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OPERATION TRANSFORMATION

Padam Kafle, Head of Innovation at Aster Hospitals UAE, talks about how the loss of his brother at just 26 is fuelling his mission to transform the healthcare industry through 'superintelligence'.

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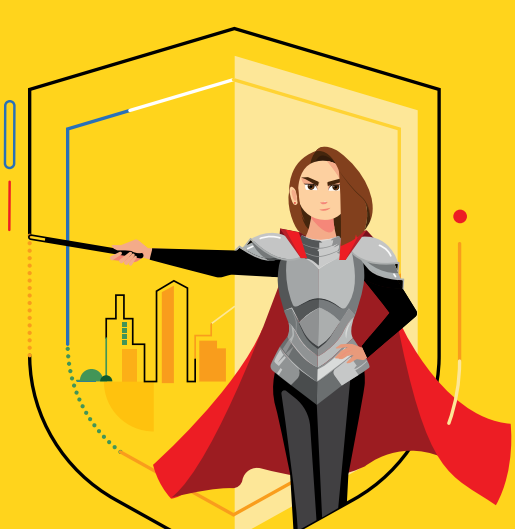

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REAL TRANSFORMATION

We all know that technology is transforming the way we live, work and play.

Technology is transforming global industries at rapid speed, making them more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable.

The power of technology is all around us, and is all encompassing.

Whilst it is fantastic to see industries like the energy sector become greener through the implementation of cutting-edge technologies, when it all comes down to it the real transformative power of technology is when it really positively impacts society and humanity.

I think the best example of this is in the healthcare industry, and on the front cover of May's edition of CNME is a fantastic example of how technology is truly being used to make our world a better place.

Padam Kafle, Head of Innovation and IT at Aster Hospitals UAE, is on a mission to make the healthcare industry a more accessible, equitable and fairer system for everyone.

He tragically lost his brother to acute kidney failure at the age of 26, and that loss is inspiring him to try and radically transform healthcare.

He believes that superintelligence can create a system designed to prevent and predict, as opposed to the current status quo, which a system that treats illnesses as they happen, instead of preventing them.

It is a powerful story, and an inspiring one, and there are few better purposes in life than to try and make healthcare more affordable and accessible, and Kafle believes that artificial superintelligence can deliver that.

Remaining on the topic of healthcare, CNME also spoke to Stefan Stefan Leichenauer, VP of Engineering at SandboxAQ.

He outlined how the power of LQMs are transforming industries like energy and healthcare, and again, he reiterated that SandboxAQ wants to use technology to make a positive impact on society.

He highlighted how they are currently working on a medical diagnostic device that is designed to better prevent and predict heart disease, which is one of the biggest killers globally.

CNME also spoke to Majda Lahlo, President of Ericsson West Africa and Morocco during GITEX Africa.

Ericsson has been powering telecommunications across the continent for the best part of 100 years, and believes that their Africa in Motion strategy can help bridge the digital divide.

Just 40% of Africa's population has access to the internet, and Lahlo conceded that more needs to be done and devices need to become more affordable in order to address these numbers.

Shukri Eid, General Manager of IBM Gulf, Levant and Pakistan spoke to CNME ahead of Dubai AI Week.

He stressed the importance of more robust governance on AI to ensure it is being used ethically and responsibly, and also highlighted how the next-generation of its iconic mainframe z17 was going to have a huge impact across the enterprise space.

Daniel Shepherd attended Empower360, which was hosted by Genetec.

Firas Jadella, Regional Director – Middle East & Africa at Genetec, outlined how security was everyone's responsibility, and advocated for the adoption of open architecture and IoT to develop smarter cities.

In addition to this, we have some excellent op-eds from Omnix International, Endava, Dell Technologies, and commentary from some prominent regional leaders on the importance of the annual International Girls in ICT Day.

Enjoy May's edition of CNME.

Mark Forker
Editor

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> He tragically lost his brother to acute kidney failure at the age of 26, and that loss is inspiring him to try and radically transform healthcare."

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du signs $544.54m deal with Microsoft on new hyperscale datacenter

UAE telecommunications giant du has announced it has signed a deal worth $544.54m with Microsoft to develop and construct a new hyperscale datacenter in the UAE.

The deal was announced onsite at Dubai AI Week, and it has been confirmed that Microsoft will be the main tenant of the new datacenter.

On LinkedIn earlier today, Crown Prince of Dubai Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, described the deal as 'groundbreaking'.

He wrote, "At Dubai AI Week, I witnessed an announcement from Du to launch a groundbreaking hyperscale data center, in collaboration with Microsoft. This marks a significant investment in digital infrastructure, reinforcing Dubai's leadership in adopting the latest technologies, innovations, and digital services."

Fahad Al Hassawi, CEO of Du, said the new partnership between the Dubai-based telecoms company, and the US technology behemoth will play a key part in their effort to 'revolutionise' the digital landscape across the United Arab Emirates.

"This deal represents a pivotal leap in our strategic goal to revolutionise the digital ecosystem of the UAE," saiid Al Hassawi.

Du currently operates five data centers across the country. Earlier this year, the telco signed a deal to extend the Peace subsea cable to the UAE.

Earlier this year, Microsoft partnered with the Abu Dhabi government and Core42 for AI infrastructure and a sovereign cloud offering in the UAE.

The cloud provider has one cloud region in the UAE, which was first launched in 2019, with three availability zones across Dubai.

The company also has cloud regions in Qatar and Israel.

In December 2024, the company completed construction of its Saudi Arabia cloud region, set to go live in 2026, and in March 2025 announced plans for a cloud region in Kuwait.

Infinite Reality acquires Touchcast for $500 million

Infinite Reality™ (iR), an innovation company powering the next generation of digital media and ecommerce through extended reality (XR), artificial intelligence (AI), and other immersive technologies, announced recently the company has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Touchcast, a pioneering agentic AI company for $500 million in a combination of cash and stock.

The acquisition is Infinite Reality's largest yet, and the transaction agreement values the company at $15.5 billion.

"The acquisition of Touchcast marks our largest transaction thus far, and represents a perfect continuation of our strategic growth trajectory, building on the momentum from the iconic Napster acquisition and recent $3 billion funding round", said Amish Shah, Co-Founder and Chief Business Officer, Infinite Reality. "The addition of Touchcast's agentic AI technology serves as a powerful building block for our platform as we look to provide our customers with the tools they need to succeed in the modern AI-powered era".

Rob Lee, CTO, Pure Storage.

Ericsson wins Google Cloud Business Applications Partner of the Year Award

Ericsson has received the Google Cloud Business Applications Partner of the Year Award for Telecommunications, marking the third year in a row that Ericsson has won a Google Cloud Partner of the Year award.

This accolade underscores Ericsson's innovative strategies and strong collaboration with Google Cloud.

"Our close relationship with Google Cloud is based on deep collaboration right across our portfolio", said Razvan Teslaru, Head of Strategy, Cloud Software and Services, Ericsson. "This award, given to Ericsson for the third consecutive year, is a greatly appreciated validation of the results we have achieved together, and a welcome vote of confidence in the ongoing work we are undertaking that will create new value for our shared customers and for the industry overall. From validation of Ericsson Packet Core on Google Cloud, to migrating a whole BSS stack supporting 100m subscribers to its platform, and conducting deep technical exploration of intent-based service management, this has been a busy year, with more to come".

e& UAE revolutionises telecom tower inspections with AI-powered drones

e& UAE recently announced the launch of its autonomous drone-based cell tower inspection, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), marking a major leap in telecom infrastructure management and operational safety.

The new initiative combines real-time data analytics, AI and autonomous flight capabilities to enable faster, safer, and more sustainable inspection of telecom towers across the UAE.

"The integration of autonomous drones into our operations reflects our commitment to reimagining network operations through cutting-edge innovation that improves reliability, safety and sustainability. Through AI-powered insights and real-time control, we are enhancing the safety and accuracy of telecom tower inspections while enabling faster, data-driven decisions that future-proof our infrastructure. And with the support of the Drones Operations Centre, we're demonstrating how technology can elevate operational resilience while supporting the UAE's broader ambitions for smart, sustainable cities," said Marwan Bin Shakar, Acting Chief Technology & Information Officer, e& UAE.

Pure Storage partners with CERN openlab

Pure Storage has announced a partnership with CERN (the European Laboratory for Particle Physics) which aims, through the CERN openlab collaboration, to accelerate the development of cutting-edge ICT solutions for the Large Hadron Collider.

The partnership will explore how Pure Storage's DirectFlash technology can support the needs of future scientific research.

"Together with CERN openlab, we are pushing the boundaries of what's possible in HPC and Grid Computing environments supporting cutting edge scientific workflows. With the integration of our state-of-the-art technology in CERN's large-scale distributed storage system, CERN openlab is ready to tackle the unprecedented volumes of data with unparalleled speed and reliability while empowering researchers for the extraordinary challenges posed by the High-Luminosity Large Hadron Collider (HL-LHC) era", commented Rob Lee, CTO, Pure Storage.

Rob Lee, CTO, Pure Storage.

AWS enter new partnership designed to develop cloud talent across the MENA region

Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS) is proud to announce its collaboration with Manara, the social impact startup dedicated to unlocking the untapped potential of top technology talent in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA), including women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Together, they are launching an ambitious initiative aimed at training 2,500 software engineers across the region on cloud skills with an investment of $3.6M over two years by AWS.

Antonio Alonso Lopez, Director of Partner Management, EMEA, AWS said, "AWS is committed to providing learners and organisations with high-quality training and certifications to build and validate cloud skills. Together with outstanding partners like Manara, we are equipping communities with the expertise required to pursue careers in cloud computing and capitalise on the tremendous opportunity that generative AI represents. We look forward to working together to cultivate the next generation of cloud professionals in MENA".

Tenable appoints Steve Vintz and Mark Thurmond as Co-CEOs

Tenable®, the exposure management company, recently announced that its Board of Directors has unanimously appointed Steve Vintz and Mark Thurmond as co-Chief Executive Officers on a permanent basis.

Vintz, Tenable's Chief Financial Officer since 2014, and Thurmond, who has served as Chief Operating Officer since 2020, bring deep industry and operational experience. Under the co-CEO structure, Vintz will oversee product, cyber security, corporate development and all general and administrative functions, while Thurmond will oversee GTM functions including sales, professional services, technical support, marketing, and customer success. Together, they will continue to guide the company's mission to help organisations understand and reduce cyber risk across their modern attack surfaces.

"Mark and Steve have demonstrated exceptional leadership and alignment during their time as interim co-CEOs", said Art Coviello, Chairman of the Tenable Board of Directors. "Their collaborative leadership style, deep industry knowledge, and customer-first mindset have already created strong results. We are confident in their ability to continue driving innovation and long-term value for all stakeholders".

