

ISSUE 287 | JUNE 2021

TRANSFORMING THE SMART WAY

D-LINK IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, HELPING ORGANISATIONS STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE. SAKKEER HUSSAIN, DIRECTOR - SALES & MARKETING AT D-LINK MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA, TELLS US HOW.

INTERVIEWS

Veeam CyberKnight Nemesysco

FEATURE Technology & Innovation

Product VIVE Focus 3





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STRATEGIC VAD PARTNER



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D-Link is at the forefront of digital transformation, helping organisations stay ahead of the curve. Sakkeer Hussain, Director - Sales & Marketing at D-Link Middle East & Africa, tells us how.



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FOUNDER, CPI MEDIA GROUP Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

Publishing Director Natasha Pendleton natasha.pendleton@cpimediagroup.com

EDITORIAL

Editor Anita Joseph anita.joseph@cpimediagroup.com

OnlineEditor Daniel Shepherd daniel.shepherd@cpimediagroup.com

DESIGN Senior Designer Analou Balbero analou.balbero@cpimediagroup.com

ADVERTISING Group Sales Director Kausar Syed kausar.syed@cpimediagroup.com

Senior Sales Manager Sabita Miranda sabita.miranda@cpimediagroup.com

DIGITAL SERVICES Web Developers Adarsh Snehajan

webmaster@cpimediagroup.com

DIGITAL

www.tahawultech.com





Registered at Dubai Production City, DCCA PO Box 13700 Dubai, UAE

Reception: +971 4 5682993 Operations: +971 4 5682994 Accounts: +971 4 5682995

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TECH-SAVVY



Anita

Anita Joseph Editor echnology is powerful, technology is big. It drives innovation by allowing businesses and organisations to continuously improve their processes and product offerings, and reach out to customers in new and different ways. In this sense, technology has been the chief driver of change and growth, particularly in the last one year or so, when the market was challenged and stretched to the maximum by forces beyond anyone's control. However, the big question we need to ask ourselves is: How do organisations identify the right technology? How do they harness this technology for the best business outcomes?

EDITORIAL

The features section of this issue asks leaders how they think the right technology can be harnessed for growth. We've also asked them whether they think technology hinders or enhances human potential and capabilities. The findings are a real eye-opener.

Our cover story "Transforming the Smart Way" is an interview with Sakkeer Hussain, Director - Sales & Marketing, D-Link Middle East & Africa, where he talks about how the company uses technology to innovate and stay ahead of the market, both as far as products and design are concerned. We also have an in-depth conversation with Amir Liberman. founder & CEO of Nemesysco, the global leader in Layered Voice Analysis technology, about how voice analysis is becoming an increasingly popular technology tool across different industries, for understanding the human mind. There's another interesting interview with Benny Czarny, CEO, founder & chairman of the board of OPSWAT, a leading global cybersecurity firm founded in 2002 to offer a special, marketdriven approach to cybersecurity products and solutions that protect critical infrastructure. As always, our interviews section packs a punch, for its variety and insightfulness.

This time, the popular "Rapid Fire" section is with Vaidy Panchabikesan, Regional Sales Director at Kissflow, where he describes the different facets that make up his world. We also have the regular Newsmakers & Top Stories section, in addition to special news and product highlights, that will make the reading experience diverse and interesting.

So, Happy Reading, Enjoy!



E-mail: anita.joseph@cpimediagroup. com



Facebook: www.facebook.com/ TahawulTech



Twitter: @TahawulTech



Instagram: @TahawulTech

EMT DISTRIBUTION ANNOUNCES DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP WITH ORCHESTRA GROUP FOR MEA



mt Distribution, a specialty IT & IT security product distributor based around security, IT Management, and analytic solutions, has announced a strategic partnership with Israel-based Orchestra Group for seamless cybersecurity management and operations.

Erez Dror - Orchestra's EMEA Regional Sales Director, said: "GCC and UAE in particular are focus markets in Orchestra Group's growth plan. emt Distribution represents many of the qualities we are looking for in a value-added distributor. It has a highly experienced team with a thorough understanding of the unique needs of users in their region as well as strong professional chain of resellers to support them. This partnership is an important step in strengthening our presence in the region."

M Mobasseri – Co-Founder and CEO, emt Distribution META added: "Despite continued security problems IOT will spread, and people will become increasingly dependent on it. AI is Future is Here, emt partnering with Orchestra group announces, od on what IT

advocates and educated on what IT needs to know about OT/IOT threats and vulnerability, we are excited singing with Orchestra Group to help our customers and partners to overcome their cyber security challenges." Orchestra Group's mission is to addresses the major roadblocks that make it difficult for CISOs, CIOs and their teams to manage cybersecurity. Resellers see emt Distribution as the distributor of choice for selected solutions sold and supported throughout the Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa region. With technical support teams located within Malta, Australia, UAE, The Netherlands, Philippines and now in India, it has the ability to offer support outside of standard business hours.

What this means for customers and channel partners is a quality of service they can depend on.

WESTCON-COMSTOR TO HOST SECOND IMAGINE MIDDLE EAST EVENT

Westcon-Comstor

Middle East, a value-

added distributor of

leading ICT solutions



Managing Director,

Westcon-Comstor

Middle East

has announced that it will host its next edition of IMAGINE Middle East, a 2-day virtual summit for IT resellers and integrators on the

21st & 22nd June, 2021. The IMAGINE event was launched by Westcon-Comstor in November last year and based on the extremely positive feedback received from partners and vendors, it is now planned to repeat the event on a 6-monthly cycle. IMAGINE Middle East will be themed 'Accelerating Digital Transformation-Reshaping the Digital Era'. Expected to be the largest distributor-led event of its kind in the Middle East, attendees will gain insights from authoritative keynote speakers and enjoy interactive digital experiences.

"As a true 'digital first, data-driven' organisation, IMAGINE has taken our engagement with our resellers and vendors a step further", said Steve Lockie, Group Managing Director, Westcon-Comstor Middle East. "As we further expand our presence in the region with the establishment of local offices, we look forward to having our vendors and many more partners join us to explore, identify and act on upcoming opportunities in advanced technologies and solutions."

IMAGINE Middle East will offer an interactive virtual experience where vendors and industry experts from across the globe will share exclusive and insightful content. Partners will learn about the range of value-added services and digital distribution platforms offered by Weston-Comstor based on its EDGE framework.

EXCLUSIVE NETWORKS MIDDLE EAST ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF 'NUAWARE'

TOP STORIES



Nathan Clements, Exclusive Networks Middle East Further to Exclusive Networks' acquisition of cloud native distributor Nuaware in 2020, Exclusive Networks Middle East today announced the launch of its Nuaware business

to serve the Middle East market.

"Nuaware – an Exclusive Networks Company" is a hyper growth, born-in-thecloud line of business at the bleeding edge of cloud, DevSecOps and containerisation. The move adds immediate scale and services capability across the Middle East to the Nuaware proposition and portfolio, while enabling Exclusive Networks, its vendors and partner community with a unique skill set for capitalising on immense demand shifts brought about by digital transformation.

Nathan Clements, Regional Vice-President at Exclusive Networks Middle East said, "DevOps tool chains, containers and the emergence of DevSecOps are specialist areas where Nuaware has carved a truly unique niche in distribution. This puts us where we want to be in this space, giving our partners a readymade platform into new high-growth opportunities. Vendors being drawn to these markets are seeking turnkey channel solutions, and their established partner ecosystems have technical skills gaps that demand credible support. We can now meet these kinds of challenges far more effectively, while continuing to accelerate growth for the next waves of disruptive technologies in secure, trusted digital infrastructure".

"In terms of culture, attitude to innovation and the capacity to create unique value in the context of technology and market disruption, Nuaware is very much like Exclusive Networks", said Clements. "Teaming up this way is great news for our partners and vendors alike. We see many additional commercial benefits from utilising Nuawares' know-how and unique skill set across and into more opportunities with Exclusive Networks' vendors and resellers and I am very excited with the growth opportunity this will present to us and our partners going forward".

AVEVA AND IMI EXTEND COLLABORATION TO ACCELERATE MARITIME SECTOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software, driving digital transformation and sustainability and International Maritime Industries (IMI), announced that they have extended their existing longterm collaboration with a new strategic partnership.

The partnership will further advance IMI's engineering solutions to include production and manufacturing processes, developing best-in-class products and services for the maritime sector in the Middle East and Africa (MEA). The new a joint venture involves Saudi Aramco, Lamprell Plc, Bahri and Hyundai Heavy Industries and spans a 10-year period, to optimise digitalisation across the maritime lifecycle utilising AVEVA Unified Engineering and AVEVA Digital Ship and Shipyard Operations.

Fathi K. Al-Saleem, CEO at IMI, said: "The maritime industry is increasingly prioritising and integrating the digitalisation and automation of operations. IMI will offer a range of technologically advanced, highquality sustainable products and innovative lifecycle management services for customers at internationally competitive prices. As the largest full-service yard in the MENA region, IMI will help shape the maritime industry as a global leader and disruptor in applying digital solutions to manage, monitor and operate our innovative smart yard".

Peter Herweck, CEO, AVEVA, said: "AVEVA has a comprehensive portfolio of cutting-edge solutions for large-scale digital transformational projects for the maritime industry. We provide an integrated, datamanagement platform that spans IMI's core business processes. We are also committed to being a strong partner for co-innovating on transformational technologies and services."

MORO HUB BECOMES FIRST MANAGED SERVICES PROVIDER FOR CISCO APPDYNAMICS IN MEA REGION



Moro Hub (Data Hub Integrated Solutions LLC), a subsidiary of Digital DEWA, the digital arm of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), has signed a Global Service Provider Agreement with Cisco AppDynamics. This partnership will provide Moro Hub customers with access to the Cisco AppDynamics Business Observability platform to monitor application and user performance.

"The agreement supports our efforts to make Moro a digital transformation hub in the region which is aligned with the vision and directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to enhance the UAE's position as a global destination for digital technology. Being the first and only MSP for Cisco AppDynamics in the MEA region, with a local data centre in the UAE is a token on our commitment to develop the technology infrastructure, provide state-of-the-art data centres and upscale digital solutions to help customers make informed decisions," said Eng. Marwan in Haidar, Vice-Chairman & Group CEO of Digital DEWA.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with Moro Hub, an organisation renowned for its state-of-the-art digital transformation services across several data centres. We can enhance our offering to local customers as they invest in digitisation, and delivering best-in-class services to power success in a multi-cloud world. This is a moment of great pride, as we strengthen our portfolio and also continue supporting Moro Hub's ambition of delivering innovative solutions and superior user experience to its customers," said Shukri Eid, Managing Director, Cisco Gulf Region.

INJAZAT APPOINTED BY LAMPRELL TO DIGITALISE OPERATIONS & EMBRACE BUSINESS AGILITY THROUGH MULTI-CLOUD

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Christopher McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Lamprell

Ussama Dahabiyeh, Chief Executive Officer, Injazat

Injazat, UAE's leader in digital transformation has been awarded a longterm contract by Lamprell to shift its legacy IT infrastructure to a multi-cloud platform. As a leading provider of services to the international energy sector, Lamprell's move to the cloud will be complemented by the deployment of enterprise applications and managed services across the company's regional operations. This partnership with Injazat equips Lamprell's operations and employees with tools to drive organisationwide agility, securing operational efficiencies in the short and long term and injecting technology innovation to accelerate Lamprell's digitalisation strategy.

"We continue to prioritise the digitalisation of our services, while leading the energy industry's journey into the future. Lamprell's investments in a robust digital infrastructure including multi-cloud, managed services and enterprise applications, will underpin our operations, and reimagine the delivery of our services to customers in ME & around the world", said Christopher McDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Lamprell.

