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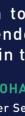
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ISSUE 310 // AUGUST 2023

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TOP STORIES



Top channel headlines from the region and beyond.

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Confluent cloud-native 2 data-streaming platform is now available on Microsoft cloud region in Qatar.



Dell Technologies launches Partner First strategy for storage.





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TRANSFORMING THE CHANNEL



elcome to the latest edition of your favourite magazine where we delve into the heart of innovation and transformation within the Channel Industry. In the dynamic landscape of the Middle East, where cultures intertwine and economies thrive, the role of effective communication has never been more vital. This issue takes you on a journey through the rapidly evolving Channel Industry in the region and uncovers the game-changing force that

is Generative AI.

As the Middle East region continues to embrace digital transformation, the demand for innovative communication methods that resonate with modern consumers has surged. This is where Generative AI emerges as a transformative force, rewriting the rulebook of engagement and personalization. Through this issue, we explore how Generative AI is disrupting the traditional norms of communication, enabling brands to tailor their messages with cultural nuance, craft personalized experiences, and forge deeper connections with customers.

We've delved deep into the perspectives of industry leaders, AI experts, and businesses that are at the forefront of this transformation. In the following pages, you'll discover how Generative AI is revolutionizing content creation, reshaping customer service interactions, and harmonizing cultural diversity within the Channel Industry. Through insightful features and thought-provoking interviews, we aim to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of how this groundbreaking technology is reshaping the way businesses communicate in the Middle East.

We invite you to immerse yourself in the stories, insights, and possibilities that this issue has to offer. From the visionaries harnessing the potential of Generative AI to the practical applications that are transforming businesses, this issue is a testament to the power of innovation in shaping the future of communication in the Middle East's Channel Industry. Wishing you an inspiring and insightful read.



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AXIS COMMUNICATIONS AND ALJAMMAZ TECHNOLOGIES ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE SECURITY SOLUTIONS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Axis Communications, the global leader in network cameras, access control, and network audio devices for the physical security and video surveillance industries, announced the onboarding of AlJammaz Technologies as its newest distribution partner in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The strategic decision to partner with AlJammaz Technologies will enable Axis to expand its reach in the KSA market, making it possible for Axis to invest further in the future of Saudi Arabia, a country showing immense potential and dedication to innovation, as is evident in the scale and ambition of Vision 2030.

This collaboration brings together the innovative surveillance technology Axis is known for and AlJammaz Technologies' excellence in Value Added distribution and channel network development, which addresses the growing demand for advanced security solutions in the KSA market. The partnership leverages the strengths of both organisations to provide KSA customers with world-class security technology that meets their evolving needs. The decision to work together results in a strategic combination of Axis technology with AlJammaz Technologies' robust distribution channel network,



expertise and local market knowledge, resulting in a comprehensive offering for Axis customers across a variety of sectors.

As such, one of the critical advantages of this alliance is the ability to provide end-to-end solutions that encompass every aspect of security. From high-quality cameras and advanced video analytics to network infrastructure and management software, customers can rely on the KSAbased distribution network developed by Axis to deliver integrated solutions that enhance security operations.

Speaking about the strategic



partnership, Sheetal Rao, Distribution Manager of Axis, stated, "We are excited to partner with AlJammaz Technologies to expand our existing network of partners in Saudi Arabia. With Al Jammaz Technologies' extensive reach and expertise, along with its product portfolio, we are confident in our joint ability to cater to the unique security challenges faced by organisations in the region and beyond. This collaboration also further expands our legacy in Saudi Arabia, where we've been involved in some of the most prestigious projects in the country."

AMIVIZ AND DARKTRACE ANNOUNCE CYBERSECURITY PARTNERSHIP

AmiViz, the Middle East region's first enterprise B2B marketplace for cybersecurity, has announced a partnership with Darktrace, a global leader in cybersecurity Artificial Intelligence for the Middle East and Africa.

This new partnership will bring the power of Darktrace's Self-Learning AI technology to AmiViz's customers and community. Self-Learning AI sits behind every component of Darktrace's Cyber AI Loop; an always-on, feedback system that creates a virtuous cycle which strengthens and hardens the entire security ecosystem. Darktrace has been onboarded to the AmiViz B2B platform and can be accessed by resellers through their mobile app.



Darktrace's Cyber AI Loop prevents, detects, responds, and heals from cyber-attacks, all at once, at all times, everywhere an organisation touches data and people, whether that's outside on the attack surface or inside the organisation.

Ilyas Mohammed, COO at AmiViz said "We are excited to announce our latest partnership with Darktrace, a leader in AI-powered cybersecurity solutions. The partnership with Darktrace will allow us to provide the best-in-class solutions to our channel partners in the region."

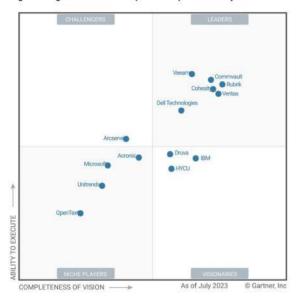
Ilyas further adds "We are confident that this partnership will enable us to help our partners and customers navigate the challenges they face with various forms of cyber threats.

