

cnme

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WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEANS BUSINESS

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ERICSSON'S
PRESIDENT OF
MIDDLE EAST
& AFRICA

DIGITAL OKTA'S
SVP

AVEVA'S CEO

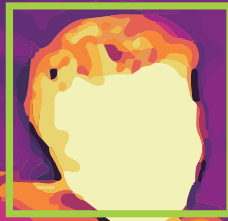
GOVTECH:

MOHAMED BIN
ZAYED UNIVERSITY
OF ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE

MULTI-CLOUD PROVIDER

GEORGE PAWLYSZYN, GENERAL MANAGER, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA
AT RACKSPACE TECHNOLOGY, EXPLAINS HOW THEIR BUSINESS HAS
ACCELERATED SINCE COVID-19, AND HOW THEY'VE BECOME THE 'GO-TO
PARTNER' FOR ENTERPRISES LOOKING TO MOVE TO THE CLOUD.

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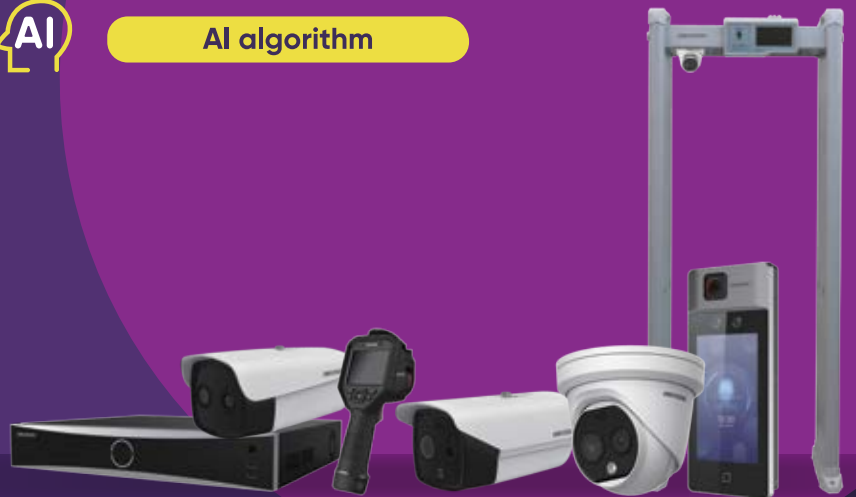
AI algorithm

Thermographic
Cameras

MinMoe Terminals

Metal Detector Door

DeepinMind NVRs



Temperature Screening
Thermal Cameras

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**We have
become an
'on-demand'
economy,
which is fueled
by digital
experiences."**

THE ON-DEMAND ECONOMY

The way we work, where we work, and how we work has been altered drastically since the outbreak of the global health crisis earlier this year.

In this region, we've witnessed a surge in digital transformation and investment in digital technologies, as enterprises turned to technology in an effort keep the lights on and maintain business continuity.

Consumer habits and expectations have evolved and changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has also served to further demonstrate that we have become an 'on-demand' economy, which is fueled by digital experiences.

In September's edition of CNME, we hear from Fadi Pharaon, Ericsson's President of Middle East & Africa, who examines how countries in Africa can leverage and harness the power of emerging technologies to create a new era of socio-economic prosperity.

The front cover story interview is with George Pawlyszyn, General Manager, Middle East & Africa at Rackspace Technology.

In a fascinating discussion he highlights the nuances and complexities that are involved in becoming cloud-native, or serverless – and how the systems integrator has firmly established itself as the 'go-to' partner for enterprises looking to migrate to the public and private cloud.

CPI Media Group continues to host a series of virtual webinars with some of the most prominent IT decision-makers in the region.

We held a virtual webinar with Huawei, 4sight and Intel around the concept of 'intelligent infrastructure', explored the importance of ransomware resilience with Veritas, and we also heard how eSolutions are helping companies manage their data and cloud requirements.

In addition to this, we have interviews with Digital OKTA and Bahrain EDB, and in GovTech, we look at the efforts being made to create sustainable transportation in the 21st century following an historic announcement between MBZUAI and Virgin Hyperloop.

We also have extensive and comprehensive coverage from our tahawultech Transformational Leadership Awards 2020.

Mark Forker
Editor

FORGING A FUTURE THAT **CONNECTS** IT ALL

○ **The Future Of Smart Businesses**

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**The Next In Banking &
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○ **The Tomorrow Of Technology
Staffing**

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Managed Services | Infrastructure &
Datacenter Management |
Helpdesk/End User Support |
Network & Security Management



6 News

CNME rounds up the biggest regional and global developments in enterprise technology, which includes the strong financial results for Avaya in Q3, Smart Dubai launch a new diploma for smart city specialists, and Emirates Digital Wallet launches its new Digital Cash platform, in another step towards a 'cashless' society.

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Sasrik Sivaram Vallath, Divisional Manager at DME Prolink, discloses how the company has become a market leader in terms of offering high-end electrical, wiring and connectivity solutions across the region.

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Roland Berger, compiles a comprehensive whitepaper, co-sponsored by global ICT leader

Huawei, in an effort to assess the effects of COVID-19 on consumers and enterprises.

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A new partnership between Virgin Hyperloop and MBZUAI has been established in a bid to create a sustainable new model for transportation in the 21st century.

42 Ericsson

Fadi Pharaon, President of Ericsson, Middle East and Africa, examines how new technologies can accelerate Africa's digital future and create new prosperity.

50 AVEVA

Craig Hayman, CEO of AVEVA, looks at the digital tools and technologies that enterprises need to equip themselves with in order to survive in the post-pandemic world.

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Avaya reports \$721 million in revenues during Q3 2020



Jim Chirico, Avaya

Avaya Holdings has reported financial results for the third quarter ended 30th June 2020.

The unified communications and contact center software vendor has reported \$721 million in revenues during the third quarter of its financial year. It reported a GAAP Operating income of \$53 million and a non-GAAP Operating income of \$164 million.

Jim Chirico, President and CEO of Avaya, said, "We delivered strong quarterly results exceeding our guidance across all metrics. The company grew sequentially and year over year, which marks a major milestone for Avaya. Software and services as a percent of revenue was 89% – beating the record set this past March; recurring revenue was 64%, up 5 points year-over-year; and our CAPS revenue increased to 30% from 23% in the prior quarter. The strength in our business is a direct result of executing on the deliberate strategy we laid out over two years ago."

"It is our great pleasure to partner with SonicWall, a globally recognised leader in providing integrated security solutions to small and medium enterprises."

Batelco, SonicWall launch integrated security solutions for SMEs in Bahrain



Luca Taglioretti, SonicWall and Abderrahmane Mounir, Batelco



Batelco has announced its exclusive service provider partnership with SonicWall to provide SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) with comprehensive security solutions to enhance cybersecurity for their customer base.

The strategic partnership with SonicWall is in line with Batelco's on-going commitment to provide its SMEs with the latest tools and technologies designed to secure their businesses and enhance their performance.

Partnering with SonicWall, a trusted security partner protecting more than 1 million networks worldwide, allows Batelco to provide a full range of network security solutions to its SME customers, including next generation firewalls, secure switching, secure wireless, endpoint protection and cloud security and a number of integrated and innovative digital solutions to boost cyber-security among its small and medium enterprise clientele base.

Abderrahmane Mounir, general manager, Batelco, said, "It is our great pleasure to partner with SonicWall, a globally recognised leader in providing integrated security solutions to small and medium enterprises. Security is a critical component in the success of this segment, and we pride ourselves on being able to provide

our customers with an affordable and comprehensive, one-stop solution comprised of the latest technological tools that would facilitate and simplify the processes and procedures required to boost SME performance.

"We recognised the need for digital security solutions for this segment and noted how much this need had increased recently as SMEs have become more dependent on digital solutions. Having access to reliable security solutions is considered crucial for business continuity, therefore we were very keen to partner with a trusted global security provider such as SonicWall to deliver solutions to our valued clients," he added.

Luca Taglioretti, Vice President, Global MSSP & Carrier Sales, SonicWall, said, "There is no organisation that is too small for the wandering eye and determination of cybercriminals. It's imperative to work closely with security providers to gain a clear and real-time picture of security risks and the impact they could potentially pose to their organisation.

"As a result of our partnership, Batelco's customers will be armed with enterprise-grade SonicWall TZ Series next-generation firewalls with installation and managed security services," he added.

Dubai introduces new professional diploma for smart city specialists



Younus Al Nasser, CEO of Dubai Data

Smart Dubai has launched a Professional Diploma to enhance the skills of the city's 'Smart City Experience Specialists' and introduce them to best practices to improve the design and quality of experiencing current digital services and help create new ones to drive Dubai's digital transformation and build a smarter city.

Taking place from the first week of September until the first week of November 2020, the Professional Diploma forms part of the new phase of Dubai's Happiness Agenda. The

“Smart Dubai is committed to supporting the education sector in its efforts to create new specialisations and programmes that are needed to build successful smart cities.”

launch of the latest phase of the Happiness Agenda aims at improving people's experiences in the smart city of Dubai, and emphasises the role of Smart City Experience Specialists as a key component of the way successful smart cities function.

The first of its kind in the region, the Professional Diploma is offered online by Smart Dubai in collaboration with the University of Dubai and the Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation (DIDI). It is accredited by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and brings together 35 Smart City Experience Specialists from 27 government, semi-government and private sector entities.

“As the government entity tasked with driving Dubai's transformation into a full-fledged smart city of the future, Smart Dubai is committed to supporting the education sector in its efforts to create new specialisations and programmes that are needed to build successful smart cities,” said His Excellency Younus Al Nasser, Assistant Director General, Smart Dubai and CEO, Dubai Data Establishment, noting that the new Professional Diploma was designed with this exact objective in mind.

“The audience we will be targeting with the Professional Diploma are experienced practitioners who have extensive knowledge and real-world expertise in services but are yet to have any formal training in design or research,” Al Nasser added.

The Professional Diploma consists of four modules and a capstone project, where all of the Diploma's learnings and takeaways are applied towards a real-life project. The second module, Design Basics, follows with insight into primary topics in design methodology such as design thinking, information architecture, user interface, and content design.

Emirates Digital Wallet's digital cash platform set for launch



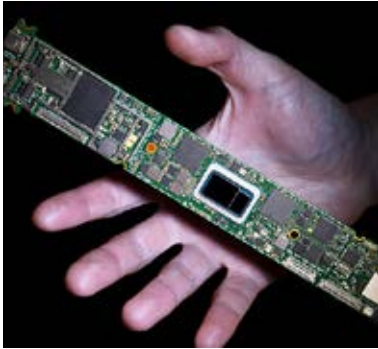
Emirates Digital Wallet has announced its first major step towards eliminating the use of physical cash, as klip, the UAE's Digital Cash Platform, enters its final round of testing.

