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WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEANS BUSINESS

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CLOUDING YOUR JUDGEMENT

CNME EDITOR MARK FORKER BELIEVES THE PENNY HAS NOW DROPPED FOR BUSINESSES WHO UNDERSTAND THAT TO ACHIEVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION YOU NEED TO BECOME 'CLOUD FIRST'.



DELL TECHNOLOGIES SENIOR DIRECTOR, MERAT

SOFTWARE AG'S CTO, ME & TURKEY

MITEL'S VICE PRESIDENT, CENTRAL EUROPE











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Moving away from the topic of digital transformation, the other key issue impacting the IT ecosystem globally has been ransomware."

TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE

ransformation is everywhere – and that is certainly the central theme to July's edition of CNME!

At CPI Media Group, we were absolutely delighted to host our first physical event after an 18-month sabbatical due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Transformational Leadership Awards, held at the Habtoor Grand Resort, JBR, were a phenomenal success as we gathered to celebrate the IT leaders and enterprises, who have demonstrated outstanding excellence over the last 12 months, through pioneering new innovations, projects, programs, and groundbreaking solutions.

We know that over the last 18 months there has been a tsunami of digital transformation across the Middle East, and a huge uptake and adoption of cloud technologies, but transformation is complex, and we spoke to some industry leaders to find out why some businesses are struggling to adapt to the demands of cloud transformation.

One of those thought leaders is Software AG CTO, Vijay Jaswal, who believes that businesses need to have a 'unified' plan and strategy in place in order to ensure their digital transformation journey is a success.

On the front cover of July's magazine is an independent feature I compiled on the impact of cloud computing, and how cloud technologies really do represent the future, and that enterprises looking to digitally transform, must become 'cloud first'.

Moving away from the topic of digital transformation, the other key issue impacting the IT ecosystem globally has been ransomware.

There has been a spate of ransomware attacks over the last number of months, such as Colonial Pipeline and JBS in the United States, and the HSE in Ireland, all of which caused devasting economic and reputational damage to all parties involved.

SolarWinds, was also the subject of a cyberattack earlier this year when their Orion platform was infected by malware. We spoke to Sascha Giese, Head Geek at SolarWinds to find out how the company responded to the attack – and rebuilt its relations with its customers through a transparent approach.

Remaining on the topic of ransomware, Tarek Kuzbari, Regional Director, Middle East & Turkey, Cybereason, reveals the key findings of its report on ransomware attacks in the UAE.

CNME were also present at Huawei Middle East IP Carnival Club 2021, which outlined how businesses can leverage the capabilities of the latest network technology to better prepare themselves for the 'intelligent era'.

In addition to this, there is interviews with Dell Technologies, Io21's Hailey Yoon, Mitel, Orange Business Services and UNDP Egypt.

Enjoy!

Mark Forker Editor





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EN IN TEC

6 News

CNME rounds up the biggest regional and global developments in enterprise technology, which includes the announcement that du and Wipro have launched a new multi-cloud platform to accelerate digital transformation, AVEVA and Rib announce their new strategic partnership, and the fastest growing smartphone brand in the world realme is officially released in the UAE.

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32 Software AG's CTO, Vijay Jaswal, believes that the digital strategy of an organisation needs to be driven by the CEO in the new digital economy.

42 Walid Yehia, Senior Director, Pre-Sales for Infrastructure Solutions Group, MERAT, Dell Technologies, highlighted how companies need to cultivate a culture of innovation in order to remain competitive in the current business environment.

FOUNDER, CPI Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

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While the publishers have made every

du and Wipro launch a Multi-Cloud Platform



du, from Emirates Integrated

Telecommunications Company (EITC), and Wipro Limited, a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company, today announced the launch of their new Multi-Cloud Platform. The two companies have partnered to deliver market-leading multi-cloud management and migration capabilities through this platform, which aligns with their aims to simplify and accelerate digital transformation and cloud adoption across the UAE. The partnership will enable organisations to minimise risks and maximise return on investment for migration and management across multi-cloud environments.

Through this Multi-Cloud Platform, du and Wipro will help organisations reimagine their infrastructure, create new cost efficiencies, and deliver compliant, trusted, and secure solutions. It will act as a "single pane of glass" that will help clients completely manage their cloud estate. du's digital infrastructure will provide agile, resilient, and scalable solutions on a foundation of hybrid, multi-cloud, data centre services, and software-defined enterprise networks. The company's comprehensive tools and managed services will ensure maximum value, supporting clients' digital infrastructure and transformation requirements, optimising costs, and boosting organisational efficiency.

D-Link Reveals Latest Connectivity Innovations at Mobile World Congress 2021

D-Link, a global leader in

networking technologies, will unveil its latest networking technologies engineered for enterprise 5G private networks, cloud-managed campus networks, on-premise SMB networks, and smart home networks at this year's Mobile World Congress (MWC), in Barcelona, Spain.

All over the world, the pandemic and continued 'stay-at-home culture' has resulted in a natural reliance on technology and being connected, and created an overwhelming rise in decentralised workforces. Business owners have had to accept the impact this will have on the future of work, re-evaluate their existing network infrastructure, and adapt to the



decentralisation of the workplace by leveraging new technologies to help them optimise efficiency and productivity.

What's more, the new global mobile workforce also demands advanced technologies to enable remote working. With that in mind, D-Link's latest 5G Private Network, Nuclias Connect, Nuclias Cloud, and Smart Home solutions are specifically designed to support this new era of connectivity.

Rapid Digital Transformation Highlights Need for Virsec's Workload Protection



Bobby Gupta, Senior Vice President & Managing Director International, Virsec

Virsec, the industry leader in

application-aware workload protection, announced that regional companies emerging out of the pandemic are accelerating their investments into digital transformation. They are increasingly concerned about the everyday announcements of cybersecurity compromises at large and medium enterprises, global and regional.

As organisations face growing sophistication of cyberattacks, the demand for effective solutions is skyrocketing. Advanced attack techniques, that execute at runtime in the memory layer, have become mainstream and companies are struggling to combat them.

Virsec Security Platform delivers a powerful solution for container workload protection with runtime visibility and zero-dwell-time defense throughout running container images, including binaries, libraries, interpreted code, and memory.

"It is imperative we change the way we think about the protection of our assets and infrastructure. Conventional security tools, like blacklisting models, were designed to address yesterday's challenges, and we can't continue to accept these offerings as the ideal option to mitigate advanced threat scenarios", said Bobby Gupta, Senior Vice President and Managing Director International, Virsec.

Logitech Debuts Wireless Earbuds Built for Business

Today, Logitech is helping

professionals stay clear, confident and connected in the next phase of hybrid work with the launches of its Zone True Wireless and Zone Wired Earbuds, the first targeted to be certified by all three major cloud video conferencing platforms—Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom Video Communications, Inc.

As many workplaces make a lasting transition to hybrid work environments, being connected has never been more important for employees joining video meetings and collaborating from different locations. Logitech Zone True Wireless earbuds upgrade video calls with the shape and fit users love, combined with the powerful audio that professionals need. Equipped with a premium noise-canceling mic and Active Noise Cancellation, Zone True Wireless gives crystal clear audio on every call, regardless of distracting surroundings. This, along with a minimalist, modern design, enables a stylish look and a



Loubna Imenchal, Head of Video collaboration for AMECA region

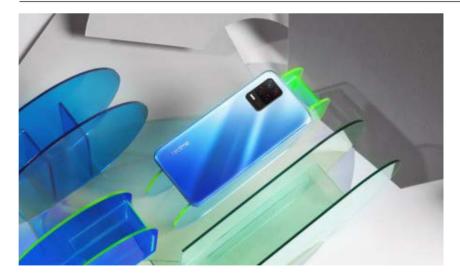
high-quality sound on video that helps users stay in the zone.

Bluetooth plus the USB receiver provides a reliable connection between Zone True Wireless and both your smartphone and your computer, allowing users to effortlessly join video meetings and phone calls, moving easily between their two devices – all with double the battery life of leading consumer devices.

These features give users confidence that their wireless earbuds are ready for every video meeting. Additionally, the certification with major video conferencing platforms sets a higher bar for audio than leading consumer offerings, and for IT managers, it provides reliable performance across multiple devices within their entire IT ecosystem.

"Zone True Wireless and Zone Wired Earbuds will enable executives in the Middle East to embrace the hybrid working model by enhancing their ability to communicate and collaborate seamlessly across devices", said Loubna Imenchal, Head of Video collaboration for AMECA region (Africa, Middle East, Turkey, and Central Asia). "Professionals will also be able to improve their online training and learning experiences with these innovative earbuds, which can boost concentration by cancelling distracting noise while providing unprecedented levels of comfort and convenience".

realme 8 5G is Officially Released in UAE



realme the world's fastest growing smartphone brand, announced today releasing the new smartphone realme 8 5G to raise the bar in the 5G phone

market, with the Dimensity 700 5G Processor being brought into the price segment to achieve an extraordinary 5G performance. Realme 8 5G realises an 8.5mm super slim design for a perfect feel, continuing to lead the tech-design field of the industry. 90Hz Ultra Smooth Display and 5000mAh massive battery are also equipped to make realme 8 5G more powerful than ever before.

Infinity Design

realme 8 5G is the thinnest 5G smartphone in the market. It has an 8.5mm super slim body, being as light as 185g, while still feeling great in the hand. Delivers a comfortable experience with every grip.

To achieve this design concept, realme used a high-gloss indium plating process on Supersonic Blue to restore a glossy sense of light; on Supersonic Black, we used a lenticular pattern process to present a premium mirror effect to bring out the sense of light better.

