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WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEANS BUSINESS

HUAWEI'S PRESIDENT MIDDLE EAST

LENOVO'S GENERAL MANAGER

SOLARWINDS HEAD GEEK

RECORD BREAKERS

FADY RICHMANY, REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTHEAST EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA AT COMMVAULT, TELLS CNME HOW THEIR GROUND-BREAKING SOLUTIONS HAVE ENABLED THE COMPANY TO ENJOY THE BEST FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN THE COMPANY'S HISTORY.



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Richmany believes that a key component in their success is the company's 'relevance' to all major industry verticals."

YOU CAN'T 'VAULT' THEM

he front cover of May's edition of CNME features a terrific interview with Commvault's Fady Richmany, who outlined in detail how the US data protection leader has enjoyed their best-ever fiscal performance.

Simply put, its suite of solutions is 'resonating' with customers on a global scale - and Commvault are empowering their clients with the tools needed for data protection and digital transformation.

Richmany believes that a key component in their success is the company's 'relevance' to all major industry verticals.

He said, "We are the company that excels in data management, protection, and security, which makes us relevant to all verticals – be it education, healthcare, energy, or government."

There were many industries impacted by the global pandemic, but few were as affected as the retail sector.

We spoke to Hozefa Saylawala, Middle East Director at Zebra Technologies, to learn more about how they have leveraged their technologies and solutions to help the retail industry cope with the new 'on-demand' economy.

Zebra Technologies has launched a new concept called 'Theatre of Retail' and that platform is enabling retailers to replicate seamless online shopping experiences in physical retail outlets.

In addition to this, we spoke to Lenovo's Alaa Bawab, who told us how he firmly believes their new Lenovo 360 framework will completely transform the channel ecosystem across the region and provides them with the opportunity to build out new revenue streams.

Bawab said, "As we launch the Lenovo 360 framework, we will continue to support our channel ecosystem by giving our partners the opportunity to build and diversify their revenue streams."

Intel are one of the world's best PC manufacturers, and CNME spoke to Taha Khalifa, Client Computing Group Sales Director, EMEA Territory at Intel, to find out how their new strategic direction set out by CEO Pat Gelsinger is going to accelerate innovation at the company for the next decade.

He also highlighted how the decision to introduce five new process nodes was a gamechanger when it comes to product performance.

ALEC are a UAE-based construction behemoth, but they have made the jump into the data centre space to meet the burgeoning demand for data centres as cloud popularity continues to soar.

Bjorn Viedge, General Manager at ALEC Data Centre Solutions, says their move into the data centre industry was a 'natural progression'.

In a brilliant interview, he documents their fascinating new partnership with startup company Submer, who focus on liquid immersion cooling, which will help data centre providers become more sustainable, but more importantly will manage cooling costs.

In addition to this, we also conducted candid interviews with Huawei's Steven Yi, Confluent's Fred Crehan, whilst Kim Grauer from Chainalysis, shared interesting data on how NFTs have been used illicitly by cybercriminals.

We also have some excellent opinion pieces by SAS and SolarWinds.

We will have full coverage of all the award winners from our GovTech Innovation Awards which were held on May 26th in June's edition of CNME.

Enjoy!

Mark Forker Editor



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CONTENTS

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COMMVAULT (





Cover feature: Commvault



6 News

CNME rounds up the biggest regional and global developments in enterprise technology, which includes the news that Nutanix has appointed a new Chief Financial Officer, Huawei's Middle East President outlines how digitalisation and carbonisation complement each other - and Mindware signs a new partnership deal with R&M.



Badr Alduaiji, Head of Integration and Architecture at Arab National Bank, has highlighted the impact of Confluent's Apache Kafka on their digital transformation journey.

14 Steven Yi. President of Huawei Middle East, believes its cloud platform will serve as a key foundation in driving the digital economy across the Gulf Region.

22 Alaa Bawab, General Manager at Lenovo ISG Middle East & Africa, says its new Lenovo 360 Framework reinforces its commitment to the channel.

36 Fred Crehan, Regional Director at Confluent, believes that the company's ability to get their clients where they need to go faster, and with reduced risk is a key market differentiator for them



44 Kim Grauer, Director of Research at Chainalysis highlights the key findings of its 2022 Crypto Crime Report, which has seen an increase in wash trading with NFTs.