The nationwide initiative – jointly set up by 15 of the UAE's leading national banks – aims to drive digital transformation across the UAE economy and society.

Mohammed Al Jayyash, Chairman of Emirates Digital Wallet, said, “The vision for Emirates Digital Wallet has always been to act as the catalyst in creating a society without any physical cash in circulation. To get there, our mission involves implementing and managing a digital cash platform, inclusive of all banks, businesses and individuals, that seamlessly integrates and replaces physical cash.”

“Introducing a country-wide digital cash platform is a complex operation. Extensive development, refinement and testing – alongside the continued support of the UAE Central Bank and UAE Banks Federation – has led us in delivering the capability of replacing physical cash with a digital equivalent. As we enter this final round of testing, we become one step closer to our society having no dependency on physical cash,” Al Jayyash added.

Intel unleashes a new era of laptop performance with 'Tiger Lake' CPUs



Intel has recently announced the launch of its next-generation mobile PC processors and the evolution of its broad ecosystem partnerships that are propelling the mobile PC industry forward.

According to the company, the new 11th Gen Intel Core processors with Intel Iris Xe graphics (code-named "Tiger Lake") are the world's best processors for thin-and-light laptops with unmatched capabilities for real-world productivity, collaboration, creation, gaming and entertainment across Windows and ChromeOS-based laptops.

"11th Gen Intel Core processors with Intel Iris X graphics are a major leap forward in real-world processor performance and are the best laptop processors we have built," said Gregory Bryant, Intel executive vice president and general manager of the Client Computing Group. "From productivity and content creation to entertainment and gaming, when you pick a system powered by 11th Gen Intel Core – especially one of our new Intel Evo co-engineered and verified designs – you know you are getting the best laptop experience possible."

Clayton, Dubilier & Rice to acquire Epicor from KKR

Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, KKR, and Epicor Software Corporation have announced a definitive agreement whereby CD&R funds will acquire Epicor, a global provider of industry-specific enterprise software to industrial-focused sectors, from leading global investment firm KKR.

Over the past four years under KKR's ownership, Epicor's executive team, led by CEO Steve Murphy, has driven growth through a combination of organic investments and strategic acquisitions. A series of new product releases has led to a revenue mix comprising 73 percent recurring revenue, which includes an industry-leading SaaS business growth rate of 60 percent year-to-date. Epicor is well-positioned for its exciting next chapter under CD&R ownership.

"This is an exciting day for the entire Epicor family—employees, customers, and partners alike – and validates the



Steve Murphy, Epicor

company's leadership position across markets we serve," said Epicor CEO Steve Murphy. "We welcome this new partnership with CD&R, which shares our vision for growing the company, and I thank KKR for a highly successful partnership these past few years. We are excited to work with CD&R to increase investment in our market-leading product portfolio and to enhance our ability to support an ever-increasing range of customer needs."

Digital DEWA teams up with Group 42 to boost AI and cloud innovation in the UAE



Peng Xiao, Group 42 and Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, DEWA

Digital DEWA, the digital arm of DEWA, has announced a strategic partnership with Group 42 (G42), an Abu Dhabi-based Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cloud computing company.

The partnership was signed in the presence of HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), and Peng Xiao, CEO of Group 42.

HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, said, "At Digital DEWA, we work according to the vision of His Highness Sheikh

Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to make Dubai the city of the future. We are also committed to strengthening the UAE's position as a global hub for the Fourth Industrial

Revolution and increase its contribution to a knowledge-based national economy that depends on innovation and future technological applications."

G42's Peng Xiao said, "We are thrilled to team up with Digital DEWA and play a key role in the digital transformation objectives and initiatives of the country. Our expertise in the fields of AI, Big Data Analytics and cloud computing, combined with our specialised industrial know-how, allow us to develop progressive and holistic solutions to problems in every sector."

Software AG and du to accelerate IoT implementations in UAE



(LtoR) Philippe La Fornara, Software AG and Farid Faraidooni, EITC

Software AG and du, from Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC), have signed a partnership to provide a subscription-based licensing model for IoT services to its business customers.

The strategic collaboration enables Software AG and du to address complex IoT implementations for organisations in UAE.

Farid Faraidooni, Deputy CEO – Enterprise Solutions, EITC, said, “As du steadfastly drives its transformation agenda, this is a significant move to scale du’s offering, drive innovation across UAE and seize opportunities in new growth areas. Software AG’s global

expertise to build new functionalities for telcos through IoT adoption fits perfectly with our strategy to deliver comprehensive IoT solutions for the UAE market.”

Philippe La Fornara, President EMEA, Software AG, said, “Our collaboration with du is a manifestation of the new approach of telcos as providers of IoT services for a fully connected future; a model gaining prominence globally. With du as our strategic telco partner, we aim to play a role in UAE’s 2021 vision through a range of competitive IoT solutions. We welcome du to Software AG’s IoT ecosystem.”



Uber has launched ride-hailing

services in Sharjah, improving access to transportation across the UAE.

Riders in Sharjah will have access to UberSelect, Uber’s most affordable service offering safe, transparent and reliable transportation.

Rifad Mahasneh, General Manager, GCC & Levant at Uber MENA, said, “We’ve seen the benefits of rapid technology adoption and improved access to transportation in the region. COVID-19 has presented unprecedented challenges, but as we

Uber doubles down on Middle East expansion with Sharjah launch

work towards accelerating recovery, we’re focusing on our strengths – offering safe, reliable, and affordable mobility solutions and investing in securing the livelihoods of drivers by creating additional earning opportunities.”

Uber has also rolled out enhanced safety features to help everyone using the app stay safe and healthy. This includes mandating masks for both riders and drivers and offering them the flexibility to cancel a ride without incurring a penalty, if they’re not wearing a mask.

Drivers are also asked to undertake additional safety measures such as regularly sanitising their car and making hand sanitiser available for riders.

Toshiba releases new Canvio Portable storage lineup

Toshiba Gulf has announced the newest models of the Canvio Portable Storage lineup. Canvio Flex is the new USB-C portable storage designed for PCs/Mac computers/iPad Pro mobile digital devices/tablets for cross platform compatibility. Canvio Gaming is the new portable game storage designed for game consoles and gaming PCs.

The Canvio Advance and Canvio Ready both boast a new design that offers portable storage that’s easy to access and take anywhere. This next generation of Canvio designs delivers seamless portability, high storage capacity and broad compatibility for various USB devices.

“The Canvio series delivers data storage excellent for a broad range of use cases and applications. The two new models – Canvio Gaming and Canvio Flex – allow gamers and multi-platform users respectively to expand storage seamlessly and across various devices. They can take their favorite content on the go in a sleek, portable design,” said Santosh Varghese, Vice President, Digital Products and Services Division, Toshiba Gulf.”

The new Canvio models will be available at all major retailers in the fall of 2020.



ECS GLOBAL WIRE

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Sasrik Sivaram Vallath**, Divisional Manager at DME Prolink, which is the Data Communication Division at ECS Global Wire, to find out how he has helped establish the company as a regional leader in terms of offering high-end electrical, wiring and connectivity solutions across different industry verticals.



Sasrik Sivaram
Vallath, Divisional Manager at DME Prolink

Vallath joined ECS in 2018, as part of an effort to expand and establish the Datacomm Division. Over the past 2 years there has been substantial acceptance for DME Prolink throughout the region.

Some notable projects the company has overseen include FAB Bank, Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Space Research Center, Emaar, Wasl, DMMC, and Ministry of Education Kuwait.

Can you tell me what about your role in ECS Global Wire, and how your experience in the cabling industry has helped you achieve regional acceptance for DME Prolink?

I have been associated with the Data Transmission industry since 2005, with a large system integrator that gave me an opportunity to technically qualify large project designs, understand site requirements and identify good products based on installation ease and testing parameters.

In 2011, I moved to an American manufacturer for Copper and Fiber systems that added to my experience on product development aspects. While I was offered a role in ECS Global Wire to develop the Datacomm business, I investigated on the solution range and their approach to the market.

I found that the company had started their Middle Mast operations in 2004, while selling fully-fledged solutions on data communication with an extensive reference with service providers and large island development project. There was

immense potential to develop and establish it further to achieve a reasonable market share.

We invested on product development prioritising the quality in catering verticals and we ensured that the products were approved by regional authorities. The newly developed products were tested and certified with recognised third-party laboratories for reassurance.

Our channel acceptance increased with our persistent support, response to enquiries and technical assistance. We positioned custom-made products to create accounts and then introduced a main-stream product line. The newly developed channels liked us due to the technical support offered on pre-sales and post-sales phases in the projects.

One of the other statements that I used to hear from the channel partners while creating a new account is losing the momentum after the sale is made. Internally we took proactive measures to avoid the situation. While we focused on increasing the sales, we ensured that we devoted equal time on accounts created. The concept was a success and ensured customer satisfaction inside and outside of the UAE.

In addition to this, Systematic Consultants Engagement has been a theory put to practice. We organised different events to engage the IT consultants in training programs, mind-share meetings, technological trends, international standards, and factory updates.

We remained committed to the post sale support in terms of project certification and audit programs and those were well

received by the Technological Consultants in the region.

How important has your pricing been in terms of helping you gain customers in the Middle East region?

We identified the consumer behavior of perceiving an expensive product as a high-quality product. It was a gradual transformation of the pattern to comprehend the pricing mechanism and optimise it to suit the requirement.

We found it simpler to explain the value for the product and price associated with the regional support available to break the stereotypical thought of products manufactured in Europe or US being the best because of its high price.

Having multiple ISO Certified manufacturing facilities in India, Taiwan, China, Turkey, and Portugal, we ensure the warranties on the system performance exceeding the industry norms. The replacements, returns or replenishment plans are also well received in the region due to the extensive regional presence with own warehouse and support staffs.

How do you see the post COVID-19 phase?

While the entire world is affected on different levels due to the pandemic, we identified a larger possibility for a regional expansion. The need for high speed internet access on a residential segment due to increased work from home culture and an upsurge use of consumer IoT applications are bringing us closer to large



We know that risk and issues are always going to pop-up during a project, but we wanted to be ready to address them in a proactive manner.”

residential developers deploying more fiber to the Home.

DME Prolink has always been a largely accepted fiber cables and connectivity vendor in different verticals including service providers. We expect a significant growth of fiber usage to facilitate the transmission requirements in the new era digital transformation and cloud computing.

Robust Passive infrastructure with regain prominence due to the global need for high band consuming data transmission.

What differentiates DME Prolink from its market rivals?

We consider our competitors as an opportunity to identify and develop products that makes a difference to the end customer. DME Prolink distributor who is also the distributor for our competitor American Manufacturer, considers it balanced distribution ecosystem with our enhanced solution where we offer an extensive passive infrastructure product range complying to regional regulations.

