

GITEX TECH VISION 2023

VISION TO SUCCEED

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VISION TO SUCCEED

In an age defined by rapid innovation and digital transformation, technology leaders of the future are emerging as visionaries with an unwavering commitment to success. These trailblazers are shaping the course of technology and, in turn, the world we live in. Their visionary approach is not merely about technological prowess, but about harnessing the power of innovation to make a lasting impact on society.

One of the defining traits of these leaders is their focus on addressing the world's most pressing challenges. Climate change, healthcare, education, and social equity are just a few of the arenas where these innovators are directing their energies. Their vision goes beyond creating the next big thing; it centers on the betterment of humanity.

These leaders are characterised by their profound commitment to ethical and sustainable tech practices. They understand that success in the digital age isn't just about profits, but about ensuring that technology benefits all of society. Privacy, data security, and responsible AI deployment are key considerations in their approach. They recognise that innovation should be a force for good, not for exploitation.

Through the Tech Vision supplement, CPI Media Group is spotlighting the technology leaders of tomorrow who are leading the change with their futuristic vision, deep knowledge and extensive experience. Happy Reading!

Going Beyond the Quest for the Best.



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VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Michele Montecchio, General Manager, Acer Middle East, discusses the cutting-edge technologies the company is implementing to fundamentally reshape enterprises in the Middle East region.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

Acer stands at the forefront of evolution in line with industry trends and the changing lifestyles

of our users. The company remains dedicated to innovation across our computer and display businesses while spearheading new initiatives such as AI and AoIT.

In 2022, Acer achieved the remarkable rank of #2 in patent applications in Taiwan, boasting a portfolio of over 300 patents in cutting-edge thermal cooling technology. Our commitment to sustainability is unwavering, which

is evident in initiatives like the Earthion platform and the eco-friendly Vero product line.

Our forward-looking approach is further exemplified by the establishment of a new Innovation Business Development Department within Acer's Taiwan operations, with a strategic focus on smart solutions driven by AI extensions. Acer's innovation efforts will encompass four pivotal domains: production, lifestyle, security, and energy.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

I believe that OpenAI can open a lot of opportunities and it's something we're very excited for at Acer, as we're always looking for new innovations that we can implement into our products.

Our commitment to innovation is underscored by the increased investment from the Acer Value Lab into the development of AI solutions. Our latest innovations proudly feature AI-based technologies, notably the immersive stereoscope 3D experience offered by SpatialLabs and cutting-edge AI-assisted medical diagnosis software.

Acer is at the forefront of creating smart solutions for diverse sectors, including healthcare, transportation, and urban development, all powered by AIoT (Artificial Intelligence of Things) technology.



There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

In today's landscape, digital transformation is imperative for a more seamless and promising future. Central to this transformation is the widespread adoption of new technologies and ensuring accessibility to these advancements.

As a prominent provider of comprehensive hardware and software solutions, our mission is to offer a complete spectrum of products, including computers, monitors, and servers, designed to cater to the diverse needs of enterprises. These solutions encompass crucial attributes such as security, durability, ease of access, and streamlined maintenance, all with the goal of empowering organisations to thrive in the digital age.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

AI can open a lot of opportunities and it's something we're very excited for at Acer, as we're always looking for new innovations that we can implement into our products.

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In a comprehensive assessment encompassing the broader tech industry, it's evident that digital transformation is a domain still evolving, particularly in the Middle East, which is striving to catch up. The expansion of cloud-based solutions in this region has been notably slower compared to other areas, and this progression has further decelerated during the challenging COVID-19 years. Now, there is an imperative need to accelerate these advancements.

Simultaneously, the critical domain of cybersecurity requires considerable enhancement, particularly as it aligns with the expansion of cloud technology. The two go hand in hand, necessitating a robust and holistic approach to safeguarding digital assets and data.

Furthermore, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is currently the hot topic and is poised to become ubiquitous, both within and outside enterprises. It is our collective responsibility within the industry to ensure that the integration of AI into business operations occurs in a secure and ethically responsible manner, prioritizing the well-being of individuals and organizations alike.

This supplement is entitled GITEX Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

In the ever-evolving tech landscape, several key trends and technologies are set to shape the future. Sustainability stands at the forefront, with a growing focus on eco-friendly practices and solutions. Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to revolutionize industries, bringing automation and intelligence to the forefront. The cloud, with its scalability and accessibility, is driving digital transformation across sectors.

Simultaneously, robust data storage solutions are indispensable in managing the vast amounts of information generated daily. The importance of cybersecurity remains paramount, safeguarding digital assets and privacy.

Lastly, the immersive world of virtual reality is poised to redefine how we experience and interact with technology, opening new realms of possibility in various domains. These trends collectively pave the way for a dynamic and transformative digital era. **TECH VISION**

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

S. M. Hussaini, CEO at Almoayyed Computers, on the three elements that ensure the success of digital transformation: Objectives, People & Technology.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

We endeavor to deliver more than what we commit! Our commitment extends beyond meeting agreed-upon SLAs. Our key performance indicators include the Net Promoter

Score and overall Customer Satisfaction Index, reflecting our dedication to exceeding customer expectations. We've implemented a user-friendly CRM self-service for effortless request and complaint logging. Furthermore, we maintain a robust practice of monitoring customer success, with dedicated personnel overseeing this aspect. Additionally, we've invested in an application that provides us with daily insights into our standing in terms of Customer Success.

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OpenAI and ChatGPT have marked a significant revelation in technological advancement, showcasing the remarkable potential for human-like thinking



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2hours

gained daily per employee through improved collaboration.¹

20%

reduction in the number of security breaches experienced annually.¹

3.75hours

saved in provisioning time per device.²





[1] Maximizing Your ROI From Microsoft 365 Enterprise With Microsoft Surface, Forrester, July 2020

[2] A Forrester Total Economic Impact™ Study Commissioned By Microsoft, 2020

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patterns, which is truly mind-boggling. Deep learning has transformed the AI landscape, revolutionizing the contemporary understanding of the field, despite AI's long-standing presence. Its widespread adoption and application in various industries have become undeniable.

While AI, like any technology, is susceptible to misuse, there are simultaneous endeavors and investments aimed at establishing ethical AI as the standard. I concur that the implementation of appropriate regulations and control measures, akin to combatting cybercrimes, is a crucial step forward.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

To ensure the success of digital and cloud transformation, it is crucial to establish the right OPT elements: Objectives, People, and Technology. Firstly, enterprises must establish clear end objectives, to prevent varying interpretations of the transformation's purpose among different organisational stakeholders. Second, it's imperative to involve people in the process, as objectives cannot be achieved without their active participation. Building a diverse team of individuals with leadership mindset from various lines of business and departments is essential for steering the transformation's objectives. Finally, selecting the most optimum technologies to meet these objectives is a key factor in guaranteeing a successful transformation.



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In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

The most significant challenge confronting the industry in the region pertains to the People. On one hand, there is a shortage of individuals with the requisite skill sets, while on the other, it is the high attrition rate.

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what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

The IT and technology sector across the Middle East is poised to experience unprecedented growth over the next decade, driven by the rapid pace of digital adoption, surpassing many other regions. This growth will be further fueled by the region's conducive environment for innovation, along with its rapid transformation into one of the most appealing destinations for expatriate residents. TECH VISION



RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

Jiten Sil – VP, Strategic Initiatives at Bahwan CyberTek highlights BCT's journey of prioritising people and processes over technology, adopting a 'Fit-for-Future' approach, and leveraging proprietary IP products to elevate user experiences in the digital landscape.



Can you outline to our readers how Bahwan CyberTek (BCT) has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

Absolutely. Experience-led growth is a business priority in today's digital landscape. Since its inception in 1999, BCT's objective has been to enable the transformation of businesses through a unique combination of intellectual property and innovative business models for value creation. Equipped with deep-domain expertise, world-class knowledge capital, and IP products, we've successfully assisted our customers in becoming agile, embracing disruption, and preparing for the future. What sets us apart is our conviction that business objectives should spearhead, not follow, technological applications.

Our approach is distinctly characterized by prioritizing people and processes before identifying and deploying suitable technology to meet the stipulated business

requirements. To help enterprises keep up the pace of transformation we've adopted a 'Fit-for-Future' framework, an approach that we deploy for every project we undertake. We're not just looking at present-day challenges but are constantly future-gazing, anticipating, and preparing for what lies ahead. This forward-thinking mindset ensures we, and our clients, are always a step ahead in this fast-paced digital landscape. We do this using our IP products, award-winning services, and outcome-based business models.

Our proprietary products, each meticulously developed from the ground up to address specific needs within various industry verticals, can sense, analyze, predict, and drive business divisions. By incorporating advanced technologies like AI, IoT, Hyper Automation, Distributed Cloud, and Extended Reality, among others, and collaborating with leading technology players, we ensure our clients receive exceptional value in their daily functions. Whether it is Droptought (DT), our digital experience management solution that captures real-time sentiment analytics or feedback from all stakeholders, or whether it is retina360, our flagship AI-powered predictive analytics solution, our products address evolving business needs and priorities bridging the gap between individuals and technology, thereby elevating user experiences and streamlining operations.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major

industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

Being at the forefront of digital transformation, we inherently possess a zest for fresh technological advancements. We are always eager to explore the potential they harbor. Nevertheless, it's vital to remember our overarching commitment to our customers and society. As service providers in the digital age, we firmly believe in the importance of regulatory measures, particularly data security and individual privacy.

We have encountered transformative technologies throughout history, beginning with the Industrial Revolution, that redefine our societal and operational norms. Each technological milestone, while often perceived as a disruptive force, has been a human-made creation, and ultimately, it is humanity that learns to harness its potential in a beneficial manner. OpenAI and ChatGPT are just the latest in this lineage of innovations, and we've barely scratched the surface. According to McKinsey, generative AI's impact on productivity could add trillions of dollars in value to the global economy.

Echoing our 'Fit-for-Future' ethos, it's paramount to consider the longevity and sustainability of any technology we adopt. CXOs must look beyond the hype and seek real transformative value. In some cases, today's promising solution might emerge as tomorrow's challenge. Therefore, when contemplating the integration

of cutting-edge AI systems like OpenAI and ChatGPT, we must look beyond immediate applications, and look for value creation. We need to envision their role in the foreseeable future, taking proactive steps to lay down guidelines that ensure their sustainable and secure deployment.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

There's a shift in the MENA region from an oil-based economy to a digital economy. Good talent, robust policies, and attractive investments are driving this shift, positioning this region as a key digital destination. Countries in the region are doubling down on their commitment to economic diversity with encouraging programs like the Saudi Vision 2023, the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, and Oman Vision 2040.

This wave of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the recent years has illuminated the complexities, especially for enterprises deeply entrenched in legacy systems. To navigate these intricacies, a successful transformation journey necessitates a triad of key processes:

- 1. Unified Vision:** Leadership must articulate and integrate the company's mission at all levels. This ongoing process ensures that all stakeholders work cohesively towards shared goals, driving successful transformations.
- 2. Structured Approach:** Effective transformation requires breaking down ambitious goals into achievable tasks, executed in sequence by the right team. This methodical approach, akin to solving complex problems, leads to realistic and attainable milestones.

3. Transparent Operations:

Trust and open communication are vital. With clear tasks and engaged experts, an atmosphere of transparency allows for smooth project progression, with challenges promptly identified and addressed.

We have consulted and worked alongside our clients to achieve this and the results have been resounding across various industries.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

The two primary challenges facing enterprises in the IT and technology sector across the Middle East are the availability of local domain experts and the prevalence of legacy systems.

Firstly, there's a noticeable shortage of local subject matter experts in the region. The current demand for specialized knowledge is often met by professionals from outside the MENA region. However, there have been commendable initiatives in countries like the UAE and KSA to nurture and develop local talent in the technology sector. We at BCT actively participate in this endeavor. In several of our projects in the UAE, we not only hire but also invest in training enthusiastic young nationals who display a keen interest in the field.

Secondly, while many public and private organizations are eager to adopt cutting-edge technologies to meet the demands of the present, the presence of legacy systems significantly impedes this process. These older systems often lack the flexibility required to integrate seamlessly with newer, more advanced technologies. With 24 years of experience as system integrators, we at BCT understand the constraints posed by legacy systems. Our deep expertise allows us to develop solutions that enable organizations to leverage their existing infrastructure while enhancing its integrability, agility, flexibility, and security. Through lightweight wrappers and other innovative approaches, we ensure

that these legacy systems can not only meet but often exceed current technological and operational requirements.

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In the upcoming "digital decade," the Middle East's IT and tech landscape will be shaped by several crucial trends and technologies:

1. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG): The region will focus on resilient and sustainable economic plans, aligning tech development with societal and environmental objectives.
2. Internet of Things (IoT): A transformation in public services will occur through further digitalization, providing valuable real-time information to citizens and enhancing operations and enhancing citizen experience.
3. AI / ML / DL: Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Deep Learning will foster innovative, efficient, and productive work processes through data science.
4. Extended Reality (AR / VR / Metaverse): This technology will bridge digital and physical worlds, offering interactive services to the public and private sectors.
5. Distributed Cloud & Hyperautomation: These will enhance security, decision-making, worker capability, efficiency, and cost savings in computational intelligence management.
6. Digital Immune Systems: Developed to minimize system failures and business disruptions, these will improve user experiences as we delve deeper into the digital age.