"Our multi-cloud solution gives Lamprell access to cutting-edge technologies needed to agility across their business, and thereby shape the future of the energy sector," said Ussama Dahabiyeh, CEO of Injazat.

STARLINK EXPANDS EGYPT OPERATIONS



StarLink, the fastest growing specialised cyber and cloud Value-added Distributor (VAD) in the META region, announced expansion plans for Africa with headquarters based out of Egypt and inaugurated a brand-new office space in Cairo.

The StarLink Egypt Office located in the heart of Cairo city is a standalone building, spanning 15000 sq. ft., with state-of-theart facilities that accommodate all major operational functionalities - Sales, Business Development, Services Competency Centre, StarLink Academy as well as back-office operations.

Egypt is established as the tech-hub of Africa and its huge tech calibre makes it a haven for technical talent which StarLink aims to capitalise on and has strategic hiring plans in the pipeline as part of their regional investment - close to 100 resources in the next couple of years to maximise market reach and to accelerate the company's presence and growth in the African continent. StarLink forecasts a closure of USD 50 million in Egypt alone, this year and aims to double its revenue to a whopping USD 100 Million with revenue generated from the rest of Africa region.

Nidal Othman, CEO, StarLink, said: "Egypt today is one of our fastest growing markets, and we see huge potential, especially since the spend in cybersecurity and cloud adoption has increased dramatically. Our Africa expansion not only fits our strategic growth plans but also gives us an opportunity to build on our expertise of 16 years in the META region and our regional presence out of Egypt will bring us closer to our partners and customers and attract new business opportunities in strategic sectors," he added.

BARCO EXPANDS ITS HYBRID MEETINGS PORTFOLIO WITH CLICKSHARE PRESENT RANGE

Barco, a global leader in

meeting room technology, has announced the expansion to its award winning ClickShare family with the addition of the ClickShare Present range. With the ambition to enable businesses to prepare for a smooth return to the office and step into the new reality of the hybrid workplace, Barco is expanding its wireless presentation range with two new models. The wireless presentation & collaboration solution offers customers worldwide the freedom to equip hybrid meeting rooms according to their own requirements, existing ecosystems and company IT policies. Wim De Bruyne, VP Meeting Experience at Barco said: "There's no going back to the way we worked before. We're no longer prepared to slog to every meeting in person. And the virtual meeting has its shortcomings too. Instead, we're going for something better than both, which we call hybrid; a seamless blend of the physical and the virtual, of in-office and remote. In the past, technology has tried to



recreate real life meetings. But in-person meetings aren't perfect. At Barco we have a different approach. We start with people, and how every person can be at their very best, engaged, agile, fully involved and inspiring each other. Only then can we create the tech that makes that happen."

With ClickShare Present, Barco now offers a solution for any customer wanting to turn existing conference rooms into fully equipped hybrid collaboration rooms and is a seamless extension to wirelessly share content in any meeting room setup.

INGRAM MICRO APPROVED FOR ISO 27001 CERTIFICATION



Ingram Micro, the world's largest

wholesale provider of technology products and services, has announced that its UAE operations, including its corporate office in Dubai, have been approved for ISO 27001 certification.

The certification indicates that Ingram Micro operates an INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM that complies with ISO/IEC 27001:2013.

Meeting the ISO standards is an essential prerequisite for companies doing business internationally.

Dr. Ali Baghdadi, SVP & Chief Executive of Ingram Micro - META; Chief Executive of Ingram Micro Cyber Security - EMEA, said: "We thank Ingram Micro associates across the country for the great teamwork led by IS manager Biju Alex, that helped us get the certification. This Certificate acknowledges Ingram Micro's ongoing commitment to customer satisfaction and ensures the work we do is held to the highest standards. This competitive advantage gives our associates and business partners continued pride and confidence in Ingram Micro."

An internal audit was conducted in Dubai in 2020 to check the implementation of the Information Security Management System and verify conformance to the ISO 27001. There were zero Non-Conformance(s) and zero Opportunity for Improvement(s) issued during the audit.

NEWSMAKERS

HIPERDIST SIGNS DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT WITH FORTINET IN WEST AFRICA



Hiperdist, one of the leading valueadded-distributors in MEA has announced that a distribution agreement has been entered with Fortinet, a leader in broad, integrated, and automated cybersecurity solutions. The agreement will enable Hiperdist to distribute the Fortinet Security Fabric solution portfolio in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia and Sierra Leone in order to meet customers' needs in their digital innovations with more agility, performance and simplicity. The Fortinet Security Fabric provides full protection across the entire digital infrastructure and deliver additional technologies such as Secure SD-WAN, Adaptive Cloud Security and Zero Trust Network Access.

"Our collaboration will assist in providing greater access of our industry leading solutions to partners and customers since Hiperdist has a strong in-country presence in these countries, and a robust network of sales, presales, logistics and marketing channels. These were key selection criteria for our distributor, making Hiperdist one of the partner of choice," said Sebastine Nzeadibe, Country Manager West Africa at Fortinet. "With Hiperdist, we look forward to solving the problems that matter most to businesses in the West Africa region, by protecting their assets, optimising their operations, and ultimately catalysing their growth." Govind Haridas, Business Head - Cyber Security at Hiperdist, said: "As a frontrunner in the global security market, Fortinet has a proactive approach to addressing the security complexity of today. This is a crucial juncture for the cybersecurity business, as the traditional method of securing organisations is undergoing rapid change. This is the best time to drive this transformation forward."

LINKSHADOW WINS COVETED GLOBAL INFOSEC AWARD SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

LinkShadow - Next-Generation

Cybersecurity Analytics announced that it has won the prestigious InfoSec 2021 award in the 'Insider Threat Detection Best Product' category, awarded by Cyber Defense Magazine (CDM) - the industry's leading source of IT Security information - at the RSA Conference 2021 in San Francisco, USA.

Fadi Sharaf, Sales Director, LinkShadow said, "Insider Threat Detection is a core module in LinkShadow that empowers security teams with advanced techniques including machine learning to automate attack detection and incident investigation. We are thrilled to be recognised for the second time and thanks to Cyber Defense Magazine for this honor. This is a true reflection of our teams' efforts and



commitment as they support effortlessly to deliver best-in-class services to our customers." Gary S. Miliefsky, Publisher of Cyber Defense Magazine, said: "We scoured the globe looking for cybersecurity innovators that could make a huge difference and potentially help turn the tide against the exponential growth in cyber-crime. LinkShadow is worthy of this coveted award," he added .

NETAPP TRANSFORMS UNIFIED PARTNER PROGRAM TO POSITION PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS & PROFITABILITY



Chris Lamborn, Head of Global Partner GTM & Programs at NetApp

NetApp, a global cloud-led, datacentric software company, has announced updates to its award-winning Unified Partner Program for fiscal year 2022. The latest enhancements will provide partners with a more flexible, consistent and simplified experience - preparing them for the planned transition to a new tiering structure next year.

The program is expanding the partner ecosystem, offering new financial incentives and accelerating profitability, and adding new solutions and Services Certified specialisations.

Enhancements to the NetApp Unified Partner Program for FY'22, available immediately, include:

Expanding Partner Ecosystem – The program will now include specialist partners who sell, consume or influence the NetApp portfolio – increasing relevance to more partner types.

Simplified Incentives – Incentives are streamlined to align with key initiatives, and focus areas including customer acquisition, FlexPod, consumption, cloud and more. These incentives tied to new specialisations become more predictable along the sales lifecycle.

New Partner Rewards – Individual participants who opt in will be rewarded for actions that drive deal closure as part of strategic programs — such as setting meetings and registering deals.

New Solution Specialisations - An opportunity to recognise and reward partners' unique skillsets and go-to-market models, new solution specialisations will be available for Cloud Preferred, FlexPod, SAP, AI/ML, Data Protection, Data Security, Hosting Service Provider, Infrastructure, and Spot by NetApp Preferred.

"We are transforming our Unified Partner Program and evolving its structure to make doing business with NetApp simpler and more profitable for our partners than ever before," said Chris Lamborn, Head of Global Partner GTM & Programs at NetApp.

"The latest updates are just the start of a multi-phase strategy to incentivise and reward our partners for their solution expertise, while delivering greater value to their customers," he added.

ESET THREAT REPORT T1 2021 HIGHLIGHTS RAPID ABUSE OF TRENDING VULNERABILITIES AND CONFIGURATION FLAWS



ESET, a global leader in

cybersecurity, has released its T1 2021 Threat Report, summarising key statistics from ESET detection systems and highlighting notable examples of ESET's cybersecurity research, including exclusive, previously unpublished updates on current threats. The featured story recounts ESET Research's discovery of multiple advanced persistent threat (APT) groups exploiting a vulnerability chain affecting Microsoft Exchange Server. The exclusive updates include new findings about the Lazarus and Turla APT groups and an analysis of a malicious iOS tweak that steals files from jailbroken iOS devices.

The exclusive research presented in the T1 2021 Threat Report brings several updates and new findings about the APT groups Turla and Lazarus. It also includes information about a malicious iOS tweak, which is an application that leverages runtime patching in order to change program behavior, to execute shell commands on jailbroken and compromised iOS devices.

The ESET T1 2021 Threat Report also reviews the most important findings and achievements by ESET researchers. Among many other findings, including an ongoing series investigating Latin American banking trojans, ESET researchers uncovered the Kobalos malware, which attacks high performance computer clusters and other high-profile targets; Operation Spalax, which targets Colombian government organisations and private entities; a highly targeted supplychain attack that focused on online gaming in Asia; and a new Lazarus backdoor that was used to attack a freight logistics company in South Africa.

Besides these findings, the report also recapitulates the many virtual talks held by ESET research specialists in T1, introduces talks planned for the upcoming months, and provides an overview of ESET's participation in the MITRE ATT&CK Evaluations that emulated the Carbanak and FIN7 adversary groups.

MAJORITY OF UAE BUSINESSES EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION: RACKSPACE STUDY

Customer experience (CX) is a top priority for most UAE businesses (62%), a new research from Rackspace Technology shows. The study revealed much greater understanding amongst UAE business leaders to improve CX than in most other countries surveyed.

Rackspace Technology, a leading endto-end multicloud technology solutions company, launched the 'How Applications Impact Customer Experience' report. The study found that UAE business leaders were very receptive to adopting new ways of using technology to improve customer experience. In fact, only 16% reported their organisation is not receptive to new ways of using technology to improve CX.

Mahesh Desai, Chief Relationship

Officer, EMEA at Rackspace Technology, said: "CX really is the holy grail for companies, particularly with the rapid adoption of digital services over the past 12 months. Investing in and improving CX with new technology is now the bare minimum that organisations need to do to keep up with the competition."

"That said, it's understandable that businesses are cautious. With so much at stake and with so many companies having been burnt before, it's easy to follow the mantra, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". "But CX is the customer battleground. So, IT leaders need the support of business stakeholders to make the necessary improvements through investments in new applications and technologies," he added.

CISCO RESEARCH REVEALS COLLABORATION, CLOUD AND SECURITY ARE UAE'S TOP IT CHALLENGES



Shukri Eid, Managing Director, Cisco Gulf Region

According to Cisco's new

Accelerating Digital Agility Research, CIOs and IT decision makers (ITDMs) across the UAE are looking to maximise investments in digitisation and drive innovation after a difficult year which raised the profile of IT leaders in driving critical workplace innovation.

Over the past twelve months, CIOs and ITDMs from across the globe have been challenged to accelerate their digital and cloud capabilities while protecting their organisations from a growing list of expanding security threats. In their efforts to create smart workplaces, IT leaders in the UAE must look to maximise critical investments made in 2020.