In the beginning of the year we introduced the control cables and the customer responses has been noteworthy. The extended product offering makes us a reliable one shop stop for passive infrastructure for IP based systems. We now offer:

- Intelligent Copper and Fiber Connectivity Solutions
- FTTx and GPON Solutions
- IP 20 to 67 Graded Cabinets with PDUs
- Data Center and Cable Management Solutions
- Control and AV Cables
- Outside Plant and Industrial Grade Fiber and Copper Solutions **crime**

4SIGHT

INTELLIGENT INFRASTRUCTURE

CPI Media Group in conjunction with 4sight, Huawei and Intel, held a virtual webinar which examined the impact and opportunities the implementation of 'Intelligent Infrastructure' is going to have in the ICT ecosystem over the next number of years.



Diaa Ahmed Bassiouni
Channel Director - Enterprise
Business Group, Huawei

The interactive webinar was moderated by Mark Forker, Editor of Computer News Middle East and he was joined by the 4sight duo of Anil Misri and Tajinder Pal Singh, Huawei executives Diaa Ahmed Bassiouni, Neeraj Sharma and Sudheer

Subramanian, Intel's Michel Abou Diwan and Usman Azar Malik, Head of Data Center Operations, at The Ruler's Representative Court in Al-Ain.

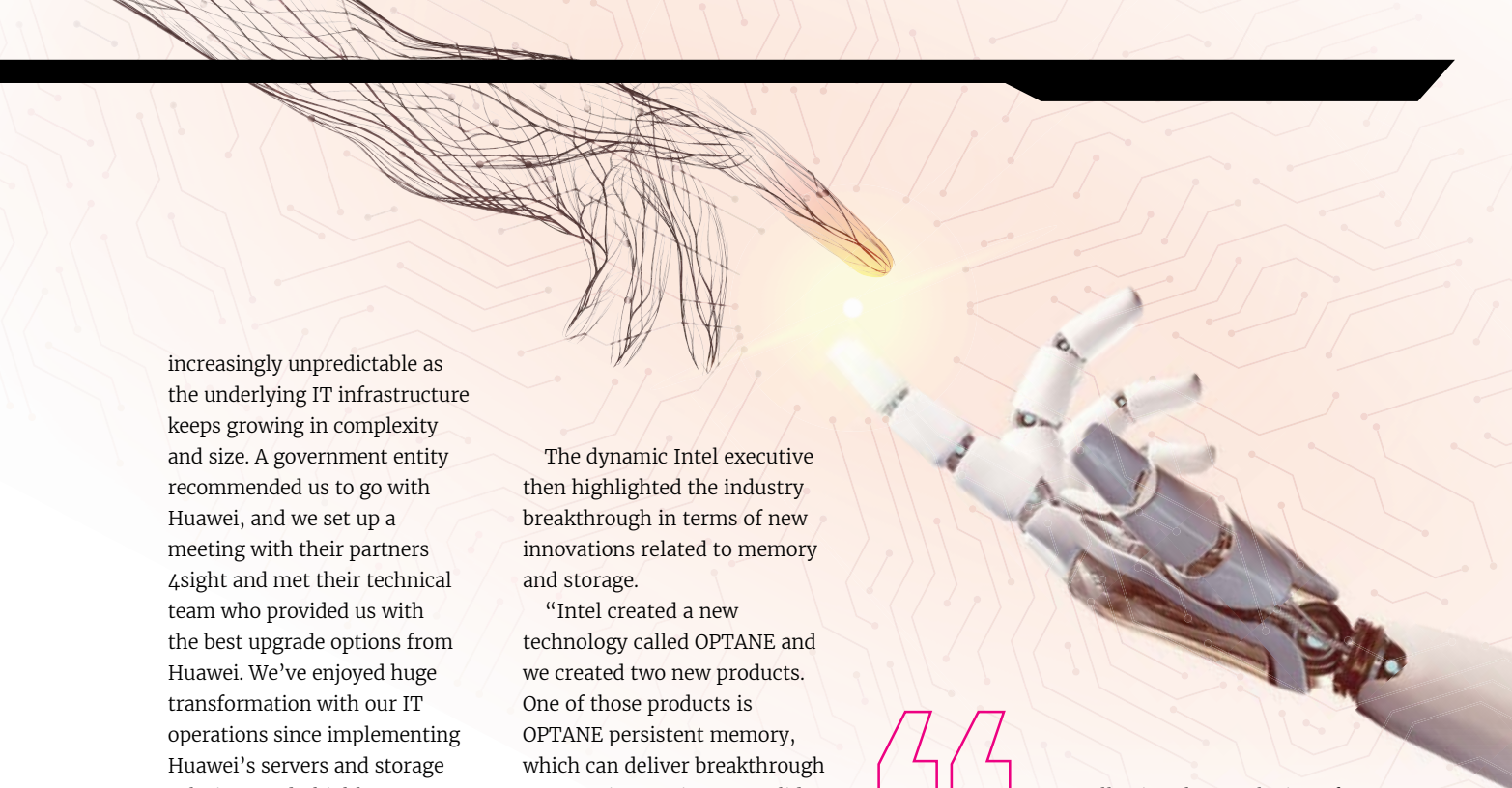
Diaa Ahmed Bassiouni, Channel Director, Huawei Business Group, UAE, delivered a short presentation which highlighted how Huawei's mission and

objective is to ultimately bring best-in-class digital experiences to every person, home and organisation for a fully connected and intelligent world.

"We have two core values at Huawei, and they are customer focus and commitment to innovation. We are a customer-centric business that supports our customers every step of the way during the entire lifecycle of any project that we've partnered with them on. Our commitment to innovation is second to none. More than half of our employees are dedicated to R&D and over the last decade we've spent \$85 billion on R&D, which is a testament to our ambition which is create a more intelligent world," said Bassiouni.

Usman Azar Malik, Head of Data Center Operations, at the Ruler's Representative Court in Al-Ain, disclosed how Huawei's broad portfolio of solutions transformed their IT operations.

"Last year, we planned to upgrade our servers and storage because what we had was no longer sufficient for future growth. In addition to this, the enterprise application environment has become



increasingly unpredictable as the underlying IT infrastructure keeps growing in complexity and size. A government entity recommended us to go with Huawei, and we set up a meeting with their partners 4sight and met their technical team who provided us with the best upgrade options from Huawei. We've enjoyed huge transformation since implementing Huawei's servers and storage solutions and I highly recommend them as no other vendor offers you a better return on investment," said Malik.

The first presentation of the interactive virtual webinar was conducted by Michel Abou Diwan, Regional Alliances Director, Global Account Team at Intel, who illustrated the unique capabilities of Intel Xeon Scalable platform.

Diwan explained that the Intel Xeon solution delivered enhanced performance and value for their customers.

"Intel Xeon Scalable processors will deliver more mainstream performance and will provide an average of 36% generation over generation performance improvement. In addition to this, we can also deliver industry leading frequency for peak performance. We're talking about 3.9GHZ and up to 44% more cache, and last but not least from an investment perspective we offer an average of 42% improvement in generation over generation in relation to performance. This is all delivered at equal or lower pricing," said Diwan.

The dynamic Intel executive then highlighted the industry breakthrough in terms of new innovations related to memory and storage.

"Intel created a new technology called OPTANE and we created two new products. One of those products is OPTANE persistent memory, which can deliver breakthrough memory innovation, consolidate your infrastructure and deliver best-in-class persistence and performance," said Diwan.

The next presentation was delivered by Neeraj Sharma, Senior Solution Manager at Huawei who discussed the data storage solutions towards an intelligent era.

Sharma highlighted the exponential rate at which data has been growing and the challenges that is presented for enterprises who don't have adequate storage.

"We're moving from being data-informed to data-driven, and we know that with all the oceans of data that we're generating, we're using that to make more intelligent decisions. We're making data-driven experiences, data-driven decision-making and data-driven processes. Huawei has been a leader in the storage since 2002, and last year we established the first high-end storage which is powered by AI chips, which has only served to further illustrate our standing as a leader in storage innovation," said Sharma.

“We’re moving from being data-informed to data-driven, and we know that with all the data we’re generating, we’re using that to make more intelligent decisions.”

Following the conclusion of all the presentations, CNME Editor Mark Forker moderated a panel discussion which took a closer look into everything that had been discussed during the virtual webinar.

Sudheer Subramanian, CTO, Cloud & AI Business Group, Huawei Middle East explained how the storage industry had evolved over the years. "We've witnessed a lot of changes over the past 5 years, and there has been a rapid adoption of All-Flash storage solutions. I project that in the next 5 years we're going to see an acceleration in digital transformation based on 5G, Cloud and AI. When you have more and more industry vertical solutions coming into play then the latency will also play a big role. We also know that data growth is going to continue to grow exponentially, but we know that 80% of this data is going to be unstructured, so you need to have a highly-scalable software-defined storage infrastructure to be able to cope and handle all of your data," said Subramanian. **cnme**

VERITAS & ITPS

RESILIENCE AGAINST RANSOMWARE

CPI Media Group conducted a virtual webinar with Veritas and ITPS, to discuss why it's crucial for organisations to have a unified solution that protects all their data across physical, virtual and cloud environments.

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The webinar which was moderated by CNME Editor Mark Forker examined and further delved into why Veritas has emerged as the ideal strategic partner in the global fight against cybercrimes such as ransomware, which has become the preferred method of attack for cybercriminals.

Ahmed Elsayed, CEO of ITPS, began the virtual webinar by giving attendees a brief overview on how they support their customers from a technology and consulting perspective and its relationship with Veritas.

Elsayed stressed that ITPS was a customer-centric company that believes in customer satisfaction and that employees always strive

to achieve it across their four different business units which include infrastructure, network and security, software development and cybersecurity.

"We have a full cybersecurity department and we provide consultancy to help our clients in relation to compliance and regulation. What we offer our customers in terms of end-to-end security is provide them with a free assessment and take a step-by-step approach in terms of what is required to determine are they ready to apply the policy and procedures to integrate the cybersecurity solution offering. We then propose a solution that will work for them and we also support them after implementation to ensure everything is working

effectively and efficiently," said Elsayed.

Tarek El-Reidy, Senior Solutions Sales Engineer, at Veritas Technologies, who delivered a detailed presentation entitled, Ransomware Resiliency with Veritas: Detect, Protect and Recover.

El-Reidy began his presentation by detailing the challenges facing many enterprises today in relation to the exponential growth in data and the costs associated with storage.

"92% of organisations strategy involves a transition to the cloud, but over 30% of them have noted that they have faced challenges and that migration to the cloud involves a lot of complexity for them. In addition



As far as I'm concerned ransomware is a nightmare, but unfortunately I see it as a case of when we will be attacked instead of if we will be attacked."

to the migration, they have also expressed issues in relation to security and storage," said El-Reidy.