The next 'digital decade' for the Middle East's IT and tech sector is brimming with opportunities, and these trends and technologies will drive digital transformation, innovation, and growth in the Middle East's IT and tech sector. **TECH VISION**

Our approach is distinctly characterised by prioritising people and processes before identifying and deploying suitable technology to meet the stipulated business requirements.





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FOCUSED ON INNOVATION

Toni El Inati, RVP Sales, META & CEE at Barracuda Networks explores how security infrastructure need not be overly complex despite the new paradigms of digital transformation, distributed mobile workforces and the adoption of cloud services.



Can you outline to our readers how your company offers cutting-edge technologies to help your customers deliver the ‘experience’ that their employees and end-users demand in the experience economy?

In a world dominated by digital interfaces and systems, the availability and security of these systems has an outsized impact on the ‘experience’ of customers and employees. Even the most well designed and slick applications have little value if they aren’t reliably accessible, or if they expose users to cyber threats.

These connected technology systems are increasingly complex – and the security infrastructure needed to protect them can quickly become complex too. This is where Barracuda fits in – we deliver innovative security products that are easy to deploy, manage, scale and use. Our comprehensive portfolio of advanced solutions features email protection, application protection, data protection, network protection and a SASE platform – wherever you need it, on premises, in the cloud, or both. We are continually innovating to deliver tomorrow’s security technology, today.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on AI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

Artificial Intelligence plays a pivotal role in driving progress and innovation. From algorithms that personalise our experiences to intricate neural networks powering virtual assistants AI is not just about technology, it revolutionises industries, enhances

We intend to highlight how concepts such as Zero Trust and the utilisation of Cloud Application Protection and SASE solutions can empower organisations to confidently embrace the cloud paradigm.

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Digital transformation, the distributed mobile workforce, the adoption of cloud services, and emerging edge computing platforms have changed how many organisations operate. Today's users expect to have access to corporate apps from anywhere and from any device. These new paradigms have introduced new complexities and challenges.

Through our participation at GITEX, we intend to highlight how concepts such as Zero Trust and the utilisation of Cloud Application Protection and Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) solutions, can empower organisations to confidently embrace the cloud paradigm and grant their user secure access to applications no matter their location or device.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

AI will undeniably be one of the biggest trends we see unfold over the coming decade. In just the last year alone, we have seen major strides in the field – not just in the innovations being rolled out, but also in the familiarity and comfort that individuals have with this concept. Today, you would be hard pressed to find someone who hasn't at least tinkered about with a tool such as ChatGPT or another AI-powered assistant. As this acceptance grows, and fears of humans being replaced by AI are placated, we will see AI start to shape regional economies. A recent report by PwC projects that the potential economic impact of AI in the Middle East could reach US\$320 billion by 2030. In relative terms, it forecasts that the UAE will see the largest impact of close to 14% of 2030 GDP, while in absolute terms, the largest gains are expected to be in Saudi Arabia where AI is expected to contribute over US\$135.2 billion to the economy, equivalent to 12.4% of GDP. TECH VISION

user interactions, and expands possibilities.

For users, AI brings together speed and customisation options, while for business it opens up opportunities for innovation, efficient operations, and a unique advantage, in a changing market.

When it comes to cyberthreats, AI allows attackers to strike faster, with better accuracy, and makes attacks more evasive and convincing. As attackers become more efficient, it is even more critical that businesses use AI-based threat detection to outsmart targeted attacks.

AI can be used in cybersecurity in many ways. For example, to enhance cybersecurity awareness training, reduce noise and

complexity, support analysis, and to learn the unique communication patterns of an individual. This kind of insight already underpins technologies that protect against email threats such as spear phishing, business email compromise, lateral phishing and other targeted threats.

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CUSTOMER-FIRST

Shiboo Varughese, Chief Technology Officer at CirrusLabs, outlines how they transform day-to-day operations with agility, data-driven insights, automation, and cloud solutions to meet the demands of the industry.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

CirrusLabs envisions a collaborative journey to achieve success alongside our valued clients. Our primary focus encompasses four key domains:

Agility:

Adaptability is paramount for delivering an exceptional customer experience. This involves the ability to swiftly respond to shifting customer demands and dynamic market conditions. We have demonstrated our commitment to agility through various notable instances:

Rapid Innovation and Product Launches: Our Agility solution empowers us to educate, establish, and expand agile teams for our clients. Drawing from our extensive experience with diverse clients, we have developed our own Agility framework, the CBVD model. This framework expedites the transition of

Our outlook is characterised by a blend of anticipation and caution regarding the impending impact of OpenAI and ChatGPT on our society.



businesses towards an agile mindset. Additionally, we offer baseline assessments that gauge the maturity of a client's agile journey.

Personalised Customer Journeys: Our dedicated customer success teams collaborate closely with clients to offer insightful guidance and deliver value promptly. We have successfully partnered with clients to leverage their data for tailoring the customer journey, ensuring a personalised experience at every interaction point.

Swift Response to Customer Feedback: Our delivery teams span across multiple continents, enabling us to promptly address customer feedback. We conduct quarterly business reviews to gather insights on the performance of our agile teams, allowing us to fine-tune our approach to deliver enhanced customer value.

Data:

CirrusLabs works with our customers on data driven consulting using cutting-edge technologies. Data-driven consulting is a new approach to consulting that uses data and analytics to inform decision-making and deliver better results for clients. We use data to help our clients understand their businesses better, identify opportunities for improvement, and make more informed decisions.

We use cutting-edge technologies such as AI, ML, and IoT to automate tasks, improve efficiency, and create new and innovative services for their clients. For example, we have enabled AI to develop conversational chatbot that can answer client questions and provide support 24/7.

Automation:

We enable cross cutting technologies to build automations. With tools like Tricentis Tosca we could enable model driven test automation for multiple clients. We are a strong

believer of DevOps and Shift left testing. Automation and DevOps have undergone a transformative evolution with the integration of AI technologies. AI-driven automation in DevOps processes has significantly improved efficiency and reliability in software development and deployment pipelines.

Cloud:

Cloud computing has revolutionised the way businesses manage and deploy their IT resources. Cloud infrastructure offers the scalability, flexibility, and cost-efficiency that modern organisations need. Cloud engineering, as a discipline, focuses on designing, building, and maintaining cloud-based systems to harness these benefits effectively. It encompasses architectural decisions, security measures, automation, and the optimisation of cloud resources.

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Our outlook is characterised by a blend of anticipation and caution regarding the impending impact of OpenAI and ChatGPT on our society. A striking illustration of this can be found in the areas where our customer engagement has been notably robust, encompassing the following application scenarios:

To commence, the incorporation of automated conversational chatbots has proven to be a catalyst for heightened productivity and the elevation of customer experiences. Furthermore, the introduction of AI-powered healthcare solutions, exemplified by Nurse Assist and continuous health monitoring, underscores our dedication to reshaping the healthcare landscape. The expeditious development of software through predictive delivery methods serves as another testament to our forward-looking approach.

However, juxtaposed with these advancements are certain conceivable risks associated with these emerging AI technologies.

Digital Transformation Simplified

cirrus labs

Your Journey Is Our Journey

PILLARS	BLOCKS	OUTCOMES
 Agile Product Management	Design Thinking Innovation Ecosystem Product Portfolio	Competitive Advantage
 Artificial Intelligence	NLP Predictive ML Generative AI Ops XReality Robotics Computer Vision	Disruptive Innovation
 Data	Data Strategy Data Integration Data Warehouse Data Governance Data Quality	Predictive Analytics
 Security	Governance Risk Compliance Cyber Security Monitoring	Compliance & Governance
 Cloud Computing	Cloud Strategy Application Development Cost Optimization Call Center	Secure Scaling
 Modernized Technology	Architecture Software Delivery Testing DevSecOps API Hub	Future Ready
 Agile Organization	Train Launch Coach Scale	Customer-centric Innovation
 Digital Strategy	Visioning Technology Strategy Policy	Unified Vision

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Notably:

- ChatGPT could potentially be misused to generate harmful content, including disinformation, propaganda, and hate speech.
- ChatGPT has the capacity to fabricate deepfakes—realistic videos or audio recordings manipulated to create the illusion of someone saying or doing things they never actually did.
- The OpenAI models are trained on existing data, introducing the risk of bias and unintended consequences.
- Concerns arise from the absence of robust regulations and control mechanisms governing AI models. Hence, we firmly advocate for a comprehensive examination of both the prospective advantages and threats posed by OpenAI and ChatGPT before embarking on their widespread deployment.

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Here are some of the key steps for legacy-heavy enterprises in the Middle East need to adopt to ensure a successful cloud transformation journey:

1. Define the scope of the transformation. This includes identifying the goals and objectives of the transformation, as well as the specific applications and data that will be migrated to the cloud. It is important to have a clear understanding of the scope of the transformation before embarking on the journey.
2. Assess the current state of the IT environment. This includes identifying all of the applications, infrastructure, and data that are currently in use. It is also important to identify any gaps or challenges that need to be addressed before migrating to the cloud.
3. Identify the cloud vendors. Conduct Pilots with multiple vendors to see which solution fits the portfolio. We have accelerated this step with our Cloud management platform tools.

4. Create a transformation Plan. This plan should include timelines, budgets, and resources. It is important to identify and mitigate any risks that may occur during the transformation process.
5. Start small and scale up. This includes migrating applications and data to the cloud, and making any necessary changes to infrastructure and processes. It is important to have a clear communication and change management plan in place to ensure that all stakeholders are on board with the transformation.
6. Monitor and manage the transformation. It is important to monitor the transformation process to ensure that it is on track and meeting its objectives. It is also important to make adjustments as needed.

Cirruslabs has done large scale cloud migrations and engineering work for multiple clients. With our learnings we have built multiple assets and accelerators. Whether it is scanning the code to understand whether it can move to the cloud, or creating an automated sandbox with all the guardrails, we have a template or an accelerator which can help to get the value quickly.

- What we say is to:
- Focus on the business value of cloud transformation. Don't just migrate to the cloud for the sake of it. Make sure that you have a clear understanding of the business value that cloud transformation will deliver.
 - Get buy-in from all stakeholders. Cloud transformation requires a change in mindset and culture. Make sure that all stakeholders, from the CEO down to the front-line employees, are on board with the transformation.
 - Be patient and persistent. Cloud transformation is not a quick or easy process. It takes time and effort to achieve success.
 - Execute and Fail Fast. With the right partner and the right cloud, Legacy migration is still possible.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

The region is experiencing a rapid growth in digital transformation, but there is not enough qualified IT and technology talent to meet the demand. This is due to several factors, including:

- A lack of investment in education and training
 - A brain drains of skilled workers to other countries.
 - A lack of diversity in the IT and technology workforce
- In addition to skills shortage, there are several other challenges facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East, including:
- Cybersecurity: The region is a target for cyberattacks, and enterprises need to invest in cybersecurity measures to protect their data and systems.
 - Regulation: The regulatory landscape in the region is complex and fragmented, which can make it difficult for enterprises to comply with regulations.
 - Access to capital: It can be difficult for enterprises in the Middle East to access the capital they need to invest in new technologies and grow their businesses.
 - Infrastructure and connectivity: Some regions in the Middle East faced infrastructure limitations and connectivity issues, which could hinder the adoption of advanced technologies.
 - Cultural Factors: Cultural norms and societal factors could impact technology adoption and innovation in certain sectors or regions.