AVEVA and RIB announce strategic partnership



Peter Herweck, CEO, AVEVA

AVEVA, a global leader in industrial

software, driving digital transformation and sustainability, announced today that it has signed a partnership agreement with RIB Software (RIB), a global leader in digital technologies for construction, to enhance AVEVA's Project Execution portfolio offering for process and plant industries. The integration will extend the AVEVA Unified Project Execution solution to include new capabilities from the RIB MTWO platform such as enhanced estimation and project cost controls, more powerful dashboards and KPI monitoring, and optimised construction management with full Connected Worker capabilities in the Cloud.

Together with RIB, AVEVA will connect project teams and allow them to collaborate more effectively by bringing together the engineering, procurement and construction functions to deliver a true design to delivery solution.

Peter Herweck, CEO, AVEVA, said, "Data-led project intelligence drives real-time transparency and elevates enterprise-wide business performance by connecting teams with data and boosting collaboration. We are excited about the potential of incorporating RIB Software's and AVEVA's portfolio capabilities into a leading-edge digital project execution solution".

eScan's Cybersecurity solutions provide proactive protection against Kaseya VSA attacks

Leaders in the cybersecurity domain,

MicroWorld Technologies have assured their clients and organisations across the world that security solutions under their flagship brand eScan have the necessary capability to detect and respond to the recent Kaseya VSA cyber-attack that has crippled nearly a million systems to date.

Kaseya VSA was recently hit with a crippling supply chain ransomware attack by the notorious REvil ransomware gang. In order to access the data of what they claim to be over one million systems, the REvil gang, also known as Sodinokibi, has requested for \$70 million or around INR 520 crore ransom. Hundreds of organisations that were using the software provided by Kaseya VSA were affected as a result of this attack.

In the face of this grave situation, Mr. Govind Rammurthy, MD & CEO of MicroWorld Technologies offers solace, "With our futuristic technologies spread across a wide range of cybersecurity solutions, we at MicroWorld are



Govind Rammurthy, MD & CEO, MicroWorld Technologies

confident that we can successfully mitigate this new threat that has risen with eScan's multilayered approach towards cybersecurity, covering endpoints, networks, servers, and mobiles. In this scenario, our Proactive Behavioural Analysis Module successfully blocks the execution of REvil ransomware that is responsible for the Kaseya VSA cyber-attack".

IBC Group to end Bitcoin and Ethereum mining in China

The IBC group has significant Bitcoin

and Ethereum mining operations across China and has over 1500 people employed in more than 40 cities. The group, which has invested in over 4000 different Blockchain projects including playing an instrumental role in the launch of Ethereum 2.0, with around 100,000 Ether staked - has responded to the recent crackdown on cryptocurrency mining in China, with the decision to close down all its Bitcoin and Ethereum mining facilities in the nation. The group plans to move its staff to UAE, Canada, USA, Kazakhstan, Iceland, and various South American countries.

Khurram Shroff, noted 'Arab



Khurram Shroff, Chairman of the IBC Group

Whale' and Chairman of the IBC Group, "We believe that while the Chinese crackdown is a temporary inconvenience, the diversified location of mining facilities is great news for the rest of the world", Khurram said. "As a company headquartered in Toronto, the fastest growing tech hub in North America, we feel perfectly positioned to take advantage of these changes".

Businesses are not equipped to deliver on customer experience, IFS study finds

Businesses are missing out on a

significant opportunity to fix internal processes and address the root causes of customer experience issues in the wake of the pandemic, research from enterprise software specialist IFS has today revealed.

The global study, which surveyed 1,700+ executives and 12,000+ consumers, uncovered that despite the majority of companies (66 percent) investing upwards of \$250,000 each year evaluating the customer experience through Net Promoter Scores, reviews, and customer satisfaction surveys, 82 percent were unable to recall a single positive example of a recent frictionless customer experience—showing current customer experience processes do little more than wallpaper over the cracks.



Michael Ouissi, IFS Chief Customer Officer

While much attention is paid to customer service, the inflection points that occur throughout the lifecycle of an operation and encompass processes, technology solutions, and human coordination are even more important to business outcomes,

yet even more frequently overlooked. Only by careful orchestration of these components can companies deliver a quality 'Moment of Service', in which everything comes together to create a positive result for a customer.

"When it comes to delivering a positive customer experience, businesses have a limited opportunity to get it right. And if they neglect a single inflection point, they are gambling with their outcomes, including profits and margins", IFS Chief Customer Officer Michael Ouissi said. "There are many points where you can either delight or disappoint a customer across the value chain and it is clear from these findings that consumers are willing to voice their opinions either way. As more and more businesses look to service provision as a key competitive differentiator, running the right enterprise software—engineered for the moment

Red Hat and Nutanix Announce Strategic Partnership

Red Hat, the world's leading provider of enterprise open source solutions, and Nutanix, a leader in hybrid multicloud computing, today announced a strategic partnership to enable a powerful solution for building, scaling and managing cloud-native applications on-premises and in hybrid clouds. The collaboration brings together industry-leading technologies, enabling installation, interoperability and management of Red Hat OpenShift and Red Hat Enterprise Linux with Nutanix Cloud Platform, including Nutanix AOS and AHV.

Key elements of the partnership include:

• Red Hat OpenShift as the preferred choice for enterprise full stack Kubernetes on Nutanix Cloud Platform.

Customers looking to run Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Red Hat OpenShift on hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) will be able to use an industry-leading cloud platform from Nutanix, which includes both Nutanix AOS and AHV.

• Nutanix Cloud Platform is now a preferred choice for HCI for Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Red Hat OpenShift. This will enable customers to deploy virtualised and containerised workloads on a hyperconverged infrastructure, building on the combined benefits of Red Hat's open hybrid cloud technologies and Nutanix's hyperconverged offerings.

• Nutanix AHV is now a Red Hat certified hypervisor enabling full support for Red Hat Enterprise Linux and OpenShift on Nutanix Cloud

Platform. The certification of the Nutanix built-in hypervisor, AHV, for Red Hat Enterprise Linux and OpenShift offers enterprise customers a simplified full stack solution for their containerised and virtualised cloud-native applications. This certification delivers Red Hat customers additional choice in hypervisor deployments, especially as many organisations explore innovative, modern virtualisation technologies.

Joint engineering roadmap providing robust interoperability.

Red Hat and Nutanix will focus on delivering continuous testing of Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Red Hat OpenShift with Nutanix AHV to provide robust interoperability. The companies will also collaborate to deliver more timely support



Paul Cormier, President and CEO, Red Hat

by aligning product roadmaps.

• More seamless support experience providing faster resolution times for joint customers. Customers will be able to contact either company with support issues. The two companies are collaborating to deliver a best-in-class support experience for the interoperability of the certified products.

Because of its distributed architecture, Nutanix Cloud Platform delivers an IT environment that is highly scalable and resilient, and well-suited for enterprise deployments of Red Hat OpenShift at scale. The platform also includes fully integrated unified storage, addressing many tough challenges operators routinely face in configuring and managing storage for stateful containers.



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MITEL

TAKING THE RIGHT CHANNEL

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Thomas Veit,** Vice President, Central Europe, Mitel, to find out how the global pandemic impacted the global unified communications leader, its strategy for growth in the MEA region – and the importance of the channel ecosystem in the company's success.



n March 2020, our world was fundamentally reshaped forever due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which ground the global economy to a halt overnight. The uncertainty and economic fallout led to multiple job losses, and businesses were forced to find new ways to continue to their operations.

The transition from a physical working office to a virtual one, presented many obstacles and challenges for businesses, but companies like Mitel, one of the world's leading players in unified communications had the solution, tools, and technologies to assist and empower business in an era now labelled as the 'new normal'.

I spoke to Mitel Vice President Thomas Veit on his recent visit to Dubai, a veteran of the IT unified communications space, he had never previously encountered such a situation in his long and distinguished career.

Over the last 18 months, Mitel has enjoyed phenomenal growth as businesses globally leverage the capabilities of its portfolio to enjoy a seamless working experience, but as Veit pointed out in our discussion when the pandemic first struck the opportunities were not so obvious.

"Initially, when COVID-19 happened, we did not see it as an opportunity, in fact we viewed it as a threat. However,

the decision which was made by governments across the world to go into lockdown, created an environment in which businesses had no choice but to transition from their physical office to a virtual one. They were coming to us because we are a leader in the unified communications space – and had the solutions and tools required to enable enterprises to maintain business continuity," said Veit.

Six months before the global lockdown, Mitel, who are always striving to innovate, decided to launch their MiTeam Meetings video conferencing tool, but as Veit highlighted their shrewd decision to provide access to the platform for free would pay

dividends for the company in the long run.

"We had only launched our MiTeam Meetings video conferencing tool about six months before the pandemic struck, but one of the first things we did was to provide businesses with a free trial to the platform, and they loved it. However, what this also did was expose these businesses to explore the other opportunities available to them with Mitel as a vendor, because we have the largest portfolio in the industry from all our acquisitions and I think we really do have a solution for everything, regardless of what industry you operate in, or what services you require," said Veit.

Mitel's success is best illustrated in its financial performance over the last couple of quarters, which Veit described as 'outstanding'.

"In Q2 last year, naturally, we were forced to re-evaluate, and we took decisions that reshaped our strategic direction, but it was not a good quarter for us, but that was largely down to the uncertainty that was in the market and economy as a direct result of the pandemic. However, Q3 was that much of a success for us that we compensated for all our losses in Q2 - and Q4 was just absolutely outstanding for us, because at that stage it had became clear to businesses globally that the future of the workplace for at least the next 6-12 months was going to



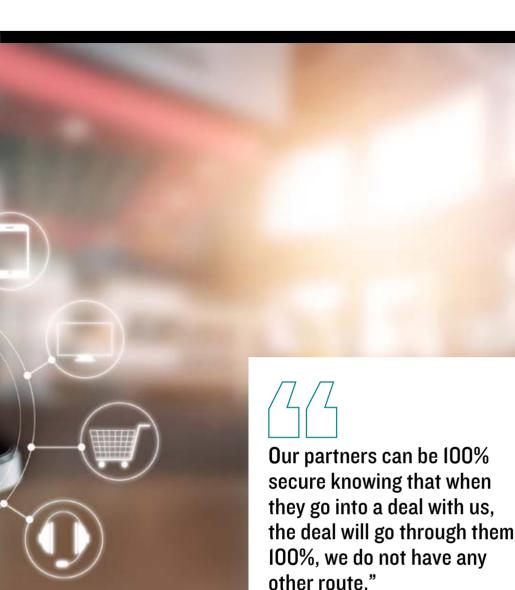
continue to be a hybrid one," said Veit.