Steve Vintz, co-Chief Executive Officers

Mark Thurmond, co-Chief Executive Officers

BingX celebrates 7th Anniversary with a special campaign

In celebration of its 7th anniversary, the global leading cryptocurrency exchange BingX unveiled a user story campaign titled "Your Voice, Our Story", inviting users from around the world to share their unique journeys and unforgettable moments with BingX.

Selected stories will be featured across BingX's global social media channels, blog, and video campaign, with exclusive rewards for participants. Outstanding storytellers will not only see their entries turned into a special anniversary video—highlighting the global spirit and diverse backgrounds of BingX users—but will also have an opportunity to participate in a live AMA (Ask Me Anything) session with Vivien Lin, Chief Product Officer of BingX. This interactive session offers storytellers a unique chance to engage directly,

Vivien Lin, Chief Product Officer of BingX.

share their experiences, and exchange ideas that could shape the future of the platform.

Vivien shared her heartfelt thoughts: "Every trade tells a story, but behind every trade is a person — full of hope, ambition, and resilience. As we mark our 7th anniversary, it is not just a time to look back at our achievements, but to spotlight the very people who made it possible. This campaign is a chance to celebrate our users — not just as traders, but as visionaries, builders, and dreamers. Through these stories, we gain insights into how BingX has impacted lives globally, and in turn, how our users have shaped us. I am especially excited to meet you during the AMA and hear how we can continue building a platform that evolves with you".

SandboxAQ launches new platform to address AI agent threats

SandboxAQ, a leader in AI and cybersecurity solutions, has announced the general availability of AQtive Guard, a groundbreaking platform designed to manage and secure Non-Human Identities (NHIs) and other cryptographic assets used by AI agents – both friendly and malevolent – that are surging across enterprise environments.

"There will be more than one billion AI agents with significant autonomous power in the next few years", stated Jack Hidary, CEO of SandboxAQ. "Enterprises are giving AI agents a vastly increased range of capabilities to impact customers and real-world assets. This creates a dangerous attack surface for adversaries. AQtive Guard's Discover and Protect modules address this urgent issue".

"As organisations accelerate AI adoption and the use of agents and machine-to-machine communication across all business domains and functions, maintaining a real-time, accurate inventory of NHIs and cryptographic assets is an essential cybersecurity practice. Being able to automatically remediate vulnerabilities and policy violations identified is crucial to decrease time to mitigation and prevent potential breaches within the first day of use of our software", said Marc Manzano, General Manager of Cybersecurity at SandboxAQ.

(L-R) Jack Hidary, CEO of SandboxAQ & Marc Manzano, General Manager of Cybersecurity at SandboxAQ.

Ericsson

AFRICA IN MOTION

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Majda Lahlo**, Vice President of Ericsson, and President of Ericsson West Africa and Morocco, during GITEX Africa, in a bid to get a better understanding of how the Swedish ICT vendor is hoping to unleash the potential of differentiated connectivity to address the digital divide that exists

Majda Lahlo has spent her entire professional career working for Ericsson across the African marketplace, so there are few better placed to comment on both the progress that has been made, and what still needs to be done to provide internet access to the 40% of the African population that remain disconnected.

CNME spoke to Lahlo during GITEX Africa, which is now in its 3rd edition, and it's the first time Ericsson has exhibited at the tech conference.

She kickstarted the conversation by highlighting how the event provided them with the opportunity to reinforce their 'Africa in Motion' strategy.

"Our presence here at the event is very important to us, and we want to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to the continent. By being here at GITEX Africa, it allows us to reinforce our Africa in Motion strategy that we launched a few years ago, where we can show how we can leverage on the power of differentiated connectivity to unleash the potential for both consumers, customers, CSPs, and developers. The key message that we really want to project at GITEX Africa, is that what's next for Africa starts now. Ericsson is ready to enable the power of 5G across Africa, and we are bringing the innovations and technologies that we believe can unleash the potential of differentiated connectivity," said Lahlo.

"Ericsson is ready to enable the power of 5G across Africa, and we are bringing the innovations and technologies that we believe can unleash the potential of differentiated connectivity."

Lahlo used the agricultural industry as an example of where huge progress has been made thanks to the implementation of cutting-edge technologies, which have dramatically increased productivity and efficiency.

"If you look at the agricultural sector, which is a very important industry across the continent of Africa. It's not that long ago that a farmer would rise in the morning and perform his daily tasks based solely on his own instincts and experience. Today, thanks to the power of 5G connectivity he has access to fixed wireless technology, and that allows him to have secure access to check weather forecasting through AI-powered applications, monitor crop prices in the marketplace, or apply for a micro loan through our mobile platform. There are so many new opportunities for farmers to tap into, and

with access to the collective power of 5G, combined with AI and cloud computing, it has fostered an ecosystem that is empowering farmers to be work more effectively and efficiently," said Lahlo.

Again, in terms of the messaging at the event from Ericsson, Lahlo outlined how they wanted to demonstrate their capabilities from a B2B, B2C, and B2D perspective, highlighting the role played by their new joint-venture Aduna.

"At the stand here at Ericsson, we are approaching all of our messaging across three different dimensions. The first is, what it brings to B2B, what it brings to B2C, and finally what does it bring to B2D. The B2D element is designed to expose the capabilities of the network to developers, who usually

outsmart us by finding new use-cases and applications that respond to the needs of the consumers and enterprises. We are doing this through our newly-formed joint venture Aduna, which is backed by 16 global CSPs, and we are committed to continuing to collaborate in this sphere to create a platform for development that enables the aggregation of all the APIs, to apply it in any network anywhere. This gives users the ability to scale-up, and bring applications that can be deployed everywhere in the continent," said Lahlo.

Ericsson has been connecting Africa for over 100 years, and has played a critical role in building wireless networks from the 1st generation to the 5th one.

However, as Lahlo pointed out, Ericsson along with its ecosystem of partners need to find a way to make devices more affordable in order to bridge that 'digital divide'.

"At Ericsson, we have a long history of driving Africa's telecommunications evolution. Our promise, and commitment to Africa is always to support a world in which digitalisation is transforming the ecosystem. However, for this to happen, then you need to have the

Our promise, and commitment to Africa is always to support a world in which digitalisation is transforming the ecosystem."

right connectivity in place, and the right 4G network to start with, and we are now seeing the emergence of 5G. Our commitment is to make sure that we will continue to play a role in expanding 4G coverage. We have seen a huge increase from 7% in 2020, to 34% by 2024 in the data traffic across the continent. That being said, we can still see that there is a gap in the usage versus the coverage that we are offering. In order for us to bridge that gap, then we need to continue to collaborate with the entire ecosystem across the Africa continent because we need to find a way in which we can make devices more affordable for consumers," said Lahlo.

Lahlo acknowledged that in order to really address the connectivity divide, then more works needs to be done to expand connectivity beyond urban areas and into rural parts of Africa.

"We really need to work on how we bring connectivity beyond the urban areas to the remote rural areas in Africa. We want to bring rural solutions that are cost-effective, in order to give remote area decent broadband coverage. At the same time with the emergence of 5G, we have the possibility to leverage the fixed wireless access capabilities to offer fibre-like experiences to small enterprises and agricultural businesses in rural areas. In summary, by continuing to collaborate with the many different players across the ecosystem, we can continue to advance the usage of the 4G network, and to support greater use-cases around 5G as it continues to grow across the continent," said Lahlo.

Lahlo conceded that in relation to the digital divide the numbers are stark, highlighting how both the cost of devices and limited infrastructure make it a challenge that isn't going to disappear overnight.

"If you look at the numbers, you can see that less than 40% of the African population currently uses the internet, and the main barrier in terms of internet access is the high cost of devices, geographical disparities, limited infrastructure, and the lack of electricity in rural areas. Urban areas across Africa continue to exhibit higher adoption of digital technologies, whilst rural communities are left lagging behind. This is inevitably creating one of the biggest digital divides in the world, and it is a huge problem, as it is preventing underserved communities from accessing meaningful economic opportunities. In

terms of what we at Ericsson are trying to do, in order to bridge that gap is from a perspective of developing solutions that are specifically-designed for rural areas. We believe that we can offer very good broadband access to remote communities, and on top of that we leverage on the fixed wireless access based on 5G, which is an affordable way to access broadband compared to what fibre would deliver," said Lahlo.

However, Lahlo did cite figures from their Ericsson Mobility Report, which indicated that Africa is very much moving in the right direction.

"If you take our Ericsson Mobility Report, which we published back in November 2024, we predicted that 5G subscriptions will make up to 33% of total mobile subscriptions in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, and that means that despite the disparity that exists, we will see continued growth in mobile broadband, and with the emergence of 5G, we will see more use-cases that could enable a more inclusive society across Africa. We believe that 5G-based fixed wireless access and rural solutions are just a few examples of the multiple ways that Ericsson are looking to bridge the digital divide that exists across the African continent. However, as I said earlier, we can't do this alone, you need to cultivate the right partnerships and collaborations to really advance change with the key stakeholders from across the entire ecosystem," said Lahlo.

If you look at the numbers, you can see that less than 40% of the African population currently uses the internet, and the main barrier in terms of internet access is the high cost of devices, geographical disparities, limited infrastructure, and the lack of electricity in rural areas."

Lahlo concluded a brilliant conversation by highlighting the unique capabilities of their 'future-ready' networks.

"When we talk about future-ready networks, first of all, we need to think about it as an end-to-end connectivity that offers differentiated experiences based on the need. I want to really underline the importance of a differentiated connectivity. When we conducted our consumer lab survey, we saw that 35% of the users acknowledge that 5G offers better experiences than 4G, but many of those users are no longer satisfied with standard performance, they are looking for a more advanced experience and are willing to pay for it. Essentially, differentiated connectivity is at the core of what we call future-ready networks, and the first step is to have the right 5G coverage. Another aspect of future-ready networks is the programmability factor that steers network behaviour towards specific business outcomes, and this will also gear us towards autonomous networks, which is a true gamechanger, as it will bring a fundamental shift in the business paradigm," said Lahlo.

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SandboxAQ

POSITIVE IMPACT

CNME Editor Mark Forker sat down with **Stefan Leichenauer**, VP of Engineering at SandboxAQ, to find out why more and more industries are increasingly opting to adopt Large Quantitative Models (LQMs) to solve their complex challenges, as opposed to LLMs. Leichenauer also outlined that ultimately their mission is to not just create technology, but instead to have a positive impact on society.

Stefan Leichenauer is a man on a mission.

He is driven by the fact that he works for a company that is committed to making the world a better place.

That company is SandboxAQ, a B2B company that delivers AI solutions that addresses some of the world's greatest challenges.

SandboxAQ was born out of Alphabet Inc. as an independent capital-backed company in 2022.

Over the last number of years, it has grown exponentially across multiple global markets, and has a major partnership here in the Middle East region with Aramco.