However, with all the constraints, the Middle East has progressed rapidly in the last decade, in leading transformational changes with technology.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

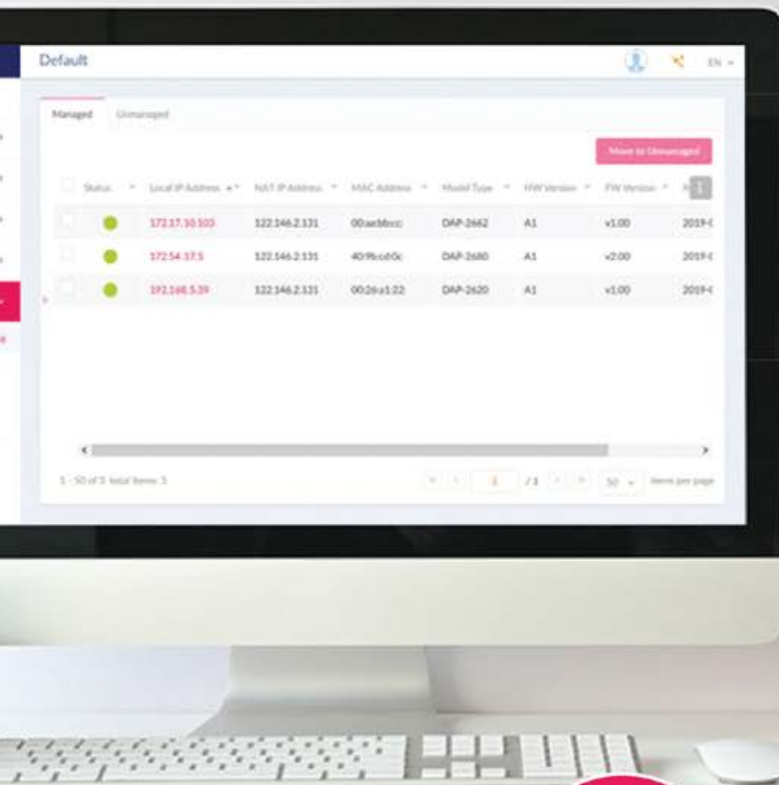
Aligning with the Middle East vision, AI, Cloud and digital transformation work will find new ways to improve productivity to business and provide value. Some of the key trends and technologies that will champion change in the Middle East over the next digital decade include:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI already has a major impact on the IT and tech sector in the Middle East, and this is only going to increase in the coming years. AI is being used to develop new products and services, automate tasks, and improve efficiency.
- 5G and beyond-5G networks: 5G and beyond-5G networks will enable new and innovative applications in the IT and tech sector. For example, 5G will make it possible to develop real-time AI applications, such as autonomous vehicles and smart cities.
- Cloud computing: Cloud computing is becoming increasingly popular in the Middle East, and this is expected to continue in the next decade. Cloud computing offers a number of benefits, such as flexibility, scalability, and cost savings.
- Internet of Things (IoT): The IoT is connecting devices to the Internet, and this is creating a wealth of new data. Enterprises in the Middle East can use this data to improve their operations, develop new products and services, and create new revenue streams.
- Blockchain: Blockchain is a distributed ledger technology that can be used to create secure and transparent transactions. Blockchain is being used in a variety of industries in the Middle East, including finance, healthcare and logistics. TECH VISION

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The DAP-2622 is equipped with two PoE ports, which are able to power an external device (such as an IP phone), as well as a LAN port if a wired connection is necessary.

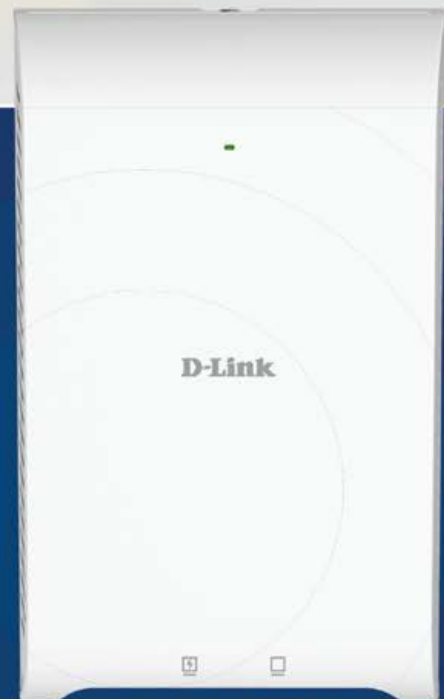
Wall-Plated Access Point



x3 LAN ports

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DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Sakkeer Hussain, Director - Sales & Marketing, D-Link Middle East & Africa, discusses technology, innovation, cloud and more.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

We have optimised cutting-edge technologies such as Wi-Fi 6, 5G, cloud, cybersecurity, IoT, AI, etc. to transform day-to-day operations to deliver exceptional experiences in the experience economy. At D-Link, we make it a point to understand key touchpoints which matter the most to our customers and partners. We use AI and ML to analyse data and anticipate customer demands and offer personalised experiences. We leverage the scalability and flexibility of cloud platforms for efficient data storage and processing. We use 5G for faster and more reliable connectivity and ensure robust cybersecurity to protect our own and customer data. We also ensure that employees and partners are aligned in our mission to deliver exceptional experiences.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?



be public, private or hybrid? What are the current requirements of the business? Think of security and compliance and data privacy. Training employees and buying the mindshare of leadership are also important steps. Usually, any kind of change is resisted so there needs to be an education before implementation. You must also identify and prioritise areas to be transformed first while also having a process for monitoring and optimising costs. This includes data migration and management, regular updates and so on. Digital and cloud transformations are continuous processes and not a one-time investment, so customers need to prepare and budget for it accordingly.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

The biggest issue is trying to stay ahead of sophisticated threat actors and complying with diverse and evolving regulations across the region. Another huge challenge is the lack of skilled talent in the technology space in specific areas. The demand for IT professionals often outpaces the supply. Geopolitical uncertainties can also impact business operations.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

Digital transformation acceleration will continue to be the top priority for most businesses across sectors in the region. Adoption of cloud technologies will grow to new levels as organisations leverage cloud services for scalability, cost-effectiveness and enhanced collaboration. Businesses will invest more into adoption of advanced threat detection and response solutions as cybersecurity continues to be a priority. AI and ML applications will be increasingly used in all areas, especially automation, predictive analysis and better customer experiences. **TECH VISION**

OpenAI has had a massive impact and contributed significantly to AI and ML. It has opened doors to new possibilities and applications across many domains. It has proved to be very innovative for writing content, language processing, image generation and problem solving. There is no doubt about its usefulness. However, like everything, there are cons and pros. While I am truly excited about the new opportunities it presents, I believe users of OpenAI should be double checking and verifying all facts. I believe it can be an enabler and quicken workloads, but one should be wary of plagiarism, check for true source, data privacy, security and so on.

It is key that we have a good balance.

We use AI and ML to analyse data and anticipate customer demands and offer personalised experiences.

”

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey? A successful cloud transformation journey involves a strategic approach that considers not only the technical aspects but also the organisational and cultural changes. The first step to digital and cloud transformation is assessing your current environment and tech assets and defining clear business objectives. Decide on the type of cloud strategy and deployment – will it

TECHNOLOGY FOR HUMAN PROGRESS

Walid Yehia, Managing Director – UAE at Dell Technologies, on how the company is on a constant mission to become the trusted digital transformation partner for businesses in the region.

Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

From small, independent businesses to the Fortune 500, every organization today recognises the full potential of capitalizing on emerging technologies. They need connection, security, and access to data from multiple endpoints and sources with the insight necessary to turn that data into action.

At Dell Technologies, we are led by our purpose to create technology that drives human progress. This commitment remains at the forefront as we assist our customers in embracing and benefitting from the ever-evolving business landscape. Across the region, we seek to become our customers' trusted digital transformation advisor, providing capabilities spanning strategy development, consultative services and solutions deployment. We are uniquely positioned to allow our customers to benefit from our competitive advantages and have a strong track record of delivering on our commitments in any environment.

Our deep, broad portfolio and capabilities are built on our ability to meet our customers' greatest needs. From the PC to the core

data center to the cloud to the edge, creating deep customer insights and driving innovation is at the core of everything Dell Technologies does. We leverage insights from all areas of our business to cultivate innovation deep into our portfolio. We focus on customer outcomes and are constantly trailblazing new solutions to meet our customers' complex IT needs.

We remain the industry leader in all of our key solution categories, and are central to our customers' technology agendas.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them.

What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

Open AI frameworks offer versatility and new opportunities to collaborate and generate positive business outcomes. For instance, ChatGPT and Generative AI (GenAI) provide opportunities to use AI to derive value from existing proprietary company data. Businesses have already adopted AI to automate complex processes, increase productivity, accelerate results and outcomes in specific use cases. Generative AI (GenAI) is projected to contribute \$150B to the global enterprise software TAM (Goldman

We remain the industry leader in all of our key solution categories, and are central to our customers' technology agendas.



Sachs) and \$76B in GenAI Data center infrastructure and services TAM (Tirias Research).

AI is key to unlocking value within data and thus is becoming one of the most important tools for businesses of all sizes. The business possibilities for GenAI are broad, spanning many industries and different business functions, including marketing and sales, research & development, and customer operations and support. As the clear leader in compute and storage, Dell Technologies is at the epicenter of AI and has the world's broadest GenAI infrastructure portfolio that spans from the cloud to client devices, all in one place. Currently, Dell provides customers with AI solutions and expertise that unlock the power of AI, automate intelligent decisions and define their paths to the future.

We help customers run AI workloads anywhere they need them and scale AI from proof of concept to production. As the market demand for AI enabled solutions continues to climb, we will continue to capitalise on opportunities within four areas: AI-In which is ensuring AI is built into our products, AI-On which is offering solutions that customers can run their AI workloads on, AI-For which is how we use AI to modernise our business and AI-With which is how we work with our ecosystems of partners to make AI real.

With Dell GenAI Solutions, businesses can get more value from their own data for more data-supported, decision-making results, to increase productivity and drive more value to end-customers.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

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The cloud computing market in the region is experiencing significant growth and transformation. A Forrester Consulting study commissioned by Dell Technologies showed that 83% of organisations adopted a multi-cloud approach or plan to by the end of 2023. The UAE stands out as a leading adopter of cloud computing services in the Middle East region. By 2026, cloud adoption is poised to reach new heights. Gartner predicts that a staggering 75% of organisations, regardless of size, will embrace cloud as the linchpin of their

digital transformation journey. This trend will be driven by factors such as data residency and sovereignty requirements, coupled with substantial investments by global hyperscale cloud providers in establishing in-country data centers. Dell is at the center of our customers' multicloud world, and we are in a unique position to expand on and deliver cloud solutions for the digital era.

Cloud has become a cornerstone of today's business operations. It has evolved from a nice-to-have option to a necessity. To ensure its successful implementation, leaders must meticulously curate tailored ecosystems, optimise costs, and ensure robust data security, governance, and stakeholder value are in place through a clear well-define cloud strategy.

Dell Technologies provides a comprehensive multicloud platform that allows customers to build, manage and maintain cloud operating systems across environments. We offer integrated solutions to support customers in modernising their IT infrastructure, managing and navigating the challenges of a multicloud world, addressing workforce transformation, and delivering essential solutions for connectivity. As our customers adapt to today's hybrid multicloud landscape, we cater to their evolving needs and broader digital transformation goals. Dell Technologies is uniquely positioned in the data and multicloud era, ensuring our customers benefit from our competitive strengths.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

Today, the biggest problem facing enterprises are the top five unresolved challenges that come in the way of their growth and productivity. These comprise the future of work, multi-cloud, AI, edge computing and cyber security. To thrive in a digital future, organisations must be adept at navigating these shifts

without losing focus on fostering innovation and positive business outcomes.

At Dell Technologies, we are uniquely positioned to deliver the solutions and expertise that turn organisations' workforce, edge, data center and cloud strategies into a single, powerful modern IT strategy. As such, our entire portfolio is immersed in a rapid innovation cycle, and we are constantly investing in research and development to innovate tomorrow's products and solutions. What we design and deliver is created to solve some of our customers' greatest challenges – the evolving future of work, running workloads seamlessly across AI, multicloud and edge environments, and navigating the complexity of security. Our solutions are designed to be agile, accelerate innovation, and overcome roadblocks. Through close collaboration, we not only support but elevate organisations, empowering them to conquer even the most formidable enterprise challenges.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and techsector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

Technology is the harbinger of growth and will help the Middle East markets to grow by leaps and bounds. Today as the region embraces digital transformation, it is well-positioned to unlock new avenues for economic development, innovation, and improved quality of life for its citizens. According to IDC, that annual digital transformation spending across META region will touch \$74bn by 2026. Key trends and technologies that will drive this change over the next decade include the widespread adoption of 5G, advancements in AI and ML, Edge, and multicloud. Additionally, workplace transformation, e-commerce, cybersecurity, and smart city initiatives will further drive digital innovation in the Middle East. TECH VISION

A woman wearing a white hard hat and safety glasses, dressed in a bright orange safety jacket with reflective silver stripes, is looking intently at a tablet computer she is holding. The background is a blurred industrial setting, likely a factory or warehouse, with various pieces of machinery and equipment visible.

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TRANSFORMING THE CLOUD

Vibhu Kapoor, Regional Vice President - Middle East, Africa & India at Epicor, discusses how the company drives positive change and transformation in the cloud journey of businesses.



Can you outline to our readers how your company is pioneering its technology domain in the region, and thus delivering the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

If the region's technological advancement in recent years has shown us anything, it is that cloud is the home of competitive advantage. It is a time saver, a cost saver, and quite possibly a business saver. That is why ERP belongs in the cloud. With much of the humdrum automated, the enterprise spends more time thinking and training, which leads to more thinking. Sooner or later, innovation hatches.

Epicor has been one of first vendors to not only recognise this, but also act on it for the benefit of regional businesses. We recently launched our Epicor Kinetic cloud offering, hosted on Microsoft Azure, in the UAE. This initiative underscores our commitment to regional customers by addressing concerns such as latency, data governance, and sovereignty issues. By pre-emptively establishing a locally delivered cloud solution, we mitigate potential hurdles, showcasing our forward-looking approach and dedication to customer-centric solutions. This initiative reinforces our competitive advantage and ensures our customers and their end users get the high-quality experiences they seek in the digital economy.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?



effectively engaging and energizing stakeholders, promoting disciplined program and project management skills, and doing so with a collegial, collaborative, can-do attitude.