Veit added that what exactly the future of the workplace looks like remains undetermined and unknown, and declared that what is certain is that things will not return to what they once were pre-COVID.

The Vice President of Central Europe, at Mitel, said a key differentiator for the company was their focus on developing products that were of the highest quality.

"We focus on high quality, so that means when we talk about audio, we are talking about HD audio and when we are talking about video, we are talking about HD video. I do not want to name any of our competitors, but if you take our phone set and compare it to any of our rivals in the market, then there is no comparison. Our products are of the highest, highest quality, and that also been a key factor in our growth and success, not only here in the Middle East, but also in all our other key markets," said Veit.

Mitel has been present in the Middle East for a considerable period, but Veit said that prior to his appointment, the company had lost its focus in the region.



"We have a large install base here across the Middle East, because we have been present here for decades, but at some stage along the way, the company really lost its focus in the Middle East market. When I took over one of the first things that I did was reestablish that focus, because I was acutely aware of the growth potential here, but this growth potential is a different one, this is all about market share, which is a totally different game," said Veit.

Mitel invested aggressively into the region and yielded significant returns on that

investment, but then the pandemic brought it to a shuddering halt.

We made a series of investments, and we grew very nicely from 2018–2019, enjoying double-digit growth. I intended to make more investments, but then the pandemic happened, but the impact of COVID-19, coupled with a drastic fall in oil prices was a disaster. However, we are now back on the growth path and have enjoyed some very good quarters," said Veit.

Veit also stressed the importance of its channel strategy and described its approach as another key

differentiator in its business.

"We have one go-tomarket strategy at Mitel, and that is through our channel partners, and that is a unique approach. There are no sales done directly, we are a 100% channel company. What we do is we high-touch customers to help our channels, and every one of our sales is conducted via one of our partners. Our partners can be 100% secure knowing that when they go into a deal with us, the deal will go through them 100%, we do not have any other route. We have a Tier 1 and Tier 2 model, but both as partners, one is going through a distributor over a partner to a customer, and the other is going through a larger system integrator directly to the customer. That is only go-to market that we know, and we will never change that model," concluded Veit.

The region's flagship technology and IT exhibition GITEX Technology Week is only a few months away and Veit has confirmed their presence at the conference.

"Mitel's signature and consistent event for partner and customers event Mitel United is on its way during GITEX Technology Week in October, and I am really looking forward to joining the together with Scott Peterson, Mitel Chief Revenue Officer and Ilona Masche, Marketing Director Central Europe to discuss all our latest solutions and technologies," said Veit.



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BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Hailey Yoon**, Co-Founder and CTO of Dubai-based tech firm IO21, in the latest series of our Women in Tech spotlight features, to find out how she is helping to break down outdated stereotypes for women in STEM positions, and how she is inspiring the next-generation to choose IT as their profession.

ypically, this segment of the magazine has profiled female executives who have enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the industry.

However, our focus in July's edition of CNME, is on Hailey Yoon, who despite being just 25 years-old, has already achieved so much in the IT and technology ecosystem here in the Middle East.

In addition to being the co-founder of a thriving tech boutique in the UAE, Yoon is also a part-time student at the fabled Stanford University, where she is completing a postgraduate in Artificial Intelligence.

We began our conversation by focusing on IO21, the company co-founded by Yoon, to learn more about the services it provides, and the rapid expansion it has undergone.

"IO21 started out as a software-based company, and I initially was just helping friends, but we quickly started to acquire a lot of clients, and before I knew it, we had grown into a tech firm! Our focus at the start was on software development, so essentially things like mobile applications and website development, but recently we expanded our portfolio to include technology consultation," said Yoon.

Io21 works with a very broad and diverse range of clients, and as Yoon points out they have also started to switch their focus on next-gen technologies such as AI and blockchain.

"We are engaged with a wide-range of clients spanning

What our clients really like about us, is the fact that we do not compromise speed over quality."

from small startup companies all the way to publicly listed companies, but typically we provide software technology solutions in relation to development primarily, whilst we also recently became involved in blockchain development in AI and ML solutions. One other aspect of our business model is to assist clients looking to upgrade their software and enhance their legacy architecture to make it ready for the new demands of the digital economy," said Yoon.

The IT industry is saturated, and it can be a difficult environment to secure clients and market share, but IO21 has been able to establish itself as a leading solutions provider despite being a nascent company, but what differentiates them for their market rivals?

"What our clients really like about us, is the fact that we do not compromise speed over quality. We know that sometimes you will have companies build you something in a week, but the quality would not meet the expectations, but what we provide and propose is that we can build things very fast, but the quality comes with it. It is also important to point out that we are also a small boutique tech firm, so our clients are not one of many, but instead the client, in which we use all our best resources on, and that customer-centric approach is a key differentiator for us in the market. Transparency is also a

AA

We want to solve these security problems by leveraging existing tools like Al and blockchain to make companies more resilient and better protected."

key principle for us, sometimes we will tell clients we cannot take on their project right now, as we have too many other projects ongoing, but on this specific date we can take on the project and make our best resources available to you to help you deliver the results that you want," said Yoon.

Traditionally, the IT industry has been a male-dominated environment, and whilst strides have been made over the years, the disparity remains. As a young woman that is having a huge impact on the sector, Yoon is perfectly placed to share her experiences, and what she thinks the industry needs to do to reverse this trend, and how it can promote greater inclusion and encourage more women to work in the STEM field.

"It's been very challenging in many ways, and especially



in the Middle East, as there are not many female software engineers. I think there is a lack of awareness in the UAE, although it is changing slowly growing, but not as big as say in the United States, Europe. I think when the awareness is more populated in the area, we will see more women engineers in the STEM field. I have attended many meetings as a software engineer, and very often I will be mistaken for someone that is in a secretarial, or administrative role, and one time I was asked to go and make coffee! It is minor things that can discourage you, so it certainly can be challenging at times to break down outdated stereotypes," said Yoon.

Unsurprisingly, considering

JULY 2021



some of her experiences, Yoon is keen to position IO21 as being a champion for women empowerment in the IT industry, and highlighted some of the initiatives she is helping to spearhead.

"We are very proactive in terms of women empowerment in terms of mentoring college students. I am a mentor for NIU Manhattan, for women in engineering. They ask me about my experiences - and come to me for advice in relation to certain issues that they have encountered in the field. It might not always be the best solution, but I try to steer them away from making the same mistakes I did, and it is important that we can come together and talk openly

about the issues we have faced, and determine what steps to take in order to overcome adversities, because as I said earlier it only takes something minor to happen to become discouraged," said Yoon.

In terms of its growth strategy for the future, Yoon stated that their focus will remain on disruptive technologies that are transforming industries.

"As a company we will focus on AI and blockchain, because security has become one of the biggest concerns for companies in light of the recent ransomware attacks that we have witnessed. The fact of the matter is the more online users we have, the more security breaches there will be,

so it imperative that enterprises protect their assets. We want to solve these security problems by leveraging existing tools like AI and blockchain to make companies more resilient and better protected," said Yoon.

Yoon has been selected as a finalist for the Women Tech Founders Program in the Middle East and North Africa. The U.S. Department of State, through the Providing Opportunities for Women's Economic Rise (POWER) initiative and Embassy Abu Dhabi, has partnered with Google's Women Techmakers to host the Women Tech Founders Program.

Yoon expressed her delight at being chosen as a finalist for the program.

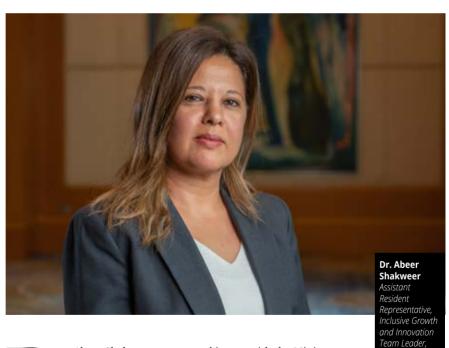
"I am thrilled that IO21 has been selected as a finalist for the Women Tech Founders Program in the Middle East and North Africa, and am honored to be a part of this meaningful initiative of empowering and supporting women in tech. I'm looking forward to the training sessions conducted by Google experts and to connect with other women tech entrepreneurs from across the region and the U.S," concluded Yoon.

Yoon, is certainly a driven and ambitious individual, and has already achieved so much, but she is hell bent on breaking down those gender barriers that still exist for women in IT, especially here in the Middle East – one thing is for sure and that is we will hearing a lot more about Hailey Yoon.

UNDP

INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR ALL

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Dr. Abeer Shakweer,** Assistant Resident Representative, Inclusive Growth and Innovation Team Leader, UNDP Office, Egypt, to find out more about the key role she is playing in terms of making digital transformation accessible to all segments of society in Egypt.



r. Abeer Shakweer has enjoyed a distinguished career in ICT, and prior to her current role with the UNDP Office, Egypt, she spent eight years working with the Ministry of Telecoms in the country. She said that her current position at UNDP involves the continuation of many projects that she was

working on with the Ministry, and in many ways is an extension of her previous role, but on a larger scale.

