deep understanding of the EMEA market, Omar brings a wealth of knowledge that aligns perfectly with VAST Data's



commitment to driving innovation in the newly started AI era.

Omar is a tech industry veteran with decades of international experience and has served in his role with WWT for nearly nine years, driving customer

strategy in 5G, AI, cybersecurity, networking and more.

In his role as Senior Advisor, Omar will drive VAST Data forward to further disrupt the AI landscape globally, explore new markets and leverage his insights to propel the company to the forefront of the AI era.

The move will also enable WWT and VAST Data to expand their ongoing global partnership by combining VAST's AI infrastructure excellence with WWT's world-leading AI enablement and acceleration capabilities including in WWT's Advanced Technology Center (ATC), one of the world's largest multi-OEM technology R&D labs.

Fintech start-up gets Fundbot raises \$1.5m from Abu-Dhabi led consortium

Fundbot, a FinTech startup that automates corporate lending and payments between banks, buyers, and sellers, announced today that it has raised a US\$1.5 million seed-funding round led by MENA based VC Hambro Perks Oryx Fund

The company targets significant expansion in the MENA region, initially in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and later into Oman, Bahrain and Egypt.

Created to address cash flow problems for start-ups, Fundbot



offers a fully automated, end-to-end embedded solution that enhances the efficiency of supply chain finance and helps banks, FinTechs, and B2B marketplaces embed, and rapidly launch financial services.

"We are thrilled to have the support of these seasoned investors whose role goes beyond capital infusion to facilitating introductions to potential partners and clients, which contributes significantly to our scalability and market connectivity," said Fundbot CEO, Karl Abou Zeid. "The region is home to 19 million SMEs, three quarters of which are suffering from delayed payments, amounting to a regional cashflow gap of US\$250 billion. Fundbot's embedded supply-chain financing solution can support both large and small enterprises and contribute to sustained economic growth throughout the region."

Dell to launch new UltraSharp and video conferencing monitors for unparalleled productivity

Made for professionals working from the office or home, Dell is introducing the world's first five-star certified monitors for eye comfort¹ – the Dell UltraSharp 27 Thunderbolt™ Hub Monitor (U2724DE) and Dell UltraSharp 27 Monitor (U2724D).

This is a brand-new industry standard for eye comfort developed by TÜV Rheinland®, one of the world's leading professional and independent testing service providers. Dell is the first in the market to introduce monitors with this highest 5-star rating certification.

These monitors offer enhanced visual comfort features to help users reduce eye strain, including:

- Doubling the current Dell UltraSharp monitors' refresh rate to a fast 120Hz refresh rate to deliver smoother and sharper motion visuals²
- Improved ComfortView Plus that brings a significant reduction in

harmful blue light exposures, from previous generation of up to 50 percent exposure to now less than 35 percent exposure

- Built-in Ambient Light Sensor that detects ambient lighting condition and automatically adjusts screen brightness and color tone setting

These new features are important because a recent study showed that a monitor which adjusts its brightness under different ambient light levels can reduce the frequency of eye fatigue signs by 7 to 17 percent³.



Ericsson and AT&T strategic agreement to pioneer networks of the future

Ericsson and AT&T are collaborating in an industry-defining roughly USD 14 billion five-year network transformation and digitalisation strategic agreement to pioneer the path to programmable and intelligent networks of the future.

The deal is the largest financially in Ericsson's history. Ericsson will deploy a wide range of Ericsson 5G Open Radio Access Networks products and solutions to support AT&T's nationwide Open RAN ambitions in the U.S.

The company will build a 5G network platform for AT&T, utilising cloud-native technologies built on O-RAN standardized interfaces – with industry scale, cost efficiency, sustainability and high performance top of mind. Through time AT&T and Ericsson will transform this to a cloud-native open network.

UAE-based tech start-up Seez set to expand to new markets in Europe

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

solutions provider Seez, is embarking on an expansive growth strategy after completing a bridge funding round.

Having secured customers for its suite of AI-driven products in a first wave of markets – Denmark, Italy, and across the Middle East – the Dubai-based tech start-up is now aiming to launch in multiple new markets in Europe.

The company has harnessed the experience and expertise gained in developing a highly successful consumer-facing car sales marketplace to launch powerful digital retail solutions for car dealers, importers and manufacturers' sales operations.

The fresh investment will also sustain rapid development of an expanding range of advanced AI-powered solutions.

Originally launched as an online vehicle marketplace, the latest bridge round supported Seez to pivot to developing and packaging digital solutions that enables automotive retailers to embrace and profit from new trends in car buyer behaviour.



Microsoft and ADIO reinforce commitment to innovation and sustainability



Microsoft and the Abu Dhabi

Investment Office (ADIO) brought 10 impactful sustainability and climate tech startups to COP28 to showcase how their innovative solutions are tackling the most pressing challenges resulting from climate change.

Hailing from the UAE, USA, UK, Greece, Spain, India, Finland, and South Korea, the startups are part of the 4th Cohort of the GrowthX Accelerator program, which was launched in 2021 as part of an ongoing collaboration between the ADIO and Microsoft to empower growth-stage B2B startups ranging primarily from the Seed to Series A stages.

Massimo Falcioni, Chief Competitiveness Officer at ADIO, said: "The UAE government's forward-thinking vision has demonstrated the urgent need for collaboration in facing the challenges of climate change. Through the GrowthX Accelerator program, we are committed to supporting the UAE's climate action goals and showcasing the exceptional creativity of Abu Dhabi's startup ecosystem. The innovative solutions that they have developed and showcased exemplify the growing impact of entrepreneurs in solving global challenges and delivering real impact".

The startups, Tomorrow IO, Mitiga Solutions, SEaB Power, Agritrack, Satavia, Nearthlab, Takachar, Cleantech Hub Grounds, Tespak, and Sustainable

Planet, were selected from a pool of over 300 applicants with a shared commitment towards sustainability and climate missions.

As part of the GrowthX Accelerator: COP28 Edition, they received invaluable mentorship opportunities and resources from multiple industry experts, experienced entrepreneurs, business leaders and investors over a period of eight weeks to help them successfully scale their businesses and realize ideas that drive positive climate impact.

Naim Yazbeck, General Manager, Microsoft UAE, praised the inspiring work of the startups and congratulated them on graduating from the GrowthX Accelerator program.

"The startups that we welcomed for the GrowthX Accelerator: COP28 Edition demonstrated an admirable commitment to addressing some of the most pressing challenges that communities around the world are facing because of climate change. We are proud to have joined forces with ADIO to establish a robust ecosystem

that provides them with enhanced access to resourcing, networking, and the mentorship opportunities they need to drive impactful solutions that will lead us to a brighter and more sustainable future".

The 10 startups in the 4th Cohort of this year's GrowthX Accelerator program showcased innovative solutions in aviation, climate data, waste management, agriculture, and aquaculture, as well as solutions to tackle extreme pollution and limited energy supply in underserved communities in the Global South.

The program concluded with an in-person Demo Day on December 6, 2023, at the DP World Pavilion in Expo City at COP28, where each startup had the opportunity to pitch their solutions to a distinguished audience that included government officials, investors, business leaders, as well as representatives from both Microsoft and ADIO.

In addition, two startups, Agritrack and SEaB Energy, were given the opportunity to showcase their sustainability and climate solutions at the COP28 Startup Village in their very own dedicated kiosk space.

The success of the GrowthX Accelerator program underscores the unwavering commitment of Microsoft and the Abu Dhabi Investment Office to nurturing the UAE's startup ecosystem and empowering the next generation of innovators to tackle real challenges facing organisations and communities.

This dedication aligns seamlessly with the visionary leadership of the UAE, which is firmly committed to elevating the UAE's position as one of the world's most dynamic and promising start-up hubs.

"The startups that we welcomed for the GrowthX Accelerator: COP28 Edition demonstrated an admirable commitment to addressing some of the most pressing challenges that communities around the world are facing because of climate change".

HPE GREENLAKE

A GREATER CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

CNME spoke to senior executives from eHosting Data Fort to find out how the implementation of **HPE GreenLake** has empowered them to deliver better services for their customers in terms of enhanced flexibility, autonomy, scalability, cost and capacity.

Over the last number of years it has become very evident that in order to succeed in the new digital economy, it is imperative for enterprises to be both agile and dynamic.

eHosting Data Fort have established themselves as a leading managed services

provider since their inception in 2001.

However, they were increasingly encountering challenges due to the 'dynamic' demands of their customers in a constantly evolving marketplace.

eHosting Data Fort were on the hunt for a cloud platform that could take them and their

customers to the next level.

The cloud platform they selected was HPE GreenLake.

Before speaking to Vinu George and Antoine Francis from eHosting Data Fort on the impact HPE GreenLake has had for their organization – CNME spoke to Kshitij Saxena GreenLake Channel Sales Lead, Middle East &



Africa at HPE, to find out what makes their platform so different.

According to Saxena, one of the many key features of HPE GreenLake is the scalability and flexibility it gives to users.

HPE GreenLake is a cloud platform that offers a range of services from compute storage to database, analytics and much more. It offers our

customers all of these services on-prem with the scalability and agility of the cloud, and the pay-per-use flexibility that the cloud offers. In addition to this, we provide the compliance and security of having it all on-prem inside their datacentre under their control.