Leichenauer spoke to CNME, about why the company wants to deliver technologies that have a positive impact on society, and the critical role played by LQMs in enabling the transformation pf industries such as the Oil & Gas sector.

In a recent op-ed, the VP of Engineering at SandboxAQ made the case for enterprises to shift their focus away from LLMs and to look at the LQMs to foster real change across their organisation.

According to Leichenauer, LLMs have limitations, and in order to solve the really complex challenges facing the world then businesses need to start looking at LQMs.

"Firstly, let me say that I think LLMs are fantastic, and we are not working to get rid of them. However, LLMs can't do everything by themselves, and I think that's the point that I am making, and I think more and more people are starting to realise that LLMs have their limitations. If you look at the latest LLMs that have been released over the last 3 years, then it seems like every release has a new set of capabilities that can do so much more, but we have sort of hit a ceiling of late. If you examine the latest releases of Llama 4 and GPT4.5 they are only incrementally better than what has come previously. So, I think there has been a realisation that LLMs as a capability are great, processing text and generating images then it is fantastic, but there is a whole set of capabilities that LLMs are just not going to get to by themselves," said Leichenauer.

The capabilities that LLMs are not going to be able to get to by themselves is associated with quantitative reasoning, and this is where LQMs come to the fore.

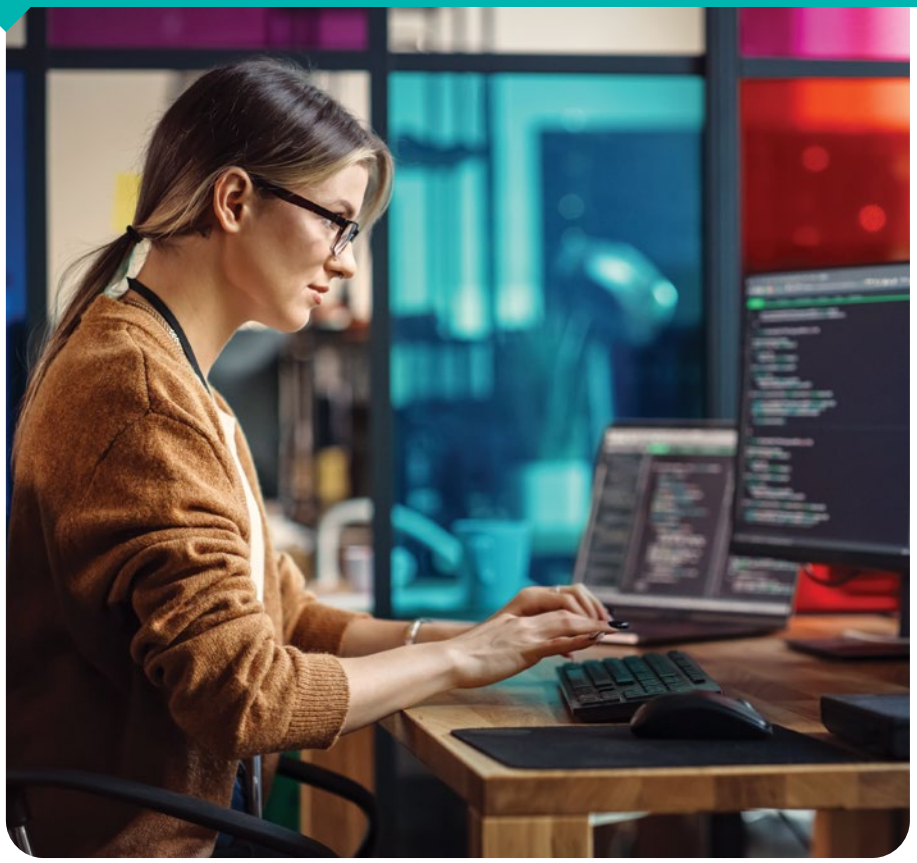
"LQMs is designed to model the physical with chemistry, physics, and medicine, and is essentially focused on doing things that has absolutely nothing to do with language-based content. You need other

tools in the tool box, and that's where LQMs come in. LQMs are basically providing those other tools in toolbox and they compliment the capabilities provided by LLMs," said Leichenauer.

In his op-ed, Leichenauer also claimed that when precision is paramount then LQMs are indispensable, and said momentum was beginning to swing in favour of LQMs.

"We're now seeing more proof points that LQMs. I think in the past people would have deployed LLMs on to any given problem to see what works, and what doesn't, and I think everyone has been doing proof of concept trials with LLMs, but they've fallen short for a couple of reasons. As I stated earlier, in some areas they are fantastic, but in other areas they have fallen short. One of the reasons for this is the fact that LLMs are very non-transparent in terms of their reasoning. LLMs will give you an answer, but why is it true? And the LLM could be hallucinating, and we know that's been a big problem in some areas. Hallucinations are fine when it comes to generating an image, maybe it has the wrong number of fingers, but when it comes to creating a new molecule for Aramco, that is designed to making their processing plants more efficient, then you can't get that wrong because that's going to cost you a billion dollars. You need your answer to be correct, you need it to be grounded in real understanding of the problem, and LQMs can provide that verifiability and transparency," said Leichenauer.

"Ultimately, our goal is to have a positive impact on the world, and it just so happens that LQM technology is a great way to have a positive impact."



As aforementioned above, SandboxAQ have enjoyed great success since spinning out of Alphabet Inc. in 2022, and are working with some of the biggest companies in the Middle East, including Aramco, who are the biggest integrated energy and chemicals company in the world.

He spoke about their partnership, and again reiterated their mission which is to build purposeful technology designed to improve society.

"Our goal at Sandbox at the end of the day is not to create technology, of course we love to create technology, but we are doing it for a purpose. Ultimately, our goal is to have a positive impact on the world, and it just so happens that LQM technology is a great way to have a positive impact. The impact areas that we care about the most such as the medicine, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and GPS free navigation is something that we are very passionate about. These are all powered by LQMs. In terms of our collaboration with Aramco, the oil & gas industry is a really important industry in the world. However, we are all acutely aware that as we move forward, we need to be better about being environmentally friendly, and more efficient with our energy and more sustainable. We need to always be looking at better techniques, and Aramco is a real leader and pioneer when it comes to these sort of techniques," said Leichenauer.

He went into more detail in relation to how LQM technology is enabling Aramco to transform, and how the technology is helping the global energy incumbent to be more sustainable and efficient.

"Aramco is not an AI company, they are an oil & gas company, so we are here to help our partners like Aramco to advance their operations to be able to do things in a much better way. SandboxAQ provides software tools, AI models and the LQMs that really help them to transform the way they operate their business. What we're doing with Aramco specifically is partnering with them to look closer at the oil & gas processing facilities. Ultimately, a lot of what is happening there is you've essentially got liquids and gases flowing through pipes and going through various kinds of processes, refineries and machines. However, in order to make those processes more efficient, one way to make them more efficient is to model them computationally better," said Leichenauer.

Leichenauer conceded that these processes are complex, but insisted that in order to make them more efficient and

"You need your answer to be correct, you need it to be grounded in real understanding of the problem, and LQMs can provide that verifiability and transparency."

sustainable then companies like Aramco had to implement LQM technologies.

"It's a complex physical process, and if you want to make your plants more efficient, and reduce emissions and waste then modelling that process computationally allows you to make tweaks and changes virtually to enable you to implement them in real-life. Modelling all of those processes computationally is something that our software is helping Aramco with," said Leichenauer.

Leichenauer is delighted at the progress SandboxAQ has made with Aramco since their collaboration started, and believes that by 2030, it will fundamentally be a completely different business.

"The part that Sandbox has control over, and the computational modelling that enables these kinds of changes, the good news is, well from our perspective anyway is relatively simply compared to actually implementing these things physically. We have been working with Aramco for several months now, and we've already achieved significant milestones with our modelling. The LQMs that can do that sort of modelling and give you the answers and the playbook that what you need to do to make the changes those exist, and in a matter of months we have made huge progress on that. If I had to speculate a little bit then I'd guess that in the next 5 years we'll see a lot more changes coming through and being implemented. It may take longer to become 100% sustainable and 100% green, but in the oil and gas industry and other industries we can affect real changes and see real progress in a sort of 5-year timeline. By 2030 or so, a lot of the work we are doing today will have real tangible impact by then," said Leichenauer.

Another industry that SandboxAQ is looking to transform in order to ensure they are having a meaningful impact on society is the healthcare industry.

"The healthcare sector is a major industry for us. It is a major source of grand challenges for the world, but we have seen a lot of progress in the last years in terms of how technology is being used to transform healthcare. When we are talking about real positive impact on the world then there's almost no better place to have that impact than in healthcare. Within healthcare, there is obviously the pharmaceutical industry, and there's always a lot to do in that space, and in terms of medical diagnostics that is a space that also can be transformed. The MRI machine is an amazing machine, it transformed medicine when it was invented several decades ago, but it is big, it is expensive, and it's clunky, and it takes a lot of expertise to use it. The next-generation of medical diagnostic devices can bring the kind of transformative impact of the MRI machine, but in a form factor that is more like an ultrasound machine, where it can something that can be much smaller and can be in every hospital emergency room. That kind of technology is coming, and some of that is what we are working on and using LQMs to enable," said Leichenauer.

Leichenauer outlined that SandboxAQ is working on a diagnostic designed to tackle the issue of heart disease.

"We're working on a device right now using LQMs that is specifically for diagnosing heart disease, and various kinds of heart disease in an emergency room setting in a way that you could actually apply it to every patient that walks in complaining of heart problems, or persistent heart pain. One of the first things that you do is take five minutes to give them a scan using the machine, and that really improves the care of the patient, and heart disease is one of the biggest killers in the world, so this is a truly transformative device. At the minute, we have a prototype device being tested in hospitals right now, and within a couple of years I'd expect this device to be used on a everyday basis in hospitals. Early indications of the prototype is that we are on the right track, and appear to be doing a good job. However, you have to prove you're doing a good job and pass regulations and so on before you can actually go to market with such a device, but the technology is there and we are actively working on it," said Leichenauer. ame

Dell Technologies

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice President, CEEMETA, at Dell Technologies, has penned an op-ed, which calls for collective responsbility when it comes to shaping the future of AI.

The AI Imperative: 5 Steps to Transforming Public Sector Services

Artificial Intelligence is no longer an abstract construct; it's actively reshaping the region's public sector.

But this transformation hinges on more than just adoption. For governments to unlock AI's full potential, it's not just about implementing technology - it's about doing so thoughtfully and strategically.

To truly harness AI's potential and avoid pitfalls, governments must navigate a complex web of ethical considerations, data security imperatives, and the urgent need for workforce readiness.

Here are five key steps to ensure AI empowers societies, strengthens governance, and enhances public services.

