Resel east

THE VOICE OF THE CHANNEL

ISSUE 316 | FEBRUARY 2024

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TRANSFORMING THE CHANNEL

CHANNEL PLAYERS ARE RACING TO POSITION THEMSELVES AS THE ENABLERS OF THIS CONNECTED FUTURE, FORGING ALLIANCES AND BUILDING EXPERTISE IN THE INTRICACIES OF THIS TECHNOLOGICAL DYNAMICS.





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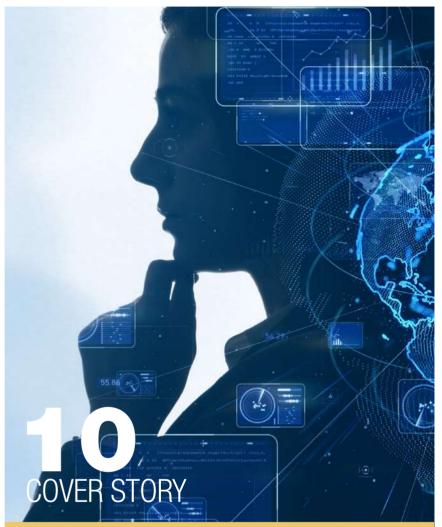
1000+	20+	4000+	20+
Customers	Countries	Associates	Partnerships

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

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Cisco Collaborates
with du Telecom in a
Landmark Cybersecurity
Transformation Initiative





Anita Joseph Editor



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INNOVATION **FIRST**

n an era where the business landscape is continually evolving, innovation stands out as the cornerstone of progress, and nowhere is this more evident than in the dynamic realm of the channel partner ecosystem. As businesses navigate through unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the ability to innovate within partnerships has become a key determinant of success.

The traditional concept of a channel partner has undergone a metamorphosis, evolving from mere conduits for product distribution to strategic collaborators driving mutual growth. Innovation in the channel partner ecosystem is not just about adopting the latest technologies; it's a mindset that fosters creativity, agility, and a willingness to explore new frontiers.

Innovation involves a paradigm shift in collaboration and co-creation. Successful partnerships are those that go beyond transactional engagements, fostering an environment where ideas flow freely, and partners contribute to each other's innovation journey. This collaborative approach not only accelerates the pace of innovation but also creates a resilient ecosystem that can adapt to unforeseen challenges.

As we delve into this edition exploring innovation in the channel partner ecosystem, it is evident that the old adage "innovate or perish" holds true. The stories and insights shared by industry leaders and experts underscore the transformative power of innovation, painting a vivid picture of a future where collaboration, technology, and a customer-centric approach converge to redefine the very fabric of the channel partner ecosystem. Join us on this journey of discovery and transformation, where innovation isn't just a choice but a necessity for sustained success in the ever-evolving business landscape.



FOUNDER, CPI Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

Published by



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Tel: +971 4 568 2993

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While the publishers have made every

TOP STORIES

KYNDRYL AND VEEAM ANNOUNCE GLOBAL STRATEGIC ALLIANCE TO DELIVER COMPREHENSIVE CYBER RESILIENCY

yndryl, the world's largest technology infrastructure services provider, and Veeam Software, the #1 leader by market share in Data Replication and Protection Software, has announced a global strategic alliance focused on providing customers with resiliency services supported by innovative technology, expert infrastructure management and incident recovery services. Under the alliance, Kyndryl will now be a Veeam Accredited Service Partner (VASP).

Kyndryl offers professional services and technical implementation integrated with Veeam solutions, providing customers with options for:

- Comprehensive Cyber Resilience:
 Using an integrated approach
 to help customers strengthen
 their stakeholder confidence with
 strategies to effectively recover
 from adverse conditions, including
 cyber incidents, human error and
 hardware failures.
- Simplified Vendor Transitions:
 Provide customers with a seamless
 transition to modern, security
 and compliance rich cloud-based



infrastructure with scalable and customizable options for hybrid and multi-cloud backup and recovery.

- Modern Data Protection Solutions:
 Help customers modernise and
 protect data across their enterprise
 with a simplified, holistic approach
 on a single platform for effective
 and reliable data protection with
 robust defense for modern SaaS
 applications, data and systems.
- Enhanced Operational Efficiencies:
 Integrated automation to drive

operational efficiency, enabling customers with the flexibility to adapt to changing business needs and industry standards.

The alliance combines Kyndryl's expertise in managed security services and infrastructure management capabilities with Veeam. Kyndryl customers benefit from simplified and holistic data protection and ransomware recovery, optimised costs, operational efficiency, regulatory compliance features, and seamless data mobility along with cloud-native and Kubernetes environments with advanced security capabilities.

"Veeam is focused on ensuring organisations are prepared to bounce forward when the worst happens. Whether it's a cyber-attack, an outage or a natural disaster we give customers peace of mind that their data is safe and can be rapidly recovered to keep their business running," said John Jester, CRO at Veeam. "We're excited to bring our technology together with the scale and expertise of Kyndryl to bring the benefits of Veeam technology to customers around the world. Together, we will keep businesses running."

MINDWARE CLOUD MARKETPLACE LAUNCHED IN IVORY COAST

indware, one of the leading regional IT Value-Added Distributors in Middle East and Africa, today announced the launch of its Cloud Marketplace in Ivory Coast to serve the sub-Saharan Africain countries. The Mindware Marketplace will enhance Cloud adoption by providing the channel community with an exceptional transactional experience, along with an extensive range of Cloud solutions and services. Clients and partners in Ivory Coast and neighboring countries can now take advantage of the Marketplace for purchases in Central African CFA franc currency.

Mindware's objective is to be the 'Cloud Distributor of Choice,' aggregating multiple Cloud solutions and helping partners create and commercialise subscription-based Cloud and Anything-as-a-Service (XaaS) solutions.

Silmi Khanfir, Director of Cloud at Mindware said: "We are excited to launch the Mindware's Cloud Marketplace in our sub-Saharan Africain Hub, Ivory Coast, to offer our 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 digital transformation journey and enables them to crosssell and up-sell, with the convenience of pricing and billing being in local currency. 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." TOP STORIES

SOPHOS EXPANDS COMMITMENT TO THE CHANNEL WITH NEW DEDICATED PARTNER CARE OFFERING

ophos, a global leader in innovating and delivering cybersecurity as a service, is expanding its commitment to the channel with the addition of Partner Care, a new offering in its global partner program that features a dedicated, 24x7 team of Sophos experts who handle non-sales related questions and operational support. The offering is designed to speed up response times for Sophos partners and Managed Service Providers (MSPs) needing assistance with administrative and operational tasks, freeing them up to focus on selling and securing their customers with Sophos' portfolio of innovative managed services and endpoint, network, email, and cloud security solutions.