Supplementing the above with a clarity of vision and an ability to simplify the inherently complex, and CIOs stand a good chance of being viewed as strong business leaders who are able to champion effective digital transformation.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

Following on from the 'Amazon effect' where people have become accustomed to receiving items and services almost instantaneously, we are finding that customer expectations are reflective of this. It's great to see customers being passionate and customising elements where they can, but the scale and speed is putting the pressure on IT companies to provide advanced solutions along with the right skills/capabilities to deliver those solutions. This challenge of course is compounded by the important issue effecting the industry - supply chain security.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, can you outline your company's vision for 2024. What are your goals and aspirations for the Middle East region?

Looking ahead to 2024, our focus remains unwavering as we strive to elevate Epicor's visibility and value proposition within the community. Our primary objective is to continually emphasise the worth of our solutions amidst market trends. Additionally, we are committed to the ongoing empowerment and skill enhancement of our channel partners, ensuring their readiness to cater to diverse industries and sub-verticals.

Recruiting specialised partners for key solutions such as Epicor Enterprise Content Management (ECM), Manufacturing Execution Systems, and CPQ (Configure, Price, Quote) is a priority. And so too is supporting government initiatives and empowering organisations to leverage the power of data with our ERP solution. **TECH VISION**

While the power of large language models has become apparent to businesses and consumers across the globe over the last 12 months, we believe huge benefit can be realised through the domain specific application of artificial intelligence. For this reason, we have collaborated with OpenAI, and combined the power of ChatGPT with our industry expertise to deliver predictive analytics and contextual recommendations via our intuitive Epicor Virtual Agent (EVA). This enables Epicor users to save valuable time analysing information across both internal and external data sources. All they need to do is simply query EVA to quickly uncover the answer they need to make informed decisions.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are

We recently launched our Epicor Kinetic cloud offering, hosted on Microsoft Azure, in the UAE.



the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

Success in the digital transformation journey is as dependent on the strategy as it is on the technologies actually being implemented. Assuming the organisation is working with world class technology providers such as Epicor, then the other critical element is project and people management. Perhaps the most important management best practice CIOs need to employ is how to effectively lead people: the talent on their teams, their colleagues leading other business functions, their own managers, and vendors. Most enterprise solutions require a complex mix of information technologies and cross-functional internal and external talent to generate requirements, design a solution, and to implement and operate.

And leading means many things in this context: demonstrating deep business and technology acumen,

INNOVATION MEETS SECURITY

Alain Penel, Vice President, Middle East, Turkey & CIS, Fortinet, discusses their vision for the future and what technologies are needed to reshape the regional tech landscape.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy? Fortinet has been at the forefront of cutting-edge technologies such as AI and machine learning for years. Incorporating AI into our Security Fabric, our response centres on an integrated approach, leveraging AI-driven technologies for proactive threat detection and response. Our solutions span from securing

IoT devices to fortifying edge environments, to addressing the intricate interplay between cutting-edge innovation and security. Furthermore, while many of our competitors OEM their security intelligence from different vendors, FortiGuard Threat Intelligence has been built in-house, allowing us to apply AI consistently across different sources to expand the scope and scale of how and where it can be used. We also recently announced the new FortiGate 90G, our first next-generation firewall and secure SD-WAN appliance to run the new SP5 security processor ASIC. Fully

integrated with our FortiGuard AI-Powered Security Services, it delivers secure compute ratings as much as 16 times greater than the average of our competitors' similarly priced models, while using over 90% less power. **OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?**



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We recognise the profound impact that AI can have on enhancing cybersecurity strategies. With the ever-evolving threat landscape, AI-powered technologies are helping us to not only predict and prevent cyberattacks, but also respond to them in real-time.

New developments in AI such as generative engines show a lot of promise to various applications in cybersecurity. AI technologies can help organisations to significantly improve productivity, and we believe that they can be scaled to our large customer base in areas such as malware detection, threat hunting, event correlation and automation, as well as assisting networking design and troubleshooting.

Our commitment to integrating AI into our Security Fabric empowers organisations to pre-emptively safeguard their networks, data, and critical assets, establishing a robust defence against even the most sophisticated cyber adversaries.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of

Our commitment to integrating AI into our Security Fabric empowers organisations to pre-emptively safeguard their networks, data, and critical assets.



cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

As companies adopt digital innovation, the potential for a cyberattack grows. Despite this potential risk, retreating from digital transformation is simply not an option in today's modern business marketplace. Leaders who want to stay competitive need to understand and implement a variety of new concepts, from web application development to the use of digital tools to obtain and keep customers.

Some key processes that enterprises should adopt to ensure a more successful transformation journey include using zero-trust access protocols, staying up to date on privacy laws, extending security to remote locations, and of course – prioritising cloud security.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

As digital threats become more sophisticated and complex, the

responsibilities of organisations have evolved in tandem. Yet, being able to retain and attract talent remains a key challenge facing organisations in the Middle East.

To help businesses to make up for the local shortage of cybersecurity talent, CIOs must take responsibility to upskill their workforce. From embracing untapped talent pools to finding ways for professionals to build and advance core technical skills, there are several ways we can collectively shrink the current skills gap. For a start, whatever their role, all personnel should have cybersecurity awareness training as well as recurring updates on the latest risks and attack techniques.

This supplement is entitled GITEV Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

In addition to the potential held by AI, we believe that there will be an increased link between cybersecurity and sustainability. Living in a digitised world where nearly all critical infrastructure and services are connected to the internet, cybersecurity has become a fundamental element to the sustainability of our society.

Attacks such as ransomware and malware targeting organisations don't just cause severe damage to businesses, affecting financial viability, brand and reputation, and consumer trust; they also impact the customers and consumers who rely on those organisations. Given this potential impact, cybersecurity, alongside issues such as diversity and business ethics, should form part of every business's sustainability initiative, with the proper measures, processes, tools, and governance in place to ensure that the digital world we all rely on is safe and sustainable.

We also expect to see increased convergence of IT and Operational Technology environments. Undertaking these changes safely and managing the new risks that come alongside them will be a very important focus for organisations in the coming months and years. **TECH WISDOM**

THE HYPE AROUND AI

Amrita Ghanty, Channel Marketing Manager at Gulf IT, talks of the need to balance the convenience of emerging technologies with their ethical use.



The path forward will likely involve a mix of innovation and regulation to harness the full potential of AI.

Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

AI and ML are at the forefront of transforming businesses across multiple sectors. The integration of AI-powered systems enables companies to automate processes, improve decision-making, and deliver personalised experiences to customers.

- Artificial intelligence (AI): We use AI to automate many of our tasks, such as code review, testing, and deployment. This frees up our engineers to focus on more creative and strategic work. We also use AI to improve our products and services, such as by personalising recommendations and optimising search results.
- Machine learning (ML): We use ML to improve our understanding of our customers and their needs. This allows us to develop more relevant and useful products and services. We also use ML to automate many of our customer support tasks, such as triage and routing tickets.

- Natural language processing (NLP): We use NLP to understand human language and generate text-based responses. This allows us to create more engaging and informative user experiences. For example, we use NLP to power our search engine and our virtual assistant, Google Assistant.
- Computer vision: We use computer vision to understand images and videos. This allows us to develop new products and features, such as Google Lens and Google Photos. We also use computer vision to improve our safety and security features.

In addition to using these cutting-edge technologies, we also focus on creating a culture of innovation and experimentation. We encourage our employees to think outside the box and come up with new ideas for how to improve our products and services. We also invest heavily in research and development, so that we can stay ahead of the curve in terms of technological innovation.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

OpenAI and AI technologies, including models like ChatGPT, indeed have the potential to bring about significant changes in various industries. They offer opportunities for automation, data analysis, and enhanced decision-making, among other benefits. However, the impact of AI also raises important ethical, societal,

and regulatory concerns.

The excitement about AI technologies often centers around their potential for innovation, efficiency, and improving various aspects of our lives. They can boost productivity, drive scientific advancements, and offer new ways to solve complex problems. AI can also assist in tasks like healthcare diagnosis, natural language understanding, and autonomous driving.

On the other hand, there are legitimate concerns about the unchecked proliferation of AI. These include issues related to data privacy, bias and fairness, job displacement, and AI's potential to be used for malicious purposes. To address these concerns, many experts and policymakers advocate for increased regulation and ethical guidelines to ensure AI is developed and used responsibly.

Balancing the excitement and the need for regulation is a complex challenge. It's essential to strike a balance that encourages innovation while safeguarding against potential negative consequences. The debate over how to achieve this balance is ongoing, and it involves discussions around transparency, accountability, and the ethical use of AI.

In summary, the potential of AI, including models like ChatGPT, is significant, and they offer exciting opportunities. However, concerns about their impact on society necessitate careful consideration, ethical development, and regulatory measures to ensure their responsible and beneficial use. The path forward will likely involve a mix of innovation and regulation to harness the full potential of AI while minimizing potential risks.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

Successful digital and cloud transformation is an ongoing process that requires a holistic approach, a commitment to

change, and a focus on both technology and culture. By following these key processes, enterprises can increase their chances of achieving a successful transformation journey, even in legacy-heavy environments.

Assessment and Strategy Development:

- Begin by assessing the current state of your IT infrastructure, applications, and processes.
- Develop a clear digital and cloud transformation strategy that aligns with your business goals.

Executive Buy-In and Leadership:

- Secure support and commitment from top-level executives to drive the transformation effort.
- Appoint a dedicated leadership team responsible for overseeing and guiding the transformation.

Data Management and Security:

- Develop robust data management and data governance strategies.
- Implement strong security measures to protect data in the cloud, addressing regulatory and compliance requirements.

Vendor and Technology Selection:

- Carefully evaluate cloud service providers and technology solutions.
- Choose providers and technologies that align with your goals and offer the necessary scalability and flexibility.

Agile and DevOps Adoption:

- Implement Agile and DevOps practices to accelerate development and deployment cycles.
- Promote collaboration and automation within development and operations teams.

Compliance and Governance:

- Establish clear governance policies for cloud usage and compliance with regional and industry-specific regulations.
- Regularly audit and review compliance with policies.

Measurement and KPIs:

- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the

success of the transformation.

- Regularly assess progress against these KPIs and make necessary adjustments. Successful digital and cloud transformation projects, especially for legacy-heavy enterprises, require careful planning, execution, and a commitment to change. These key processes and best practices that enterprises in the Middle East or anywhere else should adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey:

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

Cybersecurity Threats: Cybersecurity is a significant concern for businesses globally, and the Middle East is no exception. The region has experienced a rising number of cyberattacks, which can result in data breaches, financial losses, and reputational damage for enterprises.

1. **Data Privacy and Regulations:** Compliance with data privacy regulations, such as GDPR and local data protection laws, can be challenging for companies operating in the Middle East. Ensuring the proper handling of customer data is essential and often requires significant resources and effort.
2. **Talent Shortage:** Finding and retaining skilled IT and technology professionals can be difficult. While the region has made investments in education and training, there is still a shortage of experienced professionals in certain domains, such as artificial intelligence, data science, and cybersecurity.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** Some parts of the Middle East may face infrastructure challenges, including reliable internet connectivity and power supply. These issues can hinder the growth of technology companies and data centers.
4. **Market Fragmentation:** The Middle East is a diverse region with varying economic and regulatory conditions in different countries. Navigating these differences can be challenging

for companies trying to expand their operations across the region.

5. **Political and Geopolitical Instability:** The Middle East has experienced political and geopolitical instability, which can disrupt business operations and investment climate. Companies must adapt to changing conditions and risks.
6. **Intellectual Property Protection:** Ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights can be a concern, as intellectual property laws and enforcement mechanisms can differ across countries in the Middle East.
7. **Competition:** The IT and technology sector in the Middle East is becoming increasingly competitive, with both local and international companies vying for market share. This competition can make it challenging for enterprises to stand out and grow.
8. **Regulatory Changes:** Governments in the Middle East have been introducing new regulations to govern the technology sector. These changes can have a significant impact on how companies operate and can require adjustments to business strategies.
9. **Access to Funding:** While the region has witnessed an increase in venture capital and investment in technology startups, access to funding can still be a challenge for some enterprises, particularly for early-stage startups.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sectors across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

The Middle East has been actively working on diversifying its economy away from oil dependence. As per my insights into the trends and technologies that were shaping the IT and tech sector in the Middle East are **Digital Transformation:** The Middle East, like the rest of the world, was heavily invested in digital transformation initiatives. Governments and businesses were working on modernizing their infrastructure and processes to become more tech-savvy. This trend is likely to continue, with a focus on improving efficiency and enhancing customer experiences.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning: The adoption of AI and machine learning was growing, with applications in various sectors, including healthcare, finance, and e-commerce. AI was being used for automation, personalization, and data analysis.

Blockchain: The Middle East was exploring blockchain technology for applications in areas like supply chain management, government services, and financial services. Governments and businesses were actively looking into blockchain as a means of improving transparency and security.