1. Define a Clear Vision for AI Integration

A successful AI strategy starts with a strong vision. Governments need to go beyond isolated projects and adopt a holistic approach that aligns AI initiatives with

national priorities - whether it's improving healthcare, streamlining public services, or boosting economic resilience.

Take public services like tax processing or healthcare administration. AI can speed up tasks, reduce errors, and improve citizen experiences. But success isn't just about efficiency - it's about impact. Governments should set clear, measurable goals, such as reducing service wait times or improving citizen satisfaction.

This vision must also be supported by cross-agency collaboration, so AI solutions work seamlessly across different departments, rather than in silos. When governments lead with a clear AI vision, they build public trust and show that AI is here to serve, not replace, people.

2. Establish Ethical AI Frameworks

AI can only be as good as the values it's built on. Public trust in AI depends on fairness, transparency, and accountability. To build ethical AI systems, governments should:

- Reduce bias: AI models must be trained on diverse, representative datasets to prevent discrimination.
- Ensure transparency: AI-driven decisions must be explainable, particularly in sensitive areas like healthcare, law enforcement, and public benefits.
- Create strong oversight mechanisms: AI governance should be aligned with privacy laws and democratic values, as seen in frameworks like the EU AI Act.

Ethical AI isn't just about compliance - it's about trust. Citizens should feel confident that AI decisions are fair, clear, and in their best interests.

3. Strengthen Data Security and AI-Ready Infrastructure

AI relies on data, and that data must be secure. Without strong safeguards, governments risk exposing sensitive citizen information to cyber threats or external influence. To protect national security and maintain AI sovereignty, governments must:

- Invest in AI-ready infrastructure: This includes high-performance computing (HPC), secure cloud environments, and edge AI solutions that process data within national borders.
- Ensure data sovereignty: Governments should prioritize local AI infrastructure, reducing dependency on foreign tech providers. Companies like Core42 in the UAE are already advancing sovereign cloud solutions to maintain data control.
- Implement strong data governance policies: Governments need clear regulations to dictate how data is collected, stored, and used responsibly.

By securing infrastructure and enforcing strong governance, governments can harness AI without compromising data sovereignty or public trust.

4. Upskill the Public Sector Workforce

For AI to succeed, people must be prepared to work alongside it. A tech-savvy public sector is no longer optional – it's essential. To build an AI-ready workforce, governments should focus on:

- Training and reskilling programs: Equip the public sector workforce with the skills to leverage AI tools effectively in their daily roles.
- Recruit AI specialists: Fill talent gaps with experts like data scientists, machine learning engineers, and AI ethicists.
- Foster a culture of innovation: Encourage experimentation with AI tools to improve effectiveness and discover new applications.

A 2025 Emerging Technologies Adoption Readiness Index found that Saudi Arabia's public sector has a 74.69% readiness rate for AI and emerging technologies. As AI adoption accelerates, governments that prioritize workforce readiness will lead the way in digital transformation.

5. Build Sovereign AI Ecosystems through Public-Private Collaboration

AI innovation flourishes in vibrant ecosystems where governments, businesses, and academia collaborate. Strong public-private partnerships can drive research, spur entrepreneurship, and ensure that local priorities guide development. Governments can take several steps to develop sovereign AI ecosystems:

- Support local AI startups and R&D: Invest in businesses and research institutions working on solutions tailored to national priorities.
- Introduce regulatory sandboxes: Provide safe environments for controlled testing of AI applications before their full-scale deployment.
- Encourage knowledge-sharing: Foster collaboration between public and private sectors to break down silos, share expertise, and accelerate progress.

By developing homegrown AI capabilities, governments can reduce reliance on foreign tech providers, fortify national security, and create self-sustaining ecosystems. These efforts ensure that public sector AI remains a tool for empowerment, not dependence.

By investing in homegrown AI capabilities, governments can create self-sustaining AI ecosystems that reduce reliance on foreign technologies and ensure national security.

Shaping the Future of AI: A Collective Responsibility

Sovereign AI is more than just technology – it's a commitment to governance, ethics, and citizen empowerment.

Governments must lead in shaping AI with a clear vision, strong ethical foundations, and collaboration between public and private sectors. By doing so, AI can become a force for societal progress and economic resilience.

The time to act is now – let's shape AI to serve the public good and build a resilient digital economy.

Sovereign AI is more than just technology – it's a commitment to governance, ethics, and citizen empowerment."

Omnix International

VALUE FOR MONEY

Walid Gomaa, CEO of Omnix International, believes that every AI deployment should be approached with a focus on generating measurable business value, and ultimately driving monetization, in an exclusive op-ed for May's edition of CNME.

The rise in Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the Middle East can be attributed to the immense potential that helps deliver meaningful outcomes.

Companies in the region are understanding the need to implement AI solutions to achieve tangible business value.

This in turn has sparked interest in AI Monetization with a strategic approach to turn AI initiatives into measurable returns.

The shift of digital transformation in the GCC is a fertile environment for AI Monetization where it goes beyond technical implementation and is strategically aligned with core business objectives. Besides being a key enabler, it also paves the way for gaining a competitive advantage.

Many organizations struggle to convert their AI investments into meaningful outcomes despite the rapid adoption of technology. It is clear that proof of concept and pilot initiatives can highlight AI's potential, however, the lack of a strategic approach to AI can result in not delivering clear financial returns.

This can be circumvented by addressing the needs for AI Monetization at the onset and the value it will bring to drive growth, efficiency and improve customer experience.

AI monetization in the GCC is being driven by several key trends, particularly as governments across the region prioritize digital transformation.

Initiatives such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's National AI Strategy 2031 are accelerating AI adoption across industries. This helps in leading the way for businesses to integrate AI into core operations and envision the role of AI Monetization.

To maximize AI's value, businesses in the GCC should adopt structured frameworks for AI monetization.

A well-defined strategy helps organizations move beyond isolated AI experiments and achieve sustained business impact.

The building blocks for AI Monetization start with having a clear roadmap where businesses can identify key challenges, define success metrics and draw up measurable goals. This helps to align business priorities and focus on high impact initiatives to deliver tangible results.

Successful AI adoption requires a collaborative approach between all departments and early engagement in the implementation process helps build trust and ensures that AI initiatives are supported across the organization.

With a wide range of AI models available, businesses must select the technologies best suited to address their specific needs, be it, predictive analytics, computer vision, or natural language processing.

To ensure AI solutions deliver measurable results, businesses must focus on the value fulfillments. This involves conducting cost-

It is clear that proof of concept and pilot initiatives can highlight AI's potential, however, the lack of a strategic approach to AI can result in not delivering clear financial returns."

benefit analyses, identifying value drivers, and prioritizing AI initiatives that align with financial goals. Tracking performance metrics is essential to measuring impact and identifying areas for improvement.

Finally, effective AI monetization requires a focus on execution and optimization. Successful businesses actively monitor AI deployments and the key role that strategy adjustments can have to improve outcomes. Ensuring compliance with evolving regulations and addressing ethical concerns are also crucial to maintaining trust and maximizing AI's long-term value.

To maximize AI's value, businesses in the GCC should adopt structured frameworks for AI monetization."

As AI adoption continues to accelerate, businesses in the GCC that prioritize structured monetization strategies will be best positioned to unlock the full potential of their AI investments. By aligning AI initiatives with business objectives, ensuring cross-functional collaboration, and focusing on measurable outcomes, organizations can drive meaningful innovation while achieving sustainable growth.

AI monetization is no longer just a trend — it is fast becoming a critical business strategy for enterprises looking to thrive in the region's digital-first economy. Those that embrace this approach will gain a significant advantage, ensuring their AI investments deliver lasting value and measurable impact.

Endava

MODERNISE WITHOUT RISK

David Boast, General Manager – UAE & KSA, at Endava has penned an exclusive op-ed, which examines how enterprises can tread that elusive optimal path of AI adoption and modernise their operations without too much risk.

The new year offers the perfect moment to reflect on the past and shape the future. What insights can guide us forward? What strategies will drive success? Which fleeting trends will fade, and which transformative forces will demand our focus? Amongst these, artificial intelligence stands as a pivotal opportunity that businesses can no longer afford to overlook.

Around the world, a wave of quick-fire AI implementations has emerged, driven by the urgency to gain first-mover advantage. Yet, this rush has sparked a new and essential conversation: how can businesses harness AI responsibly, ensuring compliance with data regulations?

The reality is that even leveraging first-party data effectively may call for a comprehensive modernisation of core systems. In many ways, this marks a new era of digital transformation — one that balances technological advancement with ethical responsibility.

THE CHANGE BEFORE THE CHANGE

In many cases, AI has been layered onto existing systems as a quick fix. While this approach might work temporarily, it falls short of laying a foundation robust enough to support AI's full potential.

Effective AI adoption requires more than patchwork solutions; it demands an infrastructure designed for scalability, agility, and governance.

An AI-ready business must be prepped to adapt quickly to shifting market dynamics, customer demands and emerging technologies.

This begins with a deep understanding of workflows, business logic and operational nuances that may be obscured by legacy tech sprawl.

Leaders must prioritise data governance, invest in modular architectures for rapid deployment and establish systems capable of managing AI's demands over the long term.

While modernisation is a cornerstone of keynote speeches and whitepapers, CTOs know that it can be fraught with risk. Tacking AI onto legacy systems might seem like a lower-risk option but is often a false economy.

Clean data and modular building capabilities must come first. The challenge, therefore, is to find ways of making changes that minimise service disruption.

For incumbent GCC businesses, this urgency is compounded by competitive pressures.

The plain fact is that these businesses are prone to disruption by well-funded startups that do not have to tear down old systems to be AI-ready.

But with a data-based approach and the right expertise, established organisations can rise to the challenge of modernising their

> **"This core modernisation is, remember, only a means to an end. In the GCC, where bold innovation is the norm, businesses already understand the power of AI."**

core systems without derailing operations, in preparation for AI-driven growth.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Start with the business fundamentals. Understand yourself before trying to understand AI. From this starting point, methods for clearly capturing data will emanate from the way the business operates day to day.

Composable architecture comes next; rapid feature deployment is a must in a digital economy.

Finally, if the business can dig into its existing systems to understand its workflows and business logic, then the fundamentals are in place. The change before the change is complete. Subsequent modernisation will be more transparent and flexible, leading to reduced risk.

Milestones provide confidence and clarity along this journey. A move to the cloud might come first, or perhaps you will choose to rewrite your application architecture.

Whatever foundations you build, AI will sit on a far firmer base than if simply tacked onto a legacy stack. Blending the strengths of technology and people, regional organisations can take deep analytical dives into legacy assets.

Tools even exist to offer data-driven automation of this process, backed by the right skillsets, to deliver a de-risked, cost-controlled, modernisation process.

Essentially, the organisation uses advanced AI in controlled circumstances to pave the way for embedding AI deeper into the fabric of business.