"Based on our decades of experience successfully supporting partners



who sell to mid-market and small business organisations, we know that administrative and operational issues take away valuable time needed to build customers relationships, pursue prospects and close new business deals," said Kendra Krause, senior vice president of global channels and small business sales at Sophos. "Partner Care reinforces Sophos' longstanding strategy to be 'channel-best,' which is our commitment to provide partners with optimal, conflict-free revenue and profitability opportunities, curated training and support, and advanced security solutions that defend customers from data breaches, ransomware and other debilitating cyberattacks."

Sophos Partner Care offers a single point of contact for quoting, navigating the partner portal, addressing licensing queries, Not For Resale (NFR) requests, and more. With this high level of service, partners working with small and mid-market organisations can better boost their productivity and increase profitability.

FIRST-EVER GCC BANKING SENTIMENT INDEX REVEALS UAE AND QATAR BANKS LEAD REGIONAL REPUTATIONAL NET SENTIMENT

PMG has collaborated with DataEQ on the region's first-ever GCC banking sentiment index, designed to quantify the experiences and sentiments of consumers within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) banking sector. The report analyses consumer sentiment towards 20 banks in the GCC by tracking an extensive dataset comprising 3,965,821 X (formerly known as Twitter) posts from 1 May 2022 to 30 April 2023.

Abbas Basrai, Partner, Head of Financial Services and Financial Risk Management at KPMG Lower Gulf, said: "Understanding consumer sentiment in the GCC's banking sector is a complex, multifaceted undertaking, which has brought to light key areas of significance for consumers and banks alike. The data-led insights gained through this report not only reflect the past year but will likely serve as

a critical metric for brands aiming to evolve their strategies in a consumercentric direction."

Melanie Malherbe, Chief Commercial Officer at DataEQ, said: "Social data offers organisations an unfiltered view of what consumers really think about them and their competitors. With the rise of social media usage as a servicing channel, specifically in the banking landscape, these platforms house an untapped data pool that can be structured and analysed in realtime, providing valuable insights into customer experience, product, pricing, and conduct feedback.

Saudi Arabia dominated the conversation within the GCC's banking sector with an overwhelming 83.3% of total online conversation, demonstrating that Saudi consumers are far more active than their neighbors and more vocal about the banking



industry as a whole.

Net Sentiment is a composite metric gauging customer satisfaction, derived by subtracting negative sentiment from positive sentiment and adjusting for the total volume of conversation.

TOP STORIES

IFS PARTNERS WITH AIGC TO OPTIMISE GROWTH IN SAUDI ARABIA

FS, the global cloud enterprise software company, has signed a strategic partnership with Artificial Intelligence Global Company (AIGC) a leading digital services consulting company in Saudi Arabia. As an industry specialised solution provider, IFS is in a strong position to drive digitisation in key Oil & Gas and Utilities markets while AIGC's deeprooted local experience and capabilities will provide a solid platform to tap into this growing market

AIGC will help accelerate the uptake of IFS solutions that resonate with the Oil & Gas and Utilities companies. These include IFS Cloud, IFS Cloud Enterprise Asset management to overcome operational challenges, IFS Could EAM's AI-embedded maintenance planning and scheduling and Field Service Management solution to support 360-degree end-to-end



service lifecycle.

Speaking on the new collaboration, Vijay Jaswal, Chief Technology Officer, APJ&MEA, at IFS said, "Saudi Arabia plays a vital role in our Middle East expansion plans, and it is important for us to have a sturdy and well-connected partner to enable us to meet local business needs, help them drive growth and support the country's digitisation

goals. We truly believe that AIGC has a strong network and market insights that will help us accelerate the goals of businesses that are focused on embracing digitisation to attain operational efficiency, sustain long term growth, and lessen their carbon footprint."

Ahmed AlGhamdi, AIGC's CEO, said, "With rapid developments and initiatives taking place, the technological needs of Saudi Arabia are centered around cutting-edge solutions that will help our businesses remain competitive

on a global scale. IFS's market leading solutions drive value and innovation that our customers need and will help them overcome challenges while also providing multiple opportunities to improve productivity, reduce operational costs, and accelerate workflows. We look forward to working with IFS to meet our evolving customer needs."

GENETEC INTRODUCES ENTERPRISE-GRADE, UNIFIED, SAAS SOLUTION

enetec, a leading technology provider of unified security, public safety, operations, and business intelligence solutions, has announced Security Center SaaS. Built with cybersecurity and privacy at its core, the new offering is a massively scalable, open, and unified software as a service solution (SaaS). Combining access control, video management, forensic search, intrusion monitoring, automation, and many other advanced security capabilities, Security Center SaaS ushers in a new chapter in the technology evolution of the physical security industry.

"The physical security industry has not been able to get cloud or software as a service quite right, especially for enterprise customers," said Christian Morin, Vice President of Product Engineering and CSO, Genetec Inc. "With Security Center SaaS,



organisations are no longer beholden to proprietary or feature-poor as a service solutions that needlessly force a choice of either all on-prem or all cloud. The enterprise capabilities and open architecture of Security Center SaaS are designed to enable systems to handle complex workloads where they make the most sense to be deployed. This flexibility addresses a longstanding need of end users and fills an important gap in the market."

EMPOWERING PARTNERS

Anita Joseph caught up with Amar Mehta, Director Sales, Middle East at Sophos to discuss the company's partner program, cybersecurity and channel goals for 2024.



an you provide an overview of the current cybersecurity channel market in the region, highlighting key trends in both the channel and cybersecurity landscapes? How is Sophos positioning itself within these trends?