To set up their organisations for success in 2021 and beyond, IT leaders have adapted priorities and strategy to focus on core issues including delivering secure collaboration tools to keep distributed workforces productive, maximising technology investments from the past year, delivering the best digital experience to employees and customers, embracing cloud and "as a Service", and tackling corporate and societal issues with technology.

"TT leaders are at the forefront of ensuring critical success for their organisations in 2021", said Shukri Eid, Managing Director, Cisco Gulf Region. "Even as questions remain and new challenges will surface, CIOs and IT decision makers in the UAE are telling us they need to accelerate digital agility for their teams, so they have the speed, flexibility and choice to consume services across both traditional and modern environments".





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Contact Details : 04 352 2566

INSIGHT // SOPHOS

RISE IN CYBERATTACKS DURING COVID-19 ENHANCED SECURITY SKILLS IN 90% OF IT TEAMS IN UAE: SOPHOS SURVEY



ophos, a global leader in nextgeneration cybersecurity, has announced the findings of its global survey, "The IT Security Team: 2021 and Beyond," which shows how increased security challenges during the pandemic offered IT teams a unique opportunity to build their cybersecurity expertise. The vast majority of IT teams in the UAE that faced a rise in cyberattacks (90%) and a heavier security workload (91%) over the course of 2020 strengthened their security skills and knowledge. Despite the challenges created by the pandemic, 52% of the IT teams surveyed globally, said team morale increased during 2020.

The increase in cyberattacks during the pandemic impacted IT security skills across all industry sectors covered in the survey, including, at a global level, education (83%), retail (85%) and healthcare (80%). The survey polled 5,400 IT decision makers in mid-sized organizations in 30 countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

"Around the world, 2020 was an unprecedented year for IT teams," said Chester Wisniewski, principal research scientist, Sophos. "IT professionals played a vital role in helping organizations to keep going despite the restrictions and limitations necessitated by COVID-19. Among other things, they enabled education institutions to move learning online, retailers to switch to online transactions, healthcare organizations to deliver digital services and care under incredibly tough circumstances, and ensured public entities could continue to provide essential services.

"Much of this will have been done at high speed, with limited equipment and resources available and while facing a rising tide of cyberattacks against the network, endpoints and employees. To say things were probably pretty stressful for most IT teams is an understatement.

"However, the survey shows that in many cases these challenges have created not just more highly skilled, but more motivated IT teams, ready to embrace an ambitious future. As a growing number of countries are able to start planning for life beyond pandemic restrictions, we have an excellent opportunity to implement new IT and security policies, adopt more secure modern tools to manage employees and operations beyond the IT perimeter, build expert teams that blend in-house and outsourced talent, and introduce security platforms that combine intelligent automation with human threat hunting expertise. There is no going back. The future may be just as unprecedented as the past."

The main findings of "The IT Security Team: 2021 and Beyond" global survey for the UAE include:

Demands on IT teams increased as technology became the key enabler for dispersed and digital organizations. Overall IT workload (excluding security) increased for 56% of IT teams, while 53% experienced an increase in cybersecurity workload Adversaries were quick to take

advantage of the opportunities presented by the pandemic: 49% of IT teams overall reported an increase in the number of cyberattacks targeting their organization over the course of 2020

The overall experience of 2020 enabled 62% of IT teams to build their cybersecurity skills and knowledge. It is likely that much of this professional development will have been informal onthe-job learning, acquired as teams tackled new technology and security demands, often under intense pressure and remote from their normal place of work

Facing challenges together boosted team morale. IT team morale also improved for many teams. More than half (51%) of the IT teams surveyed said team morale increased over the course of 2020. Morale is also likely influenced by external and personal circumstances during the pandemic, such as local lockdowns, the inability to see family and other factors. Regardless, the findings suggest that a shared purpose, a sense of value and facing adversity together helped to bond and lift the spirits of IT teams

The experiences of 2020 have fuelled ambitions for bigger IT teams and using advanced tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) in future technology strategies. Many organizations appear to have entered 2021 with plans to increase the size of both in-house and outsourced IT teams, and to embrace the potential of advanced tools and technologies. The survey found that 57% of IT teams anticipate an increase in in-house IT security staff by 2023, and 57% expect the number of outsourced IT security staff to grow over the same time frame. An overwhelming majority (92%) expect AI to help deal with the growing number of attacks and 87% with the complexity of attacks. This could be due in part to the fact that 67% of IT teams believe that cyberattacks are now too advanced for the in-house team to tackle on their own.

BACKING IT UP

Claude Schuck, Regional Director, Middle East at Veeam, tells Reseller ME how partners and customers can look forward to a rewarding and technologically unparalleled relationship of trust with the company.



ow is the data protection landscape changing now and where does Modern Data Protection come in?

The landscape is changing because businesses were forced to change when the pandemic hit. If we picture the traditional data centre with brick and mortar and four walls around it - overnight those four walls were removed as the sudden shift of employees to home offices happened. This brings us to the centralised vs. decentralised aspect. If something is centralised, I feel it, put my hands around it and have a greater sense of control. In that sense, I can see it and protect what's within the four walls. This is how it was pre-COVID. All of a sudden, companies that weren't used to remote working or a more decentralised IT architecture, found themselves scrambling at the edges, trying to manage it all when they were forced to. That's where Cloud Data Management comes into play: if you look at where cloud data came from, we see that organizations called it shared IT, where staff used to find additional capacity outside of data centres to work because

it became easier to access external resources vs. internal resources. But that approach sort of matured, and today, along with this maturity and shift, if I said to you "decentralised" which means I can't see it and feel it all at once, my data, use cases and vulnerabilities are dispersed. So now, I have to really come up with a process to make sure I'm able to mitigate all those risks and still get a sense of control that the organisation and respective data are and remain intact. So that's really where Cloud Data Management as part of a Modern Data Protection strategy shows its added value resulting into most advanced data protection across all environments - cloud, virtual, SaaS, Kubernetes and physical.

How is Veeam helping to close the gap between what IT can expect and what businesses can deliver?

If you look at the assets of a business, first of all, people are the most valuable assets. A very close second to that is data. In fact, if you look at it, every business is a software business; you can't run any business without having software. And if you can't operate your business without software which is reliant on your data, you better be sure you look after your assets, which is precisely this data. That way, data becomes the key in terms of business transformation. Moreover, the acceleration of digital transformation demands modern data protection strategies. It becomes a top necessity in order to ensure business continuity, meaning have the data available and secure so that you can access it across different platforms. Veeam helps customers with these requirements, supporting quick and reliable access to data at any time and from any place. This way we give our customers the confidence that they will be able to utilise the data in any shape or form needed. Interestingly, if you look at businesses in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, we detected through the Veeam Data Protection Report 2021 that 35% of organisations in Saudi and 32% of organisations in the UAE have moved towards cloudbased backups which means that they're

VEEAM'S TECHNOLOGICAL PORTFOLIO OFFERS AUTOMATION CAPABILITIES WHICH ALLOW THE BACKING UP OF ANY DATA NO MATTER WHERE IT RESIDES."

starting to move to a platform that makes it accessible for many people. With this broad accessibility, you can start to unleash that data to transform your business. This is one of the scenarios how we're helping customers close that gap.

In this context, data backup solutions become extremely important. What are some of Veaam's products that help to minimise data loss and allow companies that have suffered data loss to recover faster?

Veeam was founded 15 years ago as a provider of systems management solutions for virtualized server infrastructures. As we grew, the basket of goods in terms of what we are able to cover, has stretched end-to-end. Here, we are talking about Cloud, virtual, SaaS, Kubernetes and containers, and physical as well as end points, Mac or MS Windows devices - or any possible combination of those - Veeam enables customers to recover faster in any IT scenario. Recovering faster actually refers to the situation that you need to recover,

but the questions that emerges is how sure can you be that you can recover? Well, Veeam's technological portfolio offers automation capabilities which allow to back up any data no matter where it resides, and while your back up admin and your staff are essentially asleep, we test that backup thoroughly. And in the morning, when you get to work in the office, you'll realise that the backup is successful, and it is 100% recoverable. Isn't that a great feeling? Knowing that if a failure occurs on that very same day, you can definitely recover. That's what recovering fast is about - making sure that you can recover, because it was tested last night.

When it comes to partnering with Veeam, what can partners look forward to when joining the ProPartner Network?

Veeam has always been100% channelfocused and we put a lot of emphasis on our partners via our ProPartner Network. I always like to put myself in the partners' shoes and think of the reasons why a partner would want to join forces with us. The associated questions would be - Is the Veeam brand something that they'd want to be associated with? When they're representing their company, will they be proud to put the Veeam brand logo next to their own? The answer is 'Yes. Absolutely'. But then a partner might obviously also ask: "What's in it for me? Can I profit from this partnership? Can I make a living off this? And the answer is 'Yes'. We see a high double-digit growth and let's imagine this would be a train going by, I'd want to get on that train, to be part of that journey. So, can I make money? 'Absolutely'. Lastly, one of the most important aspect comes down to people, or what we call trust. When we're in it together and we're putting down solutions and different ways to make these solutions work for customers, is there enough trust across both companies? Partners need to tick these boxes to make sure they're delivering the right value to customers. Keeping these fundamentals in mind, we drive our channel partner program that is paramount to our success. 🗠

KASPERSKY-SCOPE MIDDLE EAST Strengthen GCC Region Partnership



ollowing a successful partnership across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Africa and LEVANT region, Kaspersky and SCOPE Middle East a value – added distributor are now expanding the relationship into UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen to provide its wide range of industry leading products and services to organisations across the gulf market.

Through this strategic agreement, Dubai-based SCOPE Middle East will leverage its strong network reach to provide advanced cybersecurity services and products to its partners and customers developing new capabilities in mitigating cyberattacks with skilled expert teams and with dedicated sales support, product support, technical training, logistics, marketing and professional services.

Kaspersky products are regularly assessed by independent experts – and have won numerous industry awards, plus recognition from leading industry analysts, recently Forrester recognising



Kaspersky as a Leader in the Forrester Wave[™] with the Kaspersky Threat Intelligence services.

"We are extremely glad to further strengthen our relationship with Kaspersky, by extending our partnership to GCC region. For the past 2 decades, we have worked hard to create one of the strongest distribution and partner networks in the



THROUGH THIS AGREEMENT, SCOPE ME WILL LEVERAGE ITS STRONG NETWORK REACH TO PROVIDE ADVANCED CYBERSECURITY SERVICES & PRODUCTS TO ITS PARTNERS AND CUSTOMERS." Middle East region, the recent inclusion in our contract is a significant stepping stone into the evolution of this partnership," said Fadi AbuEkab, CEO and Founder, SCOPE Middle East."

"Being one of the trusted security vendors in the region; we constantly take strategic measures in our channel strategy to support our growth. I believe that this distribution partnership will further enhance our ability to support our customers in the region and make our award-winning products and services more available, I am very positive that this new expansion will achieve the success that we aspire for." said Yazan Jammalieh, Regional Sales Director – Middle East Africa and Turkey, SCOPE Middle East.

"We are very proud to announce this agreement and look forward to developing a strong partnership with Kaspersky which will enable us to offer advanced solutions that effectively address our customers ever-evolving security concerns" added Ghada Ali - Consultant Business Development, SCOPE Middle East.

About Kaspersky

Kaspersky is a global cybersecurity company founded in 1997. Kaspersky's deep threat intelligence and security expertise is constantly transforming into innovative security solutions and services to protect businesses, critical infrastructure, governments and consumers around the globe. The company's comprehensive security portfolio includes leading endpoint protection and a number of specialized security solutions and services to fight sophisticated and evolving digital threats. Over 400 million users are protected by Kaspersky technologies and we help 270,000 corporate clients protect what matters most to them.