The dynamic Veritas executive highlighted research findings from IDC that estimated storage costs are set to soar due to an increase in storage demand, but countered that with other research that projected that 37% of data will deliver value resulting in a \$430bn growth in productivity.

However, one statistic referenced by El-Reidy that really jumped off the page was the fact that IDC has claimed that 80% of enterprise data remains 'unstructured'.

"Compliance is a huge challenge when you move to the cloud and you have your data center on-premise and determining who manages your data and who has access to your data is a challenge. It is hard for an IT environment to control and you need an intelligent tool to facilitate this type of management on your data. The data you have is likely to have PPI and from an IT perspective it is imperative that you know you have this data and where it resides in your data center in order to manage and protect it," said El-Reidy.

The Senior Solutions Sales Engineer at Veritas Technologies then proceeded to document the severe damage that ransomware attacks are having on enterprises on a global scale.

He pointed out that ransomware has caused over

\$11.5bn in damage to businesses in 2019 and is expected to cost the global economy \$6 trillion by 2021.

"As far as I'm concerned ransomware is a nightmare, but unfortunately I see it as a case of when we will be attacked instead of if we will be attacked. Enterprises are the main target for cybercriminals, they no longer focus on consumers as they see it is much more lucrative for them to target large enterprises," said El-Reidy.

He added that those carrying out the ransomware attacks prey on vulnerability, and that they have capitalised on the current COVID-19 pandemic to target unsuspecting users. He used the screenshot of a text message apparently from the UKGOV regarding a COVID-19 payment as an example of the tactics employed.

"If an SMS comes from the government and it looks

completely legitimate, why should I doubt it and not open the text message. They are very clever and use what is happening in the world to trick people into falling foul of one of their scams," said El-Reidy.

El-Reidy stressed that the best way for enterprises to better protect and defend themselves from ransomware attacks was to use its Veritas Enterprise Data Services Platform. "Veritas customers can maintain control when ransomware strikes through our Enterprise Data Services Platform which contains a comprehensive set of technologies that supports ransomware IT system, protection, detection and also guarantees strategic recovery in the face of ransomware which is aligned with the NIST cybersecurity framework," said El-Reidy. **crime**



Tarek El-Reidy
Senior Solution Sales Engineer at
Veritas Technologies

CLOUD4C

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

CNME attended a recent webinar hosted by Cloud4C, which heard insights from some of the region's most prominent and influential CIO's on what major challenges await enterprises post-COVID-19 - as businesses attempt to adjust to what has been described as the 'New Normal'.

The webinar which was entitled 'CIO Extreme IT Strategies to Navigate the COVID-19 Pandemic', featured IT Leaders from across the Middle East.

In our coverage we focus on the contributions from Shafique R Ibrahim, Group IT Head – Al Fardan Group, Piyush Kumar Chowhan, Group Chief Information Officer at LuLu Group International and Saji Oommen, Chief Information Officer at RAK Ceramics, UAE.

Shafique R Ibrahim, Group IT Head – Al Fardan Group:

These are testing times for all businesses, and especially for the IT departments of those businesses. We may be in different boats, but we are all in the same storm.

For us, this has also been an opportunity to prove IT agility.

We had to respond to the overnight call to activate certain functions for work-from-home. We did have a simple framework for work-from-home, but certain functions have been confined to the office environments as part of our policies for the highest security. In this crisis, we were asking our employees to connect from public networks and perform critical sensitive functions.

Naturally, we were concerned about their security of the networks they would access organisational data from. Our IT teams were able to pull it off even under trying circumstances and equip hundreds of employees to work from home without compromising the least in terms of security.

Initially, our business had to comply with the lockdown announced. But it did not take long for the authorities to appreciate that remittance is not a luxury but a necessity. Even when our customers are confined to their homes and they would need to be in charge of their finances, to be able to spend or send as they want.

The IT department is the one that ensures that all other departments are working. But the fundamental and the functional role itself is changing. Maybe at the

beginning of the evolution, the IT department would just point out the blinking light, but now, in the current iteration, it has to be competent enough to identify the issue and solve it.

The point is that it is no longer about just managing the infrastructure but about enhancing businesses with relevant and specific IT knowledge.

Another aspect of the post-pandemic business landscape has been the focus on bringing down costs. True, spending will become more conservative, but IT investments will increase on the whole.

According to us, we will see greater focus on business decisions driven by cost optimisation rather than on infrastructure. Even as our employees work from home in the near future, we want to ensure that our customer experience is uninterrupted. They should be able to access and manage their money completely safely.

Piyush Kumar Chowhan, Group Chief Information Officer at LuLu Group International:

Our large retail group has two verticals: Supermarkets/hypermarkets and hospitality/malls. Supermarkets are deemed essential services since they have to be available to the public to access their daily needs.



We did have a simple framework for work-from-home, but certain functions have been confined to the office environments as part of our policies for the highest security."



As such, we had to keep the business running smoothly even in the face of weak supply chains, restricted resources, uncertain transport, etc. For us, the challenge was not just the functioning of the organisation but also maintaining uncompromising standards of employee safety without interrupting our services. Forecasting warehouse stocks for food in the new normal has also become a new exercise.

From the industry perspective, this situation can also be an opportunity to prioritise digital transformation at every level. The focus should be on moving to open source, nimble architecture that reduces dependency on legacy infrastructure.

With time, expenditure on legacy infrastructure will have to be tapered off, so that there will be greater investment in new technology and solutions

that will accelerate digital transformation.

Priorities will be on investing in new technology and charting a new roadmap to business that will focus on value optimisation for digital transformation.

Saji Oommen, Chief Information Officer at RAK Ceramics, UAE:

In terms of productivity and security, work from home is a novel experience for all of us. I am not sure how it is for small teams, but when you have a team of 1500 people working from home, you need a new set of solutions that are specific to this scenario.

Our first strategy has been to deploy additional security and DR solutions that are equipped to deal with global security concerns.

We are now experimenting with AI & ML technologies for security that will help us monitor threats and mount effective

defense. Moreover, our businesses are present across different locations, involving multiple geographies and regulations.

For example, our salespeople were on the IVR with CRM-installed tablets to take down orders. Within 2-3 days, we updated our B2B portal to be able to share images with customers. We also added a visualisation program so they can get a real-life idea of how the real estate looks like.

These strategies helped us keep our sales going. We were able to convert enough leads to orders, as well as strengthened our fulfilment center with additional technology.

Our teams devised and deployed multiple solutions like this within days. The positive aspect of this crisis is the test of our agility, and that we were able to successfully come up with a strong business continuity plan. **cnme**

HUAWEI

THE ROLE OF ICT IN THE 'NEW NORMAL'

Roland Berger, a leading global management consultancy firm has launched a new whitepaper that has been co-sponsored by global ICT leader Huawei, that assesses the effects of COVID-19 on consumers and enterprises and resulting implications for the ICT industry in the GCC region.



Kushal Shah
Senior Partner and Head of the Digital Practice, Asia, at Roland Berger

The whitepaper, titled “ICT’s pivotal role in post-COVID-19 “new normal””, forecasts potential future telco and enterprise IT expenditure in the region, driven by an accelerated digitization environment post-COVID-19.

It also highlights initiatives by governments in the region to stimulate the economy, the important role of the ICT sector as an economic enabler, and the potential measures regulators and governments can take to create a conducive environment for ICT investments.

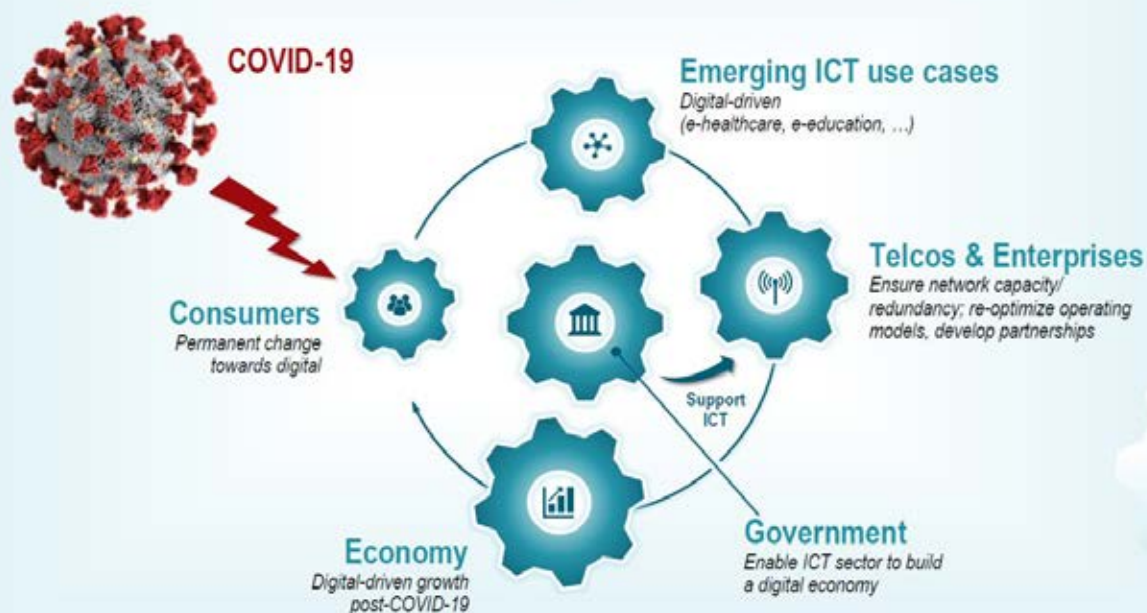
The pandemic has had a permanent impact on the way consumers work, learn and shop. IP traffic has increased significantly and is now stabilizing at 30% higher than pre-COVID times, revealing the permanent nature of this shift.

As such, organizations are now focused on optimizing their operating models and digitizing key processes and customer touchpoints, all of which will result in new emerging ICT use cases such as remote healthcare, online education, digitized public services, home automation, AI surveillance, and much more.

Amongst its findings, the whitepaper states that enterprise IT spend for GCC markets is expected to increase from USD 16.5 billion in 2019 to USD 20 billion by 2024, with sectors such as healthcare, education, media, financial services expected to accelerate their IT spend growth by 2-3x over this period.

Moreover, the top five prioritized emerging use cases – e-consultation, e-health monitoring, e-learning,

ICT spend growth to accelerate 2-3x over the next 5 years, riding on the strongest ever wave of digitization in history



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automated mining, and safety and sanitation – are expected to drive a total market opportunity of USD 5 billion in the GCC by 2024.

The report also states that telcos are expected to accelerate investment in 5G and fiber connectivity to enable new online businesses, support increased consumer demand and ensure sufficient network redundancy.

The accelerated rollout of 5G and expansion of fiber networks is projected to increase telco capital expenditure to 23% of revenue by 2021 up from 18–19% in 2019.