Saxena added that currently HPE GreenLake has more than 72+ services that go across the entire IT landscape of their customers, from the basics of high-performance computing

as-a-service, big data as-a-service, AI, Edge and IoT, with all of these are offered to our customers on-prem.

“Our customers are given the autonomy to choose which landscape and technology they would like to pursue in his datacentre, and they can enlist the help of HPE to help them make the right decision in terms of whether it should be a performance optimized set-up, or a cost optimized set-up, but the choice of technology is with the customer. It offers everything that a public cloud typically offers, in terms of scalability, flexibility, and pay-per-use on-premises inside their



Vinu George



Antoine Francis



Kshitij Saxena



datacentre and under their control,” said Saxena.

Vinu George, Senior Sales Manager at eHosting DataFort gave a brief overview of the company, and highlighted how their service offerings had evolved over time, with a particular focus on infrastructure as-a-service.

“eHosting DataFort is the first commercial datacentre in the region. We started our business as a co-location datacentre provider, and started out by providing infrastructure as-a-service and managed services. However, we evolved our offerings to provide additional services such as managed security services, and other cutting-edge solutions and products. However, the core business is now geared towards focusing on infrastructure as-a-service,” said George.

Antoine Francis, Sales Manager at eHosting DataFort explained the challenges facing the company and

the factors that led to them adopting HPE GreenLake.

“From our perspective as a service provider, we faced many challenges in terms of effectively managing our datacentres. We operate in a complex environment, one that consists of different stacks of technology that we use to deliver to our customers – and the second component is related to the service that we deliver for our customers. When we examined these challenges, and looked at the evolving market trends it was clearly indicative that businesses were looking for more agility and the ability to go to market faster. We decided that in order to combat these challenges we had to partner with the best in the market, and that’s why we chose HPE

GreenLake,” said Francis.

According to Francis, HPE GreenLake addressed all of their challenges, so the next step naturally after that was to look at ways in which they could integrate the solution into their services.

“The first thing we did was consolidate all our hardware and technologies under HPE GreenLake, and that made it more efficient and more optimized in a way where you have one platform that delivers all your compute, storage and network in a single pane of glass managed by HPE. This was another advantage for us as it allowed us to offload some of the services from our team to HPE. We deliver two types of services, an internal operation, where we host our internal applications and



We decided that in order to combat these challenges we had to partner with the best in the market, and that’s why we chose HPE GreenLake.”

processes, and the second service is the cloud that we deliver to our customers,” said Francis.

Francis added that the implementation of HPE GreenLake has really allowed them to really ‘focus’ on their customers.

“We have really embraced the pay-as-you-go model for our customers, the more complex the environment the more business sense it makes for them because it can integrate with all the other components that they have, such as regular compute, or even stretching to the public cloud. They can deliver a hybrid ecosystem between having a production environment legacy approach, providing NDR under HPE GreenLake, it provides us with different capabilities, and enriched our portfolio in a way that really added value for us – and ultimately HPE GreenLake allowed us to focus more on our customers,” said Francis.

In terms of the implementation process, George highlighted the positive impact played by HPE’s technical team during the integration.

“The eHDF team is very familiar with HPE technologies because we’ve been using their solutions for years, and we have a strong rapport with them. The strong relationship that we have with them made it easier for us when it came to the implementation of HPE GreenLake. We also received support from HPE’s technical team too, and that further

helped the implementation process to be a seamless one,” said George.

In terms of the challenges facing eHDF, George conceded that prior to the adoption of HPE GreenLake the company desperately needed greater visibility.

“The challenge we had before implementing HPE GreenLake was managing complex environments with different hardware and technologies, but with HPE GreenLake you get a single pane of glass where everything is accessible to our team, and they were able to get a full 360-degree view of their entire landscape and infrastructure. In addition to this, HPE GreenLakes provides you with predictive analytics which enables you to proactively respond to any maintenance issues. Thus far, it’s been an excellent journey for us with HPE GreenLake and it has allowed us to address our customer requirements and the demands of the current marketplace,” said George.

Another issue that has always faced eHDF and many other managed service providers is around capacity.

“For us, one of the challenges in terms of offering infrastructure as-a-service is the huge capital investment that we need to make in order to build the infrastructure that is required

for customers. There was always a challenge around the pricing of this infrastructure because you don’t know what is the capacity that is required, so there is always a lot of activity around the capacity planning. However, with the introduction of HPE GreenLake a huge portion of the issue around capacity planning has been resolved with the pay-per-use model which enables us to see what our customer consumes in terms of compute and we can see what is the cost that we are occurring in the backend. The advanced capacity available on HPE GreenLake also gives us the capacity to expand and the scalability becomes much easier,” said George.

George concluded the discussion by highlighting the two key challenges that had been resolved from a commercial standpoint.

“From a commercial point of view the two components that we addressed was the need for the right pricing to be competitive in the market, and from an operational point of view we always faced challenges in terms of managing different technologies and managing different hardware vendors. However, now we have consolidated everything into HPE GreenLake, and it’s been a game-changer for us,” said George. 



HPE GreenLakes provides you with predictive analytics which enables you to proactively respond to any maintenance issues.”



MAKING AN IMPACT

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **John Byrne**, President, Sales, Global Theaters at Dell Technologies, and **Mohammed Amin**, senior Vice President—Central Eastern Europe, Middle East, Türkiye and Africa at Dell Technologies, in an effort to better understand the company's play into the burgeoning Generative AI space, what differentiates the company from market rivals – and how its mission to impact human life through technology is unwavering.

John Byrne has enjoyed a remarkable career in the technology ecosystem.

The sales professional has spent 8 years at Dell EMC, and Dell Technologies, and has played a pivotal role in helping the company solidify its standing as a global technology leader.

Mohammed Amin needs no introduction to our readers, and has been the face of Dell Technologies in the Middle East region for the best part of two decades.

CNME managed to secure an exclusive interview with them post-GITEX, in an effort to see what's next for the company that never stands still.

Byrne was univocal about Dell's ambitions and aspirations as a company, quite simply, they want to

be the 'essential' technology company in the world.

"I have been at Dell Technologies for the last 8 years, and anyone that has been around me during that time will know that I absolutely love this company. I love it from our purpose to our vision, to our culture,



Our breadth of go-to-market, and the sheer magnitude and scale of our sales and marketing organisation is almost unrivalled in the marketplace."



John Byrne



Mohammed Amin

and our people, and I can see why world-class leaders like Mohammed have been at the company for over 20 years. There are very few organisations that have a purpose that they believe in, and are executing towards that. Our purpose is to impact human life through technology, and we live it during every single interaction we have. We want to be the essential technology company on the planet, but there's a couple of things we

need to invest in, and some of that investment is around our people, talent, and of course technology,” said Byrne.

Byrne highlighted how the conversations they have with their customers are naturally varied, but said that all of them were looking for help when it comes to establishing business outcomes.

“I’d say that up until around 9 months the conversations we were having with customers was primarily focused on where should my data reside? We very quickly get into a conversation around multi-cloud, and we outline the role Dell can play for them, but then the conversation would pivot towards what should the financial model be, should it be CAPEX, or OPEX? We’ve

made great progress, and we feel that what we are bringing to the table really resonates with customers. Sovereignty is becoming more and more of a conversation, and we think we have a very unique perspective and a lot of experience in terms of seeing where workloads should reside. However, it’s all about outcomes, they want to know what their outcomes are going to be, and they are coming to us for help,” said Byrne.

Byrne added that you can’t get into a conversation now with any customer without the topic of Generative AI being brought up.

“We have been talking about AI as an organisation for over 10 years. It’s been in our workstation offering, and even in our compute capability we had AI models. However, with the advent of ChatGPT, suddenly you had 100m within two months using it then you knew it was coming alive. We have seen an unbelievable acceleration in all of our Gen AI offerings, and every conversation we are having globally is all about where should I focus my outcomes and what are the business use-cases? We’re also having conversations around where does Gen AI



Our purpose is to impact human life through technology, and we live it during every single interaction we have.”

play on our edge, and we think that all these business use-cases as incremental. We believe that in 2-3 years it will be a \$90 billion incremental hardware and services industry vertical,” said Byrne.

Byrne also stressed that when it comes to the topic of Gen AI the conversation typically shifts to the question of how can I secure all my data?

Byrne highlighted the capabilities of its cyber vault platform.

“We believe that 80% of customers will have their mission-critical information on-prem, but they are all asking how do I secure it? We know that the intensity of the cyberattacks are not slowing down, they are only accelerating, and it’s a huge challenge. We have professional services on cyber, but our cyber vault has the ability to isolate your mission-critical data, and can take it off the network, so if and when an attack happens you have business resiliency and you’re very quickly able to get back up and running again. We are very humbled and proud in terms of what we do, and we are No.1 in terms of the products that we play in, but there is a lot of markets for us to go and get after,” said Byrne.

When asked what he felt differentiated Dell from other market players, Byrne said its ability to listen to its customers and its sales and marketing operations were key factors in its ability to stand out from the crowd.