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FOUNDER, CPI Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

ADVERTISING Group Publishing Director Kausar Sved kausar.syed@cpimediagroup.com

natasha.pendleton@cpimediagroup.com

Sales Director

Sabita Miranda

sabita.miranda@cpimediagroup.com

Publishing Director Natasha Pendleton

OnlineEditor Daniel Shepherd daniel.shepherd@cpimediagroup.com

EDITORIAL

Editor

Mark Forker

mark.forker@cpimediagroup.com

PRODUCTION AND DESIGN Senior Designer Analou Balbero analou.balbero@cpimediagroup.com DIGITAL SERVICES Web Developer Adarsh Snehajan

webmaster@cpimediagroup.com

NEWS

Nutanix Appoints Rukmini Sivaraman as Chief Financial Officer



Rukmini Sivaraman, Chief Financial Officer, Nutanix

Nutanix, a leader in hybrid

multicloud computing, today announced the appointment of Rukmini Sivaraman as Chief Financial Officer, effective May 1, 2022. Sivaraman will succeed Duston Williams, who is leaving to become CFO of a pre-IPO company in a different space. Williams will remain with Nutanix through April 30, 2022 and work closely with Sivaraman to facilitate a seamless transition.

"I am honored and excited to take on the CFO role during this important time at Nutanix", said Sivaraman. "I look forward to continuing to work closely with Rajiv and the leadership team as we execute on our financial objectives, enhance shareholder value and position the Company for long-term success. I also look forward to continued engagement with our investor and analyst community. I thank Duston for his mentorship and support, which have positioned me and the rest of the finance and accounting team to take the reins and continue driving our initiatives forward".

Cybersecurity Skills Gap Contributed to 80 Percent of Breaches According to New Fortinet Report



Sandra Wheatley, SVP Marketing, Threat Intelligence and Influencer Communications at Fortinet.

Fortinet, a global leader in broad,

integrated, and automated cybersecurity solutions, today released its 2022 Cybersecurity Skills Gap Report. The new global report reveals that the cybersecurity skills shortage continues to have multiple challenges and repercussions for organisations, including the occurrence of security breaches and subsequently loss of money. As a result, the skills gap remains a top concern for C-level executives and is increasingly becoming a board-level priority. The report also suggests ways the skills gap can be addressed, such as through training and certifications to increase employees' education.

Sandra Wheatley, SVP Marketing, Threat Intelligence and Influencer Communications at Fortinet says, "According to the Fortinet report released today, the skills gap isn't just a talent shortage challenge, but it's also severely impacting business, making it a top concern for executive leaders worldwide. Through Fortinet's Training Advancement Agenda (TAA) and Training Institute programs, we are committed to tackling the challenges revealed in the report through various initiatives, including programs focused on cybersecurity certifications and recruiting more women into cyber. As part of this commitment, Fortinet has pledged to train 1 million professionals to increase cyber skills and awareness and make a dent in the skills gap by 2026".

Pure Storage Enables Taeknizon to Enhance its Cloud Services for UAE Businesses



Omar Akar, Regional Vice President, Middle East & Emerging Africa, Pure Storage

Pure Storage, the IT pioneer that delivers

the world's most advanced data storage technology and services, today announced that Taeknizon, a fast-growing private cloud services company, has deployed Pure's infrastructure and Pure as-aService to enhance the performance and availability of its cloud services for UAE businesses. The solutions also enable Taeknizon to onboard new customers in under half a day and extend powerful ransomware protection to its entire cloud customer base as it's included in Pure's solution as standard.

"We are proud to support Taeknizon as it empowers regional businesses to achieve their cloud ambitions. Backed by our subscription model, they can confidently build these offerings on market-leading flash technology. This enables them to focus their efforts on innovation and the introduction of new offerings that cater to their customer's evolving needs", said Omar Akar, Regional Vice President, Middle East & Emerging Africa, Pure Storage.



Dr Marwan Alzarouni, Official Advisor, Everdome

Everdome, the most hyperrealistic metaverse, has announced the appointment of Dr Marwan

Dr Marwan Alzarouni joins Everdome as Official Advisor

Alzarouni as its Official Advisor. An internationally recognised blockchain technology advocate, Dr Alzarouni joins the team at a critical time ahead of the first of Everdome's three phase launch.

Dr Alzarouni is renowned for his work as the CEO of Dubai Blockchain Centre, and also serves as Managing Partner at innovation consultancy Accelliance. Given his extensive expertise in the field, he was chosen to head the Digital Asset Task Force (DATF), a research and advisory team that reports to Dubai Future Council for Blockchain.