Cybersecurity is becoming so complex that most organisations cannot keep up and need to understand it is a business necessity and a business enabler. Attackers constantly evolve their techniques to bypass defences, requiring high agility from security vendors and organizations to respond effectively. Sophos delivers superior cybersecurity outcomes by giving customers the advantages they urgently need. We offer a prevention-first approach that reduces breaches, adapts defences in response to an attack, and improves detection and response. It's all managed through the world's most trusted cloud-native security platform, supporting your team's detection and response operations or our 24/7 Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service. With the new trends & the evolving cybersecurity landscape, customers are moving towards single vendor integrated solutions which can help them maintain their security posture. With a strong channel presence in Middle East, Sophos offers its partners advanced cybersecurity solutions (ACE Platform), including a large portfolio of endpoint and network products. With Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR) and Sophos Incident Response services, organisations are better protected against cyberattacks and can be more efficient/prepared to defeat phishing, malware, active lateral attacks, ransomware, and more.

Sophos recently partnered with StarLink for a roadshow. Can you elaborate on the goals and objectives of

this collaboration? How does Sophos envision this partnership contributing to its presence and influence in the cybersecurity market?

Sophos has signed StarLink as a distribution partner in the Middle East and Levant regions. StarLink will distribute and promote Sophos' portfolio of solutions, including Managed Detection and Response (MDR) services and network, endpoint and messaging cybersecurity, through its extensive channel network. In the Middle East, both Sophos & Starlink are considered as strong brands in the Cybersecurity industry with a similar vision of providing best in class cybersecurity solutions to all customers. We are proud of this partnership and believe together, we have the capability to enable organisations to safeguard their digital assets.

Could you share insights into Sophos' partner program? What unique features or incentives does Sophos offer to its partners, and how does the program differentiate itself in the highly competitive cybersecurity industry?

Defending an organisation against rapidly evolving, increasingly complex and elusive cyberthreats is a considerable challenge. In today's volatile threat landscape, navigating independently is not an option. A comprehensive cybersecurity approach along with a strong partner is essential to navigate this complex environment. At Sophos, we take great pride in our commitment to "Partner First, Partner Best approach." The needs of our partner ecosystem are transforming and our mission to provide cybersecurity-as-a-service that works as a revenue driver for our partners, has led us to consolidate our partner offerings into one global partner program guide that covers managed service providers (MSPs), cloud security providers (CSPs) and next-gen resellers.

Looking ahead to 2024, what are Sophos' channel goals and vision? How does the company plan to navigate the evolving cybersecurity landscape, and what strategic initiatives will be implemented to achieve these goals?

Sophos currently has an award-winning partner program which is also the best in the industry. This year, we will continue with our current partner program and ensure that our channel partners can benefit the most out of it. One of the key objectives is to focus more on Cybersecurity as a Service along with our channel partners for 2024.

In the rapidly changing world of cybersecurity, what specific measures is Sophos taking to support its partners in staying abreast of emerging threats and technologies? How is Sophos fostering a collaborative and knowledge-sharing environment within its partner community?

At Sophos, we provide our channel partners — and their customers — with unrivalled, real-world cyber defences to stop more threats faster. And we do so with a remarkable return on investment for partners and customers alike. As a Sophos Partner, they have extensive opportunities to gain even more of their customers' security budget while customer enjoys the same level of cybersecurity readiness as many of the largest, most sophisticated organisations worldwide.

We are not only committed to providing our partners and their customers with the ultimate protection against modern threats using our award-winning next-gen cybersecurity solutions, but we're also building our products and processes keeping our partners in mind. From development, operations, sales, marketing, to support – the Sophos team is dedicated to fuelling partner success with the tools and know-how to drive bottom-line revenue for organisations.

TRANSFORMING THE CHANNEL

Channel players are racing to position themselves as the enablers of this connected future, forging alliances and building expertise in the intricacies of this technological dynamics.

n the ever-evolving landscape of the technology sector, the channel industry stands as a crucial nexus connecting innovators and end-users. As we plunge deeper into the 21st century, the role of channels in delivering cutting-edge solutions becomes more pivotal than ever. This cover story explores the intricate balance between the channel industry and emerging technologies, shedding light on the trends, challenges, and opportunities that shape this dynamic ecosystem.

The Rise of Emerging Technologies: A Transformative Journey

The relentless march of technology has birthed a new era where emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, the Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G are no longer confined to research labs; they are now the driving forces

behind unprecedented transformations across industries. For the channel industry, adapting to these changes has become a survival imperative.

AI's Ascendance: From Sci-Fi to Reality

Artificial Intelligence has transcended its sci-fi roots to become a tangible force shaping the channel landscape. Partnerships between traditional channel players and AI developers have become commonplace, as businesses seek to leverage the power of machine learning and data analytics. Predictive maintenance, intelligent automation, and personalized customer experiences are no longer distant dreams but tangible benefits clients expect from their technology providers.

Blockchain: Beyond Cryptocurrency

Blockchain, the technology underpinning cryptocurrencies, is undergoing a metamorphosis. Beyond finance, it is finding applications in AS TECHNOLOGIES
ADVANCE,
THE DEMAND
FOR SKILLED
PROFESSIONALS
OUTPACES THE
SUPPLY.



COVER STORY

supply chain management, healthcare, and even voting systems. The channel industry is not immune to this revolution. Distributors and resellers are exploring blockchain's potential to enhance transparency, traceability, and security in their operations. Smart contracts are streamlining transactions, reducing disputes, and fostering trust between channel partners.

IoT and 5G: Paving the Way for Connectivity

The convergence of the Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G is ushering in an era of unprecedented connectivity. This duo is not only connecting devices but also creating a vast network of opportunities for the channel industry. From industrial automation and smart cities to healthcare and agriculture, the potential applications of IoT and 5G are limitless. Channel players are racing to position themselves as the enablers of this connected future, forging alliances and building expertise in the intricacies of this technological marriage.

Challenges in the Channel Frontier

While the allure of emerging technologies is undeniable, navigating this brave new world is not without its challenges. The channel industry, once accustomed to a more predictable landscape, now grapples with the rapid



AS WE PLUNGE DEEPER INTO THE 21ST CENTURY, THE ROLE OF CHANNELS IN DELIVERING CUTTING-EDGE SOLUTIONS BECOMES MORE PIVOTAL THAN EVER.

pace of technological change, market uncertainties, and evolving customer expectations.

Skills Shortage: The Talent Conundrum

As technologies advance, the demand for skilled professionals outpaces the supply. The channel industry finds itself in a perpetual struggle to attract and retain talent proficient in emerging technologies. Reskilling and upskilling programs have become integral for channel partners, who are investing heavily in training their workforce to stay ahead of the technological curve.

Security Concerns: The Dark Side of Innovation

With great technological advancements come greater security challenges.