UNDP Office,

Egypt

"My primary role at the Ministry of Telecoms was to utilise technology and make it accessible for marginalised groups. When I moved to the UNDP, I was tasked with the responsibility of driving

digital transformation, but one of the core pillars of that digital transformation was developing an inclusive growth and innovation portfolio. At UNDP, we are also focused on leveraging technology to accelerate sustainable development. I am still working closely with the Ministry of Telecoms through seven projects that are running in parallel between the UNDP and the Ministry of Communications and IT, and those projects have been specifically designed to drive digital transformation in areas such as human resources, regulatory frameworks, and inclusion through disruptive technologies to ensure that we create an efficient and robust infrastructure for digital transformation, so in many ways I am continuing what I was working on when I was at the Ministry, but perhaps on a larger scale," said Shakweer.

Shakweer highlighted that digital transformation is a key priority for the Egyptian government but caveated that

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many challenges are preventing them for delivering a digital transformation experience that is inclusive for all its citizens.

"Digital transformation is top of the agenda for the Egyptian government, and they are performing reasonably well in terms of providing better digital governmental services to citizens. However, there remains a number of challenges, such as the regulatory framework, which is not designed to enable services such as digital identity programs and electronic signatures, so the regulatory framework needs to be adapted in order to deliver digital transformation that is effective and efficient," said Shakweer.

Inclusivity is close to her heart, and one other key challenge in Egypt according to Dr. Shakweer is that many citizens are excluded from tapping into and unlocking the benefits provided by digital technologies through digital literacy and poor infrastructure.

"Digital literacy is a big problem in Egypt, especially outside of the capital and in other major cities. This needs to be addressed if we want to enable these citizens to fully benefit from the digital transformation initiative that the government is pursuing. Inclusion is another challenge, but when I use the term inclusion, I am not only talking about gender, or a lack of accessibility for those in rural areas, but instead those that have disabilities, or refugees and asylum seekers that are disconnected from digital services, these are segments of our society that need special attention and need to

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Digital transformation needs to be accessible for everyone in our society."

be included in our nationwide digital transformation agenda," said Shakweer.

Shakweer stressed that the government were aware of these issues and are moving quickly to address them, adding that ICT professionals also required support if they want to execute their digital transformation goals.

"UNDP are pushing in the direction of inclusive digital transformation and building the capacity, not only for the citizens, but also for the professionals in the field of ICT, because if we want to leapfrog and accelerate digital transformation then we need to have qualified human resources," said Shakweer.

Shakweer said that at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the UNDP immediately started supporting the government in terms of their response to startups and SMEs.

"We partnered with SMEs to upgrade the marketplace and enhance its efficiency, whilst we also provided e-learning materials to the companies to know how to effectively use the platform and how to access existing and new markets. We needed to help them maintain business continuity and they had to embrace new technologies and e-commerce to allow this to happen. We are also continuing to work

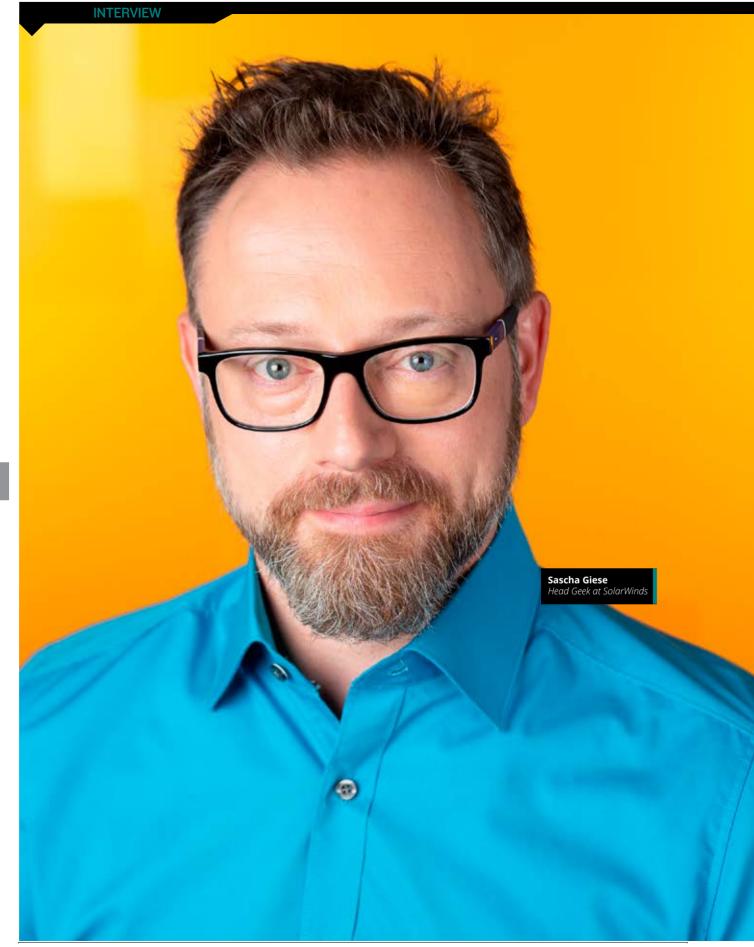
with SMEs to provide them with cloud-based services and automation as part of an effort to create a one-stop shop. It is a very broad vision designed to support the digitalisation of SMEs." said Shakweer.

The Assistant Resident
Representative at the UNDP Office
in Egypt also disclosed that they
partnered with the Ministry of
Health to support them through
the development of their chatbot
that gave the public information
and guidance on COVID-19.

"We were acutely aware that some segments of our society would not have access to such information. So, what we did was collaborate with the Ministry of Communications and IT, and Avaya to create a chatbot that gives information and guidance to persons with hearing disabilities because they are one of the most excluded groups during a crisis. This chatbot relays the same information given to the public, but in sign language," said Shakweer.

She concluded a wonderful discussion by revealing that their primary aims will be to deliver greater digitalisation for SMEs and a digital transformation agenda that includes everyone regardless of their socioeconomic situation.

"Our primary focus now is on the digitalisation of SMEs because they are the backbone of the economy. However, we are also aware that with the advancement in digital technologies there will be certain segments of our society that will be totally excluded from this. Digital transformation needs to be accessible for everyone in our society," concluded Shakweer.



SOLARWINDS

TRANSPARENCY IS THE BEST PRACTICE

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Sascha Giese**, Head Geek at SolarWinds, to find out how the company coped with the fallout from the cyberattack on their Orion software system, the best practices needed to drive new innovations in IT – and their effort to make their products and solutions more secure.

SolarWinds' product focus and targeted userbase - and how are you helping IT professionals to better manage their complex IT environments?

SolarWinds® products focus on the individuals working in various IT roles: IT

A career in IT can be exciting and rewarding, and most professionals with a passion for technology enjoy the responsibility of driving innovation for their employers."

professionals. A career in IT can be exciting and rewarding, and most professionals with a passion for technology enjoy the responsibility of driving innovation for their employers.

But the job can be difficult, as technology changes at the same pace as the demands of the business. It's not easy to stay on top of these changes while maintaining a running infrastructure—the backbone of the organisation—at the same time.

Our products aim to support these professionals in their day-to-day tasks, and they use various technologies to make complex IT environments manageable, whether they're on-premises, hybrid, or any form of cloud or containers.

We understand 20-yearold storage arrays as well as hyper-converged SDS, and our solutions support applications running locally on Linux as well as highly distributed microservices.

We know SolarWinds was the victim of a high-profile cyberattack, but how did the SolarWinds IT community respond in terms of the investigation you launched and how you communicated the issue?

Early on, it was obviously a shock to many. Outside of the incident response team, few knew much about what happened, or how broad the impact might be. We communicated with customers, partners, and the public as openly and quickly as possible, while supporting ongoing investigations.

We put our customers first and not only kept them up to date, but suggested additional measures to take, and we had hotfixes ready for our software within three days.

Many IT professionals and their organisations depend on our solutions, and we can't leave them in the dark. Our open communication was well received by our customer base and the IT community in general.

Let's face it: this incident caused concern for our customers and created a lot of extra work. No one likes that. It was our duty to inform our customers, and we created a free program to actively support them in the process of securing their environment.

This included assisted upgrades, updating software certificates, and more.

Why do current software development procedures that are often considered as best practice industry standards still require even more secure practices?

Best practices are what they are because they've proven to be efficient, fail-safe, and easy to follow, just as good process management should be.

They're the result of a long trial-and-error phase and based on experience. And here's the thing: because of this, they aren't always up to date.

Software development in particular is a field with slow innovations—even agile is two decades old. Adding security into the development process wasn't really a necessity. It was actually quite the contrary, as adding security significantly increases the cost of software development.

It was our duty to inform our customers, and we created a free program to actively support them in the process of securing their environment."

As a result, engineers relied on the infrastructure security measures already in place. The sophistication of the attack tells us not only do the requirements for processes need to change, but the whole industry needs to change their mindset, too. This wasn't the first of these attacks, and unfortunately, it likely won't be the last.

What do you believe are the key components and fundamental principles in achieving safer software developments and products? Security needs to be part of each step in software design and development. In the last few years, we saw an advancement in securing networks and infrastructure, but this required a changed mindset, too. This change involved going from perimeter security and thinking "our firewall will protect us" to the zero-trust model. In the zero-trust model, you assume you're already breached, and you have mitigations in place everywhere.

To improve the security of software development, it's important to get many experts on board—both internal and external—to spot weaknesses, check what's already in place, and find room for improvement.



It's a good idea to discuss possible risks and remediation plans with their vendors. Just a few weeks ago, there was another instance in the news of a design flaw in a popular VPN vendor, which has been actively abused. You can't plan for such risks, but it's possible to mitigate their impact.

What are steps to enhance the product development environment and secure software?