VEEAM POSITIONED AS A LEADER IN THE 2023 GARTNER MAGIC QUADRANT FOR ENTERPRISE BACKUP AND RECOVERY SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS FOR THE 7TH CONSECUTIVE TIME

Veeam Software, the leader in Data Protection and Ransomware Recovery, has been positioned by Gartner, Inc. in the Leaders quadrant of the 2023 Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Backup and Recovery Solutions. This is the seventh consecutive time Gartner has recognized Veeam as a Magic Quadrant Leader and the fourth consecutive year Veeam is positioned highest for ability to execute, which we believe is a testament to why enterprises choose Veeam. Veeam is the #1 provider worldwide in the Data Replication & Protection software market according to the IDC Semiannual Software Tracker 2H'22.

"Veeam continues to deliver





the highest product standards and trust to our 450,000 customers as we work together to ensure their business resilience and rapid recovery from ransomware and cyberattacks," said Anand Eswaran, CEO at Veeam. "As part of the recent launch of Veeam Data Platform and our focus on data protection and ransomware recovery, Veeam has released close to 30 product updates in the past 12 months, with nearly 1,000 new product features and enhancements - a result of our collaboration with partners and customers and our relentless drive to deliver the technology solutions they need to keep their businesses running."

CISCO APPOINTS OLIVER TUSZIK AS NEW PRESIDENT FOR EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Oliver Tuszik has been announced as the next president of Cisco Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA). With over 10 years of experience in Cisco, Tuszik most recently held the position of Senior Vice President of the Cisco Global Partner Sales and Routes to Market business, where he supported Cisco's expansive global ecosystem of partners and advocated for customer needs. Prior to this, Tuszik has over 25 years of leadership experience across Europe for Cisco, as CEO of Computacenter in Germany, and in various other IT companies. For Tuszik it is a homecoming, as he successfully led Cisco Germany between 2013 and 2018.

Tuszik's appointment comes as Cisco accelerates efforts to securely connect technology, people, governments, and businesses across the world. As IT



and ecological priorities become more prevalent, all industries have had to reconsider business models and supply chains to become more agile, resilient, and sustainable. In his new role, Tuszik will be enabling this through Cisco's ecosystem, partners, and customers to advance significant digitisation and innovation across EMEA.

"I have had the privilege to work with the largest organisations and brightest minds around the globe, and by far EMEA has the biggest untapped opportunity on the world stage. The power, innovation capability and talent diversity of the countries is unmatched," said Oliver Tuszik, President of EMEA, Cisco. "Technology is the most critical component to accelerate digitisation and enable industry transformation for the region. From secure and sustainable infrastructure to transformative technologies in AI, to empowering the future of work, Cisco is literally at the heart of making it possible."

DELL TECHNOLOGIES EXPANDS AI OFFERINGS TO ACCELERATE SECURE GENERATIVE AI INITIATIVES

Dell Technologies has introduced new offerings to help customers quickly and securely build generative AI (GenAI) models on-premises to accelerate improved outcomes and drive new levels of intelligence.

New Dell Generative AI Solutions, expanding upon our May's Project Helix announcement, span IT infrastructure, PCs and professional services to simplify the adoption of full-stack GenAI with large language models (LLM), meeting organisations wherever they are in their GenAI journey. These solutions help organisations, of all sizes and across industries, securely transform and deliver better outcomes.

"Generative AI represents an inflection point that is driving fundamental change in the pace of innovation while improving the customer experience and enabling new ways to work," Jeff Clarke, vice chairman and co-chief operating officer, Dell Technologies, said on a recent investor call. "Customers, big and small, are using their own data and business context to



train, fine-tune and inference on Dell infrastructure solutions to incorporate advanced AI into their core business processes effectively and efficiently."

"Generative AI can help every enterprise transform its data into intelligent applications that enable them to solve complex business challenges,"

said Manuvir Das, vice president, Enterprise Computing, NVIDIA. "Dell Technologies and NVIDIA are building on our long-standing relationship to enable organisations to harness this capability to better serve their customers, more fully support their employees and fuel innovation across their operations."

FRESHWORKS UNVEILS AI-POWERED CUSTOMER SERVICE SUITE WITH FREDDY GENERATIVE AI INTEGRATION

Freshworks Inc., has announced the launch of its AI-powered Customer Service Suite which brings together self-service bots, agent-led conversational messaging, and automated ticketing management in an all-in-one solution. Uniting Freshchat, Freshdesk, and the company's generative artificial intelligence technology, Freddy AI, the Freshworks Customer Service Suite enables a modern customer support experience accessible to any company, with pricing that scales from small business to global enterprise.

Ninety four percent of business leaders surveyed in Deloitte's State of AI in the Enterprise, 5th Edition, agree that AI is critical to success over the next five years. However, many (42%) see implementing AI technologies a barrier to doing that. Freshworks Customer Service Suite is easy-to-implement, easy-to-use, and easyto-scale solution for companies looking



to leverage AI to retain and delight their customers.