As the channel industry integrates emerging technologies into their solutions, the specter of cyber threats looms large. From AI-driven cyberattacks to vulnerabilities in IoT devices, channel players must prioritize cybersecurity to build and maintain trust with their clients. The evolving nature of threats requires constant vigilance, robust strategies, and partnerships with cybersecurity experts.

Market Uncertainties: Navigating the Unknown

The pace of technological change introduces a level of uncertainty in the market. Channel players must make strategic decisions on which technologies to embrace, invest in, and promote. Navigating this ambiguity





requires a delicate balance between being agile enough to adapt to emerging trends and stable enough to provide reliable solutions to clients.

Opportunities on the Horizon

Amidst the challenges, the channel industry stands at the cusp of unparalleled opportunities. The key lies in embracing change, adapting swiftly, and leveraging emerging technologies to create value for clients.

Collaboration and Alliances: Strength in Unity

In a landscape dominated by emerging technologies, collaboration becomes a cornerstone of success. Channel players are forging strategic alliances with technology developers, startups, and other channel partners. By pooling resources and expertise, they can create comprehensive solutions that



DISTRIBUTORS AND RESELLERS ARE EXPLORING BLOCKCHAIN'S POTENTIAL TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY, TRACEABILITY, AND SECURITY IN THEIR OPERATIONS.

address the multifaceted challenges posed by emerging technologies.

Value-Added Services: Beyond the Product

In a market saturated with similar technologies, the channel industry is finding new avenues for differentiation through value-added services. From consultancy and implementation to ongoing support and customization, channel partners are moving beyond being mere product resellers to becoming trusted advisors and solution providers.

Ecosystem Integration: The Holistic Approach

The channel industry is increasingly adopting a holistic approach to technology solutions. Instead of focusing on individual products, channel players are embracing ecosystem integration, offering end-to-end solutions that seamlessly connect different technologies. This approach not only enhances the value proposition but also simplifies the technological landscape for clients.



IN A LANDSCAPE DOMINATED BY EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, COLLABORATION BECOMES A CORNERSTONE OF SUCCESS.

Conclusion: Charting the Course Ahead

As the channel industry navigates the channel frontier, the symbiotic relationship between traditional players and emerging technologies is reshaping the technological landscape. Challenges may abound, but so do opportunities. The winners in this dynamic ecosystem will be those who can dance to the rhythm of change, embrace collaboration, and offer value that transcends the product itself. The journey ahead promises to be thrilling, challenging, and above all, transformative.

APPOINTMENT // FRESHWORKS

FRESHWORKS APPOINTS ABE SMITH AS CHIEF OF GLOBAL FIELD OPERATIONS

reshworks Inc., has announced the appointment of Abe Smith as the company's Chief of Global Field Operations. He will be responsible for leading field sales worldwide as Freshworks grows upmarket and new business increasingly comes from field sales. Smith brings nearly 25 years of experience at public software companies Zoom, Oracle and Cisco (WebEx), leading teams responsible for building relationships to top enterprise customers and driving more than \$1 billion in revenue.

"Abe is an impressive leader who has successfully scaled field sales from local to international and midmarket to enterprise. This makes him exceptionally equipped to support Freshworks' diverse customer base while helping us engage larger organisations," said Dennis Woodside, President at Freshworks. "His expertise will be invaluable to Freshworks as we accelerate our field sales to meet soaring demand and complement our in-bound motion, all with the goal of reaching \$1 billion in annual revenue in 2026."

Most recently serving as the Head of International at Zoom (NASDAQ: ZM), Smith scaled the field sales organization outside the United States as the company grew from roughly \$300 million to over \$4 billion during his tenure. Before Zoom, he served as President of EMIA (Europe, Middle East, India, Africa) at Cision, where he was responsible for over 2,000 employees. Before that, he was Group Vice-President of Oracle's Global Sales

Unit where he achieved annual growth rates as much as 90 percent and led the fastest growing division within Marketing Cloud.

"Freshworks' success and global reach serves as a beacon of inspiration for millions of entrepreneurs around the world and I'm excited to be part of this incredible team and turn great beginnings into hyper scale," Smith said. "Work is changing forever and the next decade will be dramatically

altered by generative AI – a tailwind Freshworks is rightly apt to ride. Offering a range of powerful AI-enabled solutions for all aspects of the company is crucial to becoming a billion-dollar company and I believe Freshworks is well on its way to achieving that impressive milestone."

Smith joins the executive leadership team and reports to Freshworks' President Dennis Woodside and CEO Girish Mathrubootham.





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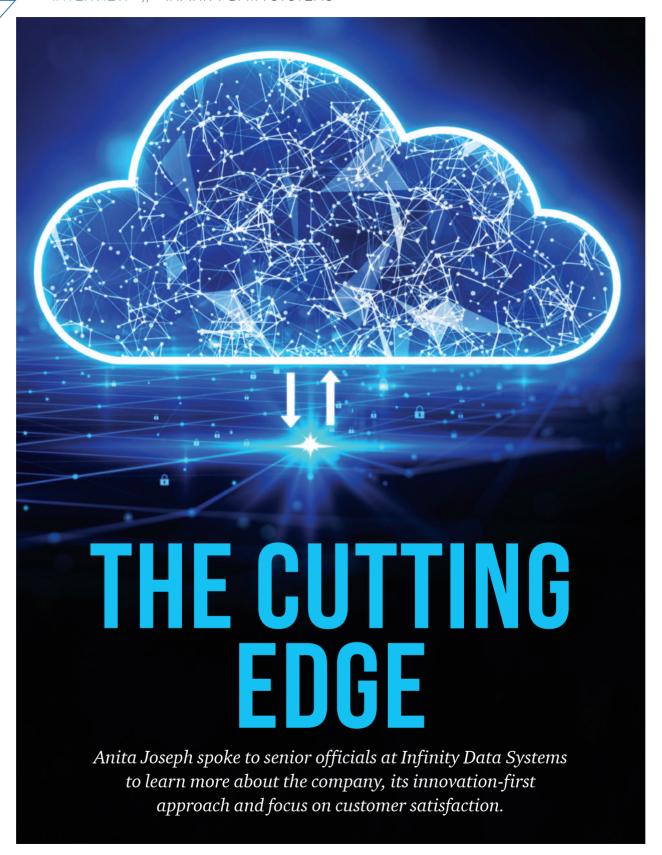
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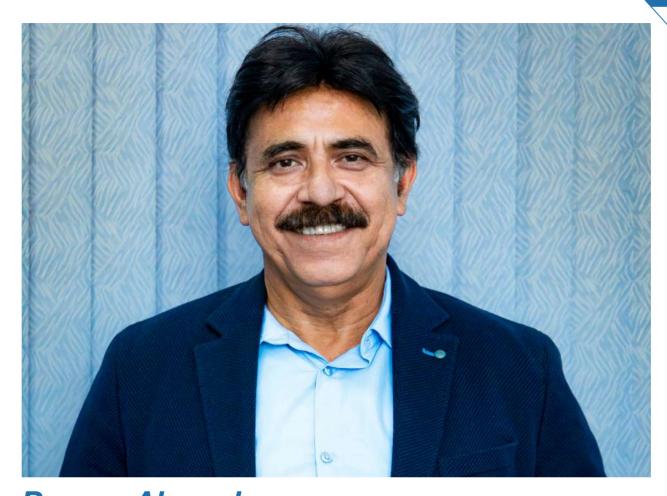