“Our breadth of go-to-market, and the sheer magnitude and scale of our sales and marketing organisation is almost unrivalled in the marketplace. We pride ourselves as a company on our ability to listen, we have big ears, and I know that Mohammed lives by this mantra. When we are sitting down with customers it’s very rare for them to talk to us about a product, they want to talk to us about where their business is going in 3-5 years and how can Dell help them? As sales leadership we have to continue to evolve our go-to market, and that is what we are going to continue to do to ensure we meet the requirements and needs of our customers,” said Byrne.

Mohammed Amin echoed the sentiments expressed by Byrne, and reiterated how the company is a customer-centric organisation.


“Our strategy over the last 20 years has always been focused on hiring the best talent and the best people to really drive the organisation forward. We believe that we have the best products in the world, but our customers don’t care, they only care about their businesses. We’ve been selling the business outcomes to our customers, and have been focused on helping them to transform. We are very mindful of the fact that our job is to serve our customers and that is in the DNA of our company,” said Amin.

Amin said that even though the company is a technology leader, he believes that Dell

are in the service industry business.

“We sell technology, and we are extremely proud of our products, but at the end of the day we are in the service industry, and we’re here to make our customers successful. Most of our relations here in the Middle East with our customers is a partnership, and a lot of the time we put the interests of our customers ahead of our own, because over time it will serve our interests eventually. We exist to deliver for our customers, and that mindset has enabled us to be successful,” said Amin.

Dell have transformed their channel partner ecosystem over the years, and Byrne, who was once responsible for building out their channel program, has said that a message he repeatedly hears from partners is the fact that Dell have an incredible brand.

“We talk to our channel partners every single day, because essentially, they are an extension of our sales team. They give us feedback regularly, and a recurring message from our partners globally is that our brand is phenomenal, and we have a great program. Our partners are so important to us, and we want to go to market with our partners. The future of our partners is building out that AI capability, and the next frontier with our partners is going to be focused on the edge. We want to thank our partners for trusting us, and going on this journey with us together,” concluded Byrne. 



ORANGE BUSINESS

A COGNITIVE APPROACH

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Anas Naim**, Managing Director – Middle East and Turkey, at Orange Business, in an effort to better understand how AI is driving the next evolution of smart cities, which industry leaders including Naim have labelled as 'cognitive' cities.

Anas Naim joined Orange Business from HPE in 2019. He was initially appointed as the Head of Business Development for Orange Business in the MEA region, but in April of this year, he was given a promotion after playing a critical role in solidifying the company's standing as a digital leader.

Naim was appointed as Managing Director for Orange



Business in the Middle East and Turkey, and has now been tasked with the responsibility of driving the company's growth across the Gulf region.

Naim kickstarted the conversation by highlighting how they are committed to serving customers that have a 'digital-first' strategy.

"Our next-generation connectivity solutions are a core part of our business, but we're expanding and growing

rapidly in the digital services space from cloud, security, data and AI. We have a very vast and diverse portfolio when it comes to serving customers with a digital first strategy and mindset," said Naim.

Orange Business is the Enterprise Division of Orange Group, but are best known in the Middle East for their role in driving iconic smart city

have the local experience and a proven track record of delivering really complex digital services projects like smart cities," said Naim.

Naim touched on the importance of delivering seamless experiences and outlined their focus on enabling their customers to connect to any type of cloud.

"We're a leader when it comes to network



We have a very strong track record in the region when it comes to smart cities, and we have spearheaded a number of major smart city projects right across the Middle East."

projects all across the region.

"We have a very strong track record in the region when it comes to smart cities, and we have spearheaded a number of major smart city projects right across the Middle East in countries such as the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. We

connectivity, and we're always trying to evolve in this area especially now with the demand in cloud connectivity. We are acutely aware of the fact that a hot topic in the industry is how do global organisations connect to the cloud seamlessly from different offices across the world? However, we have strong solutions based around that, and we believe that we can capitalise in this vertical," said Naim.

In September, Orange Business announced that it will design, build and run a new end-to-end platform, integrating AI and data analytics into existing KAFD (King Abdullah Financial District) digital infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

The Smart City Platform will enable KAFD to optimise data and advance its smart city experience using new technologies.

Naim touched on the significance of the KAFD project.





“It has been a very, very exciting time for us at Orange Business. The signing ceremony we had with the King Abdullah Financial District in September, was really significant for us, because it is such an iconic project. It is going to be one of the biggest real estate projects in the world, and we’ve been selected as the master digital services integrator for the city itself. It is incredible recognition for us, and testament to what we can do when we have been trusted to deliver a project of this magnitude,” said Naim.

The dial of the

conversation shifted towards the participation of Orange Business at GITEX.

Naim said the conference provided the perfect platform for the company to demonstrate what they and their partner Genesys have been working on in augmented customer experience.

“GITEX was very productive for us in terms of really accelerating conversations around augmented customer

experience. At GITEX, we shared a booth with our partner Genesys, and we demonstrated our end-to-end journey when it comes to augmented customer experience. It is a very important topic for our customers because it is a way to serve their clients through the different digital omni-channels in a seamless way,” said Naim.

Naim also added how important collaboration is for Orange Business in terms



The other interesting concept that we are looking at is smart city as-a-service.”



of fuelling and driving new innovations.

“Orange Business is all about partnerships, and it is a key component in our business model. We have some very strong partnerships with some of the biggest technology companies in the world, and we’re working closely with them in terms of how we go-to market around smart cities and digital services,” said Naim.

In terms of the trends and technologies that Orange Business are looking at, Naim said that AI had created a third wave when it comes to the evolution of smart cities.

“AI is everywhere and you can see it being built into every single technology that we use. If you look at our smart city offering, data analytics has always been a core function of smart cities. However, the concept of smart cities has been around for a long time, but with the implementation of AI into smart cities it has now created a third wave in the evolution of smart cities into cognitive cities. This opens the door to a whole range of new use-cases that bring together revenue generating, operational efficiency and customer experience, so it covers the full range of value-adds when we talk about AI,” said Naim.

Naim stressed that Generative AI would also be a key driver in accelerating innovation in augmented customer experiences, but also reiterated the importance of cloud technology.

“When we look at our augmented customer experience then we believe the advent of Generative AI is going to be a gamechanger. Gen AI is going to facilitate and provide huge value when it comes to interactions with our clients for our customers. Cloud is always a key priority for us, and we’re always looking at ways in which we can improve the experience of our customers connecting to any cloud. We have good propositions in this area, and our Orange Evolution program that we have been developing over the last number of years has been a

huge success for us,” said Naim.

Naim said another concept that had emerged of late was ‘smart city as-a-service’.

“The other interesting concept that we are looking at is smart city as-a-service. The whole driver of this is how do we shorten the time-to-market, because we know these are complex projects? We do believe the smart city as-a-service offering will drive this for our customers, which will allow them to quickly have a minimal viable product that you can see value from,” said Naim.

Orange Business are well-established in the Middle East region, but as Naim acknowledged there is huge potential in the market, and disclosed that they will continue to ramp up investment in the KSA.

“The Middle East is a very exciting market for Orange Business, and we see huge potential across the region. There is huge investment in the region, and we are well-established across the market here in the Gulf, especially in the UAE. We have ramped up our investment in KSA, and are looking at making that our regional HQ. Saudi Arabia is pursuing an ambitious economic program that is underpinned by technology, and we want to be at the forefront of that, and that is why we will continue to invest heavily in the KSA marketplace, and we will leverage our expertise and knowledge to help the KSA achieve their digital goals,” concluded Naim. **enme**



FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE

Grant Bourzikas, CSO at Cloudflare, has said that the best way for security leaders to mitigate AI threats is to use the capabilities of AI to better protect their themselves in an exclusive op-ed for December's edition of CNME.

1: The knowledge gap between security professionals who understand AI and those who do not will be the number one reason for any shift in the balance of power to threat actors.

Whether or not the usage of AI is giving attackers a leg up



is the wrong question to be asking.

AI is here to stay, so the right question is whether or not security leaders possess the skills required or will invest the time to upskill and learn how to handle what is becoming the largest revolution ever seen in technology.

Both harnessing the power of this technology and defending against it, hinges on the ability to connect the conceptual to the tangible.

If the security industry fails to demystify AI and its potential malicious use cases, 2024 will be a field day for threat actors.

2: The AI arms race will officially commence, and the first AI model breach will take place.

Organizations of all types are aggressively adopting and



beginning to rely on models to carry out critical business functions.

Moreover, organizations are leaning heavily on AI to maintain a competitive edge, with Wall Street upgrading the stocks of companies that mention AI and punishing those who are seemingly behind the technology curve.

As with any technology that becomes a crucial piece to an organization's success, it increasingly becomes a top target for threat actors to inflict significant damage.

Organizations rushing to join this revolution without the proper precautions put in place are opening themselves up as a low hanging fruit for model tampering and breaches – ones that could have the power to impact everything from critical care, banking systems, power grids etc.

3: The only way to fight against AI is with AI... if you have already mastered the basics.

Defending against AI ultimately means defending against all human knowledge indexed. Information sharing exists at an order of magnitude faster, and is more efficiently exchanged than ever before.

Security pros protecting their organizations in the era of infinite information face challenges never seen before.