About SCOPE Middle East

SCOPE Middle East is an award winning specialty value-added distributor (VAD) in Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) region specializing on innovative and best of breed Cyber Security, Networking Performance, Mobility and Cloud Solutions. SCOPE Middle East aims at creating value through demand generation, access to markets and efficiency. Website: https://www.scopeme.com/

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FEATURE // TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY

echnology is big. It is an enabler and disruptor, all at the same time, and also a catalyst for innovation and transformation. In fact, technology is continuously bringing about new and different ways in which products and services are being offered in the market, every day. Not only that: it

is elusive and yet, all-too-familiar. Picture this-while Big Data, AI, Machine Learning are being talked about and implemented by companies all over the world-its actual depth and layers of application remain baffling to most. Yet, paradoxically, businesses of all sizes are able to afford it-if not in its entirety, at least in parts. So, what exactly is this powerful tool? Is it a disruptor or a facilitator? How do organisations identify what technology is right for them and implement it in innovative ways in their operations?

We spoke to some of the market leaders to find out and here's what they had to say.



AMANULLA KHAN Managing Director -

Middle East, Turkey & Africa, Linksys

Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation?

An excellent example is how we have adapted to the rise of work-from-home trends by focusing on consumer technology products and solutions that ease workflow and efficiency for remote workers.

Home offices powered with the proper technological tools can facilitate a productive work environment even in non-traditional, compact workspaces. For instance, the superior connectivity offered by the latest wireless technology can help employees keep up with modern work requirements such as video conferencing and collaboration tools.

The latest wireless standard WiFi6 is several magnitudes better than anything before it. The Linksys Velop Whole Home Intelligent Mesh Wi-Fi 6 (MX4200) System delivers robust streaming and gaming to more than 80 devices on a home network. In addition, it offers gigabit speeds for reliable connection for everyone to stream, game, and video chat without interruption, while the Intelligent Mesh Technology provides whole home coverage that's easily expandable by adding additional Linksys Intelligent Mesh products.

Remote working will endure even after the pandemic has faded. Therefore, the Enterprise-at-Home trend is emerging as the next significant evolution in workplace technology. Our product roadmap is aligned with this development. We focus on bringing to market enterprisegrade solutions that offer a seamless link between the home office and the corporate office. This also means that security should be a top priority. As home internet use has skyrocketed with the rise of work-from-home and study-from-home trends, so have the cyber security risks. Although firewalls are associated with enterprises, they now should be standard for home networks, experts at Fortinet advise. Our wireless routers come with a firewall built-in, but you may need to turn it on. If your router does not come with a firewall, you can purchase one and install it.

Fortinet experts also highly recommend the use of encryption on your wireless network. By default, wireless encryption is turned off. Turning it on and choosing the most robust protocol—WPA3—can strengthen your Wi-Fi security. Other home security best practices that the experts recommend include the use of VPNs to access your network, use a strong and unique password and change the name of your default Wi-Fi network.

Our product roadmap is aligned with this development. We focus on bringing to market enterprise-grade solutions that offer a seamless link between the home office and the corporate office.

Do you think technology is an

enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why? It is both. Indeed, we see how technology continues to be an enabler of human progress. Take Wi-Fi 6, a technology that is at the heart of digital transformation trends. The faster connectivity and ultra-low latency capabilities of Wi-Fi 6 enable entirely new use cases and business models. IoT will allow home automation that will bring security, flexibility and energy efficiency to all living spaces. AR and VR will bring immersive education experiences that will completely change how education is delivered and enable novel new ways of shopping such as virtual try-ons, catalog browsing, showrooming, and much more.

But technology can also be a disruptor. Lack of access to technology is now recognized as a real barrier to human progress. For example, during the COVID-19 crisis, millions of students worldwide have missed a year or more of education because they lacked resources for online education. Technologists have coined the term digital divide to describe the schism between the technology haves and have-nots. As a global technology provider, we are committed to working with other stakeholders such as the Wi-Fi alliance to champion exciting and innovative solutions to help bridge the digital divide and help to advance society.

FEATURE // TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION



ANOOP SHARDA *CTO, Buzinessware*

Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation? We are a Managed Service Provider hyper-focused on Internet technologies that allow our customers to do more with less and challenge the norm - in cloud, at workplace, on the web. Each technology that we enable/ rollout is evaluated based on how it can help us declutter heterogenous technology landscapes for our customers. Be it digital transformation, digital asset optimisation services, ongoing managed services, remote IT support, or our multicloud platform - all our products & services are aimed to help simplify operations, automate processes & optimise the day-to-day.

Do you think technology is an enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why?

With the advent of Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence and other disruptive technologies, the role of human beings is becoming a grey area. Mundane low-cost tasks can be automated at the cost of unskilled labour. Business Intelligence can be optimised based on super-efficient & selflearning algorithms. As such, the role of humans as a value add needs to be crafted as per the business scenario.

Machines will take us far, but the last mile is where humans will be much needed. Case in point - Uber, Zomato etc, wherein technology enabled employment for millions. In summary, if re-trained & re-deployed correctly, humans can surely become strong enablers going forward.



EKTA PUTHRAN Regional Distribution & Channel Manager Middle East & Africa, Barco Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation? Tapping into the right technology is crucial to propel innovation. At Barco, our mission is to use technology to transform the quality of life, change the way people work and create compelling experiences. In our case, collaboration is the key driving force behind innovative ideas, and connecting great minds from all over the world to do so is a starting point. As a global leader in meeting room technology our ClickShare solution allows for collaborative meetings, virtual and hybrid. Fostering engagement and connectivity, ClickShare creates mixed working & collaboration solutions such as ClickShare Conference, a wireless conferencing system or ClickShare Present where users can plug and play or use the application for wireless presentation. Our solutions reinforce capabilities of high-end video technology and bringing meeting participants closer together no matter where they are working.

Do you think technology is an enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why?

The right technology is not only an enabler of human capabilities, but a tool to amplify what we as humans can achieve. The pandemic has proved that technology is the extension of the human mind and connecting with others is crucial to enhance what we are capable of. With that said, Barco has made an effort to respond to customers' needs by supporting businesses to ensure closer hybrid collaboration between employees, magnifying their capabilities and allowing collaboration.

Whether they're at a desk in Dubai or on a mountain top – everyone's part of the conversation with ClickShare.

FEATURE // TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION



FADI KANAFANI Managing Director – Middle East, NetApp Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation? By staying close to our customers, we are able to foresee their business requirements as and when they develop and evolve. Accordingly, as a technology leader in the industry, NetApp may direct up to 15% of its R&D investments towards innovating the best solutions that we believe will help our customers grow their business and thrive. Similarly, enterprises utilising NetApp solutions may leverage those innovations to stay ahead of competition, be current with market changing dynamics and support digital transformation initiatives. For example, NetApp's CEO was a forward thinker when he led the organisation into becoming a software-driven organisation by presenting the market with a true software defined storage solution that supports a multi-cloud environment through the "Data Fabric" architecture. This innovation, which was unveiled in 2015, become one of Gartner's top ten trends in 2018. NetApp continues to build on this architecture advanced offerings to drive simplification, cost reduction, additional flexibility and break all barriers to allow customers manage their data irrespective where it lives, on prem, on the edge or in the cloud.

Do you think technology is an enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why?

Technology has always been an enabler of human capabilities. Over the years, technological innovation has enabled the human race to improve its lifestyle, support social and economic development, break new frontiers, and turn what was perceived impossible into possible. Technology has directly impacted our personal lives and the way we work, connect with each other and even have fun. Through innovative technologies, the human race is able to direct its resources into making and doing things that matters. A living testimony to what technology can do, which everyone can relate to, is the swift global move to contain the COVID-19 pandemic; it is technology advancement that allowed hundreds of thousands of researchers and scientists, across continents to bring to table diverse perspective and knowledge, to collaborate and work towards a common goal in support of humanity.

Making data available, which is the source of all innovation, is key. At NetApp, we are proud to be such an enabler to many industries, be it in healthcare, security, education, manufacturing, banking, space discovery, and many more. That said, an equal opportunity on education for all is needed to make sure every country is moving forward reasonably at the same pace of technological innovation in order to harness its benefits.



MOHAMED ABDALLAH

Regional Director for Middle East, Turkey & Africa at SonicWall

Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation?

At SonicWall, innovation is in product capability. We're constantly looking out for new architectures and deep learning, machine learning and AI that are fundamental to defeating malware and other threat attacks. Threats that were once thought to be two or three years away are now a reality, with do-it-yourself, cloud-based tools creating an army of cyber criminals armed with the same devastating force and impact of a nation-state or larger criminal enterprise. The onus is on vendors like SonicWall to help organisations remain vigilant and proactive in hardening their cybersecurity posture.

Do you think technology is an enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why?

Technology should be viewed as a business enabler, not a business barrier. The biggest example of technology being an enabler is when businesses were forced almost overnight to adopt a remote work approach. Technology allowed businesses, customers and employees to connect using collaboration solutions, while embracing the cloud allowed the access to data to ensure business continuity. On the other hand, an over-reliance on technology and the convenience it offers often hampers an individual's capability to utilise their own mental and physical abilities to perform and complete tasks. There is a fine line between technology being an enabler or a disruptor and find the right balance is important to allow technology to do exactly what it's meant to do.

FEATURE // TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION



PATRICK GRILLO Senior Director, Solutions Marketing at Fortinet Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation?

The first step is understanding the "cause and effect" of the relationship between technology and innovation. In terms of digital innovation, where an organisation is looking to fundamentally change some aspect of their business, technology should be an enabler of innovation rather than a driver of innovation. The difference between enablement and driving may be subtle but it's extremely important. Digital innovation should first and foremost be about achieving a business objective such as launching a new product/service, entering a new market or reducing costs. Technology should be one aspect of the larger strategy, not the strategy itself. In this way it is enabling the innovation. In contrast, making the decision to move applications to the public cloud because your competition is doing it without a larger business objective/strategy has the relationship between innovation and technology reversed from the way it should be.

Do you think technology is an enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why?

Paradoxically it is both. While technology can certainly be an enabler of innovation as I mentioned in the previous question, it can also cause massive disruption if not properly implemented including not properly secured. In today's always and everything connected world, improperly secured technology is an open and unlocked door just waiting for open to discover it and walk in. This is why cybersecurity must always be part – from planning to implementation - of any innovation strategy involving technology.



SANDRINE EL KHODRY

Vice President – Middle East and Africa at Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise

Innovation and Technology are closely interlinked. How do you ensure that your company identifies and taps into the right technology solutions to drive innovation?

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise (ALE) has been driving innovation for the last one hundred years. We've maintained our position as one of the leaders in technology innovation to help the world transition towards the era of digital transformation. Our innovations have helped businesses rapidly maintain their business continuity during the COVID 19 Pandemic. ALE's technology has been a key enabler for businesses during the pandemic and customers across multiple key sectors including Education, Healthcare, Government, hospitality and more rely on us. The key to our innovation is the investment into our worldwide R&D to anticipate, search and improve our solutions continuously to be able to maintain our position as a leader in technology and innovation.

Do you think technology is an enabler or disruptor of human capabilities? Why?