This core modernisation is, remember, only a means to an end. In the GCC, where bold innovation is the norm, businesses already understand the power of AI. Governments and businesses here are practiced early adopters, so they have many lessons to draw on.

They know that adoption of a new technology often requires fundamental shifts in infrastructure, business processes and even corporate culture. AI is a many-headed beast capable of fulfilling a rich menu of use cases.

Your organisation has to consider its industry, workforce, operating capital, growth ambitions and more. It must grapple with the eccentricities of its people, shareholders and market. And it must be clear-eyed about where it wants AI to take it and how to undertake the journey with the lowest possible risk.

As is abundantly evident at this point, embracing AI will no longer be optional for GCC businesses. To remain competitive, organisations must modernise their core systems and infrastructure, prioritising clean data and composable architecture. This foundation will enable seamless integration of AI, unlocking its potential while minimising risks. With the region's history of bold innovation and a readiness to embrace transformative technologies, the GCC is well-positioned to lead in this new digital era. This is a pivotal moment for organisations to align bold technological ambitions with solid execution, paving the way for long-term success.

‘SUPERINTELLIGENT’ HEALTHCARE

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Padam Kafle**, Head of IT and Innovation at Aster DM Healthcare, to learn more about how artificial superintelligence can create a more equitable healthcare system for all – and how tragically losing his brother to acute kidney failure at just 26, has inspired him to use technology to make the healthcare system more equitable and accessible.

Padam Kafle is an IT leader on a very different mission to most of his industry peers.

He shares common ground with a lot of technologists from the standpoint that he wants to transform the industry that he operates in – which in this case happens to be healthcare.

However, his lofty aspirations and bold ambition to completely revolutionise the healthcare industry is driven by a very personal tragedy.

Tragically, Kafle lost his brother in 2007, at the tender of age of 26, due to acute kidney failure.

However, as he pointed out with a greater focus on prevention then his death was avoidable, and ultimately the loss of his brother lit a fire within Kafle that set him on a path to transform the healthcare industry.

According to Kafle, the current healthcare system globally is in the business of treating illnesses, whereas it needs to be focused on preventing illness, and that traditional cultural mindset within the healthcare industry needs to be completely reset.

In 2017, Kafle was appointed as the Head of IT and Automation at Aster Hospitals UAE.

He spearheaded strategic transformation across 27 facilities in the UAE and Oman, and developed a reputation as a ‘digital health innovator’.

Kafle holds an MBA in Innovation and Change from the University of Liverpool, and in January 2024, began studying for a Doctorate in Artificial Superintelligence in Healthcare from the Guglielmo Marconi University in Rome.

We kickstarted the conversation by examining how the healthcare industry needed to adopt a preventative approach to medicine, and move away from the current status quo, which is just a system that treats illness.

“My CEO would often say to me that we are not in the business of healthcare, we are in the business of sick-care, and that really struck a chord with me. When I did my MBA from the University of Liverpool, AI was not in vogue to the extent as it is now. However, when I decided to pursue my doctorate two years ago, my purpose was to find out how can we really transform the healthcare industry, and create a system that was focused on preventative care, as opposed to prescribed care following an illness,” said Kafle.

Kafle conceded that for many people the word superintelligence is just a buzzword, but he believes it has the power to radically overhaul the healthcare system.

> **“The Web3 Healthcare Wallet is the first of its kind, and is a concept that combines blockchain and Web3 technology to provide complete control over personal health data.”**

He highlighted the limitations of current generative AI models, which are primarily command-based, and lack the ability to assess individual needs.

"Superintelligence to me is having the ability to predict and prevent something before it happens. I mean that is just such a powerful thought and concept, but that is what superintelligence can provide for medical practitioners. The open AI models that are currently available on the market are very good, but at the end of the day, they are command-based, so ultimately they are limited and don't have the capability to assess what is my need," said Kafle.

Kafle highlighted that many diseases are hereditary, and stressed the need for the healthcare system to be proactive in order to deliver preventative healthcare.

This is the area where Kafle believes superintelligence can come to the fore to build models and data around a person's family health history, to predict when they may be at risk of a certain disease.

"Superintelligence can extract and pull together data that can build models that can predict when you may be at risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and other illnesses based on a comprehensive overview of your family's genetic history. This is a gamechanger. For example, we know that 1 in 3 globally are impacted by cancer, and there are so many different types of cancer. However, by the time you may discover you have cancer then it may already be too late, but if you had a superintelligence model that can predict this, and catch the illness early before it starts spreading, how many lives can we save? It is so powerful, and I'm only halfway through my doctorate, but I'm confident that I'll finish my research by the end of 2027," said Kafle.

Kafle then outlined how he had spoken to a start-up company that said they had developed a solution that could potentially prevent mental health issues, which again globally, is increasingly becoming a major problem.

However, unlike building models around heredity illnesses, and patterns related to your family history, when it comes to the mental health, it is even more personalised, and Kafle highlighted that the biggest issue here is related to data and privacy.

It gave Kafle the idea to pivot into the mental health space, and that led to him filing a patent with the Dubai Ministry of Economy for a Web3 Healthcare Wallet.

"Mental health is a huge

challenge globally, but we can see in Dubai how big a problem it has become, and a lot of research has linked the decline in our mental health to our relationship with social media platforms. When you are suffering from anxiety, or depression then your behaviour changes, but it is not always easy to spot, but if you connect all your social media accounts to a digital healthcare wallet, then it may flag something if you post something that they can recognise as being somewhat out of character for you. However, the big question always comes back to privacy, who has access to my data, and is it secure? So, I decided to file a patent with the Dubai Ministry of Economy for the region's very first Web3 Healthcare Wallet," said Kafle.

Kafle said the healthcare wallet would be run on a decentralised system, where the user was in complete control of their data, stressing that in order for it to be a success then privacy had to be rooted in its foundations as product.

"The Web3 Healthcare Wallet is the first of its kind, and is a concept that combines blockchain and Web3 technology to provide complete control over personal health data. The healthcare wallet is run on a decentralized system, where users can choose what data to share and with whom. We are also currently examining the potential for wearable technology, such as bracelets, or smart rings, to track user behaviour, which would greatly contribute to the healthcare wallet in a holistic way. Privacy is paramount to us, and the Web3 Healthcare Wallet enables secure, tokenised patient data on the blockchain – setting new standards in accessibility, trust and privacy," said Kafle.

Kafle has created PAHSI, which stands for Personalised Artificial Healthcare Superintelligence – and ALIF, which stands for Advanced Life-Integrating Intelligence Framework.

These are going to be the two main engines that Kafle believes can fundamentally change the healthcare industry.

Kafle hopes he can cultivate long-term partnerships with big tech players such as Microsoft and Amazon for the data hosting and storage that will be required, as the datasets needed are going to be massive.

"I believe that superintelligence will take the wheel, but it not here to replace doctors, but instead to lift us higher. In a world rapidly shaped by AI, it's time we envision a future where intelligence doesn't dominate, but elevates. A future where we heal faster and live longer. PAHSI and ALIF have been designed as intelligent systems that were not just built to solve problems, but to fundamentally redefine care. This is going to require a hell of a lot of data, so that's why I am proactively engaging with the big hyper-scalers like AWS and Microsoft, because when I'm talking about data, it's in terabytes. The aim is to track the entire health history of your family, and then in real-time monitor and analyse your behaviour to see what your patterns are, so that is going to require huge datasets, so we need to get the major tech players onside to become key partners in our mission to transform the global healthcare industry," said Kafle.

Kafle believes that PAHSI and ALIF will be affordable technology tools that are accessible for everyone, and not just the few.

His vision is to deliver world-class proactive and preventive healthcare through these two frameworks, but the cost is secondary.

Kafle wants healthcare to be accessible to everyone, but he knows all too well that the healthcare system globally is an unfair one.

Kafle tragically lost his brother at the tender age of 26 in 2007, a death looking back he believes was preventable, and this devastating loss is fuelling his mission to transform the healthcare sector.

"Superintelligence can extract and pull together data that can build models that can predict when you may be at risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and other illnesses based on a comprehensive overview of your family's genetic history."

"I lost my brother in 2007, when he was just 26 from acute kidney failure. It was devastating. The treatment process for kidney failure is not straightforward, trying to get a match for a kidney transplant is complex, and then the medication that you need to take is costly. So, unfortunately, I wasn't able to save him. Losing my brother was like a sliding doors moment for me, when I realised that the healthcare industry isn't accessible for a lot of people, including my brother - and I thought how can we change this inequitable system we have. Essentially, we didn't have the money to pay for a kidney transplant, on the salary I was earning at the time it was just next to impossible, but this experience triggered my burning desire to make the healthcare industry both accessible and affordable for everyone, and I believe my PAHSI and ALIF frameworks can lay for the foundations for this transformation," said Kafle.

Kafle believes that PAHSI and ALIF with superintelligence at their core they we can avoid such necessary deaths in the future.

Again, going back to his underlying point that we need to think preventively and use technology to build models and systems designed to detect illness.

However, Kafle conceded that it isn't just him championing the role of superintelligence in healthcare, but he does believe that fundamentally his research will improve humanity.

"The role of superintelligence is going to become more pivotal and palpable in our day-to-day lives. I know to some people it sounds like something from a sci-fi movie, but it's already here, and in five years our society is going to be a lot different, and I believe our healthcare industry will look very different. I am also acutely aware of the fact, that it's not just me looking at the role of superintelligence in healthcare, there is an ecosystem of partners and players. It's not just my

"The open AI models that are currently available on the market are very good, but at the end of the day, they are command-based, so ultimately they are limited and don't have the capability to assess what is my need."

invention, or innovation we are talking about. The speed at which technology is transforming is only going to accelerate and the power behind some of these models is phenomenal. I do believe that my research is going to be for the better of humanity," said Kafle.

Kafle stressed that there is no magic pill one can consume to guarantee you'll live to 100, and said if we really want to extend life expectancy then our behaviours have to change, and again our own health has to be our priority and we need to be proactive.

"I go to a lot of medical tech conference, and time and time again, people will talk about longevity. However, the simple fact of the matter is that if you want to extend people's life expectancy then there is huge work that you need to do. There is no medicine that you can take that can let you live until you're 100. You have to change your behaviours and you have to make your own health a priority, we can't wait until we get sick to then kickstart our own health journey. My grandfather lived until he 91, the day that he died he walked 3kms into the local village from his house, he was still very active and physically fit for a man in his 90s, so again it all goes back to behaviours. Technology can be a bridge here, we can use technology to guide us to better understand our own health, and support your efforts to extend your life expectancy. Superintelligence can play a key role in making you aware, and predict and prevent when you may get sick, but it still requires you to change your behaviour if you really want to stay healthy," said Kafle.