Dr Alzarouni said: "The metaverse is a natural evolution of our connected world, and technologies such as blockchain are at the heart of what will make the metaverse a success for everyone. Everdome in particular is an exciting project - the fact that it is breaking new ground and that it is rooted in the UAE, with Phase 1 of the game set in Hatta, are just two factors among many that encouraged me to join the project".

Jedox is named Global Integrated Planning & Analytics Market Leader for the Second Year in a Row by BARC



Dr. Rolf Gegenmantel, Chief Product Officer at Jedox

Jedox, an award-winning provider

of Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) solutions for Financial Planning and Analysis (FP&A), has again been named a Market Leader in the 2022 Global BARC Score for Integrated Planning & Analytics. This Business Application Research Centre (BARC) Score is focused on the market for Integrated Planning & Analytics (IP&A) products and portfolios, with each vendor being evaluated for portfolio capabilities and market execution.

Recognised again for being a highly flexible and configurable solution, this year's report also highlights the Excel-like interface of Jedox and the multitude of integration options to smoothly connect third-party CRM, HCM, and ERP systems. The high level of customer satisfaction by Jedox users revealed in BARC's The Planning Survey is also acknowledged.

Dr. Christian Fuchs, Senior Analyst Data & Analytics at BARC, noted "Jedox customer satisfaction and speed-to-value post initial implementation are two themes that emerged from our research as strong suits for the company".

This BARC Score emphasises that the integration of corporate performance management (also known as EPM) with analytics is becoming a decisive factor for sound decision-making and that using only spreadsheets to achieve these goals is frequently cited as the source of inconsistencies, errors, and dissatisfaction in results. The combination of corporate planning and analytics is noted as essential to being able to provide optimal support for modern, integrated performance management.

"We are delighted to again be recognised as a Market Leader in Integrated Planning & Analytics and deeply appreciate the acknowledgement from independent analysts who provide holistic insights and perspective on how these solutions support global enterprises in digital transformation around the world", said Dr. Rolf Gegenmantel, Chief Product Officer at Jedox.

A complimentary copy of the full report is available here: BARC Score for Integrated Planning & Analytics 2022

NEWS

SolarWinds to Showcase IT Service and Security Solutions at AiCloud Expo in Saudi Arabia



Laurent Delattre, Vice President, Sales, SolarWinds, EMEA

SolarWinds, a leading provider of simple,

powerful, and secure IT management software, announced it will be attending the AiCloud Expo, May 22 – 24, 2022, at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Saudi Arabia alongside its value-added distribution Partner in the region, Clever Solutions at #Booth G4. The company will showcase the latest updates to its product portfolio, offering attendees an opportunity to learn more about the comprehensive SolarWinds IT management software and IT security solutions.

"We're excited to be at this event alongside our Partner, Clever Solutions", said Laurent Delattre, Vice President, Sales, SolarWinds, EMEA. "The event focuses on the transformation of digital economies in the Middle East and highlights the different opportunities. SolarWinds helps such organisations address digital transformation challenges with a range of powerful tools built to deliver the features required to embrace digitalisation together in one place".

SolarWinds announced its 2022 Channel Partner Award Winners earlier this year at Partner Summits worldwide, naming Clever Solutions Distributor of the Year 2022 for Saudi Arabia.

Qualys Adds Custom Assessment and Remediation to its Cloud Platform

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Qualys, Inc., a pioneer and leading

provider of disruptive cloud-based IT, security and compliance solutions, today unveiled Qualys Custom Assessment and Remediation, opening its Cloud Platform to give security architects access to custom scripts that can be natively integrated with other Qualys solutions. This new solution significantly reduces response time by empowering security teams to orchestrate workflows, secure custom applications, and take immediate action to counter threats like zero-day attacks lessening the need to rely on the IT operations teams.

When threats hit, security teams need to quickly discover, assess and remediate both their third-party and custom applications. A typical response involves creating new out-of-band processes and custom scripts that need to be rolled out across hundreds or thousands of applications and endpoints by the security teams using a variety of techniques and ITSM tools. This approach creates a blind spot from an auditing and tracking standpoint and negatively impacts responsiveness.