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Parvez Ahmed Managing Director, Infinity Data Systems

hat are the main learnings from 2023, for Infinity? Last year

was a very productive year for our company, after the Covid-induced lows. We were able to activate a few of our projects which were postponed. We also consolidated our presence in the education sector, owing to the increasing popularity of digital learning in schools and colleges. We also bagged a few good orders in the corporate sector and implemented an enterprise project overseas. Overall, 2023 was a satisfying and fruitful year.

What's your opinion of the

market, TAM & trends?

Digital is the new way to go. TAM is growing and we're lucky to be in Dubai, one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Another important trend is the merging of the IT & AV segments.

What is your strategy for the company's growth and expansion?

The strategy is to not only organically grow our customer base, but also consolidate our business with our existing customers. To this end we have added new solutions like complete security offering and also launched a new Audio/ Video vertical in the company. Our objective is to become a one-stop provider for all IT/AV needs of our customers.

What is your company's USP?

We operate in a highly competitive industry and so we need to stand out from the other players, not only on the basis of our ability to deliver projects, but to also execute them on time and respond to customers more effectively on a daily basis. Since the duration of our projects from initial stage to commissioning could happen over a period of several months, effective communication with customers & vendors is key.

What are your plans for business expansion?

This year, we're are looking into the possibility of expanding our presence in the Oman & India markets.

INTERVIEW // INFINITY DATA SYSTEMS



Afzaal AhmadBusiness Development

ow does the company segment the market so that you can focus equally on each?

We've segmented the market into the following verticals: education, hospitality, healthcare, corporate, government and construction. However, we don't restrict our sales team to any of these segments, since our business is based more on personal relationships and customer confidence. So, if a sales person has a rapport with a client, we let him handle it with the support of the pre & post sales team.

How do you as a company handle competition, since the services you are offering are not unique in nature?

For the smooth running of operations and to stand out from competition, prices are a parameter but it's not the only one. IT infrastructure is a vital aspect of the smooth operations of any company, as well as customer confidence in the response time of the solutions provider. The baseline, however, is that commercial parameters have to be in line with the market.

Adding new customers is

critical. So besides cold calling, how else do you approach this issue?

Our business is mainly referencebased and so we request our existing customers for references. We have also designed a lucrative reference / introduction program, similar to the loyalty program of big companies.

What are your plans for 2024?

We have added Audio/Video as a product / solution in our portfolio and have also done vendor tie-ups for new solution as burglar alarm systems.

Today, we are a one-stop solutions provider for all IT/AV-related needs.



Manu Kaushik Director, Projects

hat are the challenges you face in your role?
My team and I face
multiple challenges, the main one being that of executing projects to customer satisfaction and on time.
To tackle this while keeping an eye on profits, we need to constantly innovative and be meticulous. This is a critical requirement, because any flaws in planning or site preparedness

will affect the cost of the projects. Moreover, customers will not tolerate any variance requests.

Do you manage projects with an in-house team, or do you outsource?

We have our own core team comprising engineers and senior technicians. Outsourcing technicians depends on the project size and time schedule of project handover. That said, even when we outsource, we only take from a select pool. This ensures quality of the

deliverables.

Does the company have any skill development programs in place for your team?

Yes, indeed. We encourage our team members to take vendor certification. In fact, all our key team members have the highest level of certification from major vendors such as HP / Dell / Huawei and Fortinet. We also invest in higher education and skill enhancement of our employees.



Manoj Salve Director, Audio/Video

an you give us an overview of key market trends
In the last couple of years, technology has become more reliable and within the reach and access of customers, particularly from a financial point of view. TAM is growing fast and has surpassed double digits. Another key trend is that the lines between A/V are blurring and overlapping more with the IT industry.

What are your main challenges your face in your job role?

Product life cycles are becoming shorter, mainly because customers wish to retain the product for a longer period and vendors often discontinue models as and when technology becomes outdated. We also face challenges in servicing the client. Another issue is that today's customers, particularly those in the mid-segment, are spoilt for choice and so are unable to decide and make up

their minds.

What are the company's plans for 2024?

This year, we'd like to enhance our presence in the education segment, where digital/online learning is fast becoming the norm, particularly post the pandemic. We'd also like to capitalise on the high growth being seen in sectors like premium properties and hospitality.



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SIMPLIFYING CLOUD COMPLEXITY WITH ADVANCED LOAD BALANCING

Amr Alashaal, Regional Vice President - Middle East at A10 Networks

oad balancing isn't just about managing traffic anymore.
As infrastructure expands to include applications in public, private, and hybrid clouds, traffic management has evolved from a technology function to a business function that delivers value to the business as a whole. It has also become complex.

The average enterprise is running applications in at least five clouds with over 900+ applications. And most clouds have their own load balancers. Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure have native load balancing that provides basic traffic management, and such solutions are good for simple applications deployed in one location or domain. But as multi-cloud environments become more and more complex, how do organizations ensure effective load balancing for their application services deployed in the clouds?

Here are five ways to help unravel cloud complexity:

Visibility and Analytics

Performance and reliability of applications are critical to the business. Advanced load balancing solutions keep apps running with efficiency and reliability in a number of ways. They use machine learning to set baselines for application performance, user behaviour, etc., so organizations have visibility into which assets are doing well and which may be due for an overhaul or have reached end of life. When a problem is discovered, contextual information helps the operations

team troubleshoot faster and more efficiently so optimal customer experience can continue with little or no interruption, and anomaly detection can be used to drive proactive and even predictive responses.