"At Freshworks, we've always been committed to delivering innovative solutions that anticipate the needs of our customers. The new Freshworks Customer Service Suite is firmly rooted in generative AI technology and empowers businesses to automate customer resolutions, supercharge agent productivity and make smart decisions quickly at a price point that every company wants," said Freshworks' Chief Product Officer Prakash Ramamurthy.

The Freshworks Customer Service Suite follows the June launch of Freddy Self Service, Copilot, and Insights, which brought generative A enhancements to a wide range of Freshworks products, and builds upon Freshworks' generative AI enhancements released in March, which are already reducing agent time required on certain tasks by more than 80%.

INSIGHT // A10 NETWORKS



Adrian Taylor, Regional VP of Sales, EMEA at A10 Networks

t certain times in a year, IT teams in sectors like retail, airlines etc. prepare their systems for surges in traffic, maximising resiliency to ensure uptime and profitability.

One key way of doing this is through load balancing, a methodology or algorithm that spreads network traffic, computing workloads or other service requests over a group of resources or services. Incoming traffic is distributed using various algorithms to balance the overall workload and improve customer experience.

Simply, load balancing provides scalability, optimises service reliability and availability and increases overall manageability. Services are load balanced based on algorithms like round robin, least connections, and fastest response.

There are a range of specific load balancing technologies that businesses can use.

Server Load Balancing

A server load balancer is a hardware or virtual software appliance that distributes the application workload across an array of servers, ensuring application availability, elastic scale-out of server resources and supporting health management of back-end server and application systems.

Firewall Load Balancing

This load balancing method uses an array of security firewall systems to provide the ability to scale complex



network devices and guarantee nonstop operation.

Solid firewall infrastructure is a cornerstone of network security, but best-of-breed solutions cannot be optimised without adequate firewall load balancing. A highly available firewall is crucial in protecting the network and ensuring business continuity, network architectures should always include a load balancing solution that guarantees high availability for firewall defences and can easily scale out.

DNS Server Load Balancing

Domain Name System (DNS) servers are often used in large infrastructures or mission critical infrastructures, and they generally deploy DNS services across a cluster of servers. This cluster of DNS servers typically operates behind a server load balancing system, which allows the infrastructure to overcome the shortcomings in the standard DNS failover mechanism and greatly increase performance.

Global Server Load Balancing Global Server Load Balancing (GSLB) is

LOAD BALANCING PROVIDES SCALABILITY, OPTIMISES SERVICE RELIABILITY AND AVAILABILITY AND INCREASES OVERALL MANAGEABILITY.

a technology which directs network traffic to a group of data centres in various geographical locations. Each data centre provides similar application services, and client traffic is directed to the optimal site with the best performance for each client. GSLB monitors the health and responsiveness of each site, and like server load balancing, directs traffic to the site with the best response times.

Application Delivery Controllers

Application Delivery Controllers (ADCs) are network servers providing application reliability, acceleration, and application server services. Application Delivery Controllers include server load balancing with additional technologies including SSL offloading, security firewall services, application firewall systems, DDoS protection, service chaining and others to deliver optimal resiliency and uptime.

Each method of load balancing provides its own benefits for businesses depending on the size of the organisation, budgets, inhouse capabilities, and typical traffic flow, but the importance of these technologies cannot be understated.

With e-commerce transactions spiking at certain times in a year, the consequences of either a successful attack or unplanned downtime, or the inability to manage network traffic in the current volatile environment, could be the difference between surviving and ceasing trading.

USING QLC AND ALL-FLASH ARRAYS IN DATA CENTER MODERNISATION

Ricky Martin - Director of Market Strategy, NetApp

ith the release of NetApp C-Series capacity flash arrays, there's been a lot of discussion about which workloads belong on QLC and which ones should stay on the high-performance A-Series all-flash arrays. One way of looking at this question is the old "tier 1 versus tier 2" split. However, there are plenty of mission-critical tier 1 workloads that don't do a lot of random reads and writes and therefore don't need the 200 microsecond response times that NetApp's premier flash offerings

When to use C-Series QLC capacity flash

provide.

One breakdown for the ideal workloads for NetApp C-Series QLC capacity flash looks like this.

• Large-capacity, high-throughput tier 1 workloads where 2ms to 4ms latency for small block I/O is more than enough:

- o Media and rendering
- o Data lakes for unstructured data analytics

• Consolidation of tier 2 and tier 3 workloads, where high capacity and data center efficiency are the primary drivers:

- o General-purpose file storage
- o Home directories
- o Non-mission-critical databases
- o General-purpose VMware
- DevTest sandbox copies for databases or virtual machines (NAS or SAN)
- o Fast recovery for streaming backups



o Target system for data tiering

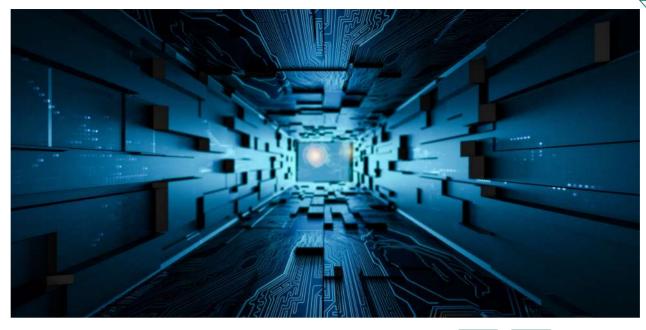
The A-series high-performance all-flash arrays should be reserved for things like:

- Nonvirtualised enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications and databases used for online transaction processing (OLTP)
- Time-series databases
- High-performance applications

virtualised under VMware Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and deep learning

When to use A-Series systems

The applications and workloads that demand that kind of small block random I/O are typically tier 1 databases like Oracle or SQL Server. In addition, there are new tier 1 apps and workloads that run



high-speed analytics over millions of small files for tasks such as training artificial intelligence or running chip simulations with electronic design and automation software. That's not an exhaustive list because each industry has its own needs, where the 200 microsecond response times that A-Series offers can make a significant difference to the speed of business. NetApp, for example, uses the speed of A-Series systems to accelerate its software build processes, and our healthcare customers use that performance to provide better patient care.

Outside of those tier 1 performance requirements, the biggest drawback to QLC is that compared to the kinds of media used in A-Series systems, it wears out more quickly. That isn't a worry for our customers because we replace any media that wears out for as long as it is under service. The flip side is that to make sure that our customers never see a service interruption due to drive wear, the data needs to be spread across a reasonably large pool of QLC flash media. For NetApp, the minimum size of that capacity pool is 122TB RAW. That's much lower than other vendors, who typically start at around 250TB for their block arrays and 1PB for their scale-out unstructured-only data silos. So, although that starting point is the best in the industry, it's still higher than many AFF installed

capacities. By comparison, the minimum starting point with the A-Series AFF A150 is 7.6TB RAW. For customers with more modest capacity requirements, the most cost-effective options are still some form of hybrid flash array technology. Those options combine SSD capacity with cloud storage, such as an AFF A150 or AFF A250 with cloud tiering or a more traditional hybrid flash array like the new FAS2820.

Is QLC right for you?

That 100+ TB starting point means that many customers need to begin by looking at QLC as the perfect technology to modernise and consolidate a broad range of existing workloads on their existing aging arrays. NetApp helps our customers take advantage of the priceperformance of QLC by leveraging technology like our industry-leading multitenancy, advanced quality of service, encryption, privacy, and cyber resilience. These features provide a safe default "landing zone" for all of our customers' data storage modernisation efforts. This is where NetApp's long-term leadership in unified storage helps customers. NetApp ONTAP has a proven track record of providing a safe technology foundation for migrating, consolidating, and managing data at any scale, easily and efficiently.

NETAPP MAKES IT EASY TO SAFELY MODERNISE AND SAVE MONEY

AND POWER BY CONSOLIDATING YOUR EXISTING STORAGE.

NetApp makes it easy to safely modernise and save money and power by consolidating your existing storage using a combination of QLC capacity flash, high-performance flash, and cloud. In a future blog post, I will discuss more advanced features, like nondisruptive dynamic workload portability between high performance and capacity flash, long-distance caching, and fully automated transparent tiering for cool and cold data. Until then, I hope that this post has helped you understand where QLC capacity flash fits into your data center modernisation plans.

CONFLUENT CLOUD-NATIVE DATA-STREAMING PLATFORM IS Now Available on Microsoft Cloud Region in Qatar

onfluent, Inc., the data streaming pioneer, has announced that Confluent Cloud on Microsoft Azure is now available to customers in Oatar through Microsoft Cloud

region in country.

"Data sovereignty and residency are rapidly becoming critical to digital projects across the region, which has led to a fundamental shift in the expectations of business leaders regarding the role cloud providers play in compliance," said Fred Crehan, Area Vice President, Emerging Markets, at Confluent. "As Qatari enterprises set their sights on the prosperous future described in Qatar National Vision 2030, Confluent Cloud's availability can play a central role in those journeys. It brings peerless, reliable data streaming and empowers customers to smooth out the complexities of digital transformation in a compliance-heavy, hybrid, and multi-cloud world."

Microsoft Cloud regions offer Confluent the availability, high performance, low latency, and security it needs to meet customer standards of flexibility, reliability, and disaster recovery. Additionally, because data is



stored in-country, Confluent can cater to highly regulated verticals such as government and financial services.

Confluent Cloud is a fully managed, cloud-native service for connecting and processing data, everywhere it is needed. Its elastic scalability and virtually infinite storage simplify realtime data movement across public and private clouds. And it offers managed connectors to the most popular data sources in the Kafka ecosystem, as well as SQL-based stream processing and a governance suite for streaming data, all from the same access pane. The service is backed by 99.95% uptimes that are guaranteed by SLAs.