Nexans announces BRIGHTBOX – A versatile closure for splicing optical cables in aerial and underground applications



Arafat Yousef, Managing Director, Middle East & Africa, Nexans Data Network Solutions

Nexans Telecom Systems, a supplier of end-to-end telecom and data network infrastructure solutions, announced the launch of BRIGHTBOX, a versatile and userfriendly splice and patching closure for aerial and underground FTTx applications. BRIGHTBOX is a closure range for splicing or patching optical cable and is designed for aerial and underground applications. It is designed to be highly versatile, includes smart technologies & additional security features, and is available in two sizes with capacity of 144 and 288 splices. Options for patching are also possible, and the innovative fibre management system allows flexibility for cabling. The watertight closure is made with high-strength material to reach an IK09 level and IP68 watertightness and dust protection.

"As broadband demand in the region accelerates, operators need to enable fast rollout of FTTx infrastructure, whilst keeping maintenance costs to a minimum. BRIGHTBOX supports that providing versatile, user friendly connection with smart features which minimise ownership costs", said Arafat Yousef, Managing Director, Middle East & Africa, Nexans Data Network Solutions.

Mindware and R&M Sign Regional Distribution Agreement



Mr. Nicholas Argyrides, General Manager - Gulf at Mindware (L) and Mr. Nabil Khalil, Executive Vice President - Middle East, Turkey and Africa at R&M (R) at the partnership signing ceremony.

Huawei Middle East President addresses how digitalisation and low carbonisation complement each other



On the back of SAMENA Leaders' Summit 2022, the top telecom industry event hosted by Huawei for the 9thconsecutive year, President of Huawei Middle East gathered with journalists from across the region to discuss the most impeding and fast-growing technologies. The insights garnered during the exclusive group interview covered how the Middle East is currently leading 5G deployment on the global scale, and how ICT companies should work on achieving sustainability through their operations.

Speaking to Steven Yi, Tahawul Tech addressed a question on Huawei's sustainability vision, considering that the ICT industry is one of the most energy intensive in the world. "Digitalisation and low carbonisation complement each other, and coordinate development is the inherent demand for high-quality economic and social development. In order to better evaluate the promotion of digitalisation and low carbonisation on green development, we propose a green development maturity model to quantify the green development process from three dimensions: energy efficiency improvement of digital infrastructure, renewable energy development and digital transformation of Mindware, today announced that it has been appointed as a Value–Added Distributor (VAD) by Reichle & De–Massari (R&M) for the Gulf and Levant regions. Mindware will promote and distribute the vendor's innovative cabling systems for high–end data and communication networks.

R&M is a top tier solution provider in the structured cabling industry and a smart innovator in data centre, LAN and telecom verticals. The company's large portfolio of state-of-the-art solutions is based on well-established Swiss quality standards. R&M is renowned for its agility in customizing solutions in response to various customer needs, in contrast to just selling off-the-shelf products. It's globally distributed network of production plants and competence centres provides consistent and stable customer support.

industries", Yi iterated.

He continued to express that by 2030, renewable energy will account for more than 50% of the electricity generation, ICT energy efficiency will be improved by 100 times, and industry digital penetration will reach 50%. Covering digital power, Huawei digital energy focuses on five fields: smart PV, data centre energy, site energy, smart electric, embedded power, and integrated smart energy. As important strategic digital energy markets in the Middle East and Gulf countries, Huawei has great potential for cooperation in these five fields, especially in smart PV and data center fields. We look forward to working with our partners to contribute to green, low-carbon and sustainable development in the Middle East.

Yi also stressed on Huawei's commitment to support building digital economies in the Middle East region "We need to be united to establish unified laws and regulations so that the digital economy can be protected".

"In terms of R&D, we will continue to invest heavily to serve our smart and intelligent future. In 2021, We invested over 22% of annual revenue in R&D targeted at supporting the long-term sustainable development of the ICT industry, we will continue to invest significantly in intelligent solutions and services such as ICT infrastructure and cloud services", Yi added. ARAB NATIONAL BANK

REACHING FOR THE SUMMIT

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Badr Alduaiji**, Head of Integration and Architecture at Arab National Bank, to find out more about how Confluent's technology has equipped the Saudi banking provider with the tools they need to meet the everevolving user experience expectations of its customers and become the market incumbent in the KSA.

The Confluent Data Streaming Platform has empowered us to build so many brilliant use-cases." he community of global stakeholders that are invested in Kafka Apache gathered for the annual Kafka Summit, which was hosted by Confluent at the Intercontinental Hotel in London from April 25th-26th.

CNME managed to secure an exclusive interview onsite at the event with Badr Alduaiji, who articulated how Arab National Bank has leveraged the Confluent Data Streaming Platform to transform how it manages and processes its data. There has been an exponential increase in digital transformation across the Middle East since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, Alduaiji stressed that ANB had already commenced on their DX journey in response to the impact FinTech companies were having across the Kingdom.