He did concede that initially that there was some resistance from doctors towards AI, but when they witnessed firs hand how the technology was actually empowering them to work more effectively then that reluctance to adopt the new AI technologies subsided.

AI technology is already transforming the healthcare sector, and Kafle pointed to the incredible success of their Gen AI assessment tool across Aster Hospitals in the UAE, which has reduced waiting times in the emergency department by 70%.

"We implementing generative AI technologies at multiple locations across our hospitals in both the UAE and Oman. Initially, we faced some resistance from doctors, who were concerned about losing their jobs. However, by showing the medical practitioners that the introduction of the technology could lead to increased efficiency and revenue, they were able to convince the doctors to adopt the technology. In addition to this, we also had huge success with our generative AI-powered assessment tool, which has reduced waiting times in our emergency department by 70%," said Kafle.

Kafle conceded a wonderful conversation, be reinforcing his belief that his research and his frameworks can better humanity, and radically transform a healthcare system that drastically needs an overhaul in order to create a fairer and more equitable healthcare industry.

"My doctorate and research will be complete by 2027, and I believe that my research can contribute toward the construction of a new healthcare system, one that is rooted in fairness and equality. The current system is broken, and we need to use these ground-breaking technologies to create an industry that is steeped in prevention as opposed to treatment. I believe that PAHSI and ALIF can lay the foundations for this, and I also believe that our Web3 Healthcare Wallet can also help tackle mental health problems. We are only at the beginning of this journey, but we can by leveraging the power of superintelligence to transform the healthcare industry to ensure that healthcare is accessible for all," concluded Kafle. cnme

"Losing my brother was like a sliding doors moment for me, when I realised that the healthcare industry isn't accessible for a lot of people, including my brother - and I thought how can we change this inequitable system we have."

Lenovo

LEAN ON ME

In this compelling case study, we take a look at how Lenovo's partnership with LEAN, is radically shaking up Kuwait's IT market with locally hosted cloud services, and how business is booming in Kuwait City, largely driven by a major cultural shift amongst its younger population, and progressive regulatory change.

The number of SMEs based in the city has rapidly increased since 2020, with notable areas of growth in the fintech and start-up scenes.

However, the pace of growth had challenged the capabilities of local IT services, leaving newly founded businesses with limited options for embracing cloud and driving digital transformation.

Just five years ago, businesses in the thriving economic hub could choose to either rely on public hyperscaler clouds located outside Kuwait or face the cost of building their own local data center.

Ambitious local IT firm LEAN launched in 2019 with the aim of disrupting the market with a third option, satisfying local businesses' demands for data sovereignty across sectors ranging from oil and gas to retail, medical services, and finance.

LEAN wanted the best cloud infrastructure so it could offer reliable, protected and locally hosted cloud services to Kuwaiti businesses for the first time – and turned to Lenovo for help.

Fajhan Almutairi, CEO & Co-Founder of LEAN, elaborates: "Our founding vision was to provide local businesses with local cloud services, hosted and managed in Kuwait. By keeping data within national borders, we can ensure data sovereignty and compliance with local regulations as well as rapid data access for clients. Our first step was to build a state-of-the-art cloud infrastructure in our own data center in Kuwait City."

CLOUDS YOU CAN TRUST

LEAN wanted to ensure that it selected the right vendor as the foundation for its cloud infrastructure – and evaluated vendors with a focus on reliability (a paramount consideration for cloud services) along with support services.

Having conducted an evaluation of the x86 vendors on the market (x86 servers are a standard computer architecture for enterprise servers) the 'choice was clear', says LEAN's Almutairi.

LEAN worked closely with experts from Lenovo to design and build a cutting-edge cloud infrastructure, with LEAN's team highly impressed with Lenovo's willingness to work with them to fine-tune their system so that the solution delivered the results they needed.

LEAN opted for Lenovo ThinkSystem SR630 servers, designed for performance and reliability.

The Lenovo servers run VMWare vCloud Suite, which brings together the VMware vSphere hypervisor and VMware vRealize Suite multi-vendor hybrid cloud management platform. Long-term support was key for LEAN, so the company opted for Lenovo Premier Support for Data Centers offering single-point-of-contact support with agents available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, along with Lenovo XClarity for agent-free hardware management.

Almutairi says that Lenovo stood out among vendors, not just for the reliability of its hardware, but for the hands-on approach of its experts.

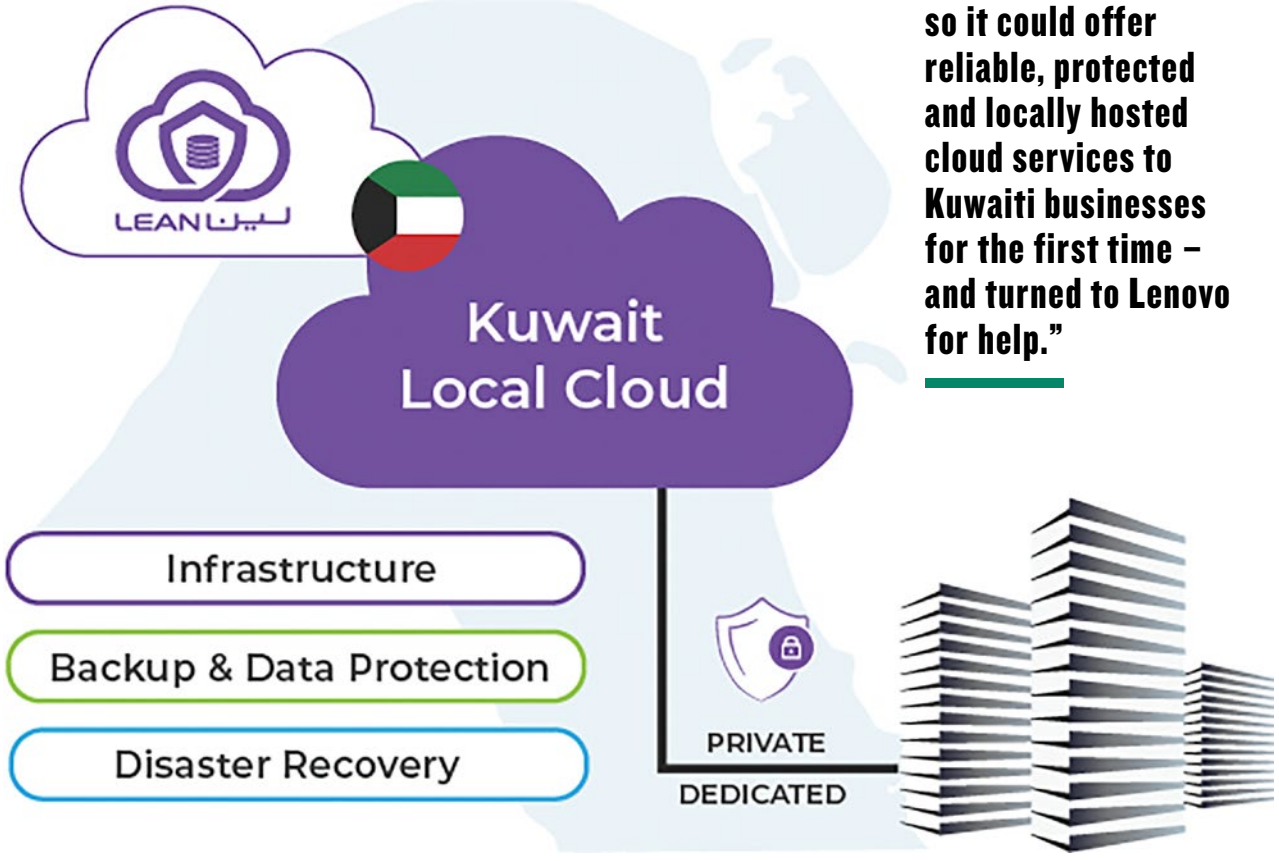
He says: "The Lenovo team was more responsive, more knowledgeable, and more involved in the build design. Lenovo, recognizing the potential impact of LEAN in the Kuwaiti cloud service market, extended unwavering support and tailored assistance, playing a pivotal role in actualizing LEAN's vision. They didn't just answer the questions we asked but helped to shape the system design to best fit our requirements."

Thibault Dousson, Director, Lenovo Services and Solutions Group, META says: "At Lenovo, we're committed to empowering innovative businesses like LEAN across the Middle East with the tools and support they need to succeed. By combining our reliable ThinkSystem infrastructure with Premier Support's 24/7 expertise, we tailored a solution to LEAN's specific needs, enabling them to deliver a new standard of cloud services. Our collaboration with LEAN in Kuwait is a testament to Lenovo's dedication to fostering technological advancement and supporting local businesses in achieving their digital transformation goals. We are proud to play a pivotal role in shaking up the IT market in Kuwait and beyond, ensuring that our customers have access to robust, locally hosted cloud services that drive growth and innovation."

DELETING DOWNTIME, CUTTING COSTS

In the five years since LEAN launched, it has become one of the leading players in IT services in Kuwait City, delivering results for clients across many different sectors. In fact, the company now

LEAN wanted the best cloud infrastructure so it could offer reliable, protected and locally hosted cloud services to Kuwaiti businesses for the first time – and turned to Lenovo for help."



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hosts 25 client environments within its cloud infrastructure.

This level of service wouldn't have been possible without the seamless integration between Lenovo's XClarity software and the VMware stack. The dramatically simplified lifecycle management has enabled the company to stay ahead of software and firmware updates and to see significant cost savings. Almutairi explains, "Without Lenovo XClarity, we would have to hire two full-time admins just to keep on top of IT operations—a huge cost-saving."

Since Lenovo and LEAN began this project, the company has experienced zero downtime, which has enabled LEAN to offer performance guarantees to its customers.

Almutairi says, "Lenovo is consistently ranked as the x86 platform with the best uptime; their reliability is second to none. The seamless integration of Lenovo and VMware technology gives us a substantial edge. It simplifies the set-up and management of our IT environment, aligning flawlessly with our operational requirements. We've never had any issues with our hardware but knowing that the Lenovo Premier Support team is only a phone call away is very reassuring."

A foundation for growth

For LEAN, the reliability of the Lenovo Premier Support and XClarity solutions has enabled the company to offer Service Level Agreement-backed performance guarantees – something that will be crucial in landing future business. Almutairi says that the reliability and seamless integration of Lenovo XClarity and VMware solutions have enabled the company to deliver a premium service for clients, underpinned by high performance and responsiveness.

Almutairi says, "Lenovo has empowered us to offer SLA-backed performance guarantees, cementing our commitment to unparalleled uptime, responsiveness, and overall service quality. This integration guarantees our platform's consistent high performance and reliability delivery, which is critical for our business demands."

Our collaboration with LEAN in Kuwait is a testament to Lenovo's dedication to fostering technological advancement and supporting local businesses in achieving their digital transformation goals."