Additionally, Confluent has worked to ensure some of the industry's most

CONFLUENT CLOUD, DESIGNED FOR APACHE KAFKA, FACILITATES CROSS-BOUNDARY DATA FLOW WITHOUT THE HEAVY LABOUR REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT robust enterprise-grade security and compliance measures are in place. For example, the company recently announced Stream Governance Advanced, which includes the Schema Registry for Stream Quality. By more than doubling the global availability of Schema Registry to 28 regions, Confluent has provided customers with more flexibility to manage schemas directly alongside their Kafka clusters in order to maintain strict compliance requirements and data sovereignty.

Confluent sees the availability of its data streaming platform on Microsoft Azure in Qatar as a clear signal of its ongoing commitment to the nation's government, businesses, and people. Crehan added: "Confluent views the Middle East as a major growth market, and as more and more organisations make the move over to hybrid and multi-cloud models, Confluent Cloud will be there to offer the flexibility and security they need to grow and thrive. In offering data in motion on Microsoft cloud region in Qatar, we are proud to be part of a national technology ecosystem that is projected to add billions of dollars to the economy and tens of thousands of new jobs over the next four years." 📟







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COVER STORY // MINDWARE

DISRUPTING DISTRIBUTION

Philippe Jarre, President, Mindware Group tells Anita Joseph all about Mindware's journey to being the global distributor of choice that it is today.

> ell us a little about Mindware and its activities in the region

Mindware is a global IT distributor that combines the best of both worlds with global best practices tailored to the region's individualities. We offer a complete portfolio of over 50 topclass vendors covering an array of technology verticals such as security, infrastructure, and networking, making us a one-stop-shop for all IT needs. Our dedicated services division has 45 solution and pre-sales consultants and focuses on enabling partners. Mindware has a solid financial position that enables us to finance the most complex deals. With warehouses in more than a dozen countries across the MEA region, that allows for faster delivery of hardware and an effective supply chain. I share the journey of our own company as an example of how the market is changing and how VADs need to adapt in order to stay ahead of the curve.

How has the role of distributors in value-added distribution evolved over the years, especially in the context of the digital era? The traditional responsibilities of IT distributors are changing rapidly. Digital transformation is becoming a key driver of growth in the industry. Businesses are increasingly turning to digital technologies to streamline operations, improve customer experience, and gain a competitive advantage. As a result, IT distributors will need to offer a wide range of digital solutions to help their customers navigate this transformation. Our emphasis must shift towards supporting the technology that underpins this transformation: cloud computing, security, IOT and data analytics. Mindware is investing heavily in these areas and are constantly upskilling to stay as market leaders and help our partners to succeed in the everchanging technology landscape.

With the recent economic changes and challenges, as well as the addition of too many dynamics to the global trading and commerce industry, we truly believe that a value-added distributor (VAD) like Mindware plays a pivotal role in supporting and facilitating the digital transformation across geographies in general and emerging countries in specific.

Players in the industry, who have the financial stability and easy access to cost-effective capital, may have a strong interest in acquiring small distributors that are experiencing high financial costs and low return







on capital employed (ROCE). With their financial resources, larger players can leverage economies of scale and synergies to enhance their profitability and gain a competitive edge in the market. Furthermore, through acquisitions, distributors can expand their geographic footprint and customer base, as well as gain access to new products and services.

Mindwares provides robust financial capabilities in a very financially challenging world today. Our legal presence in most Middle East and Africa countries, as well as our warehouses in over a dozen countries across the MEA region, enable us to offer faster delivery and a more efficient supply chain. Additionally, our dedicated Services division focuses on enabling our partners rather than competing with them, and possesses recognized technical expertise in tailoring the best solutions for our partners and their customers. Our technical services include pre-sales support such as consultation, implementation, integration, and training, which help our partners and resellers identify

and deploy the right solutions to their clients. We also offer post-sales services such as managed services and cloud services, which provide ongoing support and maintenance to ensure that those solutions continue to meet their clients' needs over time. Additionally, we offer

IT DISTRIBUTORS WILL NEED TO OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF DIGITAL SOLUTIONS TO HELP THEIR CUSTOMERS NAVIGATE THIS TRANSFORMATION. services in emerging areas such as AI, IoT, DevOps, and Security, providing the necessary support and expertise to help our customers stay ahead of the curve and achieve their business goals. Mindware is committed to delivering the highest level of service and support, and to being a true partner to our customers in the MEA region and beyond.

In what ways have digitalization and e-commerce changed the landscape for distributors? What opportunities and challenges have this presented?

Recognizing the shifting dynamics, Mindware conducted an in-depth analysis of market trends and opportunities a few years ago, identifying significant potential for eCommerce platform. Building upon this insight, the company embarked on a journey to leverage this opportunity and expand its presence in the digital commerce space. The idea was to reach a customer base outside of the traditional region and to reach all decision makers within the organization. E-commerce platform automates the entire purchasing process, from order processing to inventory management. By launching Mindware's e-commerce platform www.store.mindware.net we provide customers with the purchasing options they expect while staying ahead of the curve.