At SolarWinds, we identified our





source code hadn't been touched, but the threat actor was present in the build environment, where source code gets compiled into the final product to make it ready for shipping.

What we're now implementing is basically multiple independent development lines, with two build environments. This process will help ensure both compiled executables are identical before they're processed any further. But this isn't enough. There are additional automated and manual checks in place now to verify the authenticity of both the source code and the products, from the moment the code gets written on a developer's machine all the way to publishing the product.

And though we already used various solutions to secure both the endpoints and our infrastructure as a whole, we've added additional layers of security. We paid attention to the use of service accounts, as they're of particular interest for attackers, and we removed permissions that weren't strictly necessary.

We reflected on general security policies, too, and enforced multi-factor authentication for the entire company. Furthermore, we're continuing to work with security specialists to improve our overall posture. We'll also continue to share the measures we're taking and our experiences with other software vendors, as we hope to help them prevent a similar incident.

What is SolarWinds strategy on further innovations, products and features that are necessary for digitisation?

Over the past few months, our focus has been on making our products more secure, and we shifted most of our engineering resources to this area while also researching further innovations.

For example, we added machine learning into one of our products, and we'd like to extend the same technology into other products, too. This will help relieve IT professionals, as it'll be easier for them to understand relations and the impact individual events have on the bigger picture. We work closely with our customers, and they have a say in what we work on next. This helps us focus on what's essential for them.

When it comes to digital transformation, we already provide a lot of assistance in our products for connecting to resources in different locations including clouds.

Once connectivity works, the next step is making sure applications talk to each other as intended. We have automated application-dependent mapping in our products, a feature designed to point to the weakest link in the application delivery.

In addition, we already brought microservice and process information into our platform, and one of our next steps is improving the way we make sense of all of this information. Actually, we're going to attend GITEX this year with our local Partners, and we're looking forward to showing how this is working.

CLOUD COMPUTING

CLOUD ISTHE FUTURE

CNME Editor Mark Forker takes a closer look at the role cloud computing is going to play in terms of being the main fulcrum for businesses to grow and expand in the new and at times complex digital economy we find ourselves immersed in – and highlights the importance of embracing cloud technologies to deliver digital transformation.

t has been welldocumented by
now that the global
COVID-19 pandemic
was a catalyst for digital
transformation en-masse,
especially here in the Middle
East, and enterprises strategy
for migrating to the cloud
was accelerated well ahead of
schedule to meet and cope with
the new market demands being
placed upon their traditional
business models.

There are many technologies that fuel our digital ecosystem, but the impact of cloud computing on the Middle East GDP cannot be understated, and it has positioned itself to be the critical technology that underpins everything from security to data management and everything else in between.

What cloud computing is going to create an environment that will allow our society to become more intelligent.

but whilst the phenomenal capabilities presented by the cloud is unparalleled and undisputed, what has also become evident over the last 18 months is that many enterprises and organisations have struggled to adapt to the demands of cloud transformation.

Recent research conducted by IDC unearthed that 92% of CEOs in the Middle East are under pressure to deliver digital transformation via the cloud.



It is estimated that by 2025, 100% of enterprises will connect in some form to cloud services, and 85% of enterprise applications will be deployed in the cloud, according to forecasts from Huawei."

and innovative combinations of cloud, connectivity, AI, and computing with industry applications are making it possible to inject intelligence into all scenarios. That means new experiences for consumers, new applications for individual industries, and a reshuffle of entire industries.

So much so that it is estimated that by 2025, 100% of enterprises will connect in some form to cloud services, and 85% of enterprise applications will be deployed in the cloud, according to forecasts from Huawei.

Research by Accenture further suggests that many businesses have already recognised becoming "cloud first" as the key enabler for their digital transformation, with over 90% of enterprises having adopted cloud in some form or another.

The investments being made

in this space are even more striking. Spending on public cloud services is expected to grow approximately 26% this year in the Middle East, Turkey & Africa (META) region to USD3.7 billion, according to IDC. This contrasts with just a 2.8% expansion in spending in the broader IT market, according to the research firm.

According to a report conducted earlier this year by Gartner, end-user spending globally on public cloud services is forecast to grow 23.1% in 2021 to total \$332.3 billion, up from \$270 billion in 2020.

"The events of last year allowed CIOs to overcome any reluctance of moving mission critical workloads from onpremises to the cloud," said Sid Nag, research vice president at Gartner. "Even absent the pandemic there would still be a loss of appetite for data centers.

Another key feature of that last 18 months is that SaaS based applications that enable essential tasks such as automation and supply chain is critical. Such applications continue to demonstrate reliability in relation to scaling their operations, which in turn will help CIOs further validate the ongoing shift to cloud.

"It's important to note that the usage and adoption of cloud that served enterprises well during the ongoing crisis will not look the same in the coming years. It will further evolve from serving pedestrian use cases such as infrastructure and application migration, to those that combine cloud with technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, 5G and more. In other words, cloud will serve as the glue between many other technologies that CIOs want to use more of, allowing them to leapfrog into the next century as they address more complex and emerging use cases. It will be a disruptive market, to say the least," said Nag.

This has in turn led to a surge of innovation within the cloud computing market.

In particular, many high-tech companies in China are now doubling down on software-driven solutions, notably in the area of cloud computing. Entities like Alibaba, Tencent, and Huawei are all increasing their investments in the cloud market, delivering new platforms and applications to a global customer base.

In the case of Huawei, for example, the company's founder recently called on the company's staff to "dare to lead the world" in software. The HUAWEI CLOUD is already one of the world's fastestgrowing major cloud service providers, with over 220 cloud services and 210 solutions. Just this month, it also launched

its self-developed HarmonyOS operating system across a slew of devices, part of an effort along with an increasing focus on cloud computing to bring novel services to international customers. This is all part of a strategy to use the cloud to create "fertile soil" for the intelligent world to flourish by enabling applications and data.

Moreover, companies like Huawei are now enhancing the synergy between cloud, AI, and connectivity to provide public cloud services and hybrid cloud solutions that deliver several layers of added value—especially in

terms of stability, reliability, security, trustworthiness, and sustainability.

According to the Gartner report Market Share: IT
Services, Worldwide 2020,
HUAWEI's 2020 IaaS market share ranks No.2 in China, No. 3 in Thailand market, No.4 in the emerging Asia Pacific market, and No. 5 in the global market.

HUAWEI's IaaS revenue grew fastest in the global market between 2019 and 2020, compared to the other vendors included for analysis.

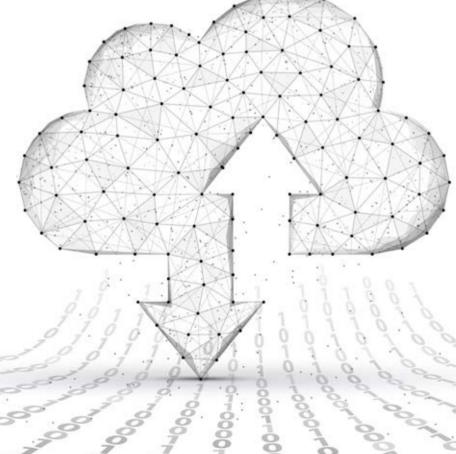
During their recent Huawei

CLOUD Summit 2021 conference in Singapore, Mr Zeng Xingyun, President of Huawei CLOUD APAC, said, "As we celebrate our 20th anniversary in Singapore, Huawei is committed to providing reliable, secure, and cost-effective cloud services to empower applications, harness the power of data, and help organisations of all sizes grow and we aim to be the mainstream cloud vendor and digital transformation leader in the region."

Ultimately, a deep-seated desire for cloud services from local governments and enterprises has led to a more open, globalised, and competitive cloud marketplace. It is an ecosystem that bodes well for the Gulf's business community.

There is ample space for both traditional service providers and relatively newer cloud entrants—such as those from China. In both cases, these companies are increasingly differentiating themselves based on inventive solutions customised for local market needs. Businesses are in turn benefitting from access to new applications from all over the world in areas like AI, blockchain, and others.

At a time when entire industries are be being disrupted, this diversification of the cloud services market is a significant trend that offers organisations powerful tools to be more innovative in creating value and serving their customers.





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CYBEREASON

SHOW ME THE MONEY

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Tarek Kuzbar**, Regional Director, Middle East & Turkey at Cybereason, to learn more about the economic impact ransomware attacks are having on a global scale, what practices businesses need to implement to better protect themselves – and he discusses the findings of their recent ransomware report in the UAE.

here has been a spate of high-profile ransomware attacks over the last number of months that have had devastating consequences for those effected. Ransomware has now entered the consciousness of the mainstream public, but as Kuzbari points out, ransomware attacks are not a new phenomenon.

"I do not think there has been a massive spike in

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It has been estimated that so far this year there has been a ransomware attack on a business every II seconds." ransomware attacks, they have been around for quite some time, in fact, the first ransomware attack occurred in 1989, when a virus was spread across a floppy disk, so it is not something new. However, I think the major difference now is that it is impacting schools, healthcare providers, government entities and other businesses, so everyone is now much more aware of ransomware attacks because it has become personal to them, especially in the case of the HSE (Health Service Executive) in Ireland, in which thousands of patients had their sensitive data leaked," said Kuzbari.

Ransomware may have been around for some time, but as Kuzbari highlights there is no doubt that cybercrime is intensifying, and some of the numbers around the economic impact incurred by

ransomware over the last few years is quite staggering.

"It is undisputed that cybercrime is getting significantly worse, the combination of factors such as the proliferation of connected devices, and geopolitics between economic superpowers such as the US and China, have undoubtedly fragmented the tapestry of the global security community, and these factors play right into the hands of cybercriminals. It has been estimated that so far this year there has been a ransomware attack on a business every 11 seconds. If you look at the trend of ransomware attacks on a global scale it is extremely worrying, in 2015, it typically used to cost the global economy \$325m, but it is now being projected to cost the global economy \$20bn by end of 2021, and if it continues at the same

pace then it is estimated to reach \$264bn by 2031," said Kuzbari.