Technology is driving success across the globe and its application has become an absolute necessity for businesses across sectors. It has left no aspect of professional and personal lives untouched. The pandemic has truly brought to light the power of IT – from enabling a massive workforce to maintain productivity remotely, to enabling students to continue studying online, and allowing people to virtually conduct meetings. But there are some disadvantages to technology use as well, as we've started losing the personal connect and direct contact with humans. Constant access to devices also leads to our brains registering information less and depending more on the devices we are using; we don't remember names and phone numbers, and perhaps have forgotten to how hold a pen or write a letter. In our personal life, we need to be discrete and careful when using technology, taking advantage and being careful to not impact our humanity and capabilities, finding the right balance is important.





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SPOTLIGHT // CYBERGYM

CYBERGYM ENTERS GCC CYBERSECURITY MARKET WITH OPENING **OF NEW UAE OFFICE**

The Dubai-based branch will provide virtual, custom-built cybertraining programmes to defend against the rising tide of cyberattacks. nd CEO of CYBERGYM

YBERGYM - a global provider of cyberreadiness solutions, has announcead the opening of its first office in the UAE. The branch in Dubai marks CYBERGYM's entry into the GCC region, and is the latest in a growing, world-wide network of facilities that provide organisations with cyber-training programmes, custom built to emulate their own infrastructures and technologies.

In light of the pandemic and ongoing social distancing restrictions, CYBERGYM will initially offer its training solutions to organisations in the region through virtual channels. CYBERGYM's Virtual Cloud Arena technology enables multiple remote online users to access tailored training in defending against a wide spectrum of cyberattacks. In the next phase of its expansion, CYBERGYM intends to build a full-scale CyberFrame facility in the UAE, through which investors, service providers, governments and integrators can run their own training facility leveraging CYBERGYM's technologies.

"After helping organisations around the world shore up their cyber defences, we are now bringing our range of cyber-training solutions to the UAE," says Ofir Hason, Co-Founder and CEO of CYBERGYM. "Our proprietary

technologies allow us to bring cyberattacks to life, so an organisation can gain critical understanding of real-world scenarios and safely train its people to defend against them in simulated, customised environments."

The UAE, and the GCC region as a whole, has been targeted by a rising wave of cyberattacks since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 250 per cent increase in 2020, according to

CYBERGYM'S VIRTUAL CLOUD **ARENA TECHNOLOGY ENABLES MULTIPLE REMOTE ONLINE USERS TO ACCESS TAILORED TRAINING IN DEFENDING AGAINST A WIDE** SPECTRUM OF CYBERATTACKS.

the head of the UAE Government Cyber Security. Experts claim that this trend, which has been exacerbated by the growth in online users in recent years and the explosion of the work-fromhome culture, is unlikely to subside anytime soon. In a recent survey, over 46 per cent of organisations in the UAE reported that the pandemic has significantly increased their vulnerability to cybercrime, while 71 per cent said they expect to invest additional resources in cyber security measures.

"The UAE is one of the leading economies in the region, and this has made it a prime target for malicious activity," says Ofir. "The massive shift to online working has only amplified the vulnerabilities in infrastructure, communication networks and supply chains. In the face of increasingly diverse threats, awareness is key to being prepared. We specialise in bridging gaps in knowledge, skills and best practices to create a workforce that is ready for any cybersecurity challenge."

Organisations such as NATO, Microsoft and Israel Electric Corporation train their employees using CYBERGYM's attack scenarios. CYBERGYM's programmes are developed, and continuously updated, based on real operational experience and knowledge of emerging threats. 👳



THE SOUND TRUTH In an exclusive interview, Amir Liberman, Founder & CEO of Nemesysco, a

In an exclusive interview, Amir Liberman, Founder & CEO of Nemesysco, a leading global provider of voice analysis technology, speaks to Anita Joseph, Editor, Reseller ME, about how a person's voice can now help to determine the potential for success or failure of a business organisation.



our voice can now determine your success. Or failure. The Layered Voice Analysis (LVA) technology from global firm Nemesysco is slowly, but surely taking the world by storm and transforming the way people interact and make their choices. Nemesysco recently signed a strategic partnership agreement with Spire Solutions, a value-added distributor in the Middle East and Africa, whereby Spire Solutions will deploy Nemesysco's voice analytics technology in the HR vertical across the UAE.

A chat with Amir Liberman at the recent GISEC event reveals that this unique technology, which has been under development for many years, is based on a proprietary set of vocal parameters that can identify deceptive intentions in "real life" scenarios. These parameters are identified from a bank of audio files taken in different languages and a numerous settings, including law enforcement investigations, call centres and controlled experiments.

Nemesysco is dedicated to developing advanced and noninvasive applications of its voice analytics solutions, including investigation and security tools, fraud prevention solutions, CRM applications, consumer products and psychological diagnostic tools. "In fact, all of Nemesysco's products and services are based on IVA and have been developed in order to better understand people," Liberman says.

But why should businesses use voice analysis solutions to understand people?

"It is important to understand how people really truly feel, whether they are your employees or customers, and capture their genuine emotional cues in order to make sure you respond correctly to their needs and preferences," Liberman adds. "Our solutions identify various types of stress levels, cognitive processes and emotional reactions that are reflected in different subtle properties of the voice."

In fact, LVA technology is so accurate that it provides in-depth insights into the way people think, what troubles them, what excites them, what portions of their speech they are uncertain about, what questions require more of their attention, and what areas appear to be sensitive issues for every speaker. What is unique about this voice analytics solution is that the content of what is being spoken or even the language it is spoken in is not important - rather, it focuses on the patterns and anomalies in the speech flow - below the spoken language level - to classify these changes in terms of stress, excitement, confusion and other relevant emotional states.

Nemesysco's solutions are being widely used in call centres as well as by HR and market research firms, among others, to explore and understand different emotions and personality traits. "In the HR field, for instance, I would like to know if I'm hiring the right person for the right position because wrong placement can be a very expensive mistake. I want to know if this person will add value to the role I have in mind. I would want, for example, an accountant who is detail-oriented and passionate about an organised environment, and a designer who is very creative and excited to think outside the box. It is usually very difficult to

LVA TECHNOLOGY IS SO ACCURATE THAT IT PROVIDES IN-DEPTH INSIGHTS INTO THE WAY PEOPLE THINK, WHAT TROUBLES THEM, WHAT EXCITES THEM, WHAT PORTIONS OF THEIR SPEECH THEY ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT..."

tell, with today's candidates and their impressive qualifications and interview training, who is good for a certain role and who isn't. It's not that a particular candidate is good or bad, it's just that some are better suited to a role in my company than others. Recognising and identifying the right candidate for a certain role will go a great way in enhancing business productivity and outcomes," Liberman points out.

"To put it in context, LVA does not tell a manager whom to hire or not hire, it just helps the manager highlight a person's true strengths and weaknesses."

LVA also provides companies with the tools to explore any identified piece of information in depth. It can be utilised both in real-time (for general overview of any client, employee, suspect or witness), and in offline mode (for more in-depth exploration), using recorded data from almost any source. LVA-based solutions can be configured for different expected work settings, and have built-in mechanism to set their sensitivity automatically to meet different needs.

That's not all. Going a step further,

Nemesysco developed the Emotional Diamond concept in 2012 to simplify the visualisation and understanding of the human emotional complexities as detected by the IVA. "It is built of eight wings," Liberman says. "Energy" at the top, "Stress" at the bottom, "Logic and Confidence" to the left, "Emotion" to the right, and four additional indications displaying levels of "Passion", "Uneasy", "Mental Effort" and "Concentration" (These are only the main eight of the 16 main emotional states IVA can detect).

"The core principle behind the Emotional Diamond is to reflect that there are no absolute good or bad emotions, as they are all context dependent. For example, we would expect to see stressful reactions when discussing intimidating events, and we will look for energetic and emotional reactions when we discuss prospects and achievements. When examining the emotional reactions over time, certain traits can be easily observed, and teach us about the true personality of the evaluated party," Liberman says.

For the tech-savvy, Liberman explains how it all works:

"When a person talks, he/she can hear their own voice and tune the highs and the lows and the way they sound. So, when talking to someone, everyone can hide their actual feelings to different degrees and keep their voice sounding very neutral and consistent. This makes it very difficult to identify what someone is really experiencing or thinking. With LVA technology, we pick up as many as 151 tiny and inaudible biomarkers from a voice, irrespective of how it sounds in our ears, find ways to combine them and then identify the connection between these biomarkers and various emotions, particularly the key ones such as excitement, confusion, happiness, stress, anger, hesitation and concentration. It is pretty much like holding a microscope to a person's voice- even the minute details are fetched out."

So, do you want to know the sound truth about yourself?

TRANSFORMING THE SMART WAY

D-Link is at the forefront of digital transformation, helping organisations stay ahead of the curve. Sakkeer Hussain, Director -Sales & Marketing at D-Link Middle East & Africa, tells us how.

hat are some of the main trends driving digital transformation in the region today? How is D-Link

working with its partners and customers to make this process smooth and seamless?

There are a number of factors pushing organisations of all sizes to embrace digital transformation. While the pandemic-related disruptions made everyone realise the importance of moving to the digital world, it only made what was inevitable happen faster.

Data analytics, 5G, AI, ML, cloud, IoT and automation tech, cybersecurity threats, evolving business models and customer expectations are all driving digital transformation across verticals. Also, with most technologies available in as-a-service or subscription models, customers are finding it easier to implement advanced solutions.

The huge amounts of data being collected every day is one of the primary reasons for digital transformation acceleration. Businesses know they have to leverage the data, their most treasured asset, sitting on their servers to gain actionable insights for accurate decision-making.

As Wi-Fi 6 and 5G grows and becomes mainstream, it will enable faster and seamless connections, making it even more accessible for companies to implement advanced technologies that rely on fast nextgeneration networks.

Technologies like IoT and automation, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are also driving digital transformation as businesses see how they greatly enhance productivity and operational efficiencies.

If companies were hesitating to make the jump to cloud technologies before, the pandemic prompted overnight cloud acceleration. Businesses saw the immediate benefits of flexibility and accessibility when they made the transition. Cloud will continue to drive digital transformation agendas.

D-Link has been successfully operating in the market for more than two decades and we truly understand current market requirements while also staying ahead of the curve and making provisions for future ones. We are always on the lookout for the latest technologies that can help make customers' lives easier, faster and better. We work with our partners and enable them to be trusted advisors for customers as they double down on their digital and connected roadmaps.

How have customer preferences for "smart" products changed over time? Has the pandemic brought in changes in this aspect? Customers are now increasingly more receptive to the idea of investing in smart products than before. This past year has impacted customer preferences as individuals have had to set up home offices, adapt to online learning and spend maximum time indoors. In such a scenario, they have realised the benefits and convenience of smart products and how it can majorly improve their dayto-day lives. Users have reimagined their physical spaces to better enable connectivity and automation with smart devices. Also, they see the importance of security and are more aware of the potential threats that could compromise their smart devices. They are curious about new technologies and take the time to research the strengths each brand or technology brings to the table.

We see an increased uptake of IoT and automation technologies, faster and secure Wi-Fi connections, security solutions, AI-enabled solutions and the like – everything that will help the user function in the most productive way in their personal and professional lives in the new normal. When it comes to smart devices, users will continue to seek simplicity in installation and configuration and prioritise security and integration with other devices.

Even from a business point of view, companies have seen the benefit of investing in smart, AI-enabled and automated technologies to boost operations. These solutions significantly help to save on costs and time - two essential components for improving business efficiency. We are seeing that even companies who considered such technologies as a luxury, are now viewing it as a basic necessity. They are increasingly embracing cloud,

> Sakkeer Hussain, Director - Sales & Marketing at D-Link Middle East & Africa

automation, cybersecurity solutions, AI tools and IoT solutions. We expect this momentum to continue even in the post-pandemic environment.