But if the industry has historically struggled with doing the simple things well, over pivoting to solve issues using AI will be mostly benign.

Sometimes the best way to mitigate attacks is by going back to foundational elements of detection and mitigation.

4: The next cutting-edge security technology that will hit the market in 2024 will be the ability to identify and eliminate the usage of deep fakes on social media and in modern media.

One of the main goals of a threat actor is to erode trust, and one of the most useful tools to achieve this is by leveraging deep fakes.



If the security industry fails to demystify AI and its potential malicious use cases, 2024 will be a field day for threat actors."

While deep fakes have been around for years, today's versions are more realistic than ever. Untrained eyes and ears cannot discern what is fake and with today's versions more realistic than ever, trained eyes and ears also fail to identify deep fakes.

5: The number one focus for customers in 2024 will be around achieving resilience.

The Internet has become a pillar of critical infrastructure, and this year will become more dangerous than ever.

In 2024 the number one concern of our customers will be resilience. As more zero-days, flaws in popular software, supply chain issues and threat actor tactics evolve and come to fruition, organizations are hyper vigilant on the steps they can take to remain protected.

Responsible disclosure will be a critical pillar in upholding resilience – no matter the priorities or style of the CISO. Managing incidents like zero-days isn't as simple as "run the patch, now you're done."

In 2024, security leaders will begin the mindset shift towards turning incident management, patching, and evolving security protections into ongoing processes.

Mitigations like patches for each variant of a vulnerability may reduce your risk, but they never fully eliminate it. **cmms**

PURE STORAGE

WHAT'S TRENDING

Fred Lherault, CTO Emerging at Pure Storage, has provided his top 4 technology predictions that UAE decision makers must consider may devising their strategic blueprints for 2024.

The rise of generative AI, the hosting of the COP28 conference, and a world still trying to figure out how to do more with less. These are just some highlights from 2023. Now we must look to the future. What are the opportunities ahead?

And how do business leaders and other decision makers take advantage of those opportunities to build efficient, profitable, sustainable operations?

The world is changing, and business must change with it. Technology can and must support that change.

I offer four predictions for the coming new year that should prepare IT and business decision makers for the challenges they will face.

Prediction 1 — Demand for generative AI solutions will spark a new surge in container adoption

A recent study by McKinsey predicted that US\$150 billion (or 9% of combined GDP) of value could be added to GCC economies by artificial intelligence, but went on to



state “that figure could be quickly surpassed” by the adoption of technologies like generative AI.

Next year, we can expect to see the widespread adoption of containers — already a growth market — to facilitate generative AI’s integration.



ICT resilience and sustainability are both indivisible from technology.”

The open-source Kubernetes, and containers in general, are widely seen as the best way to achieve the required agility to adopt AI at an organization’s own pace.

Containers play vital roles in the curation, cleaning, and formatting of data, as well as in model training, largely because the tools used in these stages all reside in containers.

This will be the third phase of growth for containers, the first being the containerization of workloads and the second involving databases and applications.

Now that AI and its supporting tools are migrating, we will see the reliance on containers continue to rise, through 2024 and beyond.

Prediction 2 — New regulation will impact technology purchasing in 2024

Regulatory compliance will continue to be a priority in 2024. Following COP28, there will be renewed focus on initiatives such as Dubai’s Green Building Regulations and UAE Net Zero by 2050, led by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA). And the ongoing surge in cyber incidents, exacerbated by the rise of generative AI, will see organizations once again consulting guidelines such as the UAE Information Assurance Regulation.

ICT resilience and sustainability are both indivisible from technology.

Digital solutions can help

with the reporting of Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, including the capture of information from along the supply chain.

For cybersecurity, enterprises must look to a range of issues, from identity and access management (IAM) to the protection of endpoints within a hybrid work environment.

Banks, telcos, and utilities must also deal with the threat to critical infrastructure posed by the merging of IT and OT.

All these issues will affect the decisions made regarding technology purchases. Procurement teams must allow for their organization's obligations to minimize waste, protect data, and a range of others.

These decisions not only affect a business's internal IT suite, but the products and services they provide. And strong reputations in cyber resilience and sustainability will bring competitive advantage in the years ahead.

Prediction 3 — Energy consumption and power costs will accelerate the shift from CapEx to OpEx

Continued concerns about the state of the economy, difficult business conditions and high energy costs will have a significant influence on the tech market in 2024. This will accelerate the trend towards OpEx spending over CapEx.

Subscription services will continue to be very attractive as customers only want to pay for what they use, scale

up and down as needed and, avoid the need for large CapEx outlays.

Besides direct budget constraints, we'll continue to see subscriptions growth being driven in part by uncertainty about the full utilization of new assets.

It makes sense to opt for a subscription to a service and avoid CapEx expenditure when there's a reasonable possibility that a CapEx asset will not be used to full capacity.

However, subscription services will only succeed if they are backed by relevant SLAs. With so many subscriptions available on the market, buyers are becoming more discerning about what to invest in, and are demanding SLAs which guarantee crucial areas of the service including data protection and energy efficiency/sustainability.

This trend is also being observed in data centers, with operators beginning to favor on-demand models that enable just-in-time provisioning of assets.

This allows them to better control energy costs through lower power consumption, which also helps them realize their sustainability goals.

From a sustainability point of view, platform usage in data centers over a three to five year period is going to be the biggest factor in carbon emissions.

Organizations are becoming aware of this and factoring it into their purchasing decisions for the year ahead and beyond.

Prediction 4 — Demand for greater efficiency and innovation in data centers to grow as capacity crunch hits

Many organizations that are reliant on data centers are reporting that their most pressing issue right now is one of capacity.

A growing number of data centers are full, and don't have the space or power available to deploy new platforms.

In 2024, this will result in widespread efforts to achieve efficiency gains, even on existing data center platforms, as this is the only way they will be able to reclaim space and power to accommodate the use of new technologies inside the data center.

To optimize the sustainability of existing data center footprints, we'll see operators looking to switch to new, more power efficient technology, with smaller space and cooling requirements.

This is in essence extending the life of the data center — an essential factor when considering the need for new technologies in the wake of the rise of AI.

Getting ahead in the year ahead

The UAE has always been a thriving business community. It faces down challenges and turns them into opportunities.

In 2024, businesses that align with the needs to optimize every asset, build sustainable operations, protect data and systems, and make use of new tools like generative AI will emerge as leaders. **enme**

COP28

THE GREATER GOOD

COP28 was a resounding success with the historic decision taken by members to finally transition away from fossil fuels, but technologies such as AI have been singled out as being the key catalyst for real change in our shared fight against climate change.

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The COP28 climate summit in Dubai was a huge success, primarily due to the fact that nearly every country in the world has finally agreed to transition away from fossil fuels.

It is the very first time such an agreement has been reached in 28 years of international climate negotiations, and comes after days of intense negotiating and lobbying by political and climate activists.

The irony of the agreement being brokered in the Middle East was not lost on those in attendance.

However, what became increasingly evident throughout the 12 conference was the importance of technology in addressing issues around climate change.

The IT and technology industry is one of the most energy-intensive in the world, and tech leaders globally are implementing sustainability measures in an effort to reduce their carbon footprint.

In terms of the technology itself, AI has been tipped as the key technology to really curb climate change and be the bedrock in building a more sustainable world for us all.

There was a lot of commentary and fanfare throughout the summit, but one announcement that stood out was the program being pursued by World Wide Technology.

World Wide Technology (WWT), one of the world's largest privately held technology innovation companies launched an AI for

Good initiative at COP28 in Dubai.

The programme plans to help one million climate tech entrepreneurs to drive a sustainable future through technological innovation for the good of people, planet and profit.

AI for Good at COP28

According to Accenture, 93% of the world's largest companies will fail to achieve their Net Zero goals if they don't at least double the pace of emission reductions by 2030.

Yet, at the same time, in 2023, available funding for climate tech start-ups is decreasing.

In response to the global lack of funding, WWT has launched AI for Good, a platform for the world's most impactful climate entrepreneurs working to solve COP28 KPIs.

WWT and partners including Pearson and Open Innovation plan to develop an online education programme helping one million climate entrepreneurs harness the power of AI.

Omar Mir, President of WWT said they were committed to getting AI into the hands of people who really needed it in order to create a 'lasting legacy'.

"AI technology has the potential to accelerate positive outcomes in clinical trials, innovation, and scientific

discoveries around the world by as much as 70%. We know climate solution start-ups need support to achieve COP28 goals and create a lasting legacy. That's why we're proud to be launching our AI for Good programme, to get AI to the people who need it most," said Mir.

The UAE's AI Climate Tech Accelerator

As part of the initiative, WWT is announcing access to its Advanced Technology Center (ATC), a leading R&D solution lab and innovation accelerator, with a new gateway located in Abu Dhabi.

Entrepreneurs will be able to pitch their ideas to be involved in the AI for Good program and once approved, they will be incubated in WWT's ATC enabling them to turn their ideas into action.

The move demonstrates WWT's commitment to investment in the UAE, COP28 and positive climate action.

As Mir highlighted almost \$6bn has been invested in climate technology across the Middle East in the last 10 years.