The IT industry has made a big leap towards digital transformation which was essential in the pandemic era, and since then it has evolved at an alarming rate. Mindware is focused on providing improved customer experience and digital transformation by enabling self-service options, real time updates and enhanced communication channel. Not only that, DX helps Mindware to be more agile and respond quickly to market changes and new customer demands. With automated process and real time data, we make informed decisions and help our partners to adapt the same as part of their business strategy. Most of the business has transformed into cloud, public/private hosting, SAAS, AI, VR and AR, the portion of traditional distribution is getting smaller every day, and the need to high-tech distribution, with the proper online channels such as marketplace, ecommerce, online services and remote assistance is growing day by day.

Mindware is leading the charge in digital transformation and innovation with Mindware Cloud marketplace, automation tools, supply chain capabilities, and as-a-service education portals. The emergence of online marketplaces presents both a significant opportunity and a challenge for the entire channel ecosystem. More vendors are offering their solutions on their own digital storefronts and also

WITH THEIR FINANCIAL RESOURCES, LARGER PLAYERS CAN LEVERAGE ECONOMIES OF SCALE AND SYNERGIES TO ENHANCE THEIR PROFITABILITY. leveraging distributors' marketplaces to increase their reach, gain access to new routes to market, and ensure that the channel adapts to the evolving needs of vendors.

Mindware saw this as a great opportunity to fill the gap with resellers to assist them in navigating complex XaaS licensing models and simplify their purchase process and launched its marketplace few years back. Mindware's marketplace (www. mindwarecloud.com) offers its partners a range of aggregated cloud solutions from various hyperscalers, private cloud providers, and ISVs, in addition to our cloud professional and support services. This approach helps partners and their clients with their cloud transformation journey and enables them to cross-sell and upsell. The marketplace provides a smooth user experience, and the platform's API integrations automate the subscription and consumption management required for high-volume cloud and XaaS business.

What do you see as the future of value-added distribution in the digital era, and what should distributors be prepared for in the coming years?

Distributors need to embrace digital transformation, not just in their own operations but also in the services





they offer. The digital era demands specialization, with distributors becoming experts in specific industries or technologies. The role of a distributor as an aggregator will continue to be crucial. In an increasingly complex digital landscape, where new technologies emerge constantly, distributors act as a bridge between vendors and resellers. They provide the necessary expertise to assess and bundle solutions effectively,



making it easier for resellers to meet the diverse needs of their clients

The shift to online purchasing is becoming real and IT distributors who do not have an online presence may find it challenging to remain competitive. There will be a surge in cybersecurity needs with the rise in digital transactions. Distributors should prepare to cater to this demand, prioritizing cybersecurity and providing security solutions.

Can you discuss some key trends and technologies that have impacted the distribution industry, and how Mindware has been adapting to them? There is a lot of buzz around AI and

DISTRIBUTORS NEED TO EMBRACE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, NOT JUST IN THEIR OWN OPERATIONS BUT ALSO IN THE SERVICES THEY OFFER. ML in the market now. It is evident that with the right capabilities, everyone is developing their own version of ChatGPT. Many customers in the region have decided to invest in hardware, software, and services to build their own machine learning and generative AI solutions. This presents a significant opportunity for us, and we are actively involved in these projects that will have a tremendous impact.

The next crucial step is the seamless integration of AI and ML with other supporting components. We are making substantial investments in the areas of security and cloud. Our partnership with Google Cloud is just the beginning, and we anticipate forging additional associations shortly.

Furthermore, we have made a strategic decision to invest in sustainability offerings. This solution allows us to leverage the best sustainability capabilities from our vendors, including industry leaders like IBM and Microsoft. We provide



these offerings to our partners, enabling them to showcase their commitment to sustainability. With COP28 approaching in the region and sustainability being a top priority for everyone, we have incorporated this into our portfolio. It is important to note that sustainability is not a new software or product; rather, it is a packaged approach that allows partners to offer this to the market, especially small and mediumsized enterprises (SMEs) with limited capabilities for significant investments in sustainability initiatives.

How has Mindware been leveraging partnerships and collaborations in the valueadded distribution space, particularly in the context of digitalization?

It all begins with establishing strategic partnerships with technology vendors and manufacturers. Our ability to select the right products for our portfolio and anticipate the essential components for supporting digital transformation has always been an integral part of Mindware's DNA. Consequently, we can proudly claim to possess the most comprehensive vendor portfolio in the industry. By working closely within our ecosystem of channel partners, we collectively deliver exceptional digital solutions to our customers. These collaborations encompass various aspects such as joint marketing initiatives, codevelopment of solutions, and privileged access to cutting-edge products and technologies. In addition, we prioritize equipping our partners with the necessary skills through training and certification programs to effectively sell and support digital products.

Furthermore, we extend our collaboration to third-party service providers, enabling us to provide an array of services, including cybersecurity, data analytics, and managed services, alongside the distribution of digital products. Lastly, recognizing the dynamic nature of technology, we engage in partnerships with educational institutions to ensure that we can offer the essential training programs and certifications to keep our partners and customers well-informed and up-to-date.

THE EMERGENCE OF ONLINE MARKETPLACES PRESENTS BOTH A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY AND A CHALLENGE FOR THE ENTIRE CHANNEL ECOSYSTEM.