"Arab National Bank had already embarked on its digital transformation journey long before the pandemic ground the global economy to a halt in March 2020. I believe the main driver in our transformation was



the movement and disruption being caused by FinTech entities. FinTech companies were able to achieve success almost instantaneously when they entered the marketplace because they were providing users with easier methods of payments, a broader range of account management tools, but crucially they delivered better customer experiences," said Alduaiji.

Alduaiji, who is Head of Integration and Architecture at ANB, stressed that in the current experience economy it was critical they focused on UX, but added that they also want to position themselves as the 'arm' of FinTech businesses in Saudi Arabia, and revealed that they now support 65% of the FinTech ecosystem across the Kingdom.

In terms of the use-cases powered by Confluent that have been constructed by ANB, again that customer experience element is at the fore.

"The Confluent Data Streaming Platform has empowered us to build so many brilliant use-cases. I think from my perspective the use-case we have built around saving is very powerful. How it works is, it utilises the stream of a transaction to do your saving. For example, let's say I decide that from any transaction I make I want to take a percentage out of that and deposit it into my savings. I have the autonomy to select the percentage that I want to save, be it 10%, 5% or 1%. When the transaction happens on the core banking and accounting system it streams the data to Confluent, and from Confluent the saving application then reads this stream of data and can see in real-time what amount needs to be saved and deposited into your current account," said Alduaiji.

National Arab Bank has adopted a very progressive mindset when it comes to integrating and implementing new technologies to transform its operations.

One other use-case that is currently still in development that Alduaiji is excited about is their new loyalty program.

"We are implementing a new loyalty program use-case, now the application is still under development and not yet live, but we are very excited about it. We are not just looking simply at transactions, we need to capture all the data that a customer generates when they are interacting with all our banking services, whether that be online, or visiting a physical branch," said Alduaiji. 11

According to Alduaiji, customers will earn points based on how often it engages with the bank, but stressed they need to capture the data in real-time, highlighting that's where Confluent really helps.

"The data on each customer helps us not only define how loyal they are, but also helps us understand their behavior - and it really empowers and enhances our customer experience offering. We need to be loyal to the customers that are loyal to us. However, it would not work if we didn't have access to this information in real-time, and that's why Confluent's Data Streaming Platform has transformed our customer services and user experience," said Alduaiji.

Alduaiji revealed that National Arab Bank has ambitions to become the market incumbent when it comes to banking in Saudi Arabia, but conceded that it will take some time, but he believes their digital transformation program is going to help them get to the summit.

"National Arab Bank becoming the first option for everyone when it comes to banking is going to take some time, but we are putting the processes and practices in place that is only going to serve to put us in a position where we will be at the top. We are not a market leader, we are a mid-level bank – but we are growing very aggressively, and we have a very progressive If you are looking for a realtime streaming data platform, and you want it centralised across all your applications then Kafka is the way to go. There is just no other alternative that comes close to it, it's revolutionary."

> digital transformation strategy that is helping us accelerate our services, and that is inevitably leading to continued customer growth – and we have ambitions to become the leading bank in the Kingdom," said Alduaiji.

One of the other factors in why ANB has acquired market share in new areas and services is because of

its attitude towards the burgeoning FinTech ecosystem in Saudi Arabia.

Unlike other banking and financial players, ANB are proactively collaborating with FinTech companies, and as mentioned above support 65% of FinTech entities in the country, but other banks have been resistant to work with them as they view them as direct competitors. "Other banks in Saudi Arabia are not working with FinTech businesses or supporting them, because quite frankly they see them as a threat, but we don't think like that. Our senior leadership can see that trends are shifting, and the way traditional banking operated is evolving and we are adapting and positioning ourselves to serve our customers in the experience economy. Our leadership are driving and supporting our digital transformation agenda, because they know digital is the future," said Alduaiji.

Alduaiji concluded a brilliant discussion by reiterating the role played by Confluent in terms of helping them transform to meet the demands of its customers.

"In his keynote, Confluent CEO Jay Kreps stressed that there is still some resistance to Kafka, but in my opinion if you are looking for a real-time streaming data platform, and you want it centralised across all your applications then Kafka is the way to go. There is just no other alternative that comes close to it, it's revolutionary," said Alduaiji. HUAWEI

POWERING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

Steven Yi, President of Huawei Middle East, spoke to CNME Editor Mark Forker about the Chinese vendors continued growth in 2021, its progressive green agenda – and the key role its 'Huawei Cloud' platform will play in powering the digital economy.