Cybersecurity: As technology adoption increased, so did the need for robust cybersecurity measures. With the growing number of cyber threats, there was a significant emphasis on enhancing cybersecurity in the region

Health Tech: The healthcare sector was also experiencing a digital transformation, with telemedicine, health monitoring apps, and electronic health records gaining prominence. **TECH VISION**

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CUTTING-EDGE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Patrick Ramseyer, VP EMEA at LinkShadow, discusses the growth of AI, their commitment to advanced analytics the secret to a successful digital transformation journey ahead of GITEX 2023.

Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

Linkshadow has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to revolutionise its day-to-day operations and deliver exceptional experiences to its customers, end-users, and partners in the experience economy. Here's how:

Advanced Analytics: Linkshadow utilises advanced analytics tools and techniques to gather and analyse vast amounts of data. This enables them to gain valuable insights into customer behaviour, preferences, and trends. By understanding their customers better, Linkshadow can tailor their products and services to meet their specific needs, providing a personalised and enhanced experience.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML): LinkShadow leverages AI and ML technologies to automate and optimise various aspects of their operations. For example, they use AI-powered chatbots to provide quick and accurate customer support, reducing response times and improving customer satisfaction. ML algorithms are also employed to enhance cybersecurity measures, detecting, and mitigating potential threats in real-time.

Cloud Computing: LinkShadow has embraced cloud computing to improve scalability, flexibility, and accessibility. By leveraging cloud infrastructure, they can easily scale their operations to meet growing demands and provide uninterrupted services to their customers. Cloud-based platforms also enable seamless collaboration with partners and end-users, enhancing overall efficiency and productivity.

By harnessing these cutting-edge technologies, LinkShadow has transformed its day-to-day operations to deliver the experiences that customers, end-users, and partners demand in the experience economy. They can provide personalised and tailored solutions, improve efficiency and productivity, enhance security and transparency, and create immersive and interactive experiences. This positions LinkShadow as a leader in the cybersecurity industry, driving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society? Yes, I agree with your statement. The positive opportunities presented by Open AI are vast and yes, I am excited to see how this will evolve over the coming months and years. It is already well documented that these systems can be used for



malicious purposes, e.g. using the technology to scan the dark web to accumulate knowledge on how to hack a particular customer, we are not that far away from having the ability to just punch in the question "tell me how to hack into my country's central bank and provide me all the codes and methods that I will need". The system will punch out detailed instructions on how to do it. In relation to Regulation, well, in my opinion the jury is out on that one. That's like saying that "we need to regulate the internet". It is truly a double-edged sword and personally I don't believe it can be done if you have bad actors in the game. Maybe a form of AI usage license will be required, but where there is good, there is bad, and we all need to prepare ourselves with all the tools available and at our disposal



to protect ourselves against Automated Threats and Attacks. The only way to do it is to quote the old adage, 'Fight Fire with Fire'. Use AI to Fight AI - that is our approach at LinkShadow.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey.

Being from the cybersecurity sector we are very familiar with many of the challenges faced by enterprises when embarking on this Journey. Obviously, Data Security and Governance is a major consideration which is why we are heavily involved from an early stage. If I were to stick my neck out and recommend a few processes, then I would summarise them as follows.

1. Develop a clear Strategy and Plan your business objectives.
2. Involve key stakeholders from Day 1, including business leaders, IT Leaders, and Users
3. Do a complete assessment of your "cloud" readiness to identify potential challenges.

Cybersecurity will continue to be a top priority to prevent disruption in a digitised economy.

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4. Check if your current Applications can be migrated to the cloud as-is, and which ones need to be modernised or rearchitected. This process involves assessing the feasibility of cloud migration, identifying dependencies, and considering factors like security, scalability, and performance.
 5. Establish robust data management and governance practices to ensure the security, privacy, and compliance of your data in the cloud.
 6. Prioritise security and compliance throughout the digital and cloud transformation journey. This includes implementing strong security measures, such as encryption, multi-factor authentication, and intrusion detection systems, as well as ensuring compliance with industry regulations and standards.
 7. Invest in change management practices to prepare employees for these changes, provide training and support, and address any resistance or concerns.
 8. Establish processes for continuous monitoring and optimisation. This involves regularly assessing performance, cost, and security metrics, and making necessary adjustments to optimize the cloud environment.
- In your expert opinion, what do

you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

That's easy - Security Threats and Skills Shortages. The cyber threat landscape is well known.

I don't have to elaborate on that, but globally there are shortages of over 3.5 million people in the cybersecurity sector alone, so it is not just an issue in the Middle East, it is a global phenomenon.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

One thing that I love about living in the Middle East is the way our visionary leaders set their visions and make them their goals. Look at the plans for Dubai city over the next decade, the Saudi Vision 30 and so on, there are many examples. So, I suppose it is only natural that I would get asked a question like this. Personally, I feel there are several landscapes that will develop over the coming few years. Cloud computing will become the norm. We will see massive growth in the use of AI in our daily lives. The Middle East has been one of the model regions for the adoption of IOT. This is set to increase in my opinion. Cybersecurity will continue to be a top priority to prevent disruption in a digitised economy. The ME has always been a frontrunner in the adoption of new connectivity technologies. This to me is inspiring. So 5G and other connection technologies will continue to evolve and get better, faster.

Overall, the Middle East is poised for significant growth and innovation in the IT and tech sector over the next digital decade. The adoption of cloud computing, AI, IoT, cybersecurity, blockchain, 5G, and digital transformation initiatives will drive this transformation and create new opportunities for businesses and individuals in the region. **TECH VISION**

FUTURE OF WORK

Loubna Imenchal, Head of Enterprise Business, AMECA at Logitech, on the company’s participation at GITEX, and the workspaces of the future.

What does Logitech hope to achieve from GITEX Global 2023?

We expect Logitech to be considered as a trusted advisor equipping organisations with the right video collaboration and personal workspace solutions to navigate the future of work. We also aim to consolidate our position as a company championing sustainability. We consider the environmental impact as part of

every design decision we make, right from the moment raw materials are sourced to the end-of-life of a product.

What products or solutions will you be exhibiting at the show?

Visitors this year will be able to get first-hand experience of two of our groundbreaking video collaboration products: the Logitech Rally Bar Huddle and the Logitech Sight AI camera. We will also

be showcasing our ergonomic solutions such as our Ergo K860 split keyboard to help hybrid workers elevate their personal workdesks.

What problem is your company solving for the industry and what can GITEX visitors expect at your stand?

We are looking to define the future of work — enabling and empowering companies, enterprises, their people and



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OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Logitech is committed to creating a more sustainable world, using lower carbon materials like post-consumer recycled plastics for our products whenever possible. We are actively working to minimize our environmental footprint and accelerate the pace of social change.



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workspaces to expand the possibilities of hybrid, remote and in-office work capabilities so that work can be done from anywhere.

Visitors this year will be able to get first-hand experience of two of our groundbreaking products: Logitech Rally Bar Huddle, which enables a natural meeting experience with AI video intelligence for huddle rooms. We also have the Logitech Sight AI camera, that works alongside Rally Bar to help solve one of today's most pressing challenges in the hybrid workplace: making meetings more equitable for everyone. We are also showcasing our newest

Ergo solutions sculpted to support wellbeing that in turn improves posture, effectiveness, and comfort of users.

Finally, we are showcasing Logitech's New Logic of Learning solutions designed for today's learning environments and built for schools. These solutions are appropriate for home, the classroom, and everywhere in between. Our education-first solutions help technology better adapt to the needs of students and educators.

Where can visitors find you at GITEX 2023? (booth no and hall no)
H1 – D90 **TECH VISION**

We are looking to define the future of work – enabling and empowering companies, enterprises, their people and workspaces.



REVOLUTIONISING PARTNER SUPPORT

Philippe Jarre, President, Mindware Group, on the introduction of MAGIC, the aggregation gateway for innovation and collaboration.

Mindware, a leading IT distributor in the Middle East, has unveiled its latest innovation in partner support with the official launch of MAGIC (Mindware's Aggregation Gateway

for Innovation and Collaboration). This initiative showcases Mindware's commitment to empowering partners through cutting-edge consulting services, perfectly timed as the role of IT

distributors continues to evolve to meet the demands of the digital era.

At its core, the 'Magic' Hub is designed to excel in handling mega deals efficiently, offering an array of support services that encompass technical expertise, financial acumen, marketing prowess, legal compliance, and comprehensive training. By embracing a holistic approach, Mindware ensures that its services are not only technically proficient but also in alignment with the unique needs and expectations of its partners and vendors.

Mindware's comprehensive suite of initiatives empowers partners and vendors in various ways. It includes technical excellence, delivering expert tech support and top-tier training programs.





Through a suite of pre-sales support services, Mindware ensures that partners can identify and deploy the most suitable solutions for their clients.



It involves sales and marketing empowerment, providing tailored marketing materials and strategic guidance. Moreover, it encompasses financial, legal, and strategic support, with a focus on advisory, financing, and legal compliance.

What sets Mindware apart is its unwavering dedication to delivering tailored solutions and technical expertise to partners and their customers. Through a suite of pre-sales support services encompassing consultation, implementation, integration, and training, Mindware ensures that partners can identify and deploy

the most suitable solutions for their clients. Additionally, Mindware's post-sales services, such as managed services and cloud services, ensure ongoing support and maintenance to meet the evolving needs of clients.

Philippe Jarre, President of Mindware Group, expresses his delight in offering this game-changing support to valued partners. "With MAGIC, we are taking a bold step towards providing unparalleled support to our valued partners," Jarre remarks. "This initiative reflects our commitment to embrace digital transformation and equip

our partners with the tools and expertise they need to succeed in today's ever-evolving market."

Mindware continues to stay at the forefront of technological advancements, focusing on emerging areas such as AI, IoT, DevOps, and security. By offering support and expertise in these critical areas, Mindware enables its customers to stay ahead of the curve and achieve their business goals.

During a soft launch earlier this year, a select group of partners had the opportunity to experience the services and capabilities of MAGIC first-hand – and the results were outstanding. **TECH VISION**

EMPOWERING THE PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

Maya Zakhour, Director Area Partner Lead at NetApp on how the company provides partners with a unified engagement model where they can move seamlessly between sell-to, sell-through and sell-with sales motions that accelerate their revenue.

What is NetApp's focus going to be at GITEX?

We are thrilled to participate in Gitex this year, which offers us an excellent platform to showcase our solutions in the Middle East. Our main objective is to have a significant impact in this region by presenting practical use cases of our technologies and strengthening partnerships with collaborators. We are committed to demonstrating how our solutions effectively address the business challenges of both existing customers and potential prospects. Our event approach has three key objectives: meeting customers at the venue for direct engagement with our NetApp team, a comprehensive partner approach featuring our branding on the show floor and specific collaborations with our wider hyperscaler ecosystem. In fact we'll also be present at the Ingram, Google Cloud and Logicom booths.

Web 3 is this year's GITEX theme. How is NetApp empowering its partners to seamlessly navigate the fast-growing technology landscape?

Web 3 is a concept that envisions a decentralised and user-centric internet ecosystem. It aims to address some of the limitations and challenges of the current web (Web 2.0) by incorporating blockchain technology, decentralised networks, and cryptographic principles.

NetApp's commitment to data portability, protection, and personal data protection is reflected in its product offerings and security features. NetApp's data fabric architecture allows organisations to easily migrate, replicate, and manage data across various platforms, ensuring data portability and flexibility. NetApp's snapshot technology allows for quick and efficient point-in-time copies of data, enabling rapid recovery in case of data loss or corruption. Additionally, NetApp's backup and recovery solutions provide comprehensive data protection strategies, including backup to secondary storage systems or cloud repositories. And in terms of





Personal Data Protection, NetApp's solutions include built-in security features, such as data encryption, access controls, and data classification, to protect personal data from unauthorised access or breaches. NetApp also provides data governance capabilities to help organisations manage and comply with data privacy regulations (as GDPR).

Why is participation at shows like GITEX important for NetApp?

At GITEX we'll showcase how our customers can modernise infrastructure to deliver new capabilities to the business, faster. Build a seamless and unified hybrid infrastructure with a consistent operating model on-prem and in the cloud, so you can flex and scale anywhere your apps and data need to be.

NetApp will be at GITEX with a meeting room located on Concourse 2 on the 1st Floor, above Hall 6. Room Sharjah D will be the centre of all our activities and meeting with customers, partners and prospective clients.

Partner-first program approach incentivises alignment with NetApp's strategy while delivering greater customer value and accelerated growth.



Give us an overview of NetApp's partner ecosystem. What are the latest features?

Our new NetApp Partner Sphere Program, which has been announced recently, further solidifies NetApp's commitment to driving a partner-first culture that creates an ecosystem of collaboration and innovation to capture greater market share by growing flash revenue, accelerating cloud adoption, and leveraging partner-led solutions and services.

Partner-first program approach incentivises alignment with NetApp's strategy while delivering greater customer value and accelerated growth. Partner Sphere provides a unified engagement model where partners can move seamlessly between sell-to, sell-through, and sell-with sales motions that accelerate their revenue by driving customer-based outcomes and outpacing competition.