Separately, the report emphasizes the key role governments play in fighting the pandemic and enabling the digital economy to support future growth. It also shares

measures governments can continue to implement to support the ICT industry.

For example, the telecom industry in our region can help boost economic growth by accelerating investments in 5G and fiber. The study estimates investment in 5G to add 6–8% to countries' GDP combining direct, indirect and induced impacts.

To that end, governments will need to support telcos by providing them with temporary monetary relief, drive operational efficiencies as well as support the SME ecosystem, in order to enable a strong economic recovery and ensure long-term growth.

Kushal Shah, Senior Partner and Head of the Digital Practice in Asia from Roland Berger commented on the White Paper



Our report studies how COVID-19 has affected economies, businesses and consumers in the Middle East region, and will lead to new, digital-driven use cases emerging in an ICT-led economic recovery."

and claimed that significant investment in the ICT ecosystem would help drive an economic recovery.

"The COVID-19 pandemic will have a seismic and permanent impact on our lives – work, life and play as we knew it will no longer be the same again. Our report studies how COVID-19 has affected economies, businesses and consumers in the Middle East region, and will lead to new, digital-driven use cases emerging in an ICT-led economic recovery. The report also highlights the Telco and Enterprise IT spend expected over the next few years in the region to drive this recovery as well as the key role that governments and regulators can play in supporting the ICT sector," said Shah. **crme**

Feras Al Jabi
SVP, ATC

ATC

NEXT-GENERATION EDUCATION

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Feras Al Jabi**, SVP, ATC, to find out more about its partnership with global ICT vendor Huawei, and how its collaboration has transformed 'remote learning' across the United Arab Emirates.

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 earlier this year has put life as we know it to a sudden halt. This has impacted many organisations across multiple industries, pushing them to adapt to the new norm and find new ways to operate.

Among the industries that were hugely impacted by the pandemic was the education sector. Precautionary measures such as social distancing have

pushed schools, universities and other educational institutions to quickly adapt and implement distance education to prevent any disruptions in learning.

The shift to online education has affected everyone, from education authorities to schools, teachers, students and parents. In the new normal, live streaming has replaced the classroom as the main arena for learning.

While the shift from offline education to online learning has

given rise to several challenges, many technology leaders have played a significant role in making the transition as smooth as possible for everyone.

Among these technology players is ATC, a UAE-based systems integrator focused on IOET, cloud, AI, mobility, SDN and SDDC.

ATC prides itself of being an industry player that grabs the opportunities brought by digital transformation by being an active

player in the market and enabling regional firms to embrace the power of technology.

ATC is not a “me too” player, but rather it is a nimble boutique inspired by the massive advancement to bring a new business model specifically tailored to its clients.

In line with this, ATC has been selected as a strategic ICT technology partner and cloud solution provider by Ankabut. As part of the agreement, ATC has enabled Ankabut with the best education cloud in the Middle East powered by Huawei technology.

Feras Al Jabi, SVP, ATC, said, “ATC’s core focus has been the education sector as we believe that a knowledge-driven economy can be more sustainable in future developments. Our collaboration with ANKABUT is more strategic than transactional, we understood their objective and tailored the solution, which holistically and seamlessly integrated with their current and future business needs.

ATC along with its partner Huawei have been enabling the digital education era by providing the advanced IT infrastructure for public schools in UAE and private cloud solution.”

ATC’s implementation solution includes full cloud stack solutions such as Huawei Cloud Stack, a full-stack hybrid cloud solution with Huawei CloudFabric, a software-defined network solution that provides seamless intra-data centre and inter-data centre cloud connectivity for physical, virtual, or container-based

workload and applications, and OceanStor Dorado V6 Flash Native All-Flash Storage.

ATC helps education institutes leverage Huawei technologies to offer innovative solutions such as Smart Classrooms. Huawei’s cloud platform empowers education firms with an End to End (E2E) solution for teachers and students, which make real-time audio and video interactive teaching possible.

This improves student participation and allows teachers to understand how students are performing. The solution offers live, online classroom broadcasts, full-angle classroom recording and on-demand lesson playback. It uses features such as Live Virtual Classroom (LVC).

This connects teachers with students online, creating an immersive classroom experience, which allows students and teachers to interact in real-time with HD video and audio.

In the past, you have to deploy a pile of devices (such as the projector, whiteboard, video terminal, loudspeaker, and microphone) in a meeting room to make it video-enabled. Now, only one CloudLink Board is required to meet the requirements of all scenarios.

It is easy to deploy and remove headache from countless cables and incompatible ports. This solution comes with 65-inch 4K, touchscreen, intelligent, presenting video images, 5K Ultra-HD. The built-in whiteboard supports local and remote collaboration.



ATC’s core focus has been the education sector as we believe that a knowledge-driven economy can be more sustainable in future developments.”

The Drag, Zoom, Erase by Gesture, and Co-author operations are allowed. Besides, content such as video, whiteboard, and other content opened through browsers can be displayed on one screen but in different panes.

Huawei’s online education solutions allow educational firms to quickly and securely set up classrooms on-demand. It leverages advanced audio and video encoding technology to ensure smooth live streaming in various network scenarios and to significantly reduce bandwidth pressure and costs, ensuring that educators can provide stable online teaching.

ATC has enabled Ministry of education, UAE to transform the classroom to full digital learning experience for students across all the public schools in UAE with more than 20,000 Huawei access points installed across 600+ public schools in UAE.

Students and teachers around the world have been rapidly adjusting to a new learning routine as schooling shifted online, as a means to curb the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

ATC is continuously able to offer cloud services in support of the UAE’s universities and schools, addressing the need to develop new clouds for educational institutions in the country.

ATC has enabled Ministry of education, UAE to transform the classroom to full digital learning experience for students across all the public schools in UAE. With more than 20,000 Huawei access points installed across 600+ public schools in UAE. **cme**





RACKSPACE

MULTI-CLOUD PROVIDER

CNME Editor Mark Forker speaks to **George Pawlyszyn**, General Manager, Middle East and Africa, at Rackspace Technology, to find out how the company is helping its clients navigate their way through the challenges presented by COVID-19.

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Pawlyszyn, has enjoyed a decorated and distinguished career in the IT ecosystem over the last two decades, and the charismatic executive eloquently articulated his points in a fascinating interview.

We begin the conversation by talking about, yeah you guessed it the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. It's impossible to avoid the topic, as the outbreak of the virus has disrupted the way we work, when we work, and how we work.

Interestingly, Pawlyszyn believes that even with the introduction of a vaccine,

things won't go back to normal like some have suggested, and the genie, which is a hybrid working model is now firmly out of the bottle.

"I don't think it's ever going to be the same again even if there is a vaccine. People have learnt through what you could describe as a massive social experiment that this hybrid working model clearly has huge advantages to it. People have noticed that they can get a lot of people together at short notice by hooking them up on a virtual call," said Pawlyszyn.

In addition to this, he believes that there will be a lot less business travel post-

George Pawlyszyn
General Manager, Middle East and Africa, at Rackspace Technology

COVID and pointed out that this was already declining prior to the pandemic.

“Businesses have discovered that they can do more meetings per-day than they probably could otherwise, so I think there’s going to be a lot less business travel, and I think the situation has really magnified the point that 50% of travel is completely unnecessary. However, I do think for client interactions people will still want to have face-to-face meetings,” said Pawlyszyn.

In terms of their own business, COVID-19 has helped solidify Rackspace Technology’s position as a global leader in the multi-cloud sector, and they’ve seen an upsurge in demand and a change in mindset from enterprises looking to migrate to the cloud.

“We’re seeing a tectonic shift in the industry to multi-cloud which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. For our business it’s been a massive accelerator. To provide some context, around 20% of the workloads of people going to cloud were already there, but doubts amongst the remainder of businesses ranged from concerns on security, the applications not working properly, or how do they run a hybrid environment? What COVID-19 has done is force a lot of businesses, including some of our new clients to do things that they were putting

off because they thought it was too difficult,” said Pawlyszyn.

The General Manager of Rackspace Technology’s operations in the Middle East & Africa said that he noticed a huge change from companies on a week-to-week basis at the outset of COVID-19, but that they quickly came to the conclusion that they needed to embrace change and adopt new technologies and embark upon digital transformation.

“Some enterprises adopted the mindset of we’re just going to ride out COVID-19, and then afterwards everything will go

back to normal, but as each week went by you could see them abandoning that belief and it has really woken them up. IDC has projected a 10% increase in the investment of digital transformation technologies, which is surprising in the current climate as you’d have thought businesses wouldn’t be investing and would be more conservative, but there was a realisation that in order to survive you have to implement change,” said Pawlyszyn.

Pawlyszyn added that Rackspace Technology were





I think what differentiates us is the fact that we're a multi-cloud company. We can design, architect and migrate you to the public cloud."

very lucky as a company due to the sheer diversity of its clients, and even though some of its clients in the travel and transportation industry may have taken a severe hit, they've been more than compensated by gaining new clients in gaming, e-commerce, media and finance.

He also added that enterprises encountered challenges in terms of the skillset that is required to move to a fully cloud-enabled environment and take those applications that need transformation and

modernisation and were key factors in putting businesses off moving to the cloud.

"We've got clients, including Aramex, a large logistics company, which has seen its business boom because of COVID-19, and they've made a huge

investment in transforming their legacy environment in order to make it more cloud capable and scalable. Normally, those are the types of things that people leave to last, because it is more complicated and complex, but businesses are beginning to realise that if you find the right partner, who knows how to do it then they can take you there," said Pawlyszyn.

The dynamic executive also said that one other thing the cloud has also taught us is you don't have to have a partner sitting next door to you in



Riyadh, or Abu Dhabi.

"We've been implementing complex modernisation programs using remote global teams, which if you tried to sell to a client six months ago, they would've said, 'Are you nuts'? We're currently in the middle of delivering complex modernisation programs remotely, where the client is also split between countries because some employees have been caught overseas, but I've had the luxury of being able to pick the best people, whether they are in the US, Europe, or the Middle East, and the

clients are loving it because they realise that if you work with a partner that has real process, tools and experience then they are the ones that adapt quicker to new modes of working," said Pawlyszyn.

One other key component of Rackspace Technology's diverse offering is the fact that they have the capabilities to run their own private cloud data centers, which enables them to know what it means from a management perspective to have a hybrid environment.

"We can move our clients data centers into an OPEX

model, which essentially means that while they're scaling down they are still getting the benefits of being on the cloud, so rather than having to go out and refresh equipment, which they might only need for 18 months, we put them onto our private cloud in their data center, and as it winds down they only pay for what they use. It's a consumption-based model across all our platforms, including private cloud, which a lot of businesses don't realise we do. However, it's important to stress that



multi-cloud is only useful if you can get the benefits from it,” said Pawlyszyn.