> espite a challenging year due to COVID and continued pressure from the US, Huawei maintained growth in 2021, as shown in the results. What was behind this momentum? Huawei 2021 Annual Report revealed that the company had maintained stable operations throughout the past year. Huawei achieved USD 99.9 billion in revenue in 2021 and USD 17.8 billion in net profits, an increase of 75.9% year-on-year.

Huawei's workforce, financial, and business operations all remain stable and can support the company's future development. Huawei's main business in ICT infrastructure has remained stable while new business segments like digital power and cloud grew rapidly and our ecosystem development efforts have entered the fast lane.

The solid performance despite a challenging operating landscape is the result of continued commitment to innovation. Huawei's R&D expenditure reached about USD 22.4 billion in 2021, representing 22.4% of its total revenue and bringing its total R&D expenditure over the past ten years to over USD 132.5 billion.

This continuous investment in R&D saw Huawei rank second on the EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard last year. Today, Huawei maintains one of the largest patent portfolios globally; by 2021, Huawei held more than 110,000 active patents across over 45,000 families.

Countries in the region were pioneers in adopting 5G, achieving rapid and successful 5G rollouts. As the technology matures, please discuss some rising use cases and how businesses can evolve new models based on 5G. In 2021, Huawei's global carrier business generated USD44.1 billion in revenue and helped carriers worldwide deploy leading 5G networks. Third-party test results have

Huawei Cloud was designed to provide customers with stable, reliable, secure, and innovative cloud services."

> found that 5G networks built by Huawei for customers in 13 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands and South Korea, provide the best user experience.

Huawei has signed more than 3,000 commercial contracts for industrial 5G applications.

Such 5G applications are currently seeing largescale commercial use in manufacturing, mines, iron & steel plants, ports, and hospitals. In 2021, Huawei worked with more than 500 new industry solution partners whose products complement our capabilities, with whom we jointly released over 700 solutions, including more than 100 scenario-based 5GtoB solutions.

These solutions were deployed in more than 10,000 5GtoB projects in the enterprise market, enabling industry applications like intelligent iron & steel, intelligent coal mining, intelligent ports, intelligent cement, intelligent manufacturing, intelligent chemicals, and intelligent oil & gas. These applications have helped customers boost 15

productivity and offer their employees a safer and more comfortable work environment.

Elaborate on the latest innovations in Huawei Cloud and how the platform continues to empower the region's digital economy? Huawei Cloud was designed to provide customers with stable, reliable, secure, and innovative cloud services. To accelerate digital transformation, Huawei Cloud is working to deliver Everything-as-a Service underpinned by three pillars - Infrastructure as a Service, Technology-as-a-Service and Expertise-as-a-Service.

Huawei has fully opened over 50 scenario-based cloud services and has provided over 8,000 solutions to customers.

Huawei Cloud is committed to growing with partners throughout the Middle East. Last year, for example, we announced investing \$15 million in the Middle East Huawei Cloud Oasis program to assist 3,000 experts, support over 1,500 consulting and technical partners, and empower more than 100 SMEs to develop their cloud capabilities.

Our Huawei Cloud Spark program will also provide startups with access to financial and technical support, mentoring, and go-to-market encouragement. The purpose is to help startups focus on business development without worrying about the financial and marketing challenges.

At the recent LEAP conference in Riyadh, Huawei further



announced plans to open a cloud region in Saudi Arabia, a message delivered by our global Rotating Chairman, reflecting the Kingdom's importance to Huawei's global business and the importance of cloud in the region.

With many regional countries announcing green initiatives, could you elaborate on how Huawei supports these new demands? We are strong supporters of

We are strong supporters of the Middle East region's green ambitions and the strategies of countries like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and others to move towards carbon neutrality."

the Middle East region's green ambitions and the strategies of countries like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and others to move towards carbon neutrality. Many of our partners across the technology landscape also desire to participate in climate change action.

This movement involves innovating green, low-carbon networks and data centers while promoting clean energy development. Today, we are doing this through Huawei Digital Power, including many strategic projects in the Middle East.

Huawei Digital Power looks at five areas of business globally: Smart PV, data center facilities, mPower for electric vehicles, site power, and integrated energy solutions. Huawei Digital Power sees the Middle East region and the Gulf specifically as one of "strategic importance" to the company as it seeks to contribute to a lowcarbon, smarter society powered by digital technologies.