"Whilst globally there's been a decline in climate tech investment, there's been a 628% growth year-over-year in the UAE since 2018. In addition to this, \$6bn has been invested from 189 individual investors in regional climate tech in the last decade. The UAE is clearly



Through efficiencies from AI forecasting and data analytics, we have the power to reduce child hunger globally."



leading the charge and we believe this presents a huge opportunity for the region, and for WWT to accelerate climate technologies.” Mir added.

The lab can be accessed both physically and digitally to enable business to make smart technology decisions faster.

From proof of concepting to cyber testing, the lab helps climate tech companies

mitigate the risks inherent in solving complex business challenges and encourages co-innovation to drive sustainable outcomes.

AI Led Food Systems Innovation

Food systems account for an average of 34% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and a third of food is wasted globally.

As a result, the UAE COP28

Presidency has placed food system transformation at the heart of its COP agenda. WWT AI can transform those food systems to reduce GHG and drive efficiencies.

Dr. Abed Benaichouche, Founder of Open Innovation and Managing Director WWT International highlighted the challenge of food security globally, and said that once again AI offered a remedy to the issue.



“Our mission is to ensure children and families across the UAE have the information and motivation to enjoy a healthy, climate-friendly diet. Through our AI for Good programme with WWT, we can offer the development and education for UAE-based food security and education initiatives to boost UAE Global Food Security Index rankings. We work with schools to provide each student with

their own app-based climate, nutrition, and health advisor. It's been transformative already and we're only getting started,” said Benaichouche.

Author and charity founder Carmel McConnell, MBE spent 20 years creating a new UK school food system to help the most vulnerable children.

Her model, Magic Breakfast now offers a healthy school meal to 500,000 school age children in the UK through Magic Breakfast and the National School Breakfast programme.

She joined leading WWT technologist, Daniel Valle on the Climate Finance Hub stage at COP28 to highlight AI for Good.

Their speech was met with a warm welcome by COP28 delegates, many of whom are keen to upscale and accelerate climate solutions.

McConnell said that the technology now at their disposal has the power to reduce child hunger on a global scale.

“Through efficiencies from AI forecasting and data analytics, we have the power to reduce child hunger globally. But that's just the start. We need to move quickly, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food systems and create a child centred global food strategy. I've been inspired by WWT's commitment and motivated

by the conversations we've had at COP28 to make our goal a reality,” said McConnell.

Daniel Valle, Senior Vice President of Sales, GSP International at WWT highlighted the importance of raising capital and securing the funding necessary to really facilitate and drive the climate tech start-up ecosystem.

“Securing funding is only the beginning for climate tech start-ups. The greater challenge is accessing the right technological ecosystem to transform innovative concepts into reality. We provide crucial tools and platforms through our Advanced Technology Center. This exposure not only fosters the development of these solutions but also accelerates their adoption and commercialisation by showcasing them to our extensive customer base. It's this unique ecosystem that truly catalyses innovation and drives forward the climate agenda,” said Valle.

The agreements made during COP28 have given renewed hope that we can save our planet, but it is clear that technology, and particularly technologies like AI are absolutely critical to building a better future for us all. **enms**



Whilst globally there's been a decline in climate tech investment, there's been a 628% growth year-over-year in the UAE since 2018.”

RUCKUS

THE NUMBER 'ONE' PLATFORM

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Moe Raslan**, Regional Sales Director MENA at CommScope Ruckus, to find out how their Ruckus One platform is helping enterprises deploy 'future-proof' networks in the ever-evolving and complex digital economy.

RUCKUS One is an AI-driven network and business intelligence platform designed to help enterprises deploy 'future-proof' networks in a simple, safe and cost-efficient way. However, can you expand on the technical capabilities of the RUCKUS One platform, and how has it resonated with end users?

At RUCKUS Networks, we always looked at solutions that help deploy, manage and operate the next generation of purpose-driven networks.

With RUCKUS One, I believe we have achieved just that. RUCKUS One is a cloud-native platform that delivers network assurance, service delivery and business intelligence in a unified dashboard to simplify converged network management across multi-access public and private networks.

This means that it delivers results through a unified dashboard to allow for an overall simplified experience.

The combination of state-of-the-art AI and multiple patented machine learning (ML) algorithms, RUCKUS One



has the ability to react at high speeds to address incidents and prevent them from compounding and becoming problems that impact services.

Ultimately, it improves the end-user experience by allowing for easy troubleshooting of problems by lean IT teams.

Today, many businesses are investing lots of money and time to manage their network infrastructure through several management interfaces and the management of several appliances.

As RUCKUS One is a one-stop solution providing quality converged network management solutions for converged and switching needs, it has resonated well with customers and end-users.

RUCKUS One greatly reduces the time to solve problems on the network as it is able to detect and identify issues as they happen and also keep records of this.

It reduces the need for technical staff to trouble shoot the issues as the AI has already identified them and given suggestions as to how to fix the issues.

Gone are the days of technicians having to spend hours on site troubleshooting an issue that might have happened in the past.

RUCKUS One does not maintain any personal information regarding the end user in the cloud. Only networking information is maintained in the cloud, minimizing issues with privacy and security.



In this digital age, networks are becoming more dynamic and, as a result, more unpredictable.”

We know that many enterprises have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation. Can you explain to our readers why RUCKUS is such a strong advocate for cloud-managed networking? What are the key benefits of this approach?

Cloud-based and AI-driven RUCKUS One is made for today's enterprises and is future-ready to deal with tomorrow's intelligent network needs.

In this digital age, networks are becoming more dynamic and, as a result, more unpredictable. This creates blind spots, which make it harder to provide consumers with consistency.

However, RUCKUS One simplifies the complex nature of modern networks. It is easy to use and expand, with flexible configuration to allow for an entirely customizable, yet secure multi-access network experience.

In RUCKUS One, a single software platform can incorporate multi access, smart services, network assurances, policy and security and device management and control. Key benefits include –

- Deploy future proof networks in simple, reliable and secure ways
- Provide a top-level view of the network and visibility into status of all APs and switches in the network
- Customize and optimize network resources on a granular level

In terms of the cloud networking offered by RUCKUS, do your solutions provide 'complete flexibility' for end users to move their management architecture across public and private cloud? We have seen many businesses locked into one deployment architecture, so how do you avoid that from happening?

RUCKUS One acts as a "one-stop shop" for everything – delivering network assurance, service delivery and business intelligence.

Many enterprises are looking to provide the right kind of connectivity for their consumers, trying to decide between Wi-Fi or 4G/5G, or even both.

RUCKUS One is exactly what they're looking for. We are passionate about providing a flexible solution for any case scenario for enterprises of all sizes – from the smallest of businesses to the largest of them, with multiple branch offices.

As mentioned before, one of the benefits of switching to RUCKUS One is its ability to customize and optimize network resources.

Once a customer has added all wired and wireless networks on the unified platform, they can change network settings depending on the demand, such as the network upload and download rates, the LAN port settings of the APs or access control policies.

And since RUCKUS One helps manage networks and their devices on multiple locations, businesses are not locked into any one deployment architecture.

With the platform the network engineers can customize the switch settings or ports as per needs and have complete control over device access within their network.

Do the solutions provided by RUCKUS continue to manage the customer's network should their subscription lapse or a customer decides to discontinue their subscription for any reason?

We give a grace period, for renewal of the

cloud subscription. If the end user does not want to carry on with cloud our access points can be migrated to different controllers. We do not stop the access points from working.

In terms of growth, have you been happy with your performance thus far in 2023, and what is your strategy for further growth across the Middle East region in 2024?


Since the pandemic, several Middle Eastern sectors have bounced back, from a general industry connectivity viewpoint.

As the region's digital economy continues to take shape, the investment in information and communications technology is expected to continue to grow.

Digital is now a permanent and dynamic fixture in today's enterprises. Digital acceleration proved effective for several organizations in the region, and those that didn't adopt the digital-first strategy have already begun investing in this direction.

CommScope is positioned in a way to offer industry-leading innovation to support enterprises' growth.

Last year, in 2022, CommScope invested approximately 600 million USD in R&D and new product introductions, with continued aggressive investment in RUCKUS® and ONECELL™ in-building wireless solutions to drive future growth. However, growth is a never-ending and ongoing process.

Our strategy is to expand and help more enterprises on their digital journey. 

VMWARE EXPLORE

DELIVERING OPTIMAL VALUE

CNME caught up with **Ahmed Auda**, Vice President and GM of Middle East, Turkey & North Africa at VMware, during VMware Explore, to discuss the new initiatives and strategies the company is implementing to support businesses across the Middle East - and how VMware remains committed to delivering optimal value to their customers.

Can you share some of the recent announcements, or developments from VMware Explore that are particularly relevant to the Middle East region?

The journey and drive for innovation across various organisations is inspiring and also the need for addressing or accelerating innovation and leveraging the cloud computing in private, hybrid, public, sovereign and edge clouds, as well as welcoming AI.

AI integrated apps are a key objective for all large organizations today. There are certain challenges though that make this not as easy as it should be, as we hope it would be, such as the complexity of the cloud environments, data sensitivity and the distributed data nature across various platforms.

The need to be able to take control and protect such data as well as the challenge in finding the needed skills to be able to leverage these kinds of technologies are well-known issues that every



organisation encounters.