IBM

REAL-WORLD IMPACT

Shukri Eid, General Manager of IBM Gulf, Levant, and Pakistan, spoke to CNME Editor Mark Forker, at Dubai AI Week, to learn more about the role it is playing in helping the UAE achieve its lofty AI objectives, the impact of its IBM z17 solution across the enterprise space, the need for greater governance on Gen AI – and its focus on advancing AI for real-world impact.

IBM is a strategic partner of Dubai AI Week. Can you provide us with more information on what attendees can expect to see and hear from IBM during the event?

Our involvement in Dubai AI Week reflects our broader partnership with the Dubai Future Foundation and the Emirate of Dubai overall, focused on advancing AI for real-world impact. Our objective is to showcase how AI can drive productivity gains, deliver significant return on investment, and help reinvent the way organizations work in the digital age.

Over the week, IBM will host expert sessions and speaking engagements covering critical priorities for businesses on their AI journey — from identifying quick-win use cases, to building a strong data foundation with fit-for-purpose models, to ensuring trust and governance throughout the AI lifecycle.

We'll further present early findings from the Global Chief AI Officers Study, a joint report we are working on with the Dubai Future Foundation, highlighting how global leaders are approaching AI strategy and implementation. Organizations with a CAIO see a higher ROI on AI spend compared to those without one and as per our interim findings, 26% of organizations have a CAIO and 65% of CAIOs believe most organizations will have a CAIO within the next 2 years. This is a key audience we are working with to advance AI for enterprise and government in line with UAE National AI Strategy.

Dubai has made no secret of its aspirations and ambitions to become a global leader when it comes to AI. The Dubai Universal Blueprint for AI has been engineered and designed to accelerate the adoption of AI technologies into every facet of society. IBM, as a global tech leader, has long been a partner of the UAE Government, but can you tell us the role IBM is playing in terms of achieving the goals and objectives of their AI vision?

We are proud to support Dubai and the UAE's bold vision to become a global leader in AI. Our collaboration with leading UAE entities is focused on accelerating the adoption of AI in ways that align with national agendas and business priorities.

> **At IBM, we are deeply committed to developing AI that can be trusted to drive progress for both business and society."**

Globally, we're seeing incredible momentum. Our generative AI book of business surpassed $5 billion inception-to-date, with $2 billion of that growth happening just in the last quarter. That's a clear signal that enterprises aren't experimenting with AI anymore—they're implementing it at scale. And that's exactly the kind of transformation we're supporting in the UAE.

We recently partnered with e& to co-develop an AI governance framework, one of the region's first, designed to help organizations in the UAE and beyond adopt AI responsibly and at scale. This framework offers practical guidance to embed governance, transparency, and accountability into every stage of the AI lifecycle.

At the World Governments Summit 2025, we signed an agreement with the Dubai Future Foundation to support the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 and the Universal Blueprint for AI. The partnership includes building a sovereign cloud, launching an AI innovation

center, and deepening our role in startup mentorship, Tech Talks, and advisory services — all to help position Dubai as a global AI hub.

Additionally, we're collaborating with the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) to apply IBM's geospatial foundation model to map and reduce urban heat islands in Abu Dhabi. This work has already led to a reduction of over 3°C in affected areas, offering valuable insights for sustainable urban planning in a region heavily impacted by climate change.

Our ongoing collaborations in the UAE reflect IBM's commitment to supporting national AI ambitions and helping shape a future where AI serves society responsibly and equitably.

IBM recently announced the next generation of their iconic mainframe in the form of the IBM z17, designed to bring AI to the core of the enterprise to enable new workloads. Can you outline the capabilities of this product in more detail, and the impact you believe it will have across the industry?

The IBM z17 isn't just another iteration of our mainframe, it's a response to how enterprise computing is evolving. So, with the z17, we've built AI directly into the hardware and software stack, starting with the Telum II processor. That gives it the ability to run AI models efficiently and securely, right where the data lives.

We're seeing over 250 AI support use cases for the z17 that are very real for our clients—fraud detection that happens in milliseconds, smarter customer service with AI-powered chat, even helping radiologists interpret medical images faster. And with the new IBM Spyre Accelerator, it's not just traditional models—we're talking large language models and generative AI running securely, at scale.

The z17 continues to lead in security and resiliency. And with tools like watsonx Code Assistant for Z, we're making it easier for developers to build and manage on the platform, whether they've been working on Z for years or are just getting started.

In short, this is about giving businesses a way to move fast with AI, without compromising on the things that matter: security, scale, and trust.

Finally, when it comes to Gen AI, understandably, there is huge excitement at the potential it has to completely transform industries, but that being said, there are growing calls for more robust frameworks and governance around AI in order to ensure it is being used responsibly. Can you give us an overview from an IBM perspective on your approach to responsible AI?

At IBM, we are deeply committed to developing AI that can be trusted to drive progress for both business and society.

Our approach to responsible AI begins with watsonx, our enterprise-ready AI and data platform, which provides the tools, governance, and transparency needed to develop and deploy AI responsibly. It helps organizations track data provenance, ensure model explainability, and mitigate bias at scale.

We also recognize that building trust in AI requires global collaboration. That's why we co-founded the AI Alliance, a coalition of over 100 organizations across industry, academia, and government, including partners like CERN, NASA, Hugging Face, and MBZUAI. All are committed to advancing open, safe, and inclusive AI innovation. Together, we are focused on keeping AI open-source, promoting responsible development, and ensuring the benefits of AI are broadly shared.

We also actively engage with governments worldwide to shape smart, risk-based regulation that focuses on high-impact use cases rather than underlying algorithms, in order to support innovation while safeguarding society.

Our involvement in Dubai AI Week reflects our broader partnership with the Dubai Future Foundation and the Emirate of Dubai overall, focused on advancing AI for real-world impact."

The Fortinet Security Fabric is the industry's highest-performing cybersecurity platform, delivering broad, integrated, and automated cybersecurity capabilities supported by a large, open ecosystem. The Fortinet Security Fabric empowers organizations to achieve secured digital acceleration outcomes by reducing complexity, streamlining operations, and increasing threat detection and response capabilities.
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Hitachi Vantara

SUSTAINABLE IT INFRASTRUCTURE

Rehan Shahid, Regional Channel & Alliances Manager – Middle East & Pakistan at Hitachi Vantara, spoke to Sandhya D'Mello, Technology Editor, CPI Media Group, about the transformational role of AI across its three defining phases—Perception, Generative, and Agentic AI—while addressing the complexities of hybrid cloud adoption and the urgent need for sustainable IT infrastructure.

Hitachi Vantara is at the forefront of enabling a new era in enterprise IT, where the convergence of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and sustainability is reshaping digital transformation strategies. The global brand brings its leadership in data infrastructure and AI-driven solutions to help businesses navigate this complex, rapidly evolving landscape with confidence and purpose.

The following excerpts explore how Hitachi Vantara is helping enterprises navigate this rapidly shifting landscape—simplifying complexity, maximizing ROI, and driving purposeful innovation.

Hitachi Vantara is known for driving innovation through AI. How do you see AI transforming enterprise IT operations, and what role does your company play in this evolution?

AI is truly transformative for enterprise IT operations, and at Hitachi Vantara, we've been at the forefront of this evolution for years.

We view AI in two phases—*Perception AI*, which supports decision-making through data-driven insights, and *Generative AI,* which represents a more recent revolution fueled by accelerated computing and GPU advancements. *Generative AI,* in particular, has democratized access to AI capabilities—enabling anyone to create new content, generate reports, and even build presentations simply by using prompts.

However, success with AI isn't just about the technology—it's about knowing how to engage with it. Being able to prompt effectively and interpret results critically is what turns AI into a collaborative tool rather than a disruptive force. This is where human-AI interaction becomes central.

At Hitachi Vantara, we don't just provide AI infrastructure; we distinguish ourselves by offering end-to-end AI solutions.

We help enterprises define their AI use cases, build the infrastructure, and—most importantly—align each initiative with measurable ROI.

This turnkey approach empowers organizations to adopt AI meaningfully,

ensuring that technology serves business objectives and not the other way around.

Sustainability is a growing priority in enterprise IT. How is Hitachi Vantara integrating sustainable practices into its solutions, and what impact do you see in the Middle East and Pakistan region?
Sustainability has become a critical focus for everyone—from individuals to organizations and nations. With the rise of AI-powered data centers and their massive energy consumption, the urgency around sustainable infrastructure has never been greater.

For context, powering a single gigawatt AI data center can cost up to $40 billion, with global projections pointing to the need for 200 gigawatts—amounting to a staggering $8 trillion. This kind of energy demand can rival that of entire cities, making sustainability both an environmental and financial imperative.

At Hitachi Vantara, we are taking a leadership role in driving sustainable enterprise IT.

Our infrastructure is ranked among the world's most energy-efficient. In fact, four of the top five systems globally rated by ENERGY STAR for sustainability are from Hitachi Vantara.

We are also ranked number one in the Carbon Product Footprint (CPF) initiative, which assesses the total environmental impact of a system—from raw material sourcing and manufacturing to shipping and energy consumption during operation.

Our innovation in this space is underpinned by patented technologies that significantly reduce energy consumption. This is especially relevant for high-growth regions like the Middle East and Pakistan, where large-scale digital transformation and AI adoption are accelerating.

As these regions invest in giga-scale projects, the need for sustainable IT infrastructure becomes even more crucial.

Through our end-to-end CPF-qualified ecosystem and ongoing investment from Hitachi Ltd., we are committed to helping the region—and the world—achieve its long-term sustainability goals.

Hybrid cloud adoption is accelerating across industries. What are the biggest challenges organizations face in implementing a hybrid cloud strategy, and how does Hitachi Vantara help simplify this transition?
Hybrid cloud has emerged as the dominant model for enterprise IT, offering the flexibility to keep critical data under one's own control while leveraging the scalability of the public cloud.

However, implementing a successful hybrid cloud strategy comes with its own set of challenges.

One key challenge is determining which workloads should reside on-premises and which are better suited for the public cloud. This involves understanding application requirements, associated costs, and compliance or latency considerations.

For "Day One" customers just starting their cloud journey, the complexity lies in assessing this balance. Meanwhile, "Day Two" customers—those already operating in the public

Through our end-to-end CPF-qualified ecosystem and ongoing investment from Hitachi Ltd, we are committed to helping the region and the world—achieve its long-term sustainability goals."

cloud—often face cost overruns and begin re-evaluating what workloads might need to be brought back on-premises, a process known as repatriation.

At Hitachi Vantara, we simplify this transition by offering a flexible, unified infrastructure and data management platform that supports seamless workload mobility between on-prem and cloud environments.

We help customers optimize hybrid strategies not only for performance and compliance, but also for cost efficiency and operational control.

Our approach ensures mission-critical applications can run securely on-prem, with the agility to shift to the cloud during peak periods—enabling enterprises to strike the right balance and future-proof their IT operations.