Many industry analysts have declared that companies should not pay the ransom as all that serves to do is create a lucrative market for these sophisticated cybercriminals to continue to tap into. One of the most high-profile ransomware attacks of late, was Colonial Pipeline in the United States, who paid \$4.3m to get their oil supply back in operation after it was crippled by the attack.

However, as Kuzbari points it is much more complex than simply deliberating over whether a company should pay the ransom or not.

"It's easy to debate over this topic, and everyone within the industry have their own points of view, and it is very easy to say that I would not pay the ransom. However, the situation when under the attack is completely different, and this is something we see with enterprises that are hit by an attack. As you know being subject to a ransomware attack once is already a nightmare for any organisation, but you also need to take into consideration that there is a high probability that the organisation that has already paid the ransom will be hit again by the same attacker, or another cybercriminal within a very short space of time, so it is not always as black and white as some would suggest," said Kuzbari.

Cybereason sponsored a comprehensive report that examined ransomware attacks in the UAE, and they discovered



that 84% of companies hit by an attack opted to pay the ransom, but incredibly 90% of those were then struck by another ransomware attack.

Kuzbari believes there are a number of factors as to why some companies are more vulnerable to others when it comes to preventing ransomware attacks.

"There are several cases behind these incidents that range from poor cybersecurity posture, to lingering vulnerability, to persistent threat actors, so it is critical for every organisation that has been hit by a ransomware attack to really understand and determine the root cause of the attack. What happens is

sometimes the root cause may not have been the ransomware, but it could be what made it visible, and in many cases' ransomware is the just the byproduct of another undetected infection, so that is why investigations and remediating the underlying cause of any attack is crucial in terms of preventing any subsequent future attacks," said Kuzbari.

The Cybereason executive also added that many businesses tend to forget the fundamentals when it comes to security – and outlined the four best practices that enterprises need to adopt to become more resilient.

"Many businesses ignore the basics when it comes to security, so what I would



recommend is four steps to become more secure. The first one would be to follow the security hygiene best practices such as offsite data backup and enhancing the security awareness of employees through additional training, this is very important, and every organisation simply must do it. The second step that I would recommend would be to deploy multi-layer prevention capabilities on all the enterprise endpoints across the network. The third one would be to implement the extended detection and response solution, which is known as an XDR across the whole environment, because it is really all about connecting different aspects

beyond the traditional end point from identity to network, which gives you better visibility to end these advanced ransomware attacks. The last point that I would advocate for is to practice strategy and implement a zero-trust architecture with restricted sensitive data access and protection," said Kuzbari.

One other startling fact from the report was that 71% surveyed in the report said that they had a specific policy in place to manage a ransomware attack, and 67% said they believed they had the right people to get the job done, but if businesses have a plan, then why are most of them still worried?

"Policies and plans are very important, but always the devil is in the detail, and when you come under an attack the situation varies because of a lot of unknowns, such as a misconfiguration, or how the public can react, or how certain authorities intervene, or it is a double-extortion type of attack. If I examine the Colonial Pipeline attack in May, within 5 days they made the payment, and their CEO told

lawmakers in the United States that although his company had an emergency response plan in place it did not include a plan in response to a ransomware attack — and because the company had insurance the decision for payment was very swift," said Kuzbari.

Kuzbari stressed that there are many factors that effect an organisation in terms of whether they are going to pay a ransom or not, but that usually the decision is made at the very end of the negotiation when the organisation can determine if they can recover all their backup data and avoid the payment, but he further illustrated that the issue of data integrity was a real problem.

"It is very difficult to be certain on the integrity of the backup, and it can take several days. The backup integrity is a real issue currently within any organisation impacted by a ransomware attack, most of the companies do not have a properly configured backup, or have not tested the resilience of these backups, or tested the ability to recover their backup against ransomware scenarios. It is not that easy to say I am not going to pay, or if I just have a policy then I am safe, there are other elements at play that you need to look at. I think at the end of the day all these incidents from Colonial Pipeline to JBS has provided us with a sobering wakeup call to make us realise that we are not as safe as we thought, and is provoking us to react and respond to these threats," concluded Kuzbari.

The backup integrity is a real issue currently within any organisation impacted by a ransomware attack."



SOFTWARE AG

A UNIFIED APPROACH TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

CNME Editor Mark Forker conducted a wide-ranging interview with the charismatic **Vijay Jaswal,** CTO, Middle East & Turkey – Software AG, who explained why he believes businesses are struggling to adapt to the demands of cloud transformation, the processes required to ensure a successful digital transformation journey - and whether he feels it is the job of a CTO, or a CEO to shape the digital strategy for an organisation.



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Digital transformation is about moving from one point in time from where a company is now, to a future improved point of time based upon a strategy and vision."

loud is the future and many businesses have embraced cloud technologies in order to embrace the current market demands of the digital economy. However, many businesses that were slow to adopt disruptive and next-gen technologies have encountered issues in migrating to the cloud.

Jaswal likened the challenges facing businesses moving to the cloud to that of consumers trying to move their data from their iCloud account to a Microsoft cloud, or their WhatsApp from an Android smartphone to an iPhone, it can be complex and far from straightforward, and what they both have in common is the issue of data.

"Cloud is a new territory for a lot of people. However, the first issue you face is the sheer amount of data you are dealing with, and then you need to determine whether you remove all the redundant data or not, or do you just transfer across everything, but of course as we all know space costs money. That is certainly one challenge, but the other challenge is what do you move," said Jaswal.

He added that one other key problem for businesses is a skills shortage in terms of having the right personnel you need to effectively move your IT operations to the cloud.

"A lot of enterprises in the UAE are moving their CRM data and their HRM systems to the cloud, but I think the other key challenge is migrating from an on-prem HR system to one that is on the cloud. That is going to lead to a scenario in which there is downtime and there is new functionality that you are going to need to train your users on. In addition to this, the technical aspect of moving from on-prem to the cloud means you need a whole new set of skills, and your existing IT department will more than likely not possess those skills, so they either need to re-train their workforce, or you need to bring in other people to help you make that change," said Jaswal.

According to the CTO of Software AG, they have the ability and capabilities to address this problem for businesses describing it as part of what they do.

"I think the big thing that we see and what is our bread and butter at Software AG is what we do is integration, and we help to connect information systems together. Now, of course when you move some of your applications to the cloud then you have created a silo, so for instance if your CRM system is on the cloud, but you still need to connect that cloud system to your on-prem billing system, but how do you do that is the big challenge and that is where we assist companies in overcoming this," said Jaswal.

In terms of the processes needed for a successful digital transformation journey, Jaswal was unequivocal about

the importance of a unified plan when undergoing digital transformation.

:Planning is essential, but I think there needs to be a unified plan in place, and when I say unified what I mean is it should not be a piecemeal plan, which typically consists of one department going out on their own to do their own little bit of digital transformation, and then another department doing the same thing, it needs to be unified," said Jaswal.

He illustrated Dubai Government as a perfect example of a unified plan of excellence and described their strategy as having a 'waterfall effect' on the entities that operate in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, saying the leadership and direction provided filters down into every business. But to achieve this what do you need?

"I believe you need highlevel executive buy-in because the leadership need to agree on a plan, but before you embark on an agreed plan, you need to have a strategy and a vision, and the plan needs to play into that strategy and vision, and it needs to filter down into every department. The guidelines are set from above and every department follows them. Digital transformation is about moving from one point in time from where a company is now, to a future improved point of time based upon a strategy and vision. However, to make that happen you need to know where you are now. You need to define where



you are because you can not improve a process if you do not know what that process is. You need to create a digital twin of the company from a strategy and people perspective to the IT systems that support all of that," said Jaswal.

In terms of who is responsible for driving a company's digital strategy, Jaswal expressed his belief that the responsibility for this in the current digital economy befalls that of the CEO.

"If you had asked me that question 4-5 years ago, I would have said that you need to appoint a CDO (Chief Development Officer) but right now my view is, it should be the CEO. I think everyone in the current environment needs to have a digital mindset, but it must be driven by the CEO. Digital must pass through every single vein of an organisation's anatomy, so that is why it needs to be led by the CEO," said Jaswal.

He highlighted how Software AG solutions are giving businesses the ability to determine what their key processes are.

"In terms of digital transformation, once you have determined what your key customer facing processes are, we have tools to firstly define what those processes are, but then the tool goes much further than that, and once you have say your 10-step process



established, then it helps to analyse each step of that process to pinpoint where the bottlenecks are, which allows you to put things in place to improve and remove those bottlenecks," said Jaswal.

He also outlined the need for many businesses to reduce their dependence on an IT manager, by transferring the knowledge of an IT executive into a knowledge-based system that they can access.

"Typically, if there is an issue within an IT company, you go to a manager who will know all the company's issues and challenges and have the skills and expertise to overcome them, but what if that manager is on holidays,

or changes jobs, suddenly that knowledge goes with them. What we are saying is to grab that knowledge from the managers head and put it into a system. This system can then be used as a launchpad for transformation

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Digital must pass through every single vein of an organisation's anatomy, so that is why it needs to be led by the CEO." because you are pulling out the policies, processes, and experiences that this manager possessed, but now you are putting it into an enterprise management system. Then if someone encounters a problem they do not need to run to the manager, they can just tap into this knowledge-based system to find out what they need to do to overcome the issue," said Jaswal.