What VMware is bringing and the announcements that we are addressing are all driving towards simplifying the cloud infrastructure, taking the complexity as much as possible out of the various types of clouds and integrating AI into the fabric of this infrastructure to help drive new innovative applications.

The objective of any infrastructure is to drive

services and modern applications that have generative AI and address the skills gap. We also have new partnerships with Intel and IBM that we are announcing in addition to our partnership with Nvidia in the domain of private AI.

Our approach on AI is to make it more controlled and protected. Many organisations that are going to leverage AI today don't want their models and data to be shared beyond their actual use cases and efforts around building such models.

We are also making new announcements and partnership with Google in the domain of the data services and bringing Google data services on top of private clouds that our customers are investing in on the VMware Cloud Foundation.

We are also addressing the sovereign cloud to give more control to users on their data and integrating new



Our forthcoming emphasis on private AI underscores our commitment to delivering optimal value to our regional customers."



dashboards to help monitor the overall digital experience of the end user in terms of connectivity and security.

We are also giving our own approach of generative AI in what we call private AI partnerships around data services and the sovereign cloud.

How does VMware plan to enhance its presence and services in the Middle East, Turkey, and North Africa?

We are simplifying the cloud offerings and pushing more partners in the sovereign cloud domain across the Middle East.

We are also leveraging and extending our partners' network. One of the ways to address the skills gap is to leverage our partner network and the skills there across the different regions.

For example, with Moro Hub in the UAE, we are helping them extend their cloud services to private and public customers in the UAE, leveraging the VMware technology, the VMware cloud services and offering infrastructure as a service.

We are also working in Saudi Arabia, helping them to modernize their healthcare services across various clinics

and hospitals, as well as having control on the data they need and offering the flexibility and the agility of cloud services.

With the STC in Saudi, for example, in the main end user computing and enabling hybrid workforce, we work with them to provide our horizon offerings to enable their employees to be able to work in a flexible manner.

We have similar examples with other customers in Turkey, driving and modernizing their applications.

We also have agreements with some government



entities in Egypt, such as the ministry of Communication Information where we're setting an agreement to build up the cloud skills in the country through different initiatives.

These are a few examples of how VMware continues to simplify the cloud journey for our customers, accelerate the transformation and help clients to build modern apps leveraging generative AI.

Could you highlight key trends, or challenges that VMware is addressing in the Middle East region?

In the Middle East, we encounter challenges akin to those faced by clients worldwide, and our commitment is to streamline these complexities.

Collaborating closely with our partners, we are dedicated to assisting clients in overcoming obstacles

and guiding them through an expedited path of transformation.

What specific initiatives and strategies is VMware implementing to support businesses and organisations in the Middle East region?

There are many initiatives, but we focus first on helping our clients being smarter in driving their strategy for adopting cloud.



The cloud smart approach is an important initiative we are taking with our clients to simplify their cloud journey and to make sure that their cloud infrastructure is utilized in the best possible way.

We have now globally 50 plus partners who are driving the sovereign cloud initiative for VMware within the region.

We have at least one in each of the major markets we

operate in the UAE, Saudi, and Turkey. We are helping our customers to go into or leverage the sovereign cloud in a secure way.

This is a key initiative to simplify the complexity of the cloud and being smart in the approach of adopting the cloud services according to different workloads.

Another crucial initiative is driving more skills into the market through various teaming agreements that we have with different entities across the region, teaming up with the governments to make sure we leverage the new talent and help them integrate into the workplace across the Middle East.

Can you provide insights into the role of VMware technologies in addressing the evolving IT landscape?

VMware has a rich and broad portfolio addressing the key drivers for digital transformations.

We are making sure we are bringing this portfolio and leveraging it across various sectors, such as the public sector, government, financial services and telecommunication across the different types of clouds.

We also have a good success story with mobile business services in Saudi, where we are working with them to take the software defined wide area equity portfolio from VMware to

their business customers, accelerating the scalability of the business for their customers and leveraging edge computing software.


Are there any upcoming projects or milestones in the Middle East region that you'd like to share, or areas where VMware is focusing its efforts for future growth and development?

In the future the role of generative AI and private AI from VMware is going to be accelerated and we're going to see a lot of use cases along with protecting the data and giving the right control to our customers to leverage their own data in building private AI models or generative AI models, but with their own data and the right protection.

To harness this potential for developing cutting-edge applications, we aim to create innovative solutions tailored for increasingly sophisticated markets.

This strategic approach not only addresses the prevailing skill gap but also aligns with the integration of AI into services, reducing reliance on specific human skills crucial for maximizing the value of these applications.

Our forthcoming emphasis on private AI underscores our commitment to delivering optimal value to our regional customers.

We strive to assist them in effectively leveraging and safeguarding their data and models throughout their transformative journey. 



Our approach on AI is to make it more controlled and protected.”

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CISCO OBSERVABILITY

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

James Harvey, CTO Advisor EMEA, at Cisco Observability, has reiterated the importance of brands of delivering seamless digital experiences this holiday season in an exclusive op-ed for December's edition of CNME.

The end of the year presents a unique and rare opportunity for people to unwind.

With work slowing in pace, and schools on break, consumers can instead turn their attention to spending quality time with friends and family, or even traveling to exotic destinations.

Indeed, the ways in which people across continents and cultures enjoy the end of the year holiday season is varied and wonderful.

But one thing that is now consistent is the central role that applications and digital services play over the holidays. Whether it's streaming their favorite movie, listening to their favorite festive tunes, ordering a last minute gift, or connecting with distant relatives, people are relying on applications.

To get insight into just how people use applications over the holiday season, and how their expectations around these have evolved, at Cisco we recently surveyed over 12,000 global



consumers, including 1,000 in the UAE.

And we found that the vast majority (78%) of people in the UAE now believe that applications and digital services are important to having an enjoyable holiday.



Brands need to move quickly to ensure that their applications and digital services provide customers with exceptional, seamless and secure digital experiences."

Of course, such dependency inevitably raises valid concerns. With people now so heavily reliant on applications for almost every aspect of their celebrations, the research uncovered many anxieties consumers have about these applications not performing as they should.

71% of UAE consumers admit that they are worried about the implication that an application or digital service not working would have on their family holiday.

Bad digital experiences are causing anxiety

With more time on their hands, the digital services that people in the UAE are most likely to use over the holiday period are for food delivery services (89%), tools for connecting with friends and family (85%), entertainment (82%), retail (81%), and utilities (81%).

Other popular applications include banking to keep track of funds that tend to flow especially fast through the holidays, collaboration, and productivity tools — to finish off work or study ahead of the holiday — and health and wellbeing applications, perhaps for some much-needed meditation to escape the stresses of those large family gatherings!

This dependency on applications is trending upwards, with 77% of

consumers across the Emirates reporting that they expect to be using more applications and digital services this holiday season than in previous years.

However, while people will be leaning on applications like never before, many have grave concerns about these digital services letting them down when they need them most. Indeed, consumers point to a number of application failure scenarios which now rival travel delays, overbooked hotels, and family feuds as a top contender in potentially ruining the holidays.

Unsurprisingly, with regional consumers likely to be more free with their finances over the holidays, many (45%) are worried

about the impact of a banking application failing so that they can't make an important payment or transfer.

A messaging platform going down so they can't speak to friends and family that they won't be with during the holidays also worries a significant share (43%).

Other fears include an online retailer's application not working properly, so they can't buy a last-minute gift or order last-minute ingredients for their holiday cooking. Whatever it is, 65% of people in the UAE state that if an application or digital service doesn't perform, it could ruin their holiday.

Responsibility is on applications owners

It's natural for most people to feel a bit anxious and stressed

ahead of holiday celebrations. After all, who doesn't want everything to go smoothly, so everyone has a great time?

But these tensions have reached a new level, with 45% of consumers acknowledging that they will find it harder to enjoy themselves as much as they otherwise would if they encounter a bad digital experience.

With holiday happiness at stake, it is no surprise that when people encounter a problem while using digital services, their reactions will be swift and strong.

They'll get stressed and angry, and a significant number (41%) say they'll vent about the issue to friends and family.

And while it may be the holiday season, people will



be completely unforgiving towards digital services that let them down (and to the brands behind these services).

Whether it's slow loading pages, payment issues or downtime, seasonal goodwill will disappear. Almost a third in the UAE (32%) claim that they will immediately delete a poorly performing application and never use it again.

With consumers ready to switch to an alternative without a second thought, can brands really afford to squander their hard-earned customer loyalty?

Of course not! And that's why it's on the application owners to take stock and ensure that their applications are ready to cope with unprecedented levels of

traffic over the holiday season.

They have a golden opportunity to attract new customers and ramp up sales over the holidays, but a single slip up in application performance could see consumers walking away en-masse, leading to a substantial loss of revenue and reputation.

This is why it's now so important for organizations in all industries to implement an application observability solution, to ensure that their IT teams are able to rapidly identify and remediate issues before they impact end users.

Crucially, with application observability, technologists can correlate application availability, performance, and security data with key

business metrics so that they can prioritize those issues which could do most damage to digital experience.

This could even mean that IT professionals could find themselves in a better position to enjoy the holidays without fear of things falling apart or escalating into major issues.