SKILLS SHORTAGE IS A KEY CHALLENGE BEING FACED IN THE REGION TODAY BY BOTH VENDORS AND DISTRIBUTORS.

What other initiatives is Mindware taking to address the changing demands in the market?

Skills shortage is a key challenge being faced in the region today by both vendors and distributors. VADs require highly skilled professionals with deep knowledge and expertise to provide the best solutions to our partners and customers. As technology evolves and becomes more complex, the demand for highly skilled professionals in the IT industry has increased, making it more difficult to find and retain top talent. At Mindware, we have already taken the first step in acknowledging and addressing this gap in the region.

Last year, we introduced the Mindware Academy, an internship program designed to hone technical skills and provide students with handson training in real-world scenarios, preparing them for future roles in the industry. Recognizing the skills gap in the region, our program aims to address this issue by offering young talent the opportunity to gain practical experience. We are pleased to announce that we have welcomed one of our former interns as a new member of the Mindware team, underscoring the program's success in nurturing and hiring emerging talent within our organization.

At Mindware, we are more than just an IT distribution company; we are a trusted partner to our customers, providing a comprehensive range of value-added services to help them succeed in today's fast-paced and rapidly evolving technology landscape.

TECHNOLOGY // AXIS COMMUNICATIONS



THE RISE OF ZERO TRUST NETWORKS FOR VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Tertius Wolfaardt, Architecture & Engineering Manager, Axis Communications

etworks are increasingly vulnerable thanks to a combination of sophisticated and numerous and the exponential

cyberattacks amid the exponential growth of the Internet of Things (IoT) and the number of connected devices. Case in point, the Middle East and Africa IoT market is projected to grow to nearly \$3.4 trillion by 2030. This is also in the context of increased cybercrime activity in the Middle East region. The UAE alone is forced to deter 50,000 cyberattacks daily, with attacks ranging from ransomware to cyber terrorism.

As a result of this, the concept of a network being isolated within a firewall, or protecting the network perimeter with a single solution, is no longer feasible. The use of cloudbased services beyond networks and the benefits of creating a more 'permeable' perimeter – where customer and supplier systems are seamlessly connected, leading to significant improvements in supply chain efficiency – have changed the nature of network security. Therefore, a new approach is needed. One defined by a lack of trust.

Trust nobody and nothing

In a connected landscape, 'zero trust' networks and architectures have become the go-to solution. And not just from a physical security and surveillance perspective. According to a recent research report endorsed by the UAE Cyber Security Council, more than half (56%) of cloud security experts in the Middle East named zero trust strategies as their top priority for the next 12 to 18 months.

As the name suggests, the default position in a Zero trust network is that no entity connecting to or within the network – whether human or machine – can be trusted, no matter who they are or how they connect. The overriding philosophy of zero trust networks is, 'never trust, always verify'. This demands that the identity of any entity is verified multiple times in several different ways, depending on behaviour and the sensitivity of specific data in the network being accessed. In other words, a user is granted the least amount of access to fully complete their task.

Zero trust uses techniques such as micro-segmentation – applying varying levels of security to specific parts of the network where more critical data resides – and granular network perimeter security based on users and devices. It also uses factors such as the physical location of devices and other identifying data to determine whether their credentials can be trusted with network access.

Zero trust in practice

What defines a Zero trust network? At the heart of it sits policy engines that allow organisations to create, monitor, and enforce rules about network resources and how data can be accessed.

A policy engine uses network analytics and programmed rules to grant role-based permission based on multiple factors. Put simply, the policy engine compares every request for network access and its context to policy, informing the enforcer whether the request will be permitted.

In a Zero trust network, the policy engine defines and enforces data security and access policies across hosting models, locations, users, and devices, requiring organisations to carefully define rules and policies within key security controls, such as next-generation firewalls (NGFWs), email and cloud security gateways, and data loss prevention (DLP) software. Together, these controls enforce microsegmentations beyond hosting models and locations. Zero trust in video surveillance Entities connecting to a network include people, of course, but increasingly, most network connections come from devices. This includes network surveillance cameras and associated networkconnected devices.

As organisations move towards zero trust network architectures, it will be essential that these video surveillance devices adhere to the principles required for verification. It would be ironic if a device designed to keep the organisation physically secure led to a cybersecurity vulnerability.

Traditional forms of device security may no longer be enough. In the same way that bad actors can steal the access credentials of an employee (the first stage of a credential-based attack), they can compromise the security certificate of devices. In a Zero trust network, new approaches are needed for devices to prove their trustworthiness to the network.

For example, blockchain technology can provide an immutable root of trust for connected devices. Though more closely associated with cryptocurrencies, blockchain, as an open, distributed ledger that can record transactions between two parties, can be used for hardware roots of trust and establish trust keys within video surveillance devices.

Zero trust represents the next logical step in building resilient and secure networks. And as organisations in the Middle East connect more devices to more networks, the risk of vulnerability, even from a single weak link in the chain, is compounded. By working with reliable technology vendors and sourcing the right hardware, organisations can put the right kind of trust (or lack thereof) in their surveillance networks.