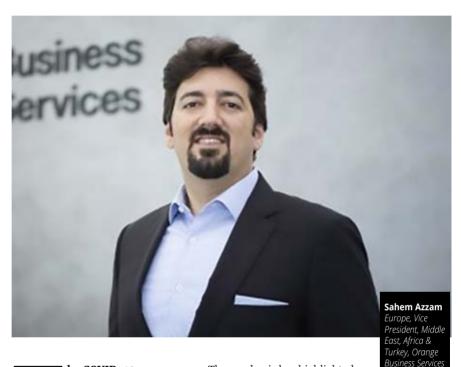
Software AG have been an IT leader for decades and are a company that is synonymous with innovation and excellence, but Jaswal believes it is their ability to extract value from data that is a key market differentiator for the company.

"We have been around the block a few times. Software AG has been around since 1969, so we have got both the trust and experience element. For example, if you want to open a business in Dubai and you access the Smart Dubai government application there are a number of different entities you need to connect with in order to obtain your trade license but guess who is doing all the plumbing behind that system, it's Software AG! We connect all these different entities together, so that the investors who invest in Dubai get their business license as quickly as possible. If I could sum up what we do in a sentence, then it is that we are masters at converting data to value and that is what we do," concluded Jaswal. Come

ORANGE BUSINESS SERVICES

CHAIN REACTION

TahawulTech.com Editor Daniel Shepherd, spoke with **Sahem Azzam**, Vice President, Middle East, Africa & Turkey, Orange Business Services, about data security, their vision for Industry 4.0 and the future of Digital Supply Chains.



he COVID-19
pandemic created
unprecedented
cybersecurity
challenges for companies
adapting to the new normal.
How did these changes
impact your approach to
providing data security and
business continuity?

As a global network-native, digital services company, Orange Business Services supports customer digital transformation and the data journey. So, the 'now normal' of increasingly digital business models plays to our strengths in connectivity, digital services and cybersecurity.

The pandemic has highlighted vulnerabilities for many industries mainly with the new ways of working. Cybersecurity is now at the heart of most business decisions and a key element in business continuity planning (BCP).

The recent Orange Cyberdefense annual report (Security Navigator) identifies a number of cyber threat trends, including the new business continuity challenges as 'multicloud' environments emerge.

Our Business Continuity approach (ISO 22301 standard) is comprehensive but the cloud revolution represents a new challenge. The good news is that there are now cost efficient continuity and recovery solutions available for cloud environments but cyber threats will continue to evolve along with enterprise demand for cloud, network and video conferencing services, bringing new risks and BCP challenges.

Cybersecurity is really, a major issue because security concerns are one of the major barriers to digital transformation for many companies, potentially putting them at risk as competitors move ahead. Inaction is not an option as the opportunity cost is just too great.

How has your vision for Industry 4.0 panned out in 2021?

In 2021, accelerating digitalisation will continue to drive Industry 4.0 and we expect significant developments, as IT and OT teams become increasingly aligned – connecting data across both domains is essential for information and business continuity.

According to the Orange
Business Services-sponsored
IDC InfoBrief - The Road to
Digital Transformation: Enabling
OT-IT Convergence, there is an
unprecedented data explosion in
the OT space, exposing critical
operational processes to more
threats. So, successful industrial
operating models will dependent

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on data management and security.

At Orange, Industry 4.0 refers to the creation of an intelligent, designed, interconnected ecosystem, which drives improved business and operational performance, reduces costs, and improves customer service. IDC Global Performance Index Analysis highlights a clear performance divide between digital and nondigital companies, but real-time integration enabling seamless data handling between IT and OT domains is often a distant goal.

Our own Head of Industry 4.0 International Business says that security concerns come into play and can create a barrier to integration. This fear of cyberattacks is preventing some companies from exploiting their digital potential – downtime and financial loss are the top two concerns.

Integrating IT and OT may increase vulnerabilities but appropriate security-related policies help mitigate the risk. A trusted third-party solution provider can help change the perception of cybersecurity as an enabler of digital investments and digital transformation.

The pandemic is giving manufacturers an opportunity to transform but how they react and embrace Industry 4.0 will shape the future of manufacturing.

Last year you collaborated on smart city IoT application with Abu Dhabi Municipality. In the year since how has this venture developed and are you planning any similar collaborations?

The UAE and wider GCC region is a hotbed of smart city initiatives and innovation. Our 'innovation hub' at the regional centre of $\sqrt{1}$

The pandemic has highlighted vulnerabilities for many industries mainly with the new ways of working."

excellence for smart cities helps stimulate collaboration with customers. This has helped us develop innovations such as the smart city IoT Cockpit application that we piloted successfully with Abu Dhabi Municipality.

We have since worked on several other co-innovation projects in the region, focusing on IoT innovations in smart cities and industry. Most recently, we announced that we will design and build a new data center to provide cloud services for Egypt's 'New Administrative Capital' smart city.

Co-innovation is at the heart of what we do. We operate a 360° co-innovation ecosystem comprising Orange Group innovation teams, our technological, industrial and commercial partners, and access to a global start-up network. We work in partnership with our customers to develop solutions to meet the specific challenges of their businesses and industries.

All smart city projects create opportunities among the diverse range of partners involved to coinnovate and become incubators of new solutions and applications as new use cases arise.

Co-innovation is also essential for enterprise success in the digital era, from retail to supply chain to maritime. Every company in every industry is facing digital disruption as digital empowers new competitors to do things

better, faster and cheaper, creating new customer value.

Smart companies are increasingly looking to suppliers, vendors, end-users, consumers, partner organisations, university labs and independent inventors for new ideas and insights.

These collaborations bring in new thinking, knowledge and skills to turn into real world innovations.

Research shows that companies with extensive innovation governance achieve twice the revenue growth of those that don't. Our co-innovation board and investment fund assesses opportunities to co-innovate with our customers where our capabilities and objectives. To be competitive tomorrow, you need a diverse and balanced portfolio of projects in the co-innovation pipeline today.

Can you tell our readers about digital supply chains? What key importance do they have on the future of sustainable business?

Of course, the pandemic has revealed not only the vital role of global supply chains but also their vulnerabilities and this is forcing us all to start to re-think and reimagine supply chains, and how sustainability can be embedded along the entire chain.

Digitalisation is essential to make supply chains more sustainable and provide enterprises with real-time data, AI-enabled analytics and digital work instructions that will enable smart-decision making. These technologies, and other emerging technologies such as blockchain, will drive sustainable growth, increasing efficiencies, reducing waste and satisfying consumer demands for greener products and services.

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HUAWEI

THE DAWN OF THE 'INTELLIGENT ERA'

CNME Editor Mark Forker was the MC for the Huawei Middle East IP Club Carnival 2021, held at Atlantis the Palm, which showcased the future of IP Networking across the region.

he annual Huawei
Middle East IP
Club Carnival is
the company's
flagship event in the region,
and the Chinese ICT behemoth
unveiled the next-generation,
AI-enabled IP products and
solutions that they believe
will equip enterprises with the
tools needed to empower their
business in the digital economy.

In an action-packed

agenda, Huawei also formally announced a joint innovation program, specifically designed to create a platform that will enable them to work together with industry pioneers across different industry verticals.

The theme of the conference was "Empower your Business with AI-Driven, User-Oriented and Fully Automated Networks", and it garnered participation from both global and regional

thought-leaders, who expressed their views on how businesses can leverage the capabilities of the latest network technology to better prepare themselves for the 'intelligent era'.

David Shi, President, Enterprise Business Group, Huawei Middle East, delivered the opening keynote speech of the event, and stressed how Huawei was continuing to invest heavily in disruptive

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technologies such as AI to help countries deliver on their ambitious new national programs for transformation.

"At Huawei, we are continuously investing in bringing the latest technologies such as AI and Big Data to enterprise networks, helping customers build a user-centric and application-centric, secure and reliable intelligent network that enables autonomous driving. Digital transformation is a long journey in the Middle East, and we are committed to working closely with our partners and customers to empower the countries' ambitious national plans, and to enable industry digitalisation strategies," said Shi.

In addition to this, Shi highlighted how he believed that Industry 4.0 will provide the foundation or springboard for a fully connected, intelligent world, and stated that intelligent networks will be the backbone of the new digital economy.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution will be our pathway to a fully connected, intelligent world, especially as we gear up towards post-pandemic recovery and growth. It will have far-reaching implications for all industry verticals across the Middle East. Intelligent networks are the vital foundation of the digital world, providing reliable, ubiquitous, ultra-wide broadband, and secure connections for our communities," said Shi.

A recurring theme of the event was on the capabilities of AI, and Dr. Scott Nowson, AI Lead at PwC Middle East, delivered a keynote speech and reiterated the viewpoint that AI should be seen as a friend and not a foe, and said AI can help enterprises to overcome issues they encounter in real-time.

"Companies use AI and other emerging technologies to transform the way they operate and to respond to challenges in real-time. The unpredictability of recent events has highlighted vulnerabilities that decision makers, especially CIOs, need to reprioritise, such as organisational resilience and a focus on network technologies that support their business needs. Next-generation networks powered by AI, and the combination of these emerging technologies, are where we will see the greatest impact today," said Nowson.

The event also showcased

Huawei's Autonomous Driving Network (ADN) solution for Data Centers to enable industry transformation from the digital era to an intelligent era. A live demo of the Data Center Network solution was held at the event, demonstrating how instantly and easily a network can get ready for any level of service deployment, simulate the intent of network manager using Digital Twins & provide proactive O&M for very complex data center network environments

Faisal Malik, CTO, Huawei Middle East Enterprise Business Group, is regarded as one of the most prominent thought leaders in the IT ecosystem here in the Middle East – and he delivered a wonderful presentation which outlined how Huawei ADN solutions is helping to build a fully-wireless, intelligent campus network.