Businesses undertaking digital transformation can use advanced load balancing to inform their decision-making and prioritise their development and infrastructure investments.

Visibility, analytics, and insights take the guesswork out of app strategy.

Integrated Security

The scale and scope of attacks is increasing. In public clouds, security is a shared responsibility. The public cloud provider is responsible for securing their own infrastructure and data inside their own cloud. Organisations are responsible for the security of their applications. It's important to understand these boundaries and implement full-stack security at both the infrastructure and application levels. The load balancer plays a key role in security, because it sits in the best place to reveal patterns around the behaviour of clients. The operations teams can use those patterns to differentiate between legitimate and malicious traffic.

Security that is integrated into the load balancing solution provides the best defence. Unless the operations team includes security experts, organisations will be implementing security on the load balancer. Configuration and management of security features and the ability to adjust policies at a granular level need be straightforward and easy.

Intelligent Automation

New brands and technologies are emerging at a pace faster than

ever before, and it is essential that application delivery, security, and load balancing solutions are able to integrate with everything.

Many organizations have already implemented continuous integration & continuous deployment (CI/CD) to merge the work of individual developers. Reducing the problems in the release process, CI/CD automatically triggers a build every time a major change is made to the code. Load balancing that is automated and API-driven will integrate with DevOps tool chains, regardless of whether they're using Ansible, Azurespecific tools, or other technologies.

Centralised Management

Today, the typical organisation has technology everywhere, and managing all that traffic can be a challenge. An advanced load balancing solution that provides centralised management will prevent conflicting policies. It will also ensure visibility of the application stack in both public and private clouds, as well as enable multiple regions to accommodate high availability, regulatory requirements, or other needs.

The operations teams can use a central management console to easily create clusters, build elasticity, and scale up or down based on application needs without having to configure each application individually. This applies whether the infrastructure is running on a multi-cloud, multiregion environment or just one cloud. By having a single source of truth through a centralised console, the operations team can drive efficiency by understanding application performance better, detecting anomalies more accurately, and troubleshooting issues faster.



SECURITY // CISCO-DU

CISCO COLLABORATES WITH DU TELECOM IN A LANDMARK CYBERSECURITY TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

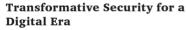
isco has announced a landmark collaboration with du, from Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC), signaling the beginning of a major cybersecurity transformation initiative. The initiative focuses on revolutionising du's Security Operations Center (SOC) into

an advanced Cyber Defense and Intelligence Center, leveraging artificial intelligence and automation to enhance security and operational efficiency.

The agreement signifies Cisco's commitment to supporting du's aspiration to lead digital transformation in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ensuring robust cybersecurity measures

that align with the nation's digital transformation strategy. This transformative partnership demonstrates how Cisco's innovative solutions can be a catalyst in securing an entire region's digital infrastructure.

Saleem Alblooshi, CTO at du, said: "Through this strategic collaboration, Cisco is reinforcing our dedication to supporting the digital transformation journey of our customers. By leveraging Cisco's advanced security operations and AI capabilities, du is empowered to lead the way in cybersecurity defense, ensuring that our customers' digital platforms are fortified against evolving threats. This integration propels du to the cutting edge of digital trust, enabling safe and intelligent organisations to thrive in the digital era."



With the rapid evolution of cyber threats, it's imperative for service providers like du to prioritise cybersecurity. Cisco's CX Services teams will play a crucial role in ensuring that du's network and customers benefit from enhanced security measures and operational excellence.

"We are embarking on a transformation journey together, ushering in a new era of digital cyber defense. Our collaboration with du Telecom marks a pivotal step in protecting critical digital assets and improving du's operations monitoring, detection and containment using Artificial Intelligence and automation," said Adele Trombetta, SVP & GM CX EMEA. "This is more than a contract; it's a shared vision for a safer, more secure and sustainable digital world."





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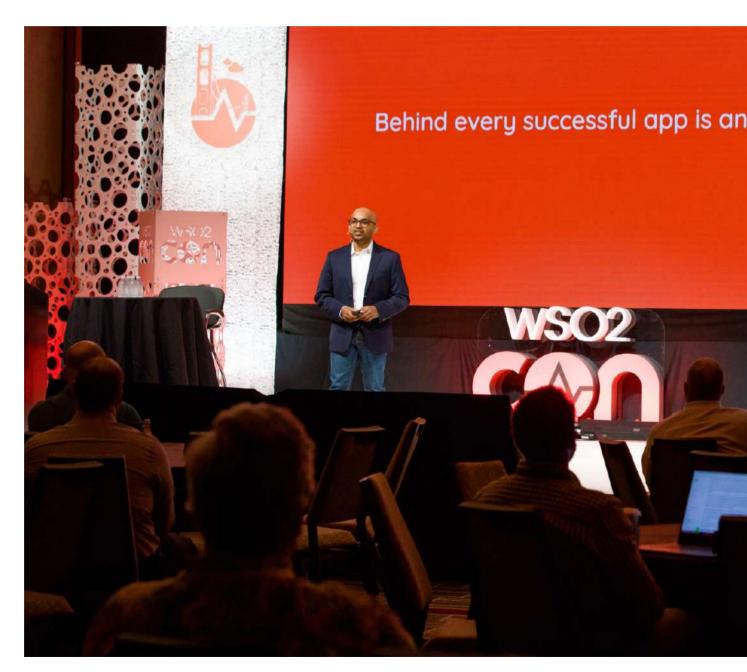






SPOTLIGHT // WSO2

WS02 ANNOUNCES WS02CON 2024 GLOBAL USER CONFERENCE AND CODE CHALLENGE





SESSIONS AT WSO2CON 2024 WILL HELP WSO2 USERS TO ACCELERATE THEIR DELIVERY OF SECURE AND INNOVATIVE DIGITAL SERVICES BY CAPITALISING ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI), KUBERNETES, INTERNAL DEVELOPER PLATFORM (IDP) TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHER KEY ADVANCES.