Pawlyszyn then spoke about the growing trend towards serverless computing, explaining not only what it entails, but why there is such a demand for it within the ICT ecosystem.

“You’ve got physical machines, virtual machines and then functions, and functions operate as if there are no servers, so you’re literally just paying for the usage that those functions are consuming. What quite a lot of people do is take physical

servers and replicate that on the cloud, but that’s the least efficient way of doing it. People who are using virtual machines will buy virtual machines on the cloud, now they might not have a choice because their applications have to be recoded to go serverless, but it’s what they call cloud native, but most people nowadays are on virtual machines. However, the most cost-effective way for people that have variability is serverless,” said Pawlyszyn.

Pawlyszyn concluded a superb and wide-ranging



We can move our clients’ data centers into an OPEX model, which essentially means that while their scaling down they are still getting the benefits of being on the cloud.”

interview by illustrating why Rackspace Technology continues to go from strength-to-strength and what ultimately differentiates the company from its market rivals.

“I think what differentiates us is the fact that we’re truly a multi-cloud company. We can design, architect and migrate you to the public or private cloud. If you just want to do some co-location, then we can help you with that, if you want us to help you design your end state DevOps organisation and transform your applications and then migrate and manage them onto the cloud then we can do that too. All the large SI’s will say they can do this, but we can do it faster and cheaper, and the reason we can do that is we don’t have the overheads. Our agility and the attention we give our clients is ultimately what differentiates us from our market rivals. We’re a pure-play cloud company, and we’re only tied to our customers success,” said Pawlyszyn. **cme**



tahawultech.com

TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERSHIP
Awards 2020

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

In July, CPI Media Group held the tahawultech.com Transformational Leadership Awards 2020, in recognition to the IT and technology decision-makers who illustrated phenomenal leadership and guidance that ensured we maintained business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst things are beginning to get back to normal, COVID-19 did force us to embrace and adapt to what is being described as the 'new normal' as governments all over the world attempt to strike the precarious balance between protecting its citizens and managing the economy.

What became evident in the first few months of the crisis was that technology and innovation would be key components in terms of finding

a resolution to overcome the pandemic, and that was proved correct over time.

Technology has ultimately ensured that enterprises on a global scale and been able to maintain 'business continuity' during this global health crisis.

Here in the Middle East we've seen incredible and remarkable leadership from the ICT ecosystem in terms of how they have responded to the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

At tahawultech we wanted to acknowledge their efforts and show our appreciation to

the exceptional technology thought leaders and companies who have leveraged their expertise and knowledge to equip businesses with the tools to cope and reshape the world post COVID-19.

The tahawultech.com 'Transformational Leadership Awards' celebrated the top CIOs, CISOs and Technology Vendors from across the region that have clearly illustrated remarkable vision and foresight that has ultimately helped enterprises navigate their way through these uncharted waters. **cme**

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MICRO
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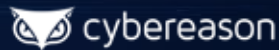
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Best Automation
Solutions Provider

Tala Fakhro*Chief of Market Strategy and Intelligence at Bahrain EDB*

BAHRAIN EDB

BAHRAIN'S JOURNEY TO DIGITISATION

Tala Fakhro, Chief of Market Strategy and Intelligence at Bahrain EDB explains how the COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for driving digital transformation across the Kingdom.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has brought about an atmosphere of uncertainty and contradiction. Around the world, governments are bracing for a second, global wave of infection, but at the same time, tentatively beginning to reopen their economies.

Whole industries have been decimated, while others have thrived. The narrative has long since shifted from any possibility of returning to the way things were. Instead, the world has resigned itself to adapting to the 'new normal'. But few can articulate exactly what this new normal will entail. There is only one constant: the pace of change has increased.

Indeed, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for change at a global level, driving digital transformation across a range of sectors and accelerating changing consumer behaviour.

In few places is this more visible than in the Middle East, and particularly the GCC, a region that boasts some of the world's highest internet and smartphone penetration rates, and yet which is notorious for its reliance on cash.

The surge in the use of ecommerce, mobile payments and financial technologies more broadly has been vertiginous. In the Kingdom of Bahrain, for example, electronic fund transfer systems such as Fawri and Fawri+ saw transactions increase by 935.7 per cent year-on-year in the month of May.

As the first GCC member to begin diversification efforts, Bahrain is indicative of the ongoing journey to digitisation currently being undertaken by countries across the region. As the latest UN e-Government survey report highlights, GCC governments have for some time now been seeking to grow tech and startup ecosystems from scratch, complete with world-class accelerators, 5G infrastructure, and even burgeoning VC communities.

Ranking second in the region for e-Government readiness and capacity, Bahrain is now home to the region's first AWS hyperscale data centre, is one of the first countries in the world to roll out nationwide commercial 5G, and is shifting its entire government to the cloud.

Indeed, as a result of a comprehensive economic reform



Bahrain is indicative of the ongoing journey to digitisation currently being undertaken by countries across the region.

programme, which saw the Kingdom named the fourth most-improved economy in the world by the World Bank, there are now few interactions with the state that require a physical presence.

This strong digital connectivity stood the Kingdom in good stead when the pandemic started coming into full force. Bahrain was able to temporarily close its educational institutions – from kindergartens to universities – quicker than most countries in the world, but still minimise disruption to studies thanks to the Ministry of Education's online education portal.

Trade with Saudi Arabia, the region's largest market and one of Bahrain's most important trading partners, was able to be maintained thanks to a streamlined and technologically advanced customs process from which paper has been almost entirely eliminated.

However, it is not just in quickly reacting to the early stages of the crisis that digitisation has a role to play. Perhaps more important will be its role as we enter the so called new normal, which stretches ahead for the foreseeable future.

Bahrain's digital revamp of its judiciary system, which

includes online fast-tracking of a number of processes including making claims, making payments, and viewing cases is already proving invaluable. This comes at a time when globally, COVID-related commercial disputes are likely to skyrocket and court systems are already under strain, thanks to social distancing measures.

When Bahrain made it possible to register a business online, register property online and even secure a construction permit online, it was an improvement and a convenience. In the new normal, it may prove to be a necessity.

Bahraini entrepreneur and open banking pioneer Abdulla Almoayed argued recently that no society can claim to be truly digital if a citizen cannot run every single aspect of their lives from their smartphone.

Bahrain was already making impressive progress on its digitisation journey – from applying for a construction permit to registering a business, in today's Bahrain few interactions with the state cannot be conducted online – but the road ahead is strewn with hurdles.

Some, like the entrenched habits of the Middle Eastern consumer, seemed almost insurmountable. It is important not to make light of the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps the most significant global health crisis in living memory.

But it is likely owing to this paradigm-shifting event that several of those hurdles were able to be overcome. Bahrain's digitisation journey continues, but in line with the new normal, its pace has picked up. **enme**

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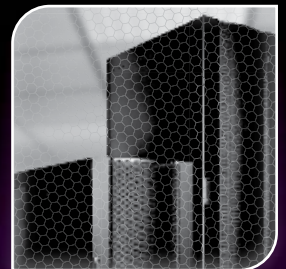
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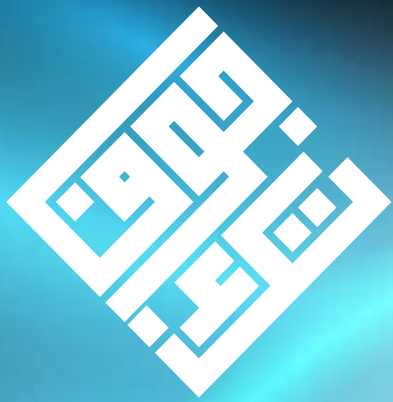
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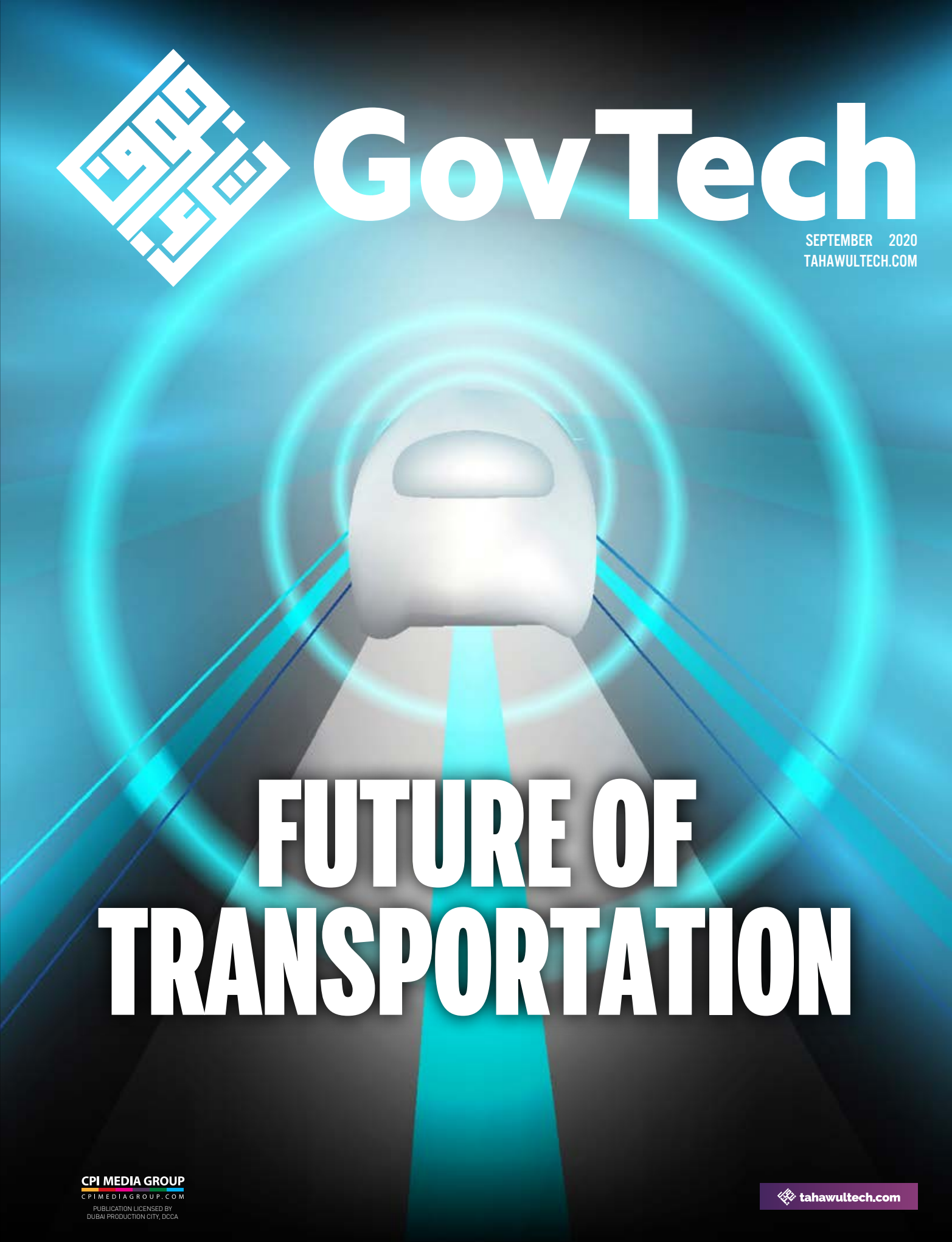
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FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION



MOHAMED BIN ZAYED UNIVERSITY OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION

Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the world's first graduate-level, research-based artificial intelligence (AI) university, and Virgin Hyperloop, the California-based category leader in hyperloop development, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance the transportation sector in the Middle East through AI.