The program offers 11 Services Certified tracks and 19 Solution Competencies aligned to 3 key focus areas that enable partners to expand their services portfolio

and become trusted advisors to their customers--unlocking greater value and accelerating revenue growth through ongoing service engagements.

Now that we're in the last few months of the year, what are the key learnings?

I think that a key learning we can mention is that data continues to play a crucial role in today's world, serving as a valuable asset for businesses, organisations, and individuals. And at NetApp we help organisations harness the power of data through our solutions and services. The exponential growth of data and the increasing importance of effective data management we are facing, with the proliferation of digital platforms, IoT devices, and emerging technologies, businesses are generating and storing vast amounts of data is an evidence of the importance of providing scalable and efficient data management solutions to help organisations handle and derive value from their data. **TECHVISION**

BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

Azeem Ahmad, Founder/CEO, Network Binary, explores the challenges, trends and key processes for a technology solutions company ahead of GITEX 2023.



In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industries across the Middle East, and what are the steps you would like to take to overcome those challenges?

The Middle East IT sector is vibrant and constantly evolving. However, there's a pressing challenge that enterprises grapple with: the stark shortage of skilled IT professionals, particularly in specialized domains such as Cybersecurity, Cloud Technologies, AI, and Machine Learning. As per the (ISC)²'s Cybersecurity Workforce Study, there exists a global deficit of close to 4 million professionals in cybersecurity alone. Gartner's analysis further highlights the acute skill shortage across IT domains.

At Network Binary, we've recognised this disparity and are primed to address it. Our comprehensive IT training solutions are tailor-made to bridge this gap. By partnering with leading tech vendors like Cisco, Microsoft, HPE Aruba, Juniper, Huawei, CompTIA, and more, we provide hands-on training, ensuring our graduates are not just certified but truly qualified. Our collaboration with the Office Connect Group amplifies our reach, making high-quality IT education more accessible. In essence, Network Binary stands as a beacon of knowledge, ready to empower the next generation of IT professionals, thus, contributing to alleviating the skill shortage in the Middle East.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities



that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

The dawn of OpenAI and technologies like ChatGPT indeed marks an exciting era in the AI spectrum. These tools have the potential to revolutionise industries. At Network Binary, we're optimistic about the prospects and are geared to offer training modules tailored to these emerging technologies, ensuring our clients stay at the forefront of AI advancements.

However, with great power comes great responsibility. AI's pervasive nature necessitates a balanced approach, emphasising ethical AI practices. While we're encouraged by its opportunities, we also advocate for thoughtful regulations ensuring its responsible deployment. An educated and ethically trained workforce, which Network Binary strives to nurture, will play a pivotal role in the conscientious growth of AI.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

Digital transformation, especially cloud adoption, demands more than just infrastructure change; it's a cultural shift. Legacy-heavy players often grapple with this change due

Network Binary stands as a beacon of knowledge, ready to empower the next generation of IT professionals, thus, contributing to alleviating the skill shortage in the Middle East.



to entrenched traditional processes. To navigate this transition:

Clear Strategy & Roadmap: Begin with a vision and an actionable roadmap, considering both immediate and long-term goals.

Continuous Learning: Digital transformation is an ongoing journey. Enterprises must adopt a culture of continuous learning. Here, Network Binary's IT training programs play a pivotal role, ensuring teams are always cloud-ready.

Stakeholder Involvement: Align all stakeholders, from top leadership to the front-line staff, ensuring unified progress.

Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners demand in the experience economy?

At Network Binary, we're not just trainers; we're lifelong learners. Harnessing cutting-edge technologies, we've built a Learning Ecosystem that nurtures exceptional instructors. These educators, in turn, foster a culture of excellence, ensuring our trainees receive top-tier education that's immediately applicable in their professional realms. Our adaptive schedules, hands-on training methodologies, and industry-veteran instructors collectively enable us to deliver experiences that surpass the demands of our partners, end-users, and customers in this experience-driven economy.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

The Middle East is on the cusp of a technological renaissance. With visionary leadership and forward-thinking initiatives, this region is steadily positioning itself at the forefront of the global IT and tech landscape. In the upcoming 'digital decade', we anticipate several transformative trends and

technologies that will redefine the boundaries of innovation and drive exponential growth.

Emerging Technologies: Over the next decade, the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), and Quantum Computing will surge. These tools will not only shape new business models but also revolutionize existing ones, creating opportunities and challenges in equal measure.

Cybersecurity Challenges: As the digital landscape expands, so does its threat landscape. Cybersecurity will be more paramount than ever, with a strong emphasis on advanced threat detection, mitigation strategies, and the continual education of the workforce to stay abreast of the latest threats.

Holistic Digital Transformation: Organisations will seek more than just technology upgrades; they'll aim for holistic digital transformation. This includes refining business processes, fostering a culture of innovation, and ensuring that every stakeholder, from leadership to frontline employees, is aligned with digital-first strategies.

Bridging the Skill Gap: The rapidly evolving tech landscape will necessitate a skilled workforce proficient in emerging technologies. However, there is an apparent gap between the skills present and those required. Addressing this will be crucial. This is where learning institutions like Network Binary come into play and our collaborations with industry leaders ensure that our curriculum remains updated and aligned with industry needs.

In essence, the Middle East's IT and tech sector is poised for transformative growth in the upcoming decade. As challenges arise, stakeholders, be they educational institutions, businesses, or government entities, will need to come together, share insights, and co-create solutions. Network Binary, with its emphasis on 'Elevating the learning industry through benchmark-setting excellence', is committed to playing a central role in this collaborative future, equipping the next generation of tech professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate the digital decade ahead. **TECH VISION**



The Picture Says it All!

A 2023 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ Leader for Primary Storage

Figure 1: Magic Quadrant for Primary Storage



Source: Gartner



FUTURE OF DATA STORAGE

Samer Semaan, Channel Manager, Middle East and Emerging Africa at Pure Storage explains how the company is innovating, collaborating and evolving, to redefine channel partnership and data storage in an age of digital transformation.



Can you give us an overview of your channel partner program and what it entails?

When we refer to our channel ecosystem, we mean our network of partners, including Resellers, Managed Service Providers (MSPs), and distributors. This ecosystem is at the core of our business, and we couldn't operate without them. Collaboration within this ecosystem is essential, both on a personal and a company level, as they are all a vital part of our customer outreach.

Now, let's dive into what we offer our partner ecosystem. We are a 100% channel focused organisation and have never taken a deal direct. Our partner program is designed solely with the channel in mind. Pure provides solutions which help partners widen their Total Addressable Market, delight customers, win more and reward both the organisation and the individual.

We offer an accessible portal where partners can access all the resources they need for pitching, designing, configuring, and selling our storage portfolio. This portal serves as a one-stop shop, providing tools, data sheets, presentations, and support for various needs, including team enablement and competitive analysis.

We also have an extensive range of incentive-based programs, one of which we call "Love Your Partner." This program rewards partners who bring us opportunities with either upfront or backend incentives, often in the form of a percentage of the deal's value. We created the "Pure Rewards" program, which recognises not only the company but also individuals, such as account executives and system engineers, who contribute to our growth. They receive a percentage of the total deal value they've brought to our installed

base in the region. They are highly profitable and greatly motivate our ecosystem partners because they benefit both the company and the individuals involved. This is one part of our approach of doing the right thing for our partners.

In summary, we collaborate with our partners, both at a personal and company level, and we support them to facilitate their work with our storage solutions to ensure we have joint happy customers.

With the current trends in digital transformation and evolving technologies, how do you see your collaboration with partners adapting to this changing landscape?

Our primary focus is to collaborate closely with partners to deliver comprehensive solutions to customers. Partners often have existing relationships with clients, and our role is to complement that by ensuring our technology fits with customers' needs and supports their wider business goals. We believe in ensuring that our partners are well-equipped and enabled to communicate how we can support customers in the evolving technology landscape. This collaboration goes beyond individual relationships; it's about the entire company aligning with our partner ecosystem.

Before any engagement, we want to ensure that our partners are not just aware of our products but are also aligned on the same message about meeting customer needs. It's all about sharing knowledge and expertise, creating a sense of confidence in the customer. Ultimately, partners serve as a bridge between us and the end-users, and together, we ensure that the customer receives consistent information about our technology.

Now, let's talk about data storage. It has become increasingly critical in recent times, with a shift towards more modern and digital solutions. How has your product and solutions portfolio evolved from traditional data storage to meet these modern demands?

Our journey began in 2009 when Pure Storage was founded with a vision to disrupt the market with something new. We never looked at legacy spinning disk storage but rather started by focusing on all-flash technology, which translates to high-performance solutions. We've created the concept of our Evergreen subscription models, making it easier for customers to keep up with the latest technology trends by continuously upgrading them. This year we've launched a series of storage solutions which mean customers can eliminate the last legacy spinning disk from their data centers. This is because Pure's all-flash technology is at cost parity with disk, provides 60% lower operational cost of legacy solutions and uses one-fifth the space and power. Our approach is to innovate continuously, and today, we invest around 19% of revenue in R&D.

As the market moved toward multi-cloud environments, we enhanced our infrastructure offerings to support the evolving needs of our customers. We've integrated automation into our operations, developed software to manage data storage for customers; we also support DevOps, containers, and Kubernetes. In summary, we've evolved by staying committed to innovation, and delivering products and solutions that respond to changing technology trends.

It's clear that you're at the forefront of innovation. Speaking of markets, how would you describe the Middle East market, particularly in terms of data storage and modern solutions?

The Middle East market, often labeled as an emerging region, is a hub for innovation. Organisations in this region are eager to adopt the latest technologies and stay ahead of the curve. They recognise the importance of keeping up with digital advancements to provide the best services to their clients.

Pure Storage was actively engaged in providing data storage and modern

solutions to customers around different sectors around the world, including the Middle East market.

Pure Storage is known for its product lines, which are designed to provide high-performance, scalable, and efficient storage solutions. These systems are suitable for various workloads, including virtualisation, databases, analytics, and cloud-native applications, which are essential for businesses in the Middle East looking to modernise their IT infrastructure.

Pure Storage offers solutions that help organisations in the Middle East effectively manage and analyse their data. This is especially important in sectors such as finance, healthcare, and telecommunications, where data analytics can drive innovation, competitive advantage and digital advancements.

This region is innovative, forward-thinking, and keen on offering the latest technology to its customers. It's a dynamic and exciting market.

That's indeed an exciting development. Looking ahead, as we approach the end of 2023, what key trends or learnings have you observed in the market? What should we expect in the near future?

The technology market direction is highly dynamic and fast-paced. In this region, we've noticed a growing appetite among customers to stay updated with technology trends. When customers inquire about new technology, the conversations are sophisticated and focused on strategic goals. Customers come well-prepared to ensure they make informed decisions. We are ready and equipped to engage in these discussions, aligning our solutions with their evolving needs.

Data security and privacy are paramount concerns. How does Pure Storage address these concerns to ensure the safety of customer data?

Data security is a top priority for organisations, and rightly so. Pure Storage takes these concerns seriously and we have a number of solutions which support customers here. We created SafeMode™ Snapshots, available with both our FlashBlade® and FlashArray™ solutions. These immutable snapshots mean that customers' data can't be modified or

deleted without two 'keys'; one from the customer and one from Pure. The value of immutable copies is that they can't be corrupted, deleted, modified or encrypted.

Additionally, through Pure1, our AI driven storage management platform, customers can use AI Ops to detect anomalies in their storage environments which can indicate an attack in progress.

Through FlashBlade//S, we can restore customer's data backups at speeds over 270TB an hour, meaning a much faster return to normal business operations.

We recently announced a ransomware recovery service level agreement (SLA) and we're the only company in the industry to offer this. Through our Evergreen//One programme, we guarantee to ship a clean storage array on the next business day, 48-hours to finalise a recovery plan started at any time, data transfer rate (8 TiB/Hour), as well as a professional services engineer onsite through RMA. This provides enterprises with the ability to rapidly recover from a ransomware incident.

We also collaborate with alliance partners to support ransomware prevention and data protection solutions.

Can you tell us a little about Pure Storage's commitment to sustainability?

Certainly, I'd like to highlight our deep commitment to sustainability and being environmentally responsible. We've taken extensive steps to reduce our environmental footprint, from manufacturing processes to energy usage. With data continuing its exponential growth, customers need solutions which use less electricity to run and manage to cope with the increase in data they'll be storing. We've demonstrated that Pure's infrastructure uses one-fifth less the space and power than legacy storage; 85% less e-waste and provides 10x-20x the reliability, meaning fewer issues needing to be addressed. We believe in creating a better world for the next generation, and our recently published ESG report showcases our dedication to sustainability. We're not just talking the talk; we're also walking the walk when it comes to sustainability. TECH VISION

As the market moved toward multi-cloud environments, we enhanced our infrastructure offerings to support the evolving needs of our customers.