SO2 has announced the return of WSO2Con, its global user conference.
WSO2Con 2024 will bring together three days of keynotes, guest presentations, technical sessions, and

three days of keynotes, guest presentations, technical sessions, and tutorials aimed at helping enterprise software development teams to simplify their creation of digital experiences. WSO2 will also reveal the winners of the WSO2 Code Challenge, including the grand prize recipient of a Tesla Cybertruck. WSO2Con 2024 will run May 7-9, 2024 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, FL.

WSO2Con 2024: Accelerating the Innovation of Digital Experiences

Thousands of organisations, including hundreds of the world's largest corporations, top universities, and governments, rely on WSO2's cloud native software as a service (SaaS) offerings and open-source software to drive their digital transformation—executing 60 trillion transactions and managing over 1 billion identities each year.

Sessions at WSO2Con 2024 will help WSO2 users to accelerate their delivery of secure and innovative digital services by capitalising on artificial intelligence (AI), Kubernetes, internal developer platform (IDP) technology, and other key advances in application development, API management, integration, and identity and access management (IAM). Additionally, Dr. Sanjiva Weerawarana, WSO2 founder and CEO; Asanka Abeysinghe, WSO2

CTO; and other technical experts will introduce the concept of "platformless" and discuss associated best practices. Providing an alternative to traditional IDPs, platformless deployments hide the complexity of platforms. So, developers can focus on coding, building, and deploying digital services and applications, speeding up time to market.

Registration for WSO2Con 2024 is now open, and attendees who sign up by April 5, 2024 can take advantage of early bird pricing. To register and learn more, visit https://wso2.com/wso2con/2024.

WSO2 Code Challenge: Use IDP SaaS to Deliver Production-Ready App

The WSO2 Code Challenge is now open. To participate, developers need to submit a production-ready application that has been built in any language and deployed on Choreo, WSO2's IDP software as a service (SaaS). Every eligible app wins an entry in the draw for prizes, which include a Tesla Cybertruck or \$100,000 for the grand prize and 10 MacBook Pro computers. Participants can get more entries by adding more features, such as databases, manual or scheduled jobs, internal and external APIs, multiple projects, customer IAM (CIAM) using Asgardeo, or backend logic or APIs implemented using the Ballerina language.

WSO2 Code Challenge submissions open on February 21, 2024 and close on April 30, 2024. Winners will be announced on May 9, 2024 at WSO2Con 2024. To learn more and participate, visit https://wso2.com/cybertruck/.

TECHNOLOGY // ERICSSON-E&

ERICSSON AND E& UAE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE CLOUD RAN TRIAL IN THE UAE







ERICSSON

ricsson, in partnership with e& UAE, has successfully conducted a 5G data call using Ericsson's Cloud Radio Access Network (RAN) architecture in a lab environment in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The setup relied on a 5G non-standalone (NSA) solution for a mid-band carrier of 100MHz, deployed on a Massive MIMO radio where, the RAN Compute baseband function was running on commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware supported with a Selected Function Hardware Accelerator* (also known as 'look-aside accelerator').

This Ericsson Cloud RAN trial is in line with the Cloud RAN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the two organisations at GITEX GLOBAL 2023 in Dubai, UAE. The results revealed that the Ericsson Cloud RAN solution meets e& UAE's expectations in terms of performance and is ready to support their 5G network evolution plan.

Ericsson Cloud RAN is based on

cloud-native principles and open architecture with standardized interfaces compatible with the deployed Ericsson Radio System products and solutions, enabling e& UAE to evolve its network to its architecture of choice. At its core, Cloud RAN disaggregates RAN software from hardware, allowing deployment on commercially available platforms. This shift to software-defined functionality enhances cost efficiency and operational agility, driving network optimisation and service innovation for e& UAE.

Marwan BinShakar, SVP of Access Network Development at e& UAE, says: "We, along with our partner Ericsson, have a long-standing commitment to delivering a world-class network using the latest solutions in the telecom industry to provide superior customer experience. This new milestone marks an important step forward on e& UAE's 5G evolutionary path as it opens the door to the next generation of high-quality connectivity, empowering our customers for the future."

Ekow Nelson, Vice President and Head of Global Customer Unit for e&

at Ericsson Middle East and Africa, says: "Ericsson Cloud RAN leverages the capabilities of Cloud native technologies to deploy and scale mobile networks flexibly and efficiently without performance trade-offs. The flexibility to place RAN functions in a distributed deployment in existing data centers, public cloud, or at the edge of the network will enable providers to scale compute resources efficiently and for different use cases as needed. It also paves the way for e& UAE to offer private networks that integrate seamlessly with Enterprise's IT and Cloud processes and tools, enabling new business models. The proof of concept comes at a timely moment and is a testament to Ericsson's commitment to openness without compromising on performance and experience."

Ericsson has a long-standing partnership with e& UAE, where both companies are working closely together to deliver a state-of-the-art 5G network, allowing consumers, enterprises, and industries to reap the benefits of enriched connectivity and enhanced mobility.



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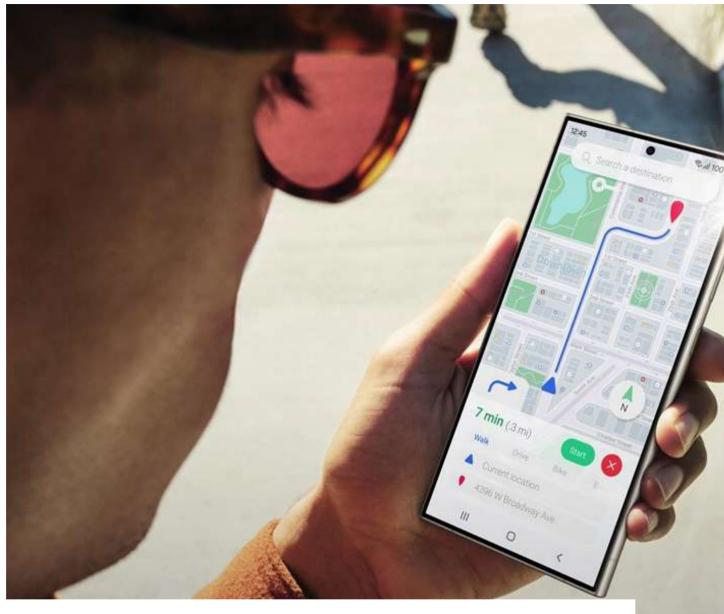






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SAMSUNG GALAXY S24 ULTRA CREATES NEW STANDARDS OF DURABILITY AND VISUAL CLARITY WITH CORNING GORILLA ARMOR





COMPARED TO A TYPICAL GLASS SURFACE, CORNING GORILLA ARMOR REDUCES REFLECTION BY UP TO 75%, WHICH ENHANCES DISPLAY READABILITY AND MINIMISES SCREEN REFLECTIONS

damage caused by daily wear.