He said, "We know that many campuses are facing huge challenges in terms of coping with traffic on their networks, as there are so many applications being used. We need a new form of network management. Intelligent connectivity is one of the basic and core requirements for any business to effectively operate and in many cases survive. We are helping enterprises by automating their network environment using Huawei's smart intelligent network management platforms and we are helping enterprises not only inside the data centres with our ADN solution, but also on the campus and across their SD-WAN networks. When we are able to provision their networks faster then the networks are able to provide deterministic experiences to the end-users," said Malik.

In addition to this, the Huawei Middle East IP Club Carnival also showcased Huawei's new groundbreaking IP products and solutions — such as the industry's first network automation and intelligence platform iMaster NCE; and CloudCampus 3.0, which combines fully wireless access with integrated IoT, One Global Network, Comprehensive Cloud Management, and Intelligent O&M of Campus network for enterprise users.

CloudCampus 3.0 provides all wireless solutions for enterprises using the industry's highest performing Wi-Fi 6 products and solutions.

There was also a fantastic panel discussion which was excellent chaired and moderated

by Faisal Malik.

The panel which was entitled 'Unleashing the Potential of your Enterprise Network with Cutting-Edge Technology', and it covered a broad range of topics, but again AI dominated large parts of the discussion.

The panelists for the session were: Dr. Scott Nowson,
AI Lead, PwC Middle East,
Aloysius Cheang, Chief Security
Officer, Huawei UAE, Dr. Feras
Ahmad Hanandeh, Professor
& Director, Center of Big Data
& AI, Hashemite University &
Alaa Bawab, Vice President,
Enterprise Networking Business,
Huawei Middle East.

During the panel session, cybersecurity expert Aloysius Cheang, Chief Security Officer, Huawei UAE, declared that AI will play a key role in helping businesses in the fight to protect their data from cybercriminals, which continues to evolve in our new digital fully connected world.

With digital technologies becoming the building blocks of the future economy, Huawei concluded the event by emphasizing that talent is the cornerstone of digital transformation and announced the launch of a comprehensive certification program and the setting up of network innovation labs in the Middle East. The joint innovation program aims to promote the application of new technologies and accelerate the digital transformation journey in this region.

The Fourth Industrial
Revolution will be our pathway
to a fully connected, intelligent
world, especially as we gear
up towards post-pandemic
recovery and growth."

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DELL TECHNOLOGIES

DELL TECHNOLOGIES EXECUTIVE HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR A 'CULTURE OF INNOVATION'

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Walid Yehia**, Senior Director Pre-Sales for Infrastructure Solutions Group, MERAT, Dell Technologies, to find out more about their strategy for the diversification of their product portfolio, the challenges facing enterprises adopting cloud technologies— and how businesses need to create a culture of innovation to succeed in today's digital economy.

ell Technologies is one of the world's leading IT and technology companies and customer-centricity is at the very core of what they do. The company has enjoyed more growth in the MERAT region over the last 12 months, and as Yehia pointed out, Dell Technologies, always tailor their solutions and products to address the specific needs of their customers.

"Our strategy is all about addressing key issues for both the current market demands, and the future requirements for businesses in the digital economy. Like any other leader in the technology space, we are always thinking about what is coming ahead, but at the same time we want to keep innovating for what the market is demanding. We have a very diverse and broad product portfolio at Dell Technologies, and we are determined to be the leader in every product area, but there is also a very diverse set of needs from the market from the edge-to-the-core, and to the cloud - and it is our job to equip our customers with the tools and solutions required for them to overcome challenges," said Yehia.

However, Yehia caveated that point by highlighting that despite focusing on the current needs of the market in today's volatile and ever-evolving digital economy, Dell is always looking to the future, and disclosed six key areas the IT leader intends to invest heavily in over the next few years.

At Dell, we do believe that the future is multi-cloud. no single cloud, whether it is private, or public will be able to address the current customer needs." "At Dell Technologies, we are always looking to the future, and we have already selected six key areas of investment for us in terms of our R&D 43 strategy going forward. The investment areas are centered around multicloud, 5G, data management, Edge computing, security, AI and Machine Learning. Our portfolio at its core is customerdriven, and we are investing significantly in making our products more intelligent by embedding AI Walid Yehia Senior Director Pre-Sales for Infrastructure Solutions Group, MERAT, Dell Technologies

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algorithms into our solutions to empower our customers to be able to work more effectively and efficiently," said Yehia.

There has been a significant shift towards the cloud since the establishment of datacenters by Microsoft in Dubai and Abu Dhabi in 2019, but the COVID-19 pandemic really accelerated the movement towards cloud technologies.

There has been a lot of debate in the IT ecosystem as to which cloud model should be adopted to ensure success, but there is a very clear sense of direction in relation to the cloud for Dell Technologies.

"At Dell, we do believe that the future is multi-cloud, no single cloud, whether it is private, or public will be able to address the current customer needs. However, we believe that while you are moving towards a multi-cloud strategy you should maintain a unified experience for all your users, whether these are your developers, your IT operations, or even your end-users, it should be seamless and transparent," said Yehia.

Despite that demand for cloud technologies, what has become evident is that many enterprises are struggling to adapt to the demands of cloud transformation, and Yehia believes their choice of cloud strategy is the issue.

"Many businesses are struggling to adapt, because some of them will declare that they have a cloud-first strategy, but they are facing



a lot of challenges because some of the workloads are just not suitable for public cloud. We are trying to create and develop technologies that will give our customers that single pane of control that will enable them to host their workloads either on their private, or public cloud, but with the same unified experience for its developers and IT operations. We collaborate with all the major players and have great relationships with Microsoft and AWS, and we believe there is room for everyone, but ultimately our vision is to make life for our customers much

simpler," said Yehia.

The dynamic executive at Dell Technologies is regarded by many of his peers as a prominent thought leader, but he stressed the importance of strategy in relation to the digital transformation journeys.

"The technology is there to drive digital transformation, but what I have observed of late is that strategy is for enterprises undergoing their business transformation journey - because digital transformation at the end of the day is all about business transformation. The lack of strategy and skills to innovate



is a big challenge. If you examine all the digital leaders in the market today, they have a rock-solid strategy, and they know they have the skillset required to innovate. Innovation is all about rethinking your entire business, it is not a technology exercise," said Yehia.

Yehia also highlighted the importance of having a 'culture' of innovation embedded within an organisation and said businesses cannot be afraid to fail.

"If you look at all successful businesses, they all have a culture of innovation, and the culture of innovation is all about not being afraid of exploring and sometimes failing fast. In the world of innovation, you cannot succeed every time, and you need to allow for failure, but you must fail fast because time and money are important. You also need the budget to innovate, but the budget can be tricky because if you measure your innovation ideas with the same KPIs for your well-established products in the market then that is going to be an inhibitor for you. If a CFO does not understand that innovation is a long-term cycle, then they might kill some of these products very early on," said Yehia.

He also pointed out that there were a lot of hidden costs in today's market and said that it was critical to reduce your overheads and speed up your time-to-market to create the capital needed to innovate on new products.

"If you look at where the cost is distributed today, the cost is not only in the acquisition of the product, but there is also a lot of hidden costs in the operations and in the time-to-market for products. Our philosophy is to innovate solutions that have the highest level of automation and intelligence that significantly reduces your overall costs and timeto-market. By modernising your infrastructure, you can save money and then take that capital and invest it in your innovation projects. IT budgets are not growing significantly, so the only way you can innovate is by saving money," said Yehia. cnme

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Leaders Of Transformation

CPI Media Group hosted their first physical event since the COVID-19 pandemic at the Habtoor Grand Resort in JBR, and it was a phenomenal success with over 100 key figures from the IT industry in attendance at the glitzy event.

The awards were designed to celebrate the businesses and IT decision-makers that have helped enterprises to transform and adapt to the challenges of the digital economy by leveraging technology and next-gen solutions.



Best Mobility Solutions Provider of the Year:

Raqmiyat



Best Cloud Wireless Solution of the Year:

Nuclias by D-Link



Best System Integrator of the Year:

CNS Middle East



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP **Awards 2021**

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Seclore



Cloud Solutions

Huawei

Best Evolved Cybersecurity Vendor of the Year:

Forcepoint



Industrial Digital Transformation Vendor of the Year:

AVEVA



Cloud Solution of the Year:

Avaya for its Avaya OneCloud
CCaaS solution





Rackspace Technology

■VIRSE



of the Year for Hybrid Work:

Jabra



Digital Transformation



HUA'

Most Innovative Healthcare



Best E-Learning Program in Higher Education:

Huawei

Zulekha Hospital

Emirates College of Technology



Monitoring and Control Centre



Prognica Labs Tech



Optimising End-to-End Solutions:

Dubai Aviation Engineering Projects



Best Self-Service Initiative in

Emirates Airline



Customer Value

Enova Facilities Management Services Middle East



Technologies for Exported Goods:

Abu Dhabi Customs

GCOS

VIRSEC CHI



TRANSFORMATIONAL **LEADERSHIP** Awards 2021

Best Customer Service in Investment

Al Masraf Bank



Etisalat



Jayesh Nandanan, Mediclinc Middle East



Application in Banking:

Kuwait International Bank



Ebrahim Kamalzadeh, Al Nabooda Automobiles

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Technology Visionary of the Year:

Hatem Hariri, CNS Middle East



Government IT Leader of the Year:

Shakeeb Fellan, Fujairah E-Government



Best Mission Marketing Team of the Year:

Avaya Marketing

Best Customer-Centered Digital Portal:

Mashreq Bank

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Best ERP Migration
Strategy:

RAK Ceramics

Leader in Transformative Decision Making for BI Implementation:

Adyard Abu Dhabi

Best ERP Driven Strategy for FMCG Innovation:

Basamh Trading Company

Best Blockchain Focused Document Authentication Initiative:

DIFC Courts

Best Online E-Trading Platform of the Year:

International Securities

Most Innovative Health Management Program of the Year:

Emirates Health Services
Establishment



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