NAVIGATING CLOUD TRANSFORMATION

Bahaa Indary, General Manager at Raqmiyat LLC shares key processes for successful digital and cloud transformation in the Middle East, addressing challenges faced by legacy-heavy players.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, harnessing cutting-edge technologies is not just a choice but a necessity to stay competitive and meet the ever-increasing demands of our customers, end-users, and partners. At Raqmiyat, we've embraced this reality and have strategically leveraged technology to transform our day-to-day operations and deliver exceptional experiences in the experience economy. First and foremost, we've heavily invested in data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) that have enabled us to personalize our products and services, tailoring them to individual needs and expectations. Furthermore, our commitment to cloud computing has been instrumental in ensuring seamless and scalable operations. Cloud technology has empowered us to scale our services rapidly, ensuring that we can handle increasing demand while maintaining high levels of performance and security.

In addition to technology adoption, we place a strong emphasis on cybersecurity. Given the increasing threats in the digital age, we've implemented state-of-the-art security measures to protect our customers' data and ensure trust in our brand. By embracing AI, automation, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and sustainability, we have transformed how we operate. This transformation has enabled us to not only meet but exceed the expectations of our customers, end-users, and partners in the experience economy. We are committed to staying at the forefront of technological innovation to continue delivering exceptional experiences.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

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I believe OpenAI and the advancements in AI technology, such as ChatGPT, hold immense potential to revolutionise various industries. These innovations offer opportunities for automation, personalisation, and improved decision-making, which can enhance efficiency and convenience across sectors like healthcare, finance, education and more.

However, with great power comes great responsibility. It's crucial to strike a balance between fostering innovation and implementing regulation. While the potential benefits are exciting, there are valid concerns about the ethical and societal implications of AI. We must address issues like bias, transparency, data privacy, and job displacement.

Regulation is necessary to ensure that AI is developed and used ethically and responsibly. It should focus on promoting transparency in AI systems, preventing discrimination, protecting user data, and establishing clear guidelines for accountability.

I'm excited about the transformative potential of OpenAI and AI technologies, but I also believe that a thoughtful and balanced approach, including appropriate regulation, is essential to harness their benefits while mitigating potential risks to society.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

For a successful digital and cloud transformation, enterprises should begin with a comprehensive assessment of their existing systems, aligning strategies with their business objectives. Change management is crucial to prepare employees for the impending changes and ensure a smooth transition. Legacy systems should be modernised and seamlessly integrated with cloud solutions, with a focus on robust data strategies that prioritize security, compliance, and

accessibility. Strengthening security measures and complying with regulations is paramount. Leveraging cloud scalability while closely monitoring and optimizing costs is essential. Embracing DevOps practices, collaborating with cloud service providers and partners, and establishing governance and continuity plans are integral parts of the transformation journey. Regularly measuring key performance indicators and considering sustainability practices will help enterprises unlock the full potential of digital and cloud transformation while addressing challenges such as expertise gaps, legacy system complexities, and cost management.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

One of the significant challenges confronting IT and technology enterprises across the Middle East is the need to adapt to rapidly evolving technological landscapes. However, persistent and potential challenges for these enterprises in the region include Cybersecurity Threats: With the increasing digitalisation of businesses and government services, robust cybersecurity measures are essential to safeguard sensitive data and critical infrastructure. Data privacy and compliance with international standards pose additional challenges. Talent Shortages: Finding and retaining skilled IT professionals and technology experts is a common challenge. Fostering a pipeline of local talent with the necessary skills is crucial for industry growth. Regulatory and Compliance Issues: Varying regulatory frameworks across Middle Eastern countries can make it complex for enterprises operating across borders. Digital Transformation: Many organizations are still undergoing digital transformation, which can be both costly and resource-intensive. Infrastructure Development: While significant investments have been made in technology infrastructure, some regions may still face challenges related to reliable internet connectivity and digital infrastructure.

This supplement is entitled GITEX Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

The Middle East has seen the emergence of startup ecosystems and innovation hubs in places like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Riyadh. These hubs will continue to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. There are several key trends and technologies that are likely to shape the industry over the next digital decade: Digital Transformation will continue to be a dominant trend as organisations across various sectors, including government, healthcare, finance, and education seek to improve efficiency and customer experiences through technology. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) will play a crucial role in automating processes, enhancing decision-making, and enabling personalized services. Applications can range from chatbots and virtual assistants to predictive analytics in healthcare and finance.

With the growing reliance on digital infrastructure, there will be a heightened emphasis on cybersecurity. The Middle East is likely to see increased investments in cybersecurity technologies to protect critical infrastructure and sensitive data. Blockchain technology is gaining traction in the Middle East, especially in the financial sector. It can be used for secure transactions, supply chain management, and even in government services for enhancing transparency and reducing fraud. Several cities in the Middle East, such as Dubai and Riyadh, have ambitious smart city initiatives. These projects will continue to evolve, leveraging IoT, data analytics, and AI to improve urban living and sustainability. Governments in the region are actively promoting technology adoption. They will likely continue to play a pivotal role in driving innovation through incentives, policies, and infrastructure investments. TECH WISDOM

I believe OpenAI and the advancements in AI technology, such as ChatGPT, hold immense potential to revolutionise various industries.



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ENHANCING THE VALUE OF IT

Sascha Giese, Technical Evangelist for Observability at SolarWinds, on how the company helps to increase the value of IT departments for the smooth and efficient running of businesses.



Can you outline to our readers how your company delivers cutting-edge technology that delivers the 'experience' that your customers and end-users demand in the experience economy?

We live in a time when competitive advantage comes through innovation, which usually results from a well-working IT department. IT is the backbone of almost every business, and customers depend on it. They want everything right now, around the clock, and from everywhere. Customers don't have patience, as they always have other options: your competition.

If a platform doesn't perform, it isn't good for the business.

We help IT teams discover anomalies before they become problems. And if a severe incident appears, they can rely on our solutions to keep the service levels low. Instead of wasting time on reactive firefighting, our customers can focus more on optimising and innovating.

Long story short: Previously, IT supported the business. Nowadays, IT runs the business. And we help increase the value of the IT department.

ChatGPT and Generative AI, in general, are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on Generative AI - are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, what do you believe are the most compelling use cases?

There are many concerns regarding generative AI, and while some are valid, most are just based on human nature; we're a little cautious about new things that we don't fully understand. It depends on the use cases.



Let's quickly look at a few examples.

Everyone who has had to contact customer services to resolve a problem knows that waiting times can be a pain. For many years, some businesses have asked for essential data before connecting the customer to a human, so account or order numbers are already available when an agent connects.

Chatbots are just an evolution of this, which we will see much more of in the future. It doesn't harm.

A bit more complicated are situations when AI makes decisions for humans. Think of recruitment. Recruitment agencies have used filters and automation for a while now, but the element of AI is relatively new. It feels weird for humans if a machine decides if a CV is being forwarded to the next step or an auto-response arrives at the applicant's inbox. This area needs to be controlled by either local governments or, even better, independent global organisations.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many enterprises have struggled

with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes/technologies that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

The Middle East is a special place when it comes to this topic. Some enterprises, particularly finance and health care, are on legacy backbones, which won't go away quickly. Their challenge is to stitch together old and new.

But in the Middle East, organisations are more willing to invest in something more cutting-edge. If something promises to be beneficial to the business, many organisations are more comfortable to try and invest in an idea. If it doesn't work, it's at least a lesson learned, but quite often it pays out. This is a good thing, as it helps with the much-needed innovation.

On the other hand, sometimes it seems that businesses are following a hype train either too quickly or stay on for too long; look at failed tech like NFT or tech that still looks for its purpose, like blockchain.

As pointed out already, AI promised a lot in the past eight years, but it took until late 2022

I believe OpenAI and the advancements in AI technology, such as ChatGPT, hold immense potential to revolutionise various industries.

before we saw the first use cases that made sense and showed a faster return on investment. This is something businesses should pay attention to, not only to save costs but to elevate their services to the next level.

This supplement is titled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

Most prominent is the progress of AI. According to McKinsey estimates, it comes with an unreal business value of US\$4.4 trillion.

Another topic that gets increasingly important, even if it's not a "trend," is Green IT. IT, or tech in general, has to become more sustainable and environment-friendly. It's a vast topic that starts with green coding and continues over energy-efficient hardware, leading to a changed mindset.

Regarding the broader tech sector, I would put bioengineering and nanotechnology on top of the trends for the next decade. But that's a conversation for another day! TECH VISION

REIMAGINING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Nidal Othman, CEO at StarLink, an Infinigate Group Company, on how they are constantly striving to lead enterprises into a new era of security, resilience, and productivity.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners demand in the experience economy?

In today's digital age, staying ahead of cybersecurity threats is essential to ensuring a safe and productive environment for businesses. By embracing innovation and maintaining a proactive approach, we are not only helping our customers protect sensitive information but also foster trust and confidence among their customers. By prioritising the safety and security of the organization and its customers, we are contributing significantly to a more secure digital landscape for everyone.

Our theme 'Spark Your Growth with Limitless Opportunities' encapsulates our winning spirit, innovation, and potential to venture into new markets to unleash prospects of our vendors, partners, and customers. With a robust portfolio of technologies, we are constantly striving to lead enterprises into a new era of security, resilience, and productivity.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

We have seen some very impressive strides in the field of AI. Open AI and ChatGPT have captivated enterprises and people in general. It has literally taken over the digital world and is becoming an indispensable tool for businesses and individuals.

Since communication is key at the workplace as well as at a personal level, this revolutionary AI tool will improve conversations, largely streamline workflows, and improve the overall quality of conversations. Having said that, we need to regulate it to ensure it is used in an ethical and responsible format.



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Regular monitoring and updating of AI systems are crucial to adapting and evolving ethical standards and technological advancements, ensuring that these tools remain responsible and reliable.

By regulating and using AI-powered communication tools responsibly, businesses and individuals can harness their potential while addressing potential ethical concerns, creating a future where these tools can be truly revolutionary and beneficial to society.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey. Digital transformation is not just about adopting new technologies, but rather leveraging those technologies to fundamentally transform your businesses operation,

Digital transformation is not just about adopting new technologies, but rather, leveraging those technologies to fundamentally transform businesses operations.



deliver value, and empower enterprises to engage with their customers. It involves reimagining processes, workflows, and strategies considering the capabilities that digital technologies provide. I believe a successful digital change requires:

- Identification of the goal of transformation
- Bringing in all the relevant stakeholders
- Developing a strategy
- Measuring and evaluating the success
- Continuous improvement and innovation

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

I believe that one of the main challenge that enterprises are faced with is keeping up with the fast-paced threat landscape and the emerging technologies. Technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, and IoT offer great potential for businesses,

but they also bring new security challenges. Understanding and securing these technologies is crucial for enterprises aiming to leverage their benefits.

This supplement is entitled Tech Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

Middle East never ceases to surprise me. The growth and diversity are tremendous. We have seen it rise rapidly in very sector, particularly the tech sector has experienced exponential growth. The top technologies that would navigate the future would be Generative AI, diversification in AI and Machine Learning, expansion of IoT, Cloud and Edge Computing, Sustainable cybersecurity technologies. We must be ready to adapt and harness these innovations responsibly, ensuring that as technology progresses, it aligns seamlessly with our shared human aspirations. **TECH VISION**

AI-POWERED EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT

Maher Jadallah, Senior Director Middle East & North Africa, Tenable details their plans to empower organisations with comprehensive exposure management across an ever-expanding attack surface.

Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge cybersecurity technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the level of security that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in today's threat landscape?

For far too long security teams have been treating the symptoms of cybercrime rather than curing the disease. The current approach is reactive and relies heavily on post-event data to find the origin of an attack and clean up the mess. This modus operandi is a losing battle against asymmetric cybercriminal activity where defenders need to be right 100% of the time and threat actors only once.

Instead of waiting to be attacked and then responding, it's vital that security teams take a preventive approach to cyber defense. The need to understand the attack surface and proactively manage risk to the business has never been more urgent. The only way to stay ahead of the curve is to find the weak spots in defenses proactively, before attackers can, and prioritise remediations based on organisational risk.

Tenable has, for years, harnessed Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in multiple ways across its solutions. This includes enhancing models around asset criticality assessment, in prioritisation techniques, and other methods we use to differentiate our offerings and add valuable insight for customers. Tenable uses AI (generative artificial intelligence,



deep learning, AI and machine learning) to fuel our exposure management capabilities with the following use cases:

- **Explain:** Derive succinct guidance to better understand product findings.
- **Search:** Simplify search across your asset inventory for complete visibility.
- **Action:** Proactively deliver insights for actions with the most impact.

If you have unique data then you're going to have unique intelligence guiding decisions. It's

truly "garbage in, garbage out" — or "gold in, gold out" — depending on the source. Tenable's exposure data stands as the world's largest repository of contextual exposure data, fueling the capabilities of Tenable ExposureAI. This unified data platform - representing more than 1 trillion unique exposures, IT assets and security findings (vulnerabilities, misconfigurations and identities) across IT, public cloud and OT environments - is the largest repository of contextual exposure data in the world and feeds all of Tenable's Exposure Management products.