As we rapidly approach the end of 2023, consumers in the UAE are gearing up for a fun-filled festive period and applications will rightly be at the heart of their plans.

Brands need to move quickly to ensure that their applications and digital services provide customers with exceptional, seamless and secure digital experiences and give customers the holiday they're dreaming of. **cmms**

AMAZON WEB SERVICES

NEXT GEN HEALTHCARE

Wojciech Bajda, Managing Director, Public Sector Middle East and Africa, Amazon Web Services believes that Generative AI has the ability to completely transform the healthcare industry in an exclusive op-ed for December's edition of CNME.

In recent years, cloud technology has been a linchpin in elevating the efficiency of health systems and accelerating innovation. However, its full range of benefits often remain unclear to those outside the tech industry.

As nations worldwide confront challenges in health system resilience and sustainability, cloud-based innovations offer a promising pathway. While the healthcare sector has been slower to embrace the cloud compared to areas like finance or banking, its impact is poised for significant growth.

From my vantage point at AWS, it's clear that cloud technology is a crucial catalyst for more data-driven, efficient healthcare. It's revolutionizing processes, from speeding up diagnoses and personalizing medicine to optimizing electronic health records (EHRs). Notably, the technology facilitates rapid developments in precision medicine, reducing genomic profile analysis times from hours to mere seconds.



A significant example of this is the collaboration between Amazon Web Services (AWS) and G42 Healthcare, a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi's artificial intelligence and cloud computing company Group 42. This partnership aims to develop a comprehensive genomics, proteomics, and biobanking service. G42 Healthcare operates one of the largest genomic sequencing farms in the world and, through this collaboration, aims to deliver over 500,000 genome samples per year using major

technology providers like Illumina.

Additionally, cloud technology is transforming medical research. It enables multiple research teams to simultaneously access and analyze data from a single, secure cloud-based database. This capability has profound implications, such as overlaying sociodemographic data with hospital admissions to identify high-risk groups, guiding targeted health interventions.

The Next Stage in Cloud Technology

As we advance, the focus in cloud technology within healthcare must shift towards ensuring enhanced data security, improving interoperability and system integration, and expanding scalability and accessibility. Prioritizing patient-centric approaches, including safeguarding data privacy and promoting personalized care, will also be crucial. These steps are vital in



Cloud technology has been a linchpin in elevating the efficiency of health systems and accelerating innovation."



fully realizing the potential of cloud technology to transform healthcare, making it more efficient, secure, and patient-focused.

Incorporating Generative AI in Healthcare

Accelerating health innovations with generative AI is a key focus in healthcare. AWS is leading this transformation, providing easier access for healthcare and life science organizations to the necessary services, data, models, and secure infrastructure to scale

generative AI. This technology is pivotal for generating new therapeutic candidates, more accurately matching patients to clinical trials, and enhancing patient engagement applications. Notable examples include Nosis Bio and Vevo, part of AWS Generative AI Accelerator's first cohort. Nosis Bio uses generative AI and deep learning to design Targeted Delivery Vehicles (TDVs) for more precise drug delivery, while Vevo combines AI with data from organoid and in vivo disease models to discover better drugs and targets.

Despite these significant advances, the concept and role of cloud technology in healthcare often remain elusive to those outside IT departments.

To bridge this gap globally, The Health Policy Partnership and The European Institute for Innovation in Health Data (i~HD), with AWS's support, have released an informative report.

Bridging the Health-Tech Divide

"Our Health in the Cloud" demystifies cloud technology, delving into its practical applications and potential to meet key challenges in health systems globally.

Recognizing patient perspectives is essential in developing cloud-based applications. However, hesitancy remains among patients and health professionals regarding cloud use in healthcare. The report underscores the necessity of engaging these groups, enhancing their understanding of the technology's role, benefits, and risks. A key part of this is demonstrating the cloud's trustworthiness and managing data security and privacy risks.

Navigating the complexities of health systems demands collaboration among all stakeholders, with patients central to the conversation. This report serves as a foundation for this dialogue, guiding the thoughtful and effective integration of cloud technology into healthcare. 

EPICOR

PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Vibhu Kapoor, Regional Vice President – Middle East, Africa & India at Epicor, has penned an exclusive op-ed for December's edition of CNME, in which he has stressed that ERP automation can succeed when organisations put people first.



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Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems are nothing new to a tech-savvy business community.

UAE organisations have long leveraged ERP to help manage day-to-day operations in industries from manufacturing to retail.

With the government laying out clear strategies to accelerate economic development, organisations must prime themselves for growth and can do so by optimising their ERP implementations.

The challenge before them today is not adoption, it is augmentation — augmentation through

automation. By injecting the right dose of automation, companies can accelerate their journey from survivor to thriver.

They can either automate the extended business from within the ERP system or automate the functions of the ERP system itself. Either way, automation represents a turning point for organisations that stand on the cusp of greatness.

Going silo

Automation's uses are, mostly, limited only by the imagination. Effective implementation, however, hinges upon understanding how the automation of a

business process, or the integration of legacy IT platforms with automation features, connects to value for customers and employees.

ERP has the capacity to reach every part of the business, regardless of its industry or operating model.

From finance and operations to warehousing and customer-relationship management, ERP manages and optimises in countless ways.

Automation is a turbo-boost for this productivity engine. When a business automates both operations and ERP, it takes departments out of their silos and connects them to a unified information ecosystem. All departments contribute to this information and all benefit from it.

Being able to see the supply chain at a glance is a benefit to more than just operations and logistics. Up-to-date inventory data is worth something to those outside sales and purchasing.

Consistent views of the business, fed into an AI module, can lead to increased revenues and higher customer-retention rates, through the provision of actionable insights.

The benefits continue. Automated ERP processes

have been shown to reduce labour costs and increase productivity.

McKinsey linked automation to a global rise in productivity growth of 0.8% to 1.4% annually. With more time on their hands, employees can focus more on their personal development and innovating on behalf of the business, leading to yet more growth.

Workers in control

Human-centric automation is critical. If the workforce feels threatened, morale will suffer. And productivity and profitability will follow.

Automation is helpful in optimising data insights to put employees in control of technology rather than having technology remove autonomy from human hands.

Informed, empowered teams should be the goal. People will feel valued and motivated, which is exactly the environment in which innovation happens.

And the environment is made even more attractive by the inclusion of secure cloud storage and services that allow knowledge employees to work from anywhere. The cloud ecosystem also enables businesses to remain connected to customers and partners wherever they may be.

Through the automated ERP platform, organisations are more agile when requests, opportunities, trends, or problems arise.

Done with adequate forethought, ERP automation

has the potential to reinvent the business. It delivers consistency across operations and performance.

But as with any great change, automation should be initiated by clear-eyed planners who understand the business top-to-bottom and are aware of the investment required, both in terms of budget and labour.

Managers of the change process must come up with a roadmap that allows iterative change with minimal disruption. Existing infrastructure must adapt, and employees must be trained and supported throughout the journey to ensure the workplace, its talent, and its capabilities all change as one.

Before each step, ensure that you know what the benefits are to the business of each implemented solution.

What problems is the solution designed to fix? What does success look like and what metrics can capture its presence or absence?

What are the roles and responsibilities affected by the change? On top of the obvious requirements-fit questions, what level of service is provided by the ERP vendor or its channel partner?

To what extent do its representatives understand your industry and your unique use cases? Such questions will help the organisation navigate

procurement and post-implementation evaluation.

An artificial trade-off

ERP has long been the spine of technology suites across scales and industries. Many digital transformation programs revolve around its automation.

IT leaders across the region see ERP automation as central to the unlocking of the planning platforms' full potential.

People-centric automation goes much further than the mere digitization of processes. By including employees, it supercharges the work environment and gives something that technology alone cannot — the potential for innovation.

Organisations that appreciate this distinction rid themselves of the artificial trade-off between technology and people. On building relationships, exhibiting empathy, and thinking outside of the box, machines simply cannot compete with human employees.

Enterprises will automate. That is a given. But they may miss out on far greater value if they fail to put people at the hub of digital transformation.

As UAE businesses look to boost internal efficiencies and futureproof operations and revenue streams, a patient, well-designed automation strategy will be critical. enme



IT leaders across the region see ERP automation as central to the unlocking of the planning platforms' full potential."

ZOOM

'ZOOM'-ING ON THE POWER OF AI

Gary Sorrentino, Chief Information Officer at Zoom, spoke to CNME Editor Mark Forker, about the company's investment plans for AI, the significance of their acquisition of Workvivo, how their solutions are empowering the work from anywhere world – and the privacy concerns with Generative AI.

We know that we now live in a 'work from anywhere' world – but many companies have struggled to enable their employees to maintain productivity when working remotely, whilst security concerns remain prevalent. Why do you think some businesses are getting it wrong, and what measures and best practices do they need to adopt to empower their remote workforce?

I think it's less about companies doing it wrong and more about companies still trying to figure it out.

We saw how productive the world was when we were forced to be remote, so there's no doubt employees can get the job done remotely.

However, as we transition to the new modern work era where employee workstyles vary from remote, hybrid and full time in office, I think it's important for companies to redefine what productivity looks like.