D-Link has won prestigious awards for design, functionality and excellence. What's the story behind this? What aspects do you take into account when you develop a particular product? Yes, most recently we were honoured that D-Link's DMS-106XT Multi Gigabit Unmanaged Switch, DCS-8635LH 2K QHD Pan & Zoom Outdoor Wi-Fi Camera, and DCS-8526LH Full HD Pan & Tilt Pro Wi-Fi Camera were awarded the prestigious Red Dot Award for Product Design 2021.

The customer is at the centre of all our product design and development strategies. Our team ensures all our products are relevant, useful, innovative and aesthetically pleasing. We also go the extra mile and pay attention to small details which helps us to further differentiate in



BY KEEPING THE CUSTOMER AT THE HEART OF OUR BUSINESS, WE ARE ABLE TO CREATE PRODUCTS THAT ENSURE FUNCTIONALITY OVER FEATURES AND HELP ADDRESS REAL-LIFE CHALLENGES." the market. By keeping the customer at the heart of our business, we are able to create products that ensure functionality over features and help to address real-life challenges. D-Link is passionate about crafting superior quality products embedded with innovations.

D-Link makes life smarter, safer and seamless. What are some of the latest products that D-Link has in its portfolio, both for home and business use?

D-Link is a leading player in pioneering secure networking, cloud and connectivity products. Our portfolio boasts an expansive range of solutions and products catering to the evolving needs of regional organisations. We have enriched our offerings with new innovations this year around mydlink, Wi-Fi 6, 5G, and 2.5 Gigabit Ethernet solutions. We are committed to enable customers to power their digital transformation journeys and meet all their new requirements in the post pandemic world.

We have recently announced the new COVR-X1870 Series Whole Home Mesh Wi-Fi 6 Systems. This includes multi-pack options that are all equipped with Wi-Fi 6 and mesh technology to provide faster speeds, greater capacity, and less network congestion for the modern devicedense smart home.

D-Link's latest DCS-8300LHV2 Full HD Wi-Fi Camera with AI-based person detection is an intelligent camera that can identify human motion, minimising false alarms and ensuring that users get the alerts that matter. The DCS-8300LHV2 captures video in Full HD 1080p with a 120-degree field of view, and also features 360-degree adjustable positioning and 5m night vision so that users see everything, even in the dark.

We have also unveiled



the new DUB-E250, which is the smallest USB-C 2.5G Ethernet Adapter on the market that breaks network bottlenecks by enabling 2.5 times the bandwidth of a Gigabit ethernet connection and makes many more high-performance online activities feasible. The DMS-106XT is D-Link's most recent unmanaged switch that accelerates network efficiency and delivers uninterrupted online experiences, which are increasingly becoming crucial in both business and personal lives.

We are continuously working on raising the bar when it comes to innovation and cutting-edge technologies. During the peak of



the pandemic last year, we unveiled avant-garde products like the D-Link Thermal Solution Fever Screening Kit and D-Link Temperature Measurement Face Recognition Terminal suite of products, remote work management solutions such as the Nuclias Managed Wireless Networking Solution portfolio.

Relevant technologies must be employed at both workers' as well as the corporate's end for successful remote working models. Effective communication is a critical element when working remotely and this is strengthened by video conferencing and other cloud-based and networking solutions. For all these digital solutions, the backbone technology is a strong, stable and seamless Wi-Fi connection along with robust routers.

D-Link's state-of-the-art Wi-Fi 6 routers - DIR-X5460 EXO AX AX5400 and DIR-X1860 EXO AX AX1800 – are the ideal tools to ensure uninterrupted connections. Equipped with Wi-Fi 6 (802.11ax) technology, these routers present faster speeds, greater capacity and less network congestion, enhancing the overall experience for users.

What is your outlook for the regional market for the next few years? Where do you think the region is headed as far as digital

transformation is concerned?

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As we enter the post-pandemic era, the market outlook looks positive and stable. This will be driven by IT leaders increasing their investments in remote, IoT, advanced networking, cybersecurity, cloud and digital technologies. Organisations will ensure business continuity plans are in place and will look to upgrade their existing IT infrastructures to thrive in the connected era. Digital transformation is a continuous objective. The region is leapfrogging in terms of adoption of new and advanced digital technologies. We expect this to continue for the foreseeable future. 🚥

FACE-TO-FACE // OPSWAT

PROTECTING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Benny Czarny is CEO, Founder & Chairman of the Board of OPSWAT, a leading global cybersecurity firm founded in 2002 to offer a special, market-driven approach to cybersecurity products and solutions that protect critical infrastructure. Since then, OPSWAT has been breaking new ground in cybersecurity by successfully identifying market needs and building, marketing and innovating on cloud-based cybersecurity products and solutions. Today, it has over 1,000 customers, 400 employees and 10 offices worldwide, and is trusted by more than 98% of nuclear facilities in the U.S. Anita Joseph finds out more.



PSWAT began in a very different, unusual way. Tell us more about the journey and your strategy in building

the company.

It all started with a vision and a global goal. When I started the company in 2002, I could, maybe, have raised money the usual way that most people do it, i.e., through institutional funding, but I found myself in the dilemma of spending most of my time selling products to people willing to use them or talking to potential investors. So, I found myself saying that I'd take the hard way and then go all the way without anything else. So, without any capital investment or institutional funding, I went ahead with my dream and using my personal investments, initially started providing some professional services and used that fund to hire engineers to build the products that I had in mind. This gradually grew into the company that it is, today.

OPSWAT is all about critical infrastructure. Tell us more. OPSWAT is all about protecting critical



OPSWAT'S CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION SOLUTIONS ARE ENGINEERED TO SUPPORT OUR ZERO-TRUST PHILOSOPHY & POWERED BY A COMPREHENSIVE, MODULAR SUITE OF PRODUCTS, TO ADDRESS A WIDE RANGE OF CYBERSECURITY USE CASES." infrastructure and our primary goal is to eliminate malware and zero-day attacks. We believe that every file and every device poses a threat and these threats must be addressed at all locations at all times-at entry, at exit, and at rest. Our products focus on threat prevention and process creation for secure data transfer and safe device access. The result is productive systems that minimise the risk of compromise. That's why 98% of U.S. nuclear power facilities trust OPSWAT for cybersecurity and compliance. We believe every file and every device poses a threat. OPSWAT's Critical Infrastructure Protection Solutions are engineered to support our zero-trust philosophy and powered by a comprehensive, modular suite of products to address a wide range of cybersecurity use cases.

How important is the channel partner ecosystem, for your business? As a leader in critical infrastructure protection, OPSWAT brings innovative technologies and products to a company's existing security portfolio. Partners are critical to our success and we are always looking for solution providers, VARs, and system integrators to join our program. We believe that together, we can protect the world's most critical infrastructure.

The OPSWAT Channel Partner Program is designed for VARs, MSPs, systems integrators, and other security resellers who are looking to expand their offerings to help companies protect their critical infrastructure. The program is flexible and offers options to meet the needs of a wide range of businesses. We support partnerships across a wide range of industries, around the world.

OPSWAT also partners with technology leaders offering bestof-breed solutions with the goal of building an ecosystem dedicated to data security and compliance using integrated solutions.

Tell us about the OPSWAT Cybersecurity Training Academy.

The OPSWAT Academy was set up to address the Critical Infrastructure skills shortage through courses that promote the best practices and practical approaches that are successfully implemented in the most secure of critical infrastructure environments.

OPSWAT Academy makes use of on-demand courses to train and certify professionals on cybersecurity concepts and best practices, critical infrastructure protection, as well as OPSWAT's range of products and solutions. We have both introductory and advanced courses available to cater to these needs and the Academy consists of subject matter courses designed for the learner to build their expertise using a phased approach. For current OPSWAT customers, the Academy also includes advanced training courses for greater ease-of-use efficiency when operating and maintaining all OPSWAT products and services. Each discipline certification is awarded for one year upon passing the exams on that discipline's courses in OPSWAT Academy.

In fact, by prioritising technical skill development over a more traditional curriculum, the OPSWAT Academy is at the forefront of preparing the next generation of Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) cybersecurity professionals for jobs that are ready and waiting, today -- whether it be a daily practitioner, a student or IT professionals interested in adding to their existing skill sets.

How would you describe OPSWAT's collaboration with EMT Distribution in the region?

emt Distribution and OPSWAT address the cybersecurity challenges of critical infrastructures in the META region. The successful partnership has been instrumental in delivering worldclass solutions and services and addressing the critical infrastructure challenges of key players like governments, oil & gas firms and banks in a highly specialised, unique manner.

For instance, with the vision of 'Trust no file, Trust no device', OPSWAT's flagship technology OPSWAT Metadefender Core addresses the challenges of customers who do not want to compromise on the authenticity of the files entering their environment through any mediums, be it web/ emails/USB/APIs and more.

With module such as 'Multiscanning' where the power of 35 antivirus engines with the likes of Crowdstrike, TrendMicro, McAfee, and many more come to play and, 'deep CDR' (Content Disarm & reconstruction a.k.a. Data Sanitisation) OPSWAT Metadefender Core ensures every file is scanned and 'disarmed' from the most common attack vectors before reaching the user. INTERVIEW // NETAPP

THROUGH THE UPDATED PARTNER PROGRAM, WE WANT TO GIVE OUR PARTNERS A STRONG ROADMAP, TO ENSURE THAT THEY'RE GETTING THE RIGHT SPECIALISATIONS."

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TRANSFORMING THE PARTNER LANDSCAPE

Maya Zakhour-Channel Director, Middle East & Africa, Italy and Spain, at NetApp, tells Reseller ME how the latest updates to their channel partner program help partners differentiate and add value to their offerings.

hat are the updates to the partner program and what prompted you to make these new updates?

The pandemic and subsequent move to a remote business operating environment established a new norm and a different way of doing business. It becomes our responsibility to make sure that we're helping our partners get ready to meet the needs of the customer, not only from a solutions perspective, but also in order to provide quick service. During this time, NetApp came up with a stronger approach based on building specialisations and competencies focus, form the basis of the roadmap for our new partner program.

We believe that there is no onesolution-fits-all; we are focused on helping customers in their digital transformation journey, whether they want to extend, transform, or modernise their current infrastructure. Some customers are unsure of where they would want to go, whether or not to connect/migrate to the cloud which is the future of business.

We wanted to ensure that our partners specialise in their areas. And if they are transforming with us, we want them to know how they can add value in their market and to their customers.

We also want partners to be differentiated in their capabilities and competencies, so we adjusted our rebate program and will guide partners to a proper learning path to adopt to these solutions, competencies and specialisations. It's essentially the learning path and the earning path. The earning path is all about how they will earn more with NetApp; not only from rebates, but also from maximising their opportunities within the data fabric that we have and to cover a 360-degree specialisation for the customers when it comes to digital transformation, on their journey to the cloud, or the artificial intelligence strategies that they would want to acquire. All of these are really strong examples of why we wanted to have an updated partner program. We wanted to give our partners a strong roadmap, to ensure that they are getting the right specialisations. By 2023 we plan to have this new platform up and running from every perspective.

How are the new updates expected to help partners add value and differentiate their offerings?

NetApp has a clear differentiator – our Data Fabric architecture. Corporate leaders are facing huge pressures to rapidly adapt, evolve, and embrace the cloud. At the same time, they are adding talent that lacks deep storage knowledge. NetApp is perfectly positioned to be the specialists who help them address these concerns.

On-prem and in the cloud, NetApp helps customers unlock the best of both. We bring customers what no other company can: an innovative, no-compromise, unified hybrid cloud experience. Put simply, we help them get more cloud for less cost.