With leading breadth and depth of data and context, Tenable empowers organisations with comprehensive exposure management across the ever-expanding attack surface. It provides a wealth of information, enabling organisations to gain valuable insights into potential vulnerabilities, threats and misconfigurations.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries including cybersecurity. What is your view on the impact of AI on cybersecurity? Are you excited about the opportunities it presents, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on cybersecurity?

For security teams and organisations, generative AI is the same as any other new technology that enters the arena. While created as a tool for good, AI can just as easily be weaponised by malicious cyber attackers to accelerate their money making schemes or even create misinformation and we need to keep one step ahead.

There is a learning curve and we're on the cusp of understanding what AI is capable of. With generative AI — such as Google Vertex AI, OpenAI GPT-4, LangChain and many others — it is possible to return new intelligent information in minutes in simple language even non-technical people can understand. For security, these insights will continue to become more accessible and capable of turning anyone into expert defenders.

Digital and cloud transformation projects have become increasingly prevalent in the Middle East. From a cybersecurity perspective, what are the key processes that enterprises should adopt to ensure a successful and secure transformation journey?

Successful hybrid cloud security requires a unified approach. With cloud computing the traditional perimeter is moved outside of the enterprise data center which means identity replaces networks as the primary trust boundary. Rather than malicious actors, the overwhelming majority of cloud security incidents stem from misconfigurations.

To preventatively secure the

modern attack surface security teams must first gain an understanding of all the conditions that matter in today's complex and dynamic environments. This requires a holistic view of cloud and on-premise, IT and OT environments, and everything in between including the interdependencies that exist for critical functionality, to determine where weaknesses and vulnerabilities exist.

In your expert opinion, what do you consider the biggest cybersecurity challenges faced by enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

The threats organisations typically face are spearphishing and malicious downloads to known vulnerabilities and weak passwords. When it comes to these cyberattacks, what we know is that threat actors' attack methodology is not advanced or even unique but opportunistic. They're looking for an open window to crawl through.

When evaluating an organisation's attack surface, they're probing for the right combination of vulnerabilities, misconfigurations and identity privileges. In the majority of instances it is a known vulnerability that allows threat actors an entry point to the organisation's infrastructure. Having gained entry threat actors will then look to exploit misconfigurations in Active Directory to further infiltrate the organisation to steal data, encrypt stems or other nefarious activities.

To mitigate the risks requires a holistic view — of IT and OT environments, on-premises and in the cloud, and everything in between — with the interdependencies that exist for critical functionality, to determine where weaknesses and vulnerabilities exist. Once a holistic viewpoint is established, the next step is to identify what would cause theoretical versus practical damage. From this stance steps can be taken to remediate the risks where possible, or monitor the assets related to the risk for deviations, to attacks.

This supplement is entitled GITEX Vision, so with that in mind, what does the future hold for the cybersecurity landscape in the Middle East? What key

cybersecurity trends and technologies do you believe will drive significant changes over the next 'digital decade'?

The infrastructure that underpins organisations today has experienced dramatic transformation with automation driving progress. Over the next 10 years we can expect this to continue to morph and change as new ways of working are developed, powered by Artificial Intelligence. Security teams are already struggling to gain visibility of what is within their infrastructure and what is connecting to it and we should expect this complexity to be amplified.

Attackers see many ways in and multiple paths through technology environments to do damage to organisations. Organisations aren't helpless. Security teams need to look at business risk holistically. That said, it's impractical to remediate everything at once, so instead it's important to understand which fixes give the biggest bang for their buck to tackle threats in the right order. Getting visibility into where the biggest areas of risk are - we call this exposure management - is absolutely critical to knowing which doors and windows are wide open and need to be closed first irrespective of how complicated or connected the environment becomes.

Exposure management provides an understanding of all the conditions that matter in today's complex and dynamic environments that helps an organisation determine the full breadth and depth of its exposures, allowing security teams to take the actions needed to reduce them through remediation and incident response workflows.

An exposure management program combines the people, processes and technologies associated with exposure management. Technologies such as vulnerability management, web application security, cloud security, identity security, attack path analysis and attack surface management are used to help an organisation understand the full breadth and depth of its exposures and take the actions needed to reduce them through remediation and incident response workflows. TECH VISION

Instead of waiting to be attacked and then responding, it's vital that security teams take a preventive approach to cyber defence.



DRIVING THE CHANGE

Mario Veljovic, General Manager at VAD Technologies, discusses how the company is keeping pace with evolving technologies to enhance customer experience and ease the digital transformation journey of businesses in the region.

Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

Even though VAD Technologies is mainly involved in scouting and promoting disruptive technologies that will help Businesses of all sizes to reduce their Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and improve their operational efficiency, even we, as an important element in the overall ICT ecosystem, have

to evolve and use technology to meet our partner's expectations in regard to "Ease of Doing Business with." VAD Technologies has invested over the last 10 years to continuously improve its online marketplace to allow vendor and channel partners to transact "Everything as a Service"





seamlessly. Channel Partners are enabled to use the same platform to extend their products, solutions and customised services to their client, which makes the entire process fast and easy. Furthermore, we make extensive use of our CRM System to ensure partners are proactively alerted about upcoming service renewals and potential Tech-Refresh Opportunities. Last, but not least, our AI empowered CRM will allow us to analyse past transactions and predict accurately the future business expectations, especially as more and more of our business becomes recurring, which is one of our KPIs.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

Every new technology and evolution has its pros and cons.



Every new technology and, in all honesty, every evolution has its pros and cons. We must keep up with the pace of the development and adapt to the new realities. While Regulations could be the right approach, it could lead for more space of Criminals to operate and identify this as an Opportunity. Rather than over-regulating, we must invest into education. Not just for the new generation, but the generation in-charge. Last but not least, the new realities of using AI brings back focus to us Humans itself and their ability of using Common-sense and their Emotional Intelligence. Those are the 2 main factors I would encourage everyone to invest into.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

From what we have observed over the years, we can only advise clients to choose the right partner for their Digital Transformation journey. And I need to emphasise that it is always a “Journey” and should not be seen as a “Project”. A Project by definition has a pre-set end date, while a journey is ongoing. It’s like a marriage – you need to choose the right partner for life. This is especially a challenge here in the Middle East with a strong expatriate-based workforce, which sees a higher than global standard of fluctuation.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

Certainly, recruiting and retaining great talent is a massive challenge, if not the biggest for all kinds of businesses. However, the region and the UAE have created a great environment to allow more and more Talent to seriously consider the region as their home and allow them to grow their professional career. In addition, the sudden increase in financing cost has impacted businesses, especially in the ICT sector, where profit margins have traditionally been wafer-thin.

This supplement is entitled GITEX Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sectors across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next ‘digital decade’?

The decade and beyond looks very promising for the Middle East. While recent developments in region make you worry, overall, many of the long-standing conflicts got resolved, which creates a climate of prosperity. Furthermore, the governments of the region found a good balance between technology adoption and regulations, which enables limitless Innovation and allows them to take a leading role on a global stage in the “Digital Decade”. TECH VISION



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INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION

Hozefa Saylawala, Middle East Director – Zebra Technologies outlines issues with labour retention, consumer packaged goods and aggregating data from edge devices ahead of GITEX 2023.



Can you outline to our readers how your company has harnessed cutting-edge technologies to transform how you conduct your day-to-day operations to deliver the 'experience' that your customers, end-users, and partners' demand in the experience economy?

The rapid pace of digitisation across industries continues and businesses need solutions to help

them modernise, automate and meet demand. The on-demand economy, ecommerce, labour hiring and retention are driving the need for technology solutions, presenting Zebra and partners with the challenges faced by customers.

Zebra's solutions support companies looking to modernise their operations and better equip their front-line workers through

a 'sense, analyse, act' approach, helping connect every front-line worker and asset at the edge, making them visible, connected and fully optimised. Zebra's portfolio of hardware, software, services and solutions digitise and automate workflows across a range of industries.

Zebra invests 10% of global revenue into R&D and Zebra and partners have new, useful solutions to bring to customers, including Machine Vision and AI-powered software for demand forecasting, workforce and task management. Zebra has also launched a series of new specialisations within its partner ecosystem, including location and tracking, software-as-a-service, and advanced Machine Vision.

OpenAI and ChatGPT are all the rage, and these new AI integrations have been tipped to fundamentally reshape all major industries as we know them. What is your view on OpenAI, are you excited by the new opportunities that it will present, or do you think more regulation is needed to control its impact on society?

Zebra's portfolio features a range of AI to support customers with automation, analytics, and inspection, for greater levels of accuracy, speed, quality and compliance in manufacturing, for example.

There have been a lot of discussions about Artificial Intelligence (AI), thanks to ChatGPT's ability to provide a human interface. People want to know if the hype represents reality. Fear among the public is spurring politicians to regulate the technology.

Some of the latest generative AI solutions have problems. But AI



is doing a lot of good in the world today. Manufacturers and retailers use adaptive AI to forecast demand and plan inventory, especially CPG (consumer packaged goods) companies. AI-powered machine vision assists with detailed quality inspections of everything from medications to automotive and electronic parts coming off the manufacturing line.

Many essential workers are supported by trustworthy adaptive AI - an app on a wearable or handheld mobile computer, in a business's inventory, logistics and/or e-commerce information system, or even in the cloud tied to an industrial automation system.

As the number of smart devices – IoT physical objects – at the edge of networks continues to grow, we know responsible and ethical AI is going to become necessary to business. The concerns around generative AI

Zebra's products are enriched with software on-device and in the cloud to provide customers and partners the tools they need to put their data to work.



extend to all AI, and we must consider the implications of new AI use cases. Continuous evaluation and refinement of responsible AI methodology in terms of ethics, development and deployment is needed, supported by evolved processes, principles, tools and training while ensuring consistency and compliance.

There has been a swathe of digital and cloud transformation projects in the Middle East over the last 3-5 years. However, many have struggled with the demands of cloud transformation, especially legacy-heavy players. What are the key processes that enterprises need to adopt to ensure a successful transformation journey?

The regional end-customer buyer and influencer base is shifting from the IT department to broader business operations management and more senior executives, as the regional enterprise business model transforms with increasing adoption of digital. As industries transform, the channel also has to adapt and focus on customer relationships and outcomes, to support cloud transformation.

Zebra's products are enriched with software on-device and in the cloud to provide customers and partners the tools they need to put their data to work, allowing for higher levels of security and manageability and analytics that can elevate the performance of their business. Zebra's software-as-a-service portfolio includes Workforce and Task Management, AI-powered demand forecasting, Zebra Prescriptive Analytics, and Aurora machine vision with deep learning.

The cloud-based Zebra Savanna data platform aggregates and analyses data from edge devices to reveal actionable workflow insights, and power next-gen applications and solutions, while Zebra Data Services operates as a cloud-based capability designed to assist software developers and ISVs to build applications.

In your expert opinion, what do you view as the biggest problem facing enterprises in the IT and technology industry across the Middle East?

Enterprise solutions require a collaborative go-to-market approach, in order to provide a total solution for customers. That starts with understanding a customer's challenge or opportunity, then creating a tailored solution. Aligning with like-minded complementary providers and channel partners is fundamental to Zebra which is coupling its market-leading portfolio with partner applications, to help end user customers make business-critical decisions.

This supplement is entitled GITEK Vision, so with that in mind, what do you think the future holds for the IT and tech sector across the Middle East, what will be the key trends and technologies that will really champion change over the next 'digital decade'?

Sustainability is the key driver of technology adoption and change. For example, warehouse decision-makers are choosing solutions based on their ability to help them build sustainable operations, driven largely by regulations, energy costs or shortages along with customer, worker and investor expectations. 78% of European warehouse decision-makers (77% globally) are focused on reducing emissions and waste while eight in ten warehouse decision-makers say it's important their warehouse technology solutions maximise battery life. Beyond their own operations, 81% of warehouse decision-makers also say it's important that technology vendors have sustainability measures in place for running their businesses.

Zebra is always innovating via R&D and acquisitions to enhance the portfolio to meet customer expectations and needs and support their automation and digitisation journeys.

In terms of technologies, we see Fixed Industrial Scanning and Machine Vision (MV) solutions helping improve quality in manufacturing, warehouse and logistics environments. Reducing complexity and costs is a priority and Zebra Aurora is designed to drive efficiency and productivity through advanced industrial automation processes. **TECHVISION**

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YOU CAN COUNT ON US

Rapid advancements in technologies are reshaping industries, fostering new business models, and challenging traditional practices. To thrive in the coming decade, organizations must embrace change, reinvent themselves, accelerate digitization and deliver great customer experience.

At BCT, for over 24 years, we've assisted clients worldwide in unlocking business value from their digital transformation initiatives. Our winning formula comes from our unique combination of innovative IP products, customer-centric IT services, and strategic technology partnerships.

1000+
Customers

20+
Countries

4000+
Associates

20+
Partnerships

USA | Singapore | Malaysia | Brunei | Taiwan | India | Oman | UAE | Qatar | Saudi Arabia