While we will cooperate with businesses in all of the previously mentioned five domains in the GCC, I believe that Smart PV and data center facilities are significant.

In Saudi Arabia, Huawei provides energy storage and PV solutions for the Red Sea Project, the world's largest microgrid energy storage project. This project will see the construction of the world's first city to be powered solely by PV with energy storage.

Moreover, we see an opportunity to support telecom carriers to optimise energy by building energy-efficient sites, networks, and operations. This helps them reduce their carbon footprint while lowering energy expenses to meet their cost reduction goals. This is the essence of our "More Bits, Less Watts" strategy.

Huawei's highly popular talent development initiatives continue to empower the youth to explore careers in

ICT. Please update us on the latest developments in these initiatives

When we launched Seeds for the Future in 2008, we immediately identified a real need to develop local ICT talent. Since then, Huawei has launched or sponsored multiple other talent development programs and competitions at the global, regional, and country levels, including scholarship programs, Huawei ICT Academy, Huawei Developers Training, Huawei Cloud Developer Institute, Women in Tech, and Technology for Education (e.g., DigiSchool, DigiTruck, and SmartBus).

We have already invested more than US\$150 million into these programs as part of our commitment to local ICT talent development, and 1.54 million people from over 150 countries have benefited from them.

To date, Huawei has opened 152 Huawei ICT Academies in the Middle East alone. More than 15,000 students got Huawei Certifications, and over 76,000 students participated in Huawei's annual ICT Competition. More than 3,000 students have engaged in its flagship program, Seeds For The Future.

In 2021, Huawei announced Seeds for the Future Program 2.0 with a commitment to invest US\$150 million in digital talent development over the next five years. We expect this effort to benefit more than three million additional people, including hundreds of thousands in the Middle East.

ALL PART OF THE 'PROCESS'

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Taha Khalifa**, Client Computing Group Sales Director, EMEA Territory at Intel Corporation, to learn more about the new direction the company is headed under the leadership of incumbent CEO Pat Gelsinger – and how the decision by the tech behemoth to launch five process nodes over the next few years is going to be a 'gamechanger' when it comes to performance.

aha Khalifa has enjoyed a decorated and distinguished professional career with Intel, one which has spanned over 20 years.

He has seen the company evolve and take on many different forms during that time, but one aspect that remained a constant was that innovation has always been in Intel's DNA.

In a candid and forthright conversation with CNME, Khalifa expressed his excitement at the future direction the tech leader is headed under the new tutelage of CEO Pat Gelsinger.

Earlier this year, Intel conducted a meeting with their investors, and Gelsinger laid bare his plans for the company for the next few years – and that's the place where we kickstarted our conversation. Khalifa believes the vision set out by Gelsinger will enable Intel to become the innovation market leader and highlighted that their decision to launch five process nodes in four years represents a 'company first'.

"Our new CEO Pat Gelsinger joined the company just over 12 months ago, and he launched a 'Torrid Pace' innovation and execution model. We are moving at a very fast pace in terms of

We are moving at a very fast pace in terms of our innovation, to the extent that we are launching five process nodes in four years." our innovation, to the extent that we are launching five process nodes in four years. We are starting with Intel 7 in 2021, and this year we plan to introduce Intel 4, followed by Intel 3 in 2023. In 2024, we will enter the Angstrom era, which essentially means we will move from Nanometer to Angstrom, and we will be introducing 20A and 18A. The decision to launch five process nodes in four years is something that Intel has never done before, and it's a very ambitious plan. However, we firmly believe it will put us in a very strong leadership position," said Khalifa.

In addition to this, Khalifa noted the launch of Intel's IDM 2.0, highlighting how that will greatly enhance its manufacturing capacity.

"We also launched Intel IDM 2.0 at the beginning of the year, and that will ultimately



allow us to increase our manufacturing capacity - and ensures that we capitalise on that by opening it as a foundry service for other technology providers. In addition to this, at the same time, we can selectively choose to use some of the foundries for our own products," said Khalifa.

The conversation then moved away from the process and packaging technologies that are being launched by Intel, towards their PC and desktop product offerings.

Khalifa said its new Alder Lake offering was equipping Intel with a leadership product that was transformative in terms of 'performance'.