SAMSUNG INTRODUCES NEW BESPOKE RANGE OF AI WASHER AND DRYER IN UAE AND GCC

The new appliances feature AI Ecobubble, big capacity with 11.5KG option, and come with a 20-year warranty

amsung Gulf Electronics has announced the availability of the new Bespoke AI Washer and Dryer. The new frontload washers and dryers are the latest addition to the popular Bespoke range, whose design allows customers to customise the look of their appliances to match their home décor and lifestyles.

The new appliances stand out in the intelligent use of AI to optimise energy, water and detergent without compromising cleanliness, the large capacity and long-lasting performance backed by a 20-year warranty on the motor. A simple, flat design blends seamlessly with modern interiors, kitchen furniture, and other Bespoke appliances.

Burcin Arabul, Director of the Home Appliances Division, Samsung Gulf Electronics, said, "The new Bespoke AI Washer and Dryer fulfills Gulf customers' needs for purposeful design, high-quality materials and top performance. The new range also comes in line with our sustainability promise, with significant upgrades in energy efficiency, water usage and durability from our previous generation through the smart application of artificial intelligence."

The new Bespoke washing machine features AI Ecobubble, which produces bubbles that remove 24% more soil even at low temperatures, saving up to 70% energy and delivering 45.5% better fabric care. The AI feature detects the fabric type and optimizes the amount of bubbles, washing time, temperature and spin speed. Additionally, AI Wash uses advanced sensing to detect the weight and softness of the fabric and continually monitor the level of soiling. It then



intelligently optimizes the water, detergent, soaking, rinsing and spinning times.

The new appliances are powered by Samsung's Digital Inverter Technology which utilizes strong magnets for a quieter and more powerful performance but uses less energy than traditional Universal Motor. It also offers the industry's longest durability, backed by a 20-year warranty on the motor.

The new appliances are part of the SmartThings connected ecosystem. The SmartThings App delivers personalised, efficient and hassle-free washing by analysing users' laundry patterns. The 'Clothing Care' tool offers tailored cycle recommendations and tips, 'Energy' mode helps manage your energy use holistically, while 'Home Care' keeps the washer in optimal condition.

Samsung believes that sustainability begins at home, where everyday decisions by individuals can add to the sustainable solution we need for a better future. This message is rooted in Samsung's approach to all Bespoke appliances, including the latest Bespoke AI Washer and Dryer, which optimizes the laundry experience with technologies focused on maximized savings, performance and capacity.

The new Bespoke range of AI Washer and Dryer is now available in UAE and GCC across all Samsung online and offline stores.





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On The Road

TAKE IT WITH YOU



Wi-Fi Hotspot



Up to 8 Users





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On-board SIM card slot

Connect via Wi-Fi or USB port

802.11n/g wireless compatible

Connect up to 8 users

POWER IN YOUR MI-FI simply plug in your computer/laptop

WI-FI MODEM/ROUTER

DWR-910M

FINAL WORD // DELL TECHNOLOGIES

DELL TECHNOLOGIES LAUNCHES PARTNER FIRST STRATEGY FOR STORAGE

ell Technologies has announced its Partner First Strategy for Storage, which designates more than 99 percent of Dell's

customers and potential customers as partner-led for storage sales.

This new go-to-market strategy combines partner expertise and reach with Dell's world-class team and storage portfolio, including data protection, to deliver transformational outcomes for customers.

Effective today, Dell is:

• Compensating Dell sellers more when transacting storage through a partner.

• Quadrupling the number of storage Partner of Record-eligible resale accounts for more predictability of engagement.

"Dell's investment in partnership runs deep. We have decades of experience working with our partner community to accelerate transformation for our customers," said Michael Dell, chairman and chief executive officer, Dell Technologies. "The Partner First Strategy for Storage extends our partner commitment and unites the strengths of our partners with the advantages of our world-class team and solutions."

"An omni-channel business model with a robust partner ecosystem is at the core of Dell's growth strategy," said Bill Scannell, president, Global Sales and Customer Operations, Dell Technologies. "The Partner First Strategy for Storage will incent Dell sellers to work even more closely with partners to acquire new business and deliver the right outcomes for customers. It's a win-win-win for customers, partners and Dell."

"Dell is the market leader in

Enterprise Storage and best positioned to serve our customers in today's data-centric world," said Rola Dagher, global channel chief, Dell Technologies. "We can win more often – and faster – when we work side-by-side with our global partner ecosystem. With 99 percent of our customers and potential customers deemed as partner first for storage, we're very clear about our intentions to embrace the channel."

"The Partner First Strategy for Storage, including data protection, is a change in our go-to-market strategy designed to fuel continued storage growth in UAE, Qatar, and around the world," said Vangelis Lagousakos, General Manager - Channel Sales, Central Eastern Europe, Middle East, Turkey & Africa (CEEMETA), Dell Technologies. "By further embracing the power of collaboration with our partners, we win more deals and drive better outcomes for customers."



S A M S U N G

THE ULTIMATE VISUAL EXPERIENCE



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RUCKUS One

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Unified converged network management



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AlOps to automate IT operations intelligently



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