Yes, we still need to do the tasks at hand, but it's crucial to prioritize employee



engagement and belonging. We know that employees who are more engaged and feel a sense of belonging are more likely to be productive.

One of our favorite new products that we use at Zoom is Workvivo to help with exactly that. Workvivo,

acquired by Zoom earlier this year, is a platform built for the digital workplace to help people engage and connect in a familiar way.

Can you outline to our readers how Zoom have leveraged their portfolio of solutions to enable global businesses to empower their workforces?

To be competitive in today's environment, leaders need to empower their employees to provide the total experience to customers, which includes creating a model that is flexible and adaptable to the many ways of working.

Businesses need to connect with employees where they are today in relation to their different work values and styles to help foster inclusion and parity, and that starts with implementing the right solutions.

According to Gartner, 67% of facilities managers say



Workvivo, acquired by Zoom earlier this year, is a platform built for the digital workplace to help people engage and connect in a familiar way."



improving their employee workplace is their number one priority.

With Zoom, organizations can go beyond Meetings to equip their workforce with the right tools, which is key to creating employee happiness. And happy employees create happy customer experiences.

In-office, organizations can implement technology like Workspace Reservation and Wayfinder to allow employees to seamlessly choose their

workspace for the day and find their desks.

And with Zoom Rooms features such as Intelligent Director, in-room participants have their own video tiles in the meeting, so when they are in an office conference room with remote participants, meetings can be more inclusive for all participants.

Asynchronous collaboration has also become a necessity in today's work environment, with teams dispersed over

different time zones or continents.

With the Zoom platform, employees have the tools they need to collaborate effectively on their own time. Zoom Team Chat, Zoom Clips, Zoom Mail and Calendar, and Whiteboards allow employees to choose the way they best collaborate to get meaningful work done.

And with Zoom AI Companion, it's easier than ever for organizations to cut out unnecessary tasks like note-taking in meetings or



time spent composing or responding to emails and chats, and spend more time connecting with each other.

At GITEX Global 2023, the theme was all about AI. Generative AI is everywhere. Can you give our readers Zoom's perspective on Gen AI, and some of the concerns that have been raised by security professionals in terms of privacy. Are you looking to embed Gen AI into your product portfolio moving forward?

Zoom has committed to evolving our platform in ways that empower limitless human connection and solve real business problems, and that includes infusing our platform with the powerful capabilities of generative AI.

We're continuing to add capabilities to Zoom AI Companion, our generative AI digital assistant, to allow our customers to customize solutions that work for their unique business needs and provide the most value.

Our approach to AI

is three-fold — we are investing in responsible, federated, and empowering AI.

First and foremost, our approach is responsible because we do not use any audio, video, chat, screen sharing, attachments or other communications-like Customer Content (such as poll results, whiteboard, and reactions) to train Zoom or its third-party artificial intelligence models.

By default, all AI Companion features are



disabled at the account level, but Zoom gives admins granular control of the features through account level settings, and for certain features, group and user-level settings.

Second, our federated approach to AI results in capabilities that are flexible, and our own Zoom models, as well as models from other AI providers such as OpenAI, help us deploy the right model for different use cases.

Third, Zoom's ultimate goal is to empower our customers

to boost their workforce's productivity, teamwork, and customer experience.

And unlike other similar offerings that cost as much as \$30 or more per user per month, AI Companion is included at no additional cost for eligible paid users (may not be available for all regions or industry verticals).



Zoom has committed to evolving our platform in ways that empower limitless human connection and solve real business problems."

This pricing model aligns with our belief that generative AI should be widely accessible.

Remaining on the topic of trends, what will the future of work look like by the end of this digital decade?

While we can't predict the future, we are confident that hybrid work is here to stay. Rapid advancements in technology have forever changed how we work, making it easier to work from anywhere securely and effectively.

I believe that the pace in innovation will continue, allowing employees to be more effective in their jobs and focus on what matters most.

Was this your first time at BlackHat MEA? What outcome were you looking forward to from your participation at BlackHat this year?

"Yes. This was my first time at Black Hat MEA and I'm very honored that I have been asked to participate in two events.

I was looking forward to networking with like-minded professionals and staying up-to-date on the latest emerging threats and developments in cybersecurity, which are not only relevant for the region but the industry overall." CTM

WSO2

THE NEED FOR BALANCE

Asanka Abeysinghe, CTO of WSO2, has called on tech leaders to rethink their strategy - and has stressed the need for greater balance when it comes to constructing in-house platforms in an exclusive op-ed for December's edition of CNME.

In the dynamic landscape of technology, the appeal for complete control has become a driving force for many leaders in the business world, including the Gulf Cooperation Countries.

Founders, CEOs, and technical leaders believe that crafting in-house platforms offer total sovereignty over every layer of the tech stack, promising a tailored solution that aligns with a company's unique needs.

However, this illusion of control often conceals a host of challenges that can undermine broader business objectives, including agility, focus, and scalability.

The choice, however, isn't merely technical; it's strategic. Based on extensive experience with enterprise-level platform development, this article offers five compelling reasons why constructing a platform internally may not be the wisest decision.

Evaluating the considerations discussed here will help your organisation make an informed decision that accounts for various



complexities, budgets and skill base.

1. Lost Agility: The quest for control through platforms built in-house can sacrifice agility. Locking into a rigid architecture and investing time in custom solutions may hinder the ability to respond swiftly to market changes, resulting in missed opportunities.

2. Diluted Focus: Building in-house platforms is resource-intensive and can divert attention from core business objectives. This phenomenon is widespread, with technical teams increasingly absorbed in platform intricacies, leaving less bandwidth for creating valuable experiences.

3. Scalability and Governance: As organisations scale, the governance of in-house platforms become cumbersome and challenging. Additional features introduce complexity, making the system harder to manage, leading to increased operational costs.

4. Over-Engineering: The inclination to over-engineer is a common pitfall, resulting in solutions that are unnecessarily complex, thereby impeding adaptability to new technologies. In turn, complexity can limit agility and stifle innovation.



5. Cost-Benefit Mismatch:

Achieving a positive return on investment from in-house platforms is often more complex than anticipated. Apart from initial development costs, ongoing maintenance, security, and updates may quickly add to the mounting expenses over time.

So, what's the alternative?

While in-house development may appear to be the better option, the sense of autonomy and control it offers may result in complexities and challenges as discussed earlier.

These can be avoided if organisations make the right strategic decisions at the

onset. Autonomy without direction often leads to inefficiency or strategic misalignment.

Therefore, balancing the customisation advantages against the risks and resource requirements reveal that the scales tip in favour of commercial solutions.

Commercial platforms provide a balanced mix of control and agility, allowing companies to focus on core business activities while enjoying reduced costs.



Balancing control and flexibility

Given the potential pitfalls

of investing time, effort and resources into building in-house platforms, opting for a commercial product can give companies the balance they ought to have.

Technical leaders must critically reassess the long-term viability of pursuing absolute control through in-house platforms.

While the allure is compelling, a more balanced approach using commercially available platforms can lead to better alignment with organisational goals, offering a sustainable and agile approach to technology management. [enme](#)

Technical leaders must critically reassess the long-term viability of pursuing absolute control through in-house platforms.”

VEEAM SOFTWARE

BEWARE OF FESTIVE FRAUD

Gil Vega, CISO at Veeam Software, has provided his top tips to keep you and your business safe during the forthcoming festive season.



What do Santa and cybercriminals have in common?

I love this time of year. Work starts to slow down once the end of year quotas are hit, there is a distinct hint of magic in the air, and I get to dedicate myself to two of my favorite things: overindulging and spending time with family and friends.

As I'm getting stuck into my, no doubt later regretted, second helping of roast potatoes, I often find myself thinking about those whose work gets busier at this time of year.

Their hard work keeps essential services running, allowing the rest of us to have a safe and happy holiday season, and for that I am incredibly grateful.

There is another group that also find themselves working around the clock during the holiday season, that you should also spare a thought for.

No, not Santa and his elves, I'm talking about cybercriminals.

Cybercrime goes up by a sizeable 30% in the festive period, meaning cybercriminals are at their busiest.

You might be asking, why this increase? It turns out the holiday season is definitely the most magical time of the year for scammers.

There are several things

that contribute to this, but two major factors are, firstly, people tend to spend a lot of money online at this time of year, and secondly, people tend to be busy and often feel more stressed than usual.

This means that in a lot of the world, stressed, busy people are likely relying on System 1 thinking (the fast, effortless, instinctive, non-critical type of thinking), to make decisions about spending large amounts of money. It's a scammers' dream come true.

What can you do to protect yourself from festive fraud?

- Have a rough idea of what scams to look out for.
- Be on the lookout for fake delivery notifications, fake shopping sites and sellers, fake gift cards and vouchers, fake charities, and fake travel offers.
- Incorporate some simple measures to up your protection, like keeping a healthy level of skepticism, doing your research before taking action, choosing payment methods with more protection like credit cards and PayPal, and setting alerts up on your banking accounts. [CMMC](#)



Cybercrime goes up by a sizeable 30% in the festive period, meaning cybercriminals are at their busiest."



PURPOSE-DRIVEN ENTERPRISE NETWORKS



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