Looking ahead, what key AI-driven and cloud innovations do you foresee shaping the future of IT infrastructure, and how is Hitachi Vantara positioning itself to support this transformation?

The future of IT infrastructure is being redefined by the rapid evolution of AI, moving through three transformative phases. We began with Perception AI, which supported data-driven decision-making and reporting.

Today, we're deep into *Generative AI,* which empowers users to create content through natural language prompts. But the next wave—*Agentic AI*—is where the most profound shift will happen.

Agentic AI refers to systems that can take autonomous actions without human intervention. For instance, imagine your system noticing you're running late to a meeting and automatically notifying the next attendees. These AI agents will act on behalf of users in context-sensitive ways, making operations more seamless and responsive.

However, with this power comes responsibility. Organizations will need to define clear boundaries for what agents can and cannot do—just like HR departments manage human roles. In fact, IT teams will increasingly resemble HR functions, responsible for creating, nurturing, deploying, and managing these digital agents.

Hitachi Vantara is already preparing for this future. We're actively developing AI agents for use across sectors including finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and energy.

Our work focuses not only on creating these agents but also on embedding them within secure, scalable, and sustainable hybrid cloud infrastructures.

By combining our deep enterprise expertise with AI and cloud innovation, we're helping businesses transition into a future where IT is intelligent, autonomous, and adaptive.

“At Hitachi Vantara, we don’t just provide AI infrastructure, we distinguish ourselves by offering end-to-end AI solutions.”


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360 SECURITY

Firas Jadalla, Regional Director for the Middle East, Turkey & Africa at Genetec, spoke to Daniel Shepherd from CPI Media Group, at the Genetec empower360 roadshow in Dubai. The event delved into the importance of open architecture and IoT technologies in developing smarter cities, whilst there was also a strong focus on new trends in access control technology, simplifying video management, providing advanced scalable solutions – and the need for a unified approach to cybersecurity challenges.

Having spent almost 20 years of a decorated career at Genetec, Firas Jadalla, has witnessed firsthand their phenomenal growth of the company from relatively humble beginnings back in 2005.

In the time that has elapsed, Genetec has expanded rapidly across nine Middle Eastern cities.

In addition to their focus in Dubai and Riyadh, Genetec has local teams in Doha, Cairo, and Cape Town in South Africa.

They have also been recognised globally as a leader in innovation, and in addition to their significance presence across the Middle East region, the IT company is headquartered in Montréal, and also has other offices in multiple countries all over the world, which only serves to reinforce its standing as a global leader in innovation within the IT ecosystem.

At their recent 360 roadshow in Dubai, Daniel Shepherd sat down with Firas Jadella, to learn more about their plans for the future, amidst a backdrop of an everchanging marketplace and global economy.

Which security trends do you believe organisations should keep in mind when it comes to secure solutions?

When you consider security, we are seeing more awareness around cybersecurity which was triggered by the pandemic. We see more end users and system integrators looking for solutions that can meet the current challenges of cybersecurity. Another element is an increased focus on unification.

20 years ago, people were interested in the idea of having an interface between physical security solutions. They wanted to have alarms, control systems and video feeds interfaced together, which we now know as integration.

Today, the trends are more focused around unification. In integration multiple

different systems are combined definitively for efficiency and unification represents a unique concept.

To elaborate on the last point, how does unified security differ from current security solutions businesses use?
When we talk about a built-in unified product there is a big difference between that and an integrated solution.

A unified solution is built from the ground-up with the same code and aspects as most physical products. With unified solutions we take one solution that can meet all your requirements such as physical security, video management, access control system, license distribution system, intercom and more.

Some projects might not require all these features, but broadly it provides one solution with one interface. Consider it like Microsoft Office which includes Excel, PowerPoint and Word under a familiar interface.

With the Genetec Unified Platform, it is one platform and one interface that meets all these requirements in a seamless package. This is advantageous because it becomes easier to deploy, train employees or perform updates without breaking any links.

Do you see cloud security solutions becoming more common or is hybrid still popular with your customers?
All of us in Genetec agree that the cloud is going to dominate the future of security solutions. For us it is not a question of will, it is a question of when. When will we see this adoption reach over 50%?

When will over 50% of physical security installations rely on an on-prem cloud? When you look at enterprise solutions, there is a bigger appetite for hybrid verses cloud. If we look at small deployments like shop cameras, the owners will likely prefer everything to be linked via cloud.

However, with bigger examples like airports that use thousands of cameras it becomes more meaningful and cost effective to use a hybrid solution.

Hybrid offers the best of both

“With the Genetec Unified Platform, it is one platform and one interface that meets all these requirements in a seamless package. This is advantageous because it becomes easier to deploy, train employees or perform updates without breaking any links.”

worlds as you can address issues related to bandwidth and the cost of bandwidth, whilst being able to use cloud access from anywhere to gather insights.

Can your security centre solutions incorporate and develop alongside the changes we are seeing in access control technology?

Our flagship product offers a unified platform for management control. What you get with this platform is that every time a software update is available you only need to do it once to keep things running smoothly.

There are no unnecessary integration links or interfaces. Our latest products feature an element called GUS (Genetec Upgrade Service) which when enabled, automatically checks for updates during night hours.

Before we wrap up, is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

As a company, Genetec has taken a very strong stance on cybersecurity since 2016. We've seen people become aware of the importance of having a secure security solution right after the pandemic.

During that time more people were working from home leading to an increase in the number of cyberattacks. We've continued to encourage our system integrator, channel partners and end users to give cybersecurity the importance it is due.

At Genetec, with have improved our solutions with built-in cybersecurity and created guidelines for our system integrator during deployment to tighten security measures.

Our solution includes many features such as, encryption to avoid man-in-the-middle attacks between cameras and the servers' workstation.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind people of the critical nature of their own security systems and at the end of the day it is everyone's responsibility.

Whether it's Genetec being the supplier, our system integrator deploying it or the end user running it, everyone is accountable. We must all work together to share the responsibility. cmme

"At Genetec, with have improved our solutions with built-in cybersecurity and created guidelines for our system integrator during deployment to tighten security measures."

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REAL TRANSFORMATION

Some of the most prominent technology leaders from the global ICT ecosystem have come together to reinforce and reiterate their commitment to empowering young women in technology on International Girls in ICT Day – with **Doreen Bogdan-Martin** declaring that real transformation only happens when girls are not just in the room, but at the forefront of digital change.

It is an annual initiative spearheaded by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and is celebrated on the 4th Thursday of April, and is fundamentally designed to inspire and empower girls and young women to consider studies and careers in the growing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) field.

This year's theme, which is 'Girls in ICT for inclusive digital transformation' highlighted the critical need to bridge the gender gap in the tech sector.

Events were held globally, from workshops and coding competitions to mentorship programmes and career fairs, aiming to introduce young women to the exciting possibilities within ICT.

In the Middle East, **Fida Kibbi**, Vice President, Head of Marketing, Communications, Sustainability & Corporate Responsibility at Ericsson MEA, highlighted their initiatives such as *Connect*

to Learn and *Technovation Girls* as an example of their unwavering commitment to empowering and nurturing female talent in technology.

"On this International Girls in ICT Day, we reaffirm our commitment to empowering young women in technology. The journey may present challenges but overcoming them leads to a rewarding future. At Ericsson, we are dedicated to nurturing female talent through initiatives like Connect to Learn and Technovation Girls, providing opportunities and resources for success. By championing diversity and inspiring the next generation of leaders, we aim to ensure that young girls see themselves as future pioneers in ICT. Together, we can transform our industry and society, driving innovation and creating a more inclusive world that values the contributions of women in technology," said Kibbi.

Martine Billmann, Marketing Manager, Middle East, Turkey and Africa, Genetec, echoed the sentiments expressed by Ericsson, and stressed that they believe that 'diversity' is the key to future innovation in the ICT landscape.

"At Genetec, we believe that diversity is key to innovation, especially in critical fields like technology and security. On International Girls Day in ICT, we celebrate the critical role that women and girls can play in advancing the security industry and beyond. Encouraging more women to enter and lead in tech and security isn't just the right thing to do, it's essential for building inclusive, resilient, and forward-looking solutions. By fostering equal opportunities and breaking down barriers, we pave the way for a smarter, safer and unified world - powered by the insights and leadership of women," said Billman.

Diversity is key to innovation, especially in critical fields like technology and security. On International Girls Day in ICT, we celebrate the critical role that women and girls can play in advancing the security industry and beyond."

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the ITU, highlighted how they launched Girls in ICT Day back in 2011, and that their mission is more important than ever before.

"Today, we celebrate the power and potential of young women and girls as leaders, creators and changemakers in the digital age. Technologies like AI are rapidly transforming our world. But one-third of humanity remains shut out from digital opportunities. In fact, 189 million fewer women than men are using the internet in 2024. That's too many missed opportunities to learn, to earn, and to shape our shared digital future, because everyone deserves the chance to thrive in an increasingly digital-world. At ITU, we are committed to empowering 100 million women and girls with digital skills through initiatives like our EQUALS Global Partnership, but we can't do this alone. We launched Girls in ICT Day back in 2011, to open digital doors for girls everywhere. Today, that mission is more important than ever before. Because real transformation only happens when women and girls are not just in the room, and at the table, but at the forefront of digital change," said Bogdan-Martin.

By championing diversity and inspiring the next generation of leaders, we aim to ensure that young girls see themselves as future pioneers in ICT."

Because real transformation only happens when women and girls are not just in the room, and at the table, but at the forefront of digital change."

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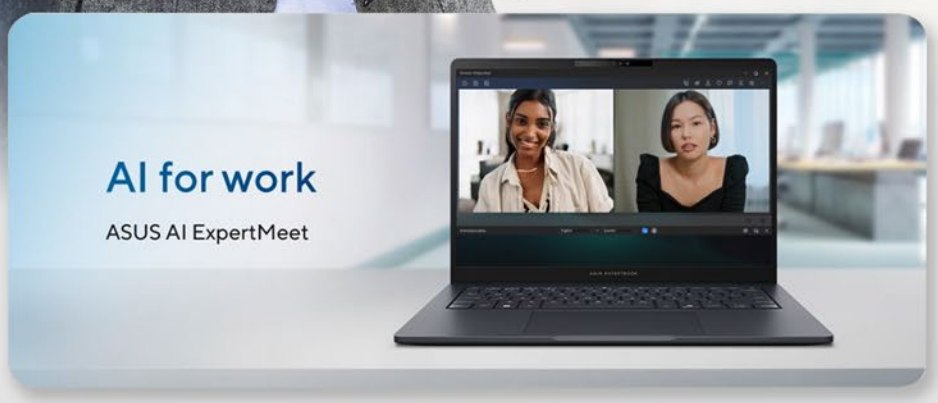

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