And for that we help our partners build their specialisations accordingly

whether it is an infrastructure, enterprise solutions, and/or cloud, where the partner will be rewarded for taking the market this specialisation and expertise. We have the right incentives and promotions to help the company focus and invest in developing their skills, their teams- their sales team, their technical team, or whomever will be able to add value. If the company opts in for that kind of rewards program, their teams will wake up in the morning, knowing that they have a target to achieve, and how they will achieve it. We will provide them with a complete learning and earning path allowing these teams to compete, win and celebrate great rewards.

What is your outlook for the market for this year and the next couple of years?

NetApp is committed to helping our partners navigate the changes in the marketplace today. We want to ensure that their loyalty and we regularly communicate with them about how our unified partner program is evolving. We want them to fully understand and be more confident with the data fabric and how to align this strategy with their offerings.

We're committed to helping our partners understand how to work with us or industry alliances and how they can be rewarded for their efforts. Trust and loyalty are what is key to a dynamic market and this is what NetApp is focused on building among our partner community, alliances and customers. We are confident this is a good direction we're taking and that it has a lot for our partners, and therefore, for our customers. 36



HTC VIVE TAKES BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH VIVE FOCUS 3 ANNOUNCEMENT IN MEA

TC VIVE, the global leader in premium virtual reality (VR), has set a new benchmark for business VR, bringing 5K resolution and a 120-degree field of view as standard to the new VR headsets announced.

"VIVE Focus 3 heralds a new era of business VR - crafted for stunning visuals while also being durable and lightweight, with superior comfort and ease of use. Our new VIVE Business solutions make it easier than ever for an organisation to use VR, so whether it's a small start-up or a multinational, everyone can benefit from the transformative potential of VR."-Graham wheeler, General manager, HTC

The new All-In-One VIVE Focus 3 is the ultimate solution for business VR, combining outstanding visuals with a smarter ergonomic design, superior audio and next level inside-out tracking and controllers.

VIVE Focus 3 has 5K resolution with class-leading dual 2.5K displays, a smooth 90Hz refresh rate and an ultra-wide 120-degree field of view, for exceptional immersion. The fastswitching display panel uses real RGB subpixels, practically eliminating the screen door effect. The new visuals mean fine details like writing and overall fidelity are dramatically clearer, allowing for software design and user interaction to be more natural.

VIVE Focus 3 delivers superior comfort, with a new strap design, balanced weight distribution, and an intelligently designed curved battery pack which is swappable. VIVE Focus 3's battery pack can be changed in seconds, allowing you to keep going on a non-stop day. Quick charge gives you 50% battery from just 30 minutes of charging, and an L.E.D indicator lets you know how much power you have left.

Durable and lightweight, the magnesium alloy frame of VIVE Focus 3 is 20% lighter and 500% stronger than traditional plastics. VIVE Focus 3 has a wide range and fine-adjustable Inter Pupillary Distance range, as well as a quick-release button and easily removable magnetic front and rear face gaskets - so it's quick and effortless to swap in replacements or clean them - especially important on days when there are lots of different users.

VIVE Focus 3 has new open-back speakers featuring a pair of dual drivers, delivering immersive and true-to-life audio. They are contact-free which means users can still maintain environmental awareness while staying immersed in VR. For peace of mind in VR meetings, a special audio privacy setting dramatically reduces the risk of sound being overheard by people nearby.

VIVE Focus 3 uses an AI powered inside-out tracking algorithm for precise tracking, with privacy at the forefront as all tracking data is stored in an encrypted format on the headset. The redesigned controllers are easy and intuitive to use - one of the lightest 6dof controllers on the market that last for 15 hours on a single charge. Hand tracking support will be released in the future.

VIVE Focus 3 is powered by the premium-quality Qualcomm® Snapdragon[™] XR2 Platform which unlocks staggering performance improvements including twice the CPU and GPU performance and 11x the AI processing compared to its predecessor which powers the original VIVE Focus.

The powerful Qualcomm Snapdragon XR2 Platform is combined with a copper heat pipe and cooling fan, so that it's always cool under pressure. Featuring the all-new VIVE Reality System 2.0 which delivers a more streamlined and professional environment, VIVE Focus 3 will be on sale from first week of july, for AED 5,590 (includes 24-month VIVE business warranty and services, excludes VAT).


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IN PERSPECTIVE // NUTANIX

A LOOK AT THE Knowledge Worker of 2030

By: Andrew Brinded, Senior Vice President EMEA Sales, Nutanix

o understand what enduser computing may look like in 2030, first think about how you work today and consider how you worked 10, 20, 30 years ago. And if you're lucky enough to be too young, ask a colleague.

The Seventies. The knowledge worker of the 1970s had a fixed-line telephone, sheaves of paper documents, possibly a typewriter, memos for written communications, a legion of clerks, a typing pool and precious little other information infrastructure.

The Eighties. As hairstyles got shorter, the office expanded to include early personal computers. IT began to talk more to end-users and business analysts' requests for data to be hauled off mainframes and mid-range servers became more frequent.

The Nineties. Cheaper PCs, laptops, the web, local-area networks, email, mobile phones and client/server IT made this the decade where personal productivity soared.

The Noughties to now. Smartphones abounded, WiFi became ubiquitous, tablets soared, and office workers were released from the shackles of their desks to be effective from anywhere, often selecting their own devices too. Architects design spaces for workers to bump into each other, brainstorm and co-create with farflung colleagues and partners.

But what of the knowledge worker in 2030? Where will this person work from and what tools will s/he use to become optimally effective? It's a fair bet that this person will need to be creative because nobody wants to compete with China (or Indonesia or any low-cost economy) on price, so

INNOVATION WILL BE KEY. IT'S ALSO LIKELY THAT CO-CREATION AND CO-CURATION WILL BECOME MORE IMPORTANT..." innovation will be key. It's also likely that co-creation and co-curation will become more important, so we need tools and spaces that are fun, funky and conducive to getting creative juices flowing. Here are some ideas of what we might see.

Everything is virtual. Desktop PCs will disappear almost entirely except for power-user workstations. Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) will prevail because users will want to see their working environment from any device, whether that's a laptop, tablet, phone, smart watch, smart speaker or something else. We can expect ubiquitous compute capacity everywhere: in domestic appliances, in-car infotainment systems, perhaps baton or cylinder computers with roll up flexible screens, smartphones that can double as PCs, Star Trek-style smart microphones that we pin to clothing.

Streaming is everywhere. Once, a lack of support for advanced graphics was the criticism of VDI but that argument is becoming obsolete. Google's cloud-based Stadia games platform will even support 8k streaming at 150 frames per second. That could mean the computer of the future effectively returning to be a dumb terminal and with hardware



costing perhaps tens of pounds rather than hundreds.

Massive immersive screens. With such great streaming quality, screens may be one of the hottest areas of end-user computing change. It's possible that we will go from today's curved OLED screens to immersive pod units where we are transported into another world of crystal-clear audio and life-like visuals. Your colleague in the US takes a virtual seat in a simulacrum of a meeting room alongside you and calls are finally perfect, thanks to faster broadband and clusters of routers.

Alexa and her friends are coming to you. Voice assistants will become critical to the business user interface, meaning we can control everything from anywhere, hands-free. Bolstered by AI, search will be simplified. Can't find that file? Just say: 'Computer find me that document I wrote about end-user computing in 2030'... and there it is.

Instant computing. Faster boot sequences helped by advanced memory will make computing faster than ever with fewer irritating wait states. Storage becomes less important if streaming dominates but NAND Flash and similar technologies will help with lightning-fast caching and buffering.

Autonomic self-correction. Security and error detection will advance to the point that helpdesk calls are reduced to a minimum as AI and Machine Learning detect and anticipate signs of imminent failures or vulnerabilities and take action without user action.

Long-lasting power. Advanced battery chemistries will let computers run for days on end while solar and wireless charging become ubiquitous.

Faster input. Tools such as Otter provide the ability to transcribe meeting notes with high degrees of accuracy, while Zoom offers a transcription service for conferencing sessions. Expect more automation of clerical tasks such as automatically storing files in a logical place or anticipating next actions based on previous behaviour.

Homes that look like offices, offices that look like homes. For 20 years, designers have created office spaces that bring out the 'kidult' in all of us. Games rooms, comfy sofas, work-out rooms and running tracks abound, but now the tide is turning the other way as the design experts figure out how to bring work capabilities into domestic spaces. So, look out for pullout pods and desks, beds that turn into workspaces, TVs that morph into computers screens and more.

Some of this may sound fanciful and the truth is that it's hard to predict progress with any great degree of accuracy, but think of how working life has changed over the decades and these ideas are far from absurd. In order to win the battle for talent, companies need to provide attractive working environments and great tools for the incoming generation of workers. By tapping into the innate human capacity to innovate, companies that offer the best environments will excel and win over the best people. INTERVIEW // GROUP-IB

THREAT HUNTING-THE INTELLIGENT WAY

Group-IB, a global threat hunting and adversary-centric cyber intelligence company specialising in investigating and preventing hi-tech cybercrimes, has opened its Middle East & Africa Threat Intelligence & Research Center in Dubai. Nicholas Palmer, Head of Global Business at Group-IB speaks to RME about the move and what it means for the region.



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ell us more about Group-IB and how you position yourself in the market. Group-IB has been in the market for the last 18 vears and it started as an investigation and digital forensics and response bureau. So, if someone had an incident, we would be the guys to go in and clean it up, make sure that the threat actors are removed from the network, and most importantly, tell the customer how to defend themselves against such an attack in the future. And basically, here in the region, and all over the world, our intention is to bring this type of capability to customers here in the Middle East, especially. So, we've just opened our regional HQ and Threat Intelligence and research centre in Dubai.

Group-IB's office will not only function simply as a sales and marketing center but also as a full copy of Group-IBs other HQs with all core technological competencies. We are bringing with it the top skills that are found across its global HQ in Singapore and other offices. The office will accommodate about 20 employees from key Group-IB units: hitech crime investigations, Digital Forensics and Incident Response (DFIR) lab, Threat Intelligence, security assessment, Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-GIB), Threat and Fraud Hunting teams, Digital Risk Protection department, and other major divisions.

And we'll lead with our products and services, to show people what type of technical capabilities we have, versus other players that are trying to help them protect their assets.

We know that there are real people are behind cyberattacks. They have behaviours, they have tools that are trackable, and that are preventable. Our cyber investigations and DFIR arms enrich the Group-IB's technology ecosystem with first-hand understanding of intrusion tactics used in the most sophisticated cyberattacks. Group-IB's solutions are now here to help local businesses both protect their networks from these types of attacks, become aware of these threats, and ultimately prevent and respond to them when they happen.

Why did you choose Dubai as the hub of your regional operations?

Dubai is one of the regional strongholds for the coordination of cross-border efforts against cybercrime and research into threat actors and their techniques. The brand-new Threat Intelligence & Research Center enables local community to leverage Group-IB's in-depth knowledge of criminal schemes and close collaboration with international law enforcement and cyber police forces worldwide. The company's battle-tested experts carried out more than 1,200 successful investigations over 18 years around the world enriching the Group-IB's technology ecosystem with first-hand understanding of intrusion tactics used in the most sophisticated cyberattacks. We plan to develop world-class research, monitoring, incident detection and response capabilities here in Dubai and adapt them to the needs of the market.

So, what's going to be the company's strategy for the market?

Knowledge transfer and hiring of local talents are the some of the key elements of Group-IB's strategy. The company plans to have about 50 team members in the UAE within the next 18 months. Leveraging its cyber education arm and successful track record with universities worldwide, the Dubai team will be tasked with investing in local talents by collaborating closely with the UAE higher education institutions. The initial WE'LL LEAD WITH OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT TYPE OF TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES WE HAVE, VERSUS OTHER PLAYERS THAT ARE TRYING TO HELP THEM PROTECT THEIR ASSETS."

hiring focus will be on digital forensics experts, investigators, and cyber threat intelligence and attribution specialists who are expected to join Group-IB's MEA Threat Intelligence & Research Center.