"Corning's Gorilla® Glass, together with the Galaxy S series, have driven innovation and made significant progress towards achieving greater durability," said Kwangjin Bae, EVP and Head of the Mechanical R&D Team, Mobile eXperience Business at Samsung Electronics. "This partnership has made it possible for people to use our products with confidence and peace of mind."

Corning Gorilla Armor is a different kind of smartphone cover material. Compared to a typical glass surface, Corning Gorilla Armor reduces reflection by up to 75%, which enhances display readability and minimises screen reflections in almost any environment[i].

Corning's new cover material optimises durability on the Galaxy S24 Ultra. In Corning lab tests, Gorilla Armor demonstrated superior durability when compared against competitive aluminosilicate cover glasses[ii]. To measure its exceptional scratch resistance, Corning created a new lab test — the "Scratch Bot" — to replicate micro scratches caused by day-to-day wear. On this rigorous test, Gorilla Armor showed no visible scratches and demonstrated over four times more scratch resistance than competitive aluminosilicate cover glasses.

Gorilla Armor contains an average of 25% pre-consumer recycled content, as validated by UL Solutions in accordance with UL2809-2 Environmental Claim Validation Procedure (ECVP) for Recycled Content[iii].

"Gorilla Armor brings Corning's research and engineering prowess together with Samsung's consumercentric design and focus on user experience," said David Velasquez, vice president and general manager, Corning Gorilla Glass. "This latest innovation simultaneously addresses both the need for durability and our increasing need for better optics — bringing the mobile phone experience of the future into the present."

The launch of Galaxy S24 Ultra phones with Gorilla Armor follows a celebratory year for Samsung and Corning. Last year marked 50 years of industry-leading partnership for the companies. Samsung and Corning first partnered in 1973 to make televisions more accessible to consumers in Korea.

This same spirit of collaboration has been carried through half a century. Corning Gorilla Glass has been featured on countless Samsung devices, from some of the earliest Galaxy smartphones to the most recent, including the Galaxy S23 Series, Galaxy Z Fold5, and Galaxy Z Flip5, which all use Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2. The launch of Galaxy S24 Ultra devices with Gorilla Armor continues this longstanding relationship dedicated to creating world class innovations vital to the mobile consumer electronics industry.

VERITAS RESEARCH REVEALS UAE IS LEADING GLOBAL AI REVOLUTION

ew research released by Veritas Technologies finds that 92% of UAE office workers are using publicly available generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini (previously known as Bard), at work, leading AI adoption levels on a global scale. Yet, there remains widespread uncertainty over the best use of generative AI in the workplace, as well as conflicting employee sentiment.

The use of generative AI in the workplace, although beneficial to many in terms of productivity increases, is also creating a divide between employees while simultaneously increasing the risk of exposing sensitive information through unintentional misuse. Out of the total pool of UAE based respondents, 68% of employees think that those who are not

using generative AI tools are missing out on higher levels of productivity in the workplace. 48% of this group also say more training is required for them to succeed and to even out the playing field at the workplace.

Regardless of their disposition toward using generative AI, 96% said guidelines and policies on its use are important, but only 47% of employers in the UAE currently provide any mandatory usage directions to employees.

Johnny Karam, Managing Director & Vice President of International Emerging region at Veritas Technologies, said: "The UAE continues to be adept at leading the charge of new technology adoption, regionally and globally. However, the journey of publicly accessible generative AI doesn't end with adoption. The emerging divide among employees and

the concern over safeguarding sensitive information spotlight the urgent need for comprehensive training and clear regulatory guidelines, for the sake of their skills development, and the safety of the large data they work with."

The UAE is leading the numbers, with 82% of office workers, versus 56% globally saying they use generative AI tools at least weekly and only eight percent, compared to 28% globally, saying they do not use them at all.

The reason this portion of the global workforce is not using generative AI may be because only 57% of respondents have received any guidance from their employers on what is acceptable and what is not.

This lack of clarity has at least two negative outcomes: First, it increases the potential of employee infighting and negative workplace culture, as a striking 68% of UAE respondents said that some employees using generative AI have an unfair advantage over those who are not. This number is the highest recorded globally.

Second, many office workers are not increasing their efficiency with the help of the appropriate use of generative AI as they continue to be unaware of this full potential. Comparatively, those who are using it said they benefit from faster access to information (63%), increased productivity (51%), automating mundane tasks (47%), generating new ideas (51%) and finding advice on workplace challenges (33%).

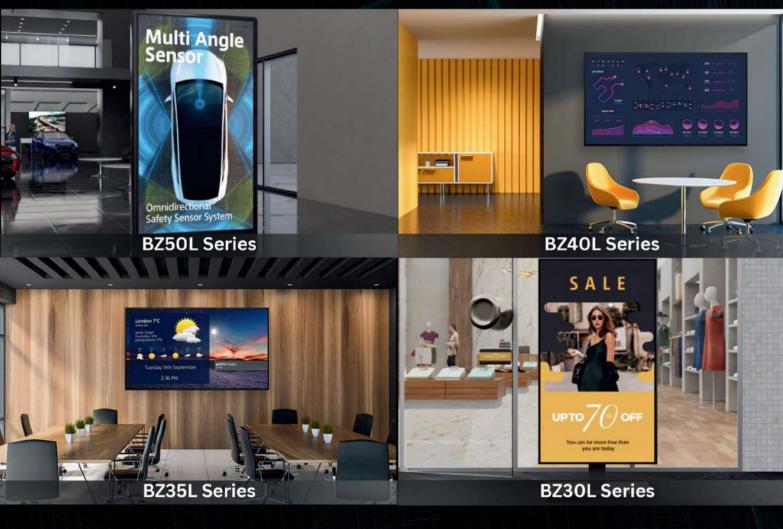
Karam added: "As Generative AI becomes pivotal for competitive advantage, offering career growth and productivity boosts, it also brings risks when used inappropriately. Correctly guided and trained employees deliver growth and innovation for sustainable success. Ignoring the risks of public AI tools will impede rather than enhance organisational outcomes."



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