40

The historic collaboration between MBZUAI and Virgin Hyperloop is part of an effort to accelerate the global development of hyperloop technology and sustainable transport innovation.

In a virtual signing ceremony, the MoU was signed by His Excellency Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State and Chairman of the Board of Trustees at MBZUAI, and His Excellency Sultan Bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO of DP World and Chairman of Virgin Hyperloop, in the presence of Professor Sir Michael Brady, Interim President at MBZUAI; Dr. Ling Shao, Executive Vice President and Provost at MBZUAI; Dr. Behjat Al Yousuf, Executive Vice President for Outreach and Engagement at

MBZUAI, and Harj Dhaliwal, Managing Director Middle East and India at Virgin Hyperloop.

MBZUAI and Hyperloop will engage the best AI minds of both teams to pursue three core objectives: joint fundamental research in several key AI domains, such as computer vision; massively parallel cloud computing initiatives, and a range of solution-oriented commercial projects in the smart transportation industry.

Transporting passengers and goods at speeds exceeding 1,000km/h, hyperloop is a completely new form of transport with the ambition to become the most sustainable means of mass transportation of the 21st century.

The potential of AI, which is fundamental to Virgin Hyperloop's future operations in the Middle East, will form the

core basis to explore knowledge exchange opportunities between MBZUAI and Virgin Hyperloop.

Speaking on the announcement, His Excellency Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber said: "This partnership exemplifies the immense capacity of AI to reshape the world around us by breaking boundaries. Virgin Hyperloop will change the way we move around the world. MBZUAI will help enable this by providing access to some of the world's most talented AI professionals, as well as superior research facilities, which can contribute to delivering Virgin Hyperloop's vision."

His Excellency Sultan Bin Sulayem said that AI is a fundamental building block in establishing an 'on-demand economy'.

"Our region has great potential to emerge as a global powerhouse



from the current economic situation. The transportation and technology sector – and that includes advancements in AI in particular – will define our regional capabilities in the long-term. Supported by AI, we are ultimately offering time with this disruptive, completely new, and sustainable technology that will help us to create an on-demand economy. We seek to revolutionise regional transport and trade sectors through a passenger and cargo hyperloop-enabled system, powered by AI. We can transport people and high-priority goods at the speed of an airliner, moving them between economic zones, cities and emirates. The UAE's education sector, through partnerships such as our new collaboration with MBZUAI, will have a meaningful role in

enabling and driving this very exciting and growing industry.”

Virgin Hyperloop is the only company in the world that has successfully tested its hyperloop technology at scale, launching the first new mode of mass transportation in over 100 years. The company successfully operated a full-scale hyperloop vehicle using electric propulsion and electromagnetic levitation under near-vacuum conditions, realising a fundamentally new form of transportation that is faster, safer, cheaper, and more sustainable than existing modes.

Harj Dhaliwal, Managing Director Middle East and India at Virgin Hyperloop said that hyperloop technology represented the best option for sustainable mass transport in the 21st century, as more and more investment is made in safer,



What matters the most here is the capacity and the capability that the UAE gained out of this mission, and the knowledge it brought into the country.”

cleaner and more efficient ways to revolutionise transportation as part of a global effort to find climate change.

“With hyperloop, we find ourselves at an important crossroads of transport innovation. AI will play an important part and it promises to transform the customer experience, from seamless check-ins to smooth system operations. Together with our institutional partners at MBZUAI, we want to further accelerate the global hyperloop development, leading to the commercialisation of the most sustainable means for mass transport in the 21st century,” said Dhaliwal/

MBZUAI will offer Master of Science (MSc) and PhD level programs while also engaging policymakers and businesses around the world so that AI is harnessed as a force for positive transformation. The University has already begun the process of vetting the applications for 2021 intake, with thousands of applications received from over 80 countries.

Graduate students can apply to MBZUAI via the University's website for 2021 registration. The first class of graduate students will commence coursework at MBZUAI's Masdar City campus in January 2021.

The University will provide all admitted students with a full scholarship, plus benefits such as a monthly allowance, health insurance, and accommodation. MBZUAI will work with leading local and global companies to secure internships and will also assist students in finding employment opportunities. **cme**

ERICSSON

ACCELERATING AFRICA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

Fadi Pharaon, President of Ericsson Middle East and Africa, penned an exclusive op-ed for September's edition of CNME, which explores how Africa can leverage new digital technologies in an effort to create new socio-economic prosperity across the continent.

Digitisation Boosting Economies:

We believe that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is the catalyst for digital transformation, with mobile networks being the crucial ingredient in increasing Africa's economic competitiveness in the global arena. While we have witnessed impressive market developments in recent years,

Africa's ICT sector still has growth potential compared to leading economies.

As digital infrastructure and transaction become increasingly impactful to the development of the African societies and economies, affordable broadband access will need to be extended to over a billion individuals to bridge the "digital divide" and enable them to reap the benefits of the digital economy.

The Ericsson Mobility Report shows us that, by 2025, 77% of subscriptions in the Middle East and North Africa are expected to be for mobile broadband, while in Sub-Saharan Africa mobile broadband subscriptions will increase to reach around 72% of mobile subscriptions.

Mobile broadband connectivity not only offers great potential to transform cities and industries, but it



Fadi Pharaon
President of Ericsson Middle East
and Africa

enables connectivity as a basic human right; fostering inclusion and making a positive, sustainable economic impact.

Sustainability Through Connectivity:

Bridging the “digital divide” is a demanding journey both for the public sector and the telecoms industry. This carries significant potential to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa. In order to achieve that, we have a continuous ongoing journey serving several parameters.

And the story just begins here. We strongly believe in

the importance of education for the economic development of Africa by building the right foundation to propel a steady eco-system.

Our efforts to support education in Africa is a continuous determination and for that we are proud to launch our three-year global partnership with UNICEF that will help map school connectivity in 35 countries by the end of 2023. Our partnership will support the UN’s Giga initiative, a global program led by UNICEF and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) that aims to connect

every school to the Internet.

Furthermore, another testimony that reiterates our efforts in supporting education, is our recently announced “Ericsson Educate” initiative with UNESCO. In response to how the global COVID-19 Pandemic, UNESCO and Ericsson have launched a new portal for teaching Artificial Intelligence (AI) to children.

Teaching AI is a learning program, which includes a free, multi-lingual artificial intelligence (AI) skills portal that can be accessed globally by parents and teachers, enabling them to support children and students in home learning

environments to learn about AI.

On the other hand, we also focus on another fundamental goal and that is financial inclusion through integration of digital technology which is an essential element in furthering the economic development of Africa.

Mobile money services have become an essential, life-changing tool across the continent, providing access to safe and secure financial services but also to energy, health, education and employment opportunities. One key example to showcase our efforts in that area is our Ericsson Wallet Platform that allows users to store, transfer and withdraw money; pay merchants and utility providers; and use financial services such as savings and loans.

With connectivity acting as a critical enabler of social and economic change, sustainable technologies that support the SDGs are the need of the hour.

According to Ericsson research, ICT solutions could help to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by up to 15% by 2030, amounting to around ten gigatons of CO₂e—more than the current carbon footprint of the EU and US combined. Examples of areas where the savings can be enabled by ICT solutions are transportation, energy, industries and agriculture.

This is reflected in our initiatives such as Ericsson Weather Data and Mixed Reality for Urban Design.

Clearly, the SDGs provide



What is now needed is a framework that facilitates harnessing the power of ICTs to foster inclusive socioeconomic development across Africa.”

a unique opportunity for interesting discussions that will lead to more multi-sectoral partnerships and opportunities that will help spur progress towards meeting the goals.

Partnerships and Collaborations for Societal Impact:

What is now needed is a framework that facilitates harnessing the power of ICTs to foster inclusive socioeconomic development across Africa. However, this bridging of the digital divide – which promises to level the global playing field so Africa can achieve its full potential – requires a well-planned policy and regulatory environment.

A conducive, enabling policy environment that generates regulatory certainty is key to encouraging market development through partnerships, entrepreneurship, job creation and knowledge sharing. Factors like:

- Timely availability of ample, cost-effective and harmonised spectral resources
- Support of long-term stable network regulations that uphold the principle

of technology neutrality, stimulate investments and foster infrastructure competition

- Provision of free flow of data, while ensuring data protection, privacy and security regulation

We at Ericsson Middle East and Africa are constantly looking for opportunities to collaborate and engage with partners across the board to facilitate such policy development to fast tracking digitisation across the African continent and our recent collaboration with the African Telecommunications Union is one clear example.

Accelerating the Future:

As we look ahead, it's clear that Africa shows significant promise for economic, technological and infrastructure growth over the coming years. Yet, there are still many challenges we must overcome if we are to deliver real sustainable change for all.

While there are parts of the continent trialing 5G services, majority of countries remain focusing on 3G and 4G as smartphone affordability improves year on year. The development of advanced wireless digital infrastructure is an integral part of Africa's growing economy. Mobile broadband access has proved to be an essential driver of an inclusive information society that integrates digitisation in all critical aspects of life, such as education, transport, health, energy and even homeland



security. Never has this been more evident than during the current COVID 19 pandemic.

Ericsson focuses on assuring best performing networks in Africa, while also offering the best digital services and solutions to our customers. Our aim is to create a unique customer experience evolving from networks adopting automation, artificial intelligence and analytics. One of our focus areas also is reducing time-to-market and flexibility in launching services for our customers towards their subscribers. From an operations perspective, we emphasis driving service delivery efficiency through adoption of advanced tools. We will continue our purposeful growth of mobile

broadband, fixed wireless access and fintech services so that our service provider partners reach out to further communities across the continent.

Our promise to Africa:

Tackling the digital divide, continuing to build a robust ICT infrastructure, promoting sustainability, innovation, education and entrepreneurship will be critical for maximising the role of technology in boosting resilience and inclusive growth in Africa.