What's your take on the cybersecurity landscape from a business perspective? From a business perspective, at this point that everyone is doing business online. The quick transition has transformed a threat landscape for completely. Many private and public companies were caught unprepared for this in terms of the maturity of their cybersecurity processes and policies. They are not used to doing all of their business online, they're not used to their employees working from home. The combination of this factors created a perfect storm for cybercriminals and nation-state adversaries who are surely taking advantage of the move. And they've developed new techniques and new tools to target and disrupt this mix of business activity.

Ransomware is one of the examples. The ransomware empire prospered during the pandemic. According to Group-IB's report Ransomware Uncovered 2020-2021, the number of ransomware attacks grew by more than 150% in 2020. In 2020, ransomware attacks on average caused 18 days of downtime for the affected companies, while the average ransom amount increased almost twofold. Ransomware is now everyone's concern. Their only motivation is money. It doesn't' matter if you are an energy company or a flag carrier: as long you are potentially capable of paying the ransom you are a target.

The two major vectors of ransomware attacks are good old spear phishing emails and publicly accessible RDP servers. It's clear that traditional sandbox. anti-virus, and anti-spam are not efficient enough. Ransomware attacks are human operated. Most cloud email sandboxes use standard templates for virtual machines that look completely unnatural to adversaries and are therefore easy to both detect and hide from. We have solutions to block, detonate and hunt for the most advanced email threats. They are built on knowledge about real tools and techniques used by the most advanced adversaries. And we are bringing this knowledge and solutions to the region.

Finally, what is your outlook for the region as far as the cybersecurity landscape goes?

I believe that certainly ransomware groups are going to continue to operatebusinesses have to be aware of the weak entry points, the exploits that are used by these groups, the different techniques that they'll use for initial access, and they have to ask themselves, for example, can I detect different exploitation frameworks on my network like cobalt strike and others that ransomware groups might use, does my email need a better protection.

If you don't have the knowledge about how these threat actors operate, or what tools they use, how are you supposed to identify those if they start to attack your network.

I think another is continued cyber espionage in the region by nation state actors. So, with different countries attacking one another from a critical infrastructure and disruption perspective, it can be extremely damaging for a country to not have access to water or to electricity. And it's something that is very concerning to me personally and I'm sure it's very concerning to a lot of governments to know that this is now modern warfare.

INTERVIEW // CYBERKNIGHT



A ZERO-TRUST Approach

Avinash Advani, Founder & CEO at CyberKnight, tells Anita Joseph in an interview, how the company has positioned itself in a rapidly changing market with its Zero-Trust security strategy and exclusive portfolio of offerings.

ybersecurity has become front and centre now especially, in the last one year. How has this impacted businesses? Cybersecurity is a hot topic for the simple reason that over the course of the pandemic, the number of breaches the frequency of breaches and the impact of breaches have exponentially skyrocketed. Just look at the ransomware attacks and look at the high-profile nature of the names that have been reached recently- and we can confidently say that no one is far away from this risk. So it's critical to make sure that you're keeping up with your or maintaining your security posture to defend against the constantly ongoing evolution of cyber-attack techniques. To sum up, the threat landscape has gotten harder from a business perspective, because the need of organisations to defend, detect, prevent and respond to these new attacks has increased exponentially due to the pandemic, with the rampant spread of remote working and therefore, the space for a much larger attack surface.

How has CyberKnight positioned itself in this evolving market?

So, we've just defined the problem of the increasing nature of attacks, and the solution that we find to this problem is what we call Zero-Trust security. Now, Zero-Trust security is a framework that's not new, it's been around for almost a decade. The essence of Zero-Trust is basically to never trust, always verify. Zero-trust, security, in essence, helps an organisation secure its data, no matter where it goes. Historically, in the old days of security people used to believe that if they were sitting behind the firewall, their perimeter, they would be secure. Today, that perimeter is no longer the firewall, it's everywhere. And that extended perimeter and that extended attack surface is what zero-trust security, addresses, so we are proud to say that we were the first Value-Added-Distributor, I think globally, that focuses on zero trust, security, as our go-to market strategy. So be built our entire portfolio, offering mapping to the seven micro perimeters that make up zero trust security. That is our frankly key differentiator from a goto market perspective.

How do you help your partners stay relevant in a rapidly changing market?

The key here is differentiation and profitability-how we can help partners differentiate themselves while achieving profitability. Why? Because we want our partners to be advisors to the end user. How do you become an advisor? First of all, you have to be able to advise on something. So, what we do each year is we carve out unique "solution stories" that are made by taking a very key topic in the industry, looking at the vendors in our portfolio that address that, and then helping partners take that to the market.

This year, our solution stories were around ransomware. Ransomware is 30 years old, and not at all new. But the main difference between then and now is that there's this concept called Ransomwareas-a-Service-there's so many of these tools around that anyone who can find the ransomware as a service offering can conduct a ransomware attack.

When we launched our ransomware stack, we realised that there is no one product that stops ransom. There's no golden bullet or silver bullet, but it requires an understanding of the ransomware attack cycle, and only if you cover the entire attack cycle, can you 100% guarantee prevention of ransomware. So, we built a ransomware solution stack involving six different vendors from our portfolio, and we are running an entire campaign over the course of this year, to spread the message to the partners that outlines what each, what role each of these vendors play in the ransomware stores. So yes, we help partners differentiate themselves and maintain profitability by being an advisor to their customers by not just selling products, but really telling a story around what the challenge is for the customer. And you know the value proposition we give the partner is everything from sales through support, so we help them sell the product, we help them with the technical capabilities the pre-sales, the post-sales, marketing, we engage with them to help them to market, and then post-sales support and stuff that will come from a sale. And if a partner doesn't require any of this, we support them only with

EACH YEAR, WE CARVE OUT UNIQUE SOLUTION-STORIES THAT ARE MADE BY TAKING A KEY TOPIC IN THE INDUSTRY, LOOKING AT THE VENDORS IN OUR PORTFOLIO THAT ADDRESS THAT AND THEN HELPING PARTNERS TAKE THAT TO THE MARKET."

the message. So, they choose where they want us to engage. We work hand-in-hand with different styles of partners to ensure that we have growth across the market.

What are the challenges in this journey, as far as partners are concerned?

The way that people were selling cybersecurity or frankly any IT product pre-pandemic and now is very different. Of course, now with things opening up, we're hearing that customers are going back to their offices slowly but surely, yes, but in all in all, we've been using online sessions to speak to customers. But to sit in front of a customer and be able to present to them and shake their hand and look them in the eye and highlight things is completely different to having a zoom call our team's calls, and doing it even on video, it's different, you lose the personal touch to the advisory capability. So that's been one big challenge.

The second big challenge of course is that when you look at the regional dynamics when the pandemic hit, there was so much uncertainty in the markets- budgets were cut, budgets were delayed, budgets were stalled, there was consolidation of budgets-that of course has impacted partners' ability to convert projects that they had in the pipeline into closed deals. So that has been a problem, of course. I think that the other thing that's really important to understand as well, is that in general, there's been a paradigm shift in the channel over the last few years. There's a lot of interest around MSSPs (Managed Security Service Providers) and those partners that have MSSP skills are doing a really good job. They're making a lot of money, because the market is moving in that direction where they need that kind of Opex- based model to pay and manage their budgets, but also because they need that trusted adviser, a trusted partner to support them through their security journey. Those partners that haven't been able to make that transition, or are struggling to make that transition, are going to get left behind. Because although this part of the world is still very much a systems integration startup market where it's CapEx-based, we're already starting to see the market moving towards a subscription-based model.

Where does it all go from here?

Till the pandemic hit, security used to be a board-level priority. Now it's at the top of the agenda. This means that security budgets will now go up. People will start understanding the value of Zero-Trust, security and SASE and begin moving in those directions because it's the only way in, and because I believe it'll be a while before the world goes back to a 100% pre-pandemic style of operating. There's also going to be innovation within cyber security around AI and Machine Learning, and the rapid adoption to cloud in this part of the world. All of these are going to be key trends in the Middle East. Business, I think, will continue at a normal healthy growth rate. It was growing around 14 to 15% CAGR pre-pandemic, and I expect it to go, potentially even higher than that. I don't know the exact percentages, but I do expect it to maintain at least that percentage or above, over the next, let's say three to four years. 🚥

5-IN-5 // VAIDY PANCHABIKESAN



VAIDY PANCHABIKESAN

REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR AT KISSFLOW

IDEAL MORNING ROUTINE: Yoga followed by a cup of coffee while catching up with the news and industry happenings. I start my workday by dedicating an hour to checking & responding to



.

LESSONS FROM 2020: While 2020 was no doubt and stayed resilient. In business, it promoted a rethinking of the sales approach, with value-based

Rather than focusing on targets and productivity alone, we learnt that it was important to practice empathy with our teams and deliver delight to our customers in

FIVE THINGS I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT:

- Building personal and professional relationships Prospecting new opportunities
- The ambition to constantly advance toward my

THE MOST UNDERRATED TECHNOLOGY: Low-

°¢

become an integral part of the innovation lifecycle in this era of accelerated digital advancement.

5 FUTURE GOALS:

- Get physically fit Nurture the relationships important to me Establish a foundational school in my hometown



POWER LEAGUE GAMING UNVEILS Fully Equipped HI-tech Studio



he MENA region's leading and most disruptive gaming and eSports company, Power League Gaming (PLG), has launched the region's first, fully-equipped 10,000 square foot production studio that has been specifically built to deliver outstanding eSports and gaming content for regional and global audiences.

Set to become home for branded content creation, production and live broadcasts in the Middle East, the PLG studio has been built to host 360° production solutions, features the highest quality technology standards, and also features the latest broadcast hardware and IT infrastructure. The studio's facilities enable the PLG team to deliver seamless live eSports broadcasts and pre-recorded content to a global audience, and has seen leading brands such as adidas, KFC and Lenovo already utilize the space. A unique facility in the MENA region, the studio also features an overlooking café so spectators can view the action in comfort when live broadcasts and events are taking place.

"PLG has been at the forefront of the gaming and eSports sector in the MENA region for the past decade and the company is responsible for the region's most ambitious related activations. It is what has formed our deep understanding of what resonates with Arabic gaming audiences, and what has powered us to launch the region's first production studio that will play an integral part in production and development of the sector in the MENA region." said Mathew Pickering, CEO of Power League Gaming.

Power League Gaming is the MENA region's most disruptive fullservice gaming, content and eSports activation company that is made up of passionate gamers, ex-pro eSports athletes, brand strategists, content creators, designers, and educators. For the past decade, the PLG team has shaped the gaming and eSports sector in the MENA region through its offering of a tailored brand experience from a team that is guaranteed to help clients deliver on their marketing objectives—be it shifting perception, brand equity building, or simply growing the audience base, with tangible ROIs to measure the success.

PLG is Arabic First and actively seeks to engage with Arabic audiences. The company consistently produces ground-breaking, disruptive mechanics that successfully connects global brands with a gaming audience and has also designed engaging content platforms that transfer the skills and experiences necessary to develop the region's next generation of gaming and content leaders.



All-New Speed for Everything

Lightning-Fast Speeds, Always-On Mobility, Continuous Self-Organizing Networking. Redefine Wi-Fi Industry Benchmark.



Contact Us:

- enterpriseME@huawei.com
- e.huawei.com/ae

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