"We launched Alder Lake H series in Notebooks in January 2022, and for the first time at Intel it introduces hybrid architectures. We have efficient and performance cores, which gives us up to 16 cores, and 24 threads, which is quite significant in terms of performance in a leadership product, and from a desktop perspective it is without doubt the best desktop, gaming, and CPU out there with significant performance leadership over our competition. From a mobile standpoint it is also the fastest mobile CPU from that aspect on the market," said Khalifa.

The Intel Director also outlined how Intel have formulated a roadmap for innovation across the next few years.

"At the end of 2022, we intend on launching Raptor Lake, which is expected to increase performance year-on-yearand will optimise Alder Lake to create a more high-performance product in Raptor Lake. In 2023, we are introducing a new concept entitled 'Disggregated Architecture', which means instead of having all the CPU on



one package, we are launching the concept of 'Tiles'. This allows you to modularise the architecture to have a graphic tile, CPU tile, or a core tile, which gives you the ability to use multiple process technologies in each one of these tiles. The other is to use the best IP and process technology available on the market to bring products to market at a faster pace," said Khalifa.

Khalifa also added that under the new direction of Intel, CEO Pat Gelsinger has adopted brings back an accelerated version of the old Tick-tock operating model. "Meteor Lake is going to be a truly innovative product and will bring both the hybrid architecture and disaggregated architecture to offer very solid optimisation in terms of efficiency. We are also bringing back an accelerated version of the Tick-tock model we used to have in the past to give us the leadership in architecture and process technology, and we are very excited about that," said Khalifa.

Khalifa revealed that Intel bases its new innovations on a range of factors that include the key trends it sees emerging in the IT ecosystem, comprehensive research and most importantly engagements with its customers.

"We examine what we believe will be some of the long-term key trends in the IT ecosystem over the next 3-5 years and embark upon strategic planning based on what we see. This inevitably helps us to design solutions and better understand the product and framework to meet the demands of the market. We also conduct our own surveys and research. However, we also engage in a lot of customer interactions



to learn how their products are being used, and ultimately how we can optimise that," said Khalifa.

The Intel executive then highlighted how the global COVID-19 pandemic showed them the importance of collaboration.

"Collaboration with our ecosystem is critical for our innovation, and our core engineering efforts with our OEMs and partners are also very important. During the COVID-19 pandemic we realised how important collaboration was in terms of the way we work, live, learn, \square

Meteor Lake is going to be a truly innovative product and will bring both the hybrid architecture and disaggregated architecture to offer very solid optimisation in terms of efficiency."

> collaborate, and communicate through our PC. We optimised our features to eliminate things like background noise, added more clarity to the image and integrated a lot of AI features that will help our collaboration be optimised," said Khalifa.

He then heralded the impact its range of Intel Evo products has had on enhancing their communication and collaboration capabilities.

"We launched our Evo products a few years ago, and we have sold over 10 million units. This year we have 100 new designs of Evo coming to the market. It is an amazing product that is the result of engagement with our customers and focus groups to determine what people both want and need when it comes to the PC. We have worked very closely with our partners to co-develop and co-design this platform. It has many features such as a minimum of 9 hours of battery life, you can charge up to 4 hours in less than 30 minutes. In summary, we are fully committing to the industry that this is a long-term vision, and we have

also introduced intelligent collaboration which again only serves to further enhance our product offering," said Khalifa.

Intel, like so many other global vendors rely heavily on its channel ecosystem to elevate, promote, and proposition its product and solutions to the market.

Khalifa reiterated that Intel was fully committed to the channel – and disclosed how they are providing opportunities for their channel partners to become more innovative.

"One of our key focus areas is how we can continue to grow our channel partnerships. The channel has always been an area in which our customers have demonstrated their innovation and agility. Our channel partners have an intrinsic understanding of the market, and they know their customers very well. We provide them with tools to make them successful and more productive. We also introduced things like the NUC element in the channel as this provides them with the opportunity to differentiate and create products through their customers. The NUC is a small form factor of the PC that is highly integrated and gives the channel an opportunity to add more components to it in a bid to make it more competitive. We believe in harnessing the power of the channel and our approach to shows that we are fully committed to the channel," said Khalifa.

LENOVO

PUTTING THE CHANNEL BACK IN THE FRAME

CNME Editor Mark Forker managed to secure an exclusive interview with **Alaa Bawab**, General Manager, Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions Group (ISG) Middle East & Africa to find out what impact he believes their new Lenovo 360 framework is going to have on the channel ecosystem across the region.

enovo has always taken great pride in the fact that it is a channel first company, and they believe the fact that they deliver their business 100% through the channel is a key differentiator for them versus other