By achieving that, Africa will experience a paradigm shift on all levels with new game-changers as e-health, e-government and e-education; the African society will accelerate into a

much economically advanced nation. However, collaboration between the different stakeholders in the ecosystem becomes even more important than ever to achieve this vision.

Our promise and commitment towards Africa are to always support a world where digitalisation is transforming the eco-system; enabling sustainable growth, economic development and opening up opportunities for all.

To accelerate our promise to Africa and achieve a true impact, we are looking forward to supporting our customers in their quest, bringing our latest innovation, leveraging our global skill and scale to the benefit of Africa's digital development. **enme**

VERITAS & ESOLUTIONS

CLOUD DOESN'T NEED TO BE 'COMPLEX'

Are the complexities in your hybrid multi-cloud environment weighing your business down? CPI Media Group hosted a virtual webinar to get top insights from eSolutions Data Management and Veritas, on how you can take maximum advantage of the multi-cloud world and navigate its complexities to succeed in the digital era.

The webinar was hosted and moderated by CNME Editor Mark Forker, and he was joined by Robert Nehme, General Manager, eSolutions Data Management and Tarek El-Reidy, Senior Solution Sales Engineer at Veritas Technologies to further examine and explore the complexities of the hybrid multi-cloud environment, and why there has been such an acceleration in demand for a hybrid cloud model from enterprises.

Robert Nehme was the first of the spokespeople to address the large number of attendees who joined the virtual webinar and he gave a brief overview of the

business model of eSolutions and how its broad portfolio of solutions empower their customers to have more control and autonomy over their data.

"We're experts in terms of helping businesses both better manage and protect their data and we also help our customers navigate the challenges of migrating to the cloud. We're a platinum partner and service provider to Veritas and we've been delivering complex projects together for over 15 years. We have full expertise on the diverse Veritas portfolio, and we've worked with some of the biggest Oil & Gas companies and government entities in the Middle East region," said Nehme.

The first presentation of the virtual webinar was conducted by the charismatic and dynamic Veritas executive Tarek El-Reidy, the Senior Solution Sales Engineer delivered a presentation which was entitled, Cloud Journey with Veritas: See, Move Protect.

El-Reidy began his insightful presentation by dispelling myths and misconceptions around the cloud such as the perception that if you're in the cloud, then you don't need backup. He referenced the below excerpt which was compiled from the world's largest cloud providers such as Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure.

You are responsible for properly configuring and

using the service offerings and taking your own steps to maintain appropriate security protection and backup of your own content, which may include the use of encryption technology to protect your content from unauthorized access and routinely archiving your content.

“Infrastructure is the responsibility of the cloud provider. Data is your responsibility. You need to take care of it, protect it and make it available. Moving to the cloud is not an easy step and there are many challenges to overcome. Data is growing so you need an efficient and cost-effective way to store your data, but there has also become an increased reliance on data, and you need to leverage that to make better decisions,” said El-Reidy.

He added that other obstacles included help for solving issues such as GDPR and continuous budgetary pressures.

In addition to this, he said that Veritas helps their customers see their data, by eliminating the dark data, helps them move to the cloud and ultimately protects their data and infrastructure.

“Data is getting bigger and bigger, but the problem we have in the IT ecosystem is we don’t have the time and the luxury to know how some of our data is related to our business. At least 50% of the data that we have we don’t know anything about it. There are some practices and steps you need to take to



Robert Nehme
General Manager, e-Solutions
Data Management

resolve this problem such as determining who is the owner of the data, who is using the data, is it important? Do I need to keep it? You have to ask these questions, but CIOs or IT managers simply don’t have the time for to find out the answers and it will cost too much,” said El-Reidy.



Infrastructure is the responsibility of the cloud provider. Data is your responsibility. You need to take care of it, protect it and make it available.”

He then proceeded to document the unique capabilities of its APTARE IT analytics solution. “APTARE is an IT infrastructure analytic tool, it is important to establish that it’s infrastructure and not data. It looks for any kind of data in any type of cloud in any kind of storage from any type of backup. This tool is agnostic and designed to look for data on the backup, cloud and storage. In addition to this, it also scans data and it co-relates the data between each other. We take that date, we run it and we get you results. It can help businesses save hugely in terms of their cloud, storage and backup costs,” said El-Reidy. **enme**

THREATQUOTIENT

PUT A 'SOC' IN IT

Markus Auer, Regional Sales Manager, Central Europe at ThreatQuotient, has penned an exclusive opinion editorial for CNME, which outlines in forensic detail how a Security Operations Center (SOC) can protect government agencies from cyber threats and attacks.

Traditionally, large companies have been the main targets of hackers, as they attract potentially high ransom money. It goes without saying, however, that it is precisely those companies with a lot of capital that strengthen their IT security structures due to this threat. But what does this mean for cyber criminals? They are looking for new victims, with defence systems that are easier to crack and grown IT infrastructures as well as municipal or state funds.

The effects of cyber attacks are particularly devastating for government organisations. In many cases, not only does this cause purely economic damage to the agency itself, but citizens are also victims of data protection abuses.

In the worst case – such as attacks on health care facilities – medical care and other important services can even fail. Recently, the Klinikum Fürth was the victim of a hacker attack. In December 2019, the IT of the facility was paralysed by the malware attack, which meant that the admission of patients had to be temporarily halted.

Holistic IT security through SOC's

In order to avoid such failures in government agencies, the IT infrastructures must be specifically secured. The German Federal Employment Agency (BA), among others, has shown what an important step towards more reliable security can look like.

In 2015, it was one of the first German authorities to receive the IT security certification ISO 27001 based on the IT basic protection of the Federal Office for Information Security (BSI). The BA is now continuing its efforts to strengthen cyber security by expanding its own Security Operations Center (SOC). But what exactly is an SOC and why is it so essential for network security?

In a world of increasingly complex cyber attacks, it is of course not enough to rely on simple security concepts like firewalls. It is essential to protect your network with a comprehensive line of defense.

In order to achieve this, more and more IT security specialists are turning away from one-dimensional security strategies and are instead relying on the holistic approach of an SOC. Within the IT of an organisation,

the SOC functions, as the name suggests, as the central point for the operational processes of IT security. The tasks of the SOC can be divided into several areas and also vary depending on the size of the company.

Together with other organisational tasks, such as patch management, one of the main tasks of the SOC is to bundle and evaluate all security relevant events delivered by internal solutions such as SIEM, firewalls, endpoint protection, intrusion detection systems and others.

The latest “ingredient” in a SOC is Threat Intelligence. After the kind of intelligence services that have been practicing this approach for decades, they try to obtain as detailed information as possible about the attacker and the type of attack, as well as so-called IoCs (Indicators of Compromise, e.g. harmful IP addresses).

The actual strength of the SOC lies precisely in the cooperation between man and machine. The automated programs take over the computationally intensive task of scanning all devices and networks, while the IT staff concentrates on reacting to



The actual strength of the SOC lies precisely in the co-operation between man and machine.”



Markus Auer
Regional Sales Manager, Central Europe at ThreatQuotient

system alerts and specifically searching for security gaps. But the cooperation of the teams within a SOC is also extremely important. Security Operations Platforms guarantee a seamless integration of the individual processes and possibilities to distribute information quickly and automatically.

Specifically, specialised teams work closely together to address

the various tasks involved in combating cyber threats. The Incident Response Team reacts to acute threats such as attacks by hackers, while so-called Threat Hunters detect threats and vulnerabilities in the network. These Threat Hunters are a rather new but promising introduction to IT security, as shown by last year's SANS Institute Threat Hunting study

commissioned by ThreatQuotient. For example, 61 percent of the companies surveyed in the study stated that their general IT security status had improved by at least 11 percent as a result of Threat Hunting

Depending on the size and needs of the organisation, the SOC can be operated either by the in-house IT security department or by external providers. Whichever of these options is chosen, it is always worthwhile for a company to use the services of a SOC. The centralised approach enables security professionals to quickly and efficiently monitor and manage devices, apply patches, detect threats and respond to attacks across departments.

Conclusion:

As the number and complexity of cyberattacks increases every day, it is essential to ensure that your IT security is prepared to deal with the threats from the network. This applies more than ever to public authorities today, as they are usually less well protected than companies in the business world and consequently are increasingly the target of devastating attacks by cybercriminals.

Up to now, only very few IT security departments of state authorities have a dedicated SOC. The establishment of such a security center ensures a holistic approach to security that generates synergy effects by bundling IT security tasks and supports and facilitates the work of IT experts. **crime**

AVEVA

DIGITALISATION WILL HELP BUSINESSES THRIVE IN POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Craig Hayman, CEO AVEVA, has penned an exclusive opinion piece for CNME which suggests that enterprises who adopt and infuse digital tools and technologies into their operations will thrive in a post-pandemic world.



Craig Hayman
CEO AVEVA

Over the past few years, digital transformation has been changing the way we do business at an accelerating rate. Industrial organisations in all sectors are producing and using vast amounts of data and therefore require robust technologies to run their operations.

Since the start of 2020, the world has shifted significantly and the COVID-19 pandemic has paved the way for even greater digital transformation as businesses worldwide shift operations and

reinvent themselves to cope with new social distancing measures, restrictions on movement and supply chain disruptions. Many companies have also increased remote working and virtual collaboration, which has driven strong demand for emerging technologies.

As the 'new normal' and post-pandemic reality set in, we will see a new digital age dawning rapidly. In this world, digital capabilities will increasingly act as a barometer for economic resilience and the industries that will thrive past the COVID-19 crisis will be those that can fully digitalise their operations.

In disrupted times, leaders need to think differently. With unified data and analytics, we can empower the experts with better information, meaning they can make more informed decisions to optimise operations for the new environment in which they are operating. Continuous learning is also redefining competitive advantage. This is because bringing the most advanced technology into a unified data

environment enables teams to maximise performance, minimise cost and delay, and ensure efficient organisational operations. This in turn reduces energy usage and cuts emissions both outright using smart models, and as a by-product of reducing the need for emergency flaring and rework.

COVID-19 has been a watershed event for the world. For many organisations, the digital transformation that was expected to take years has been compressed into days and weeks. Entire industries are rapidly being reset, and digital infrastructure is front and center in the transition. The shift toward a new computing environment has undoubtedly added layers of complexity that have broad implications for how IT managers secure corporate IT environments. Now that so much of the world's economy is increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, meeting the highest governance standards for these critical assets is as much a social as it is a business obligation.

Security poses a particular challenge, given that successful business continuity is dependent on a secure environment. COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of cloud computing as a platform that can deliver true business outcomes in the face of ever-evolving challenges. Demand for cloud services will soar in some sectors, but wither in other verticals as they shift into survival mode. With economic resilience now tied so closely to our digital infrastructure, and with the rate of data consumption growing exponentially, companies that invest in innovative technologies will be the ones that thrive in the coming years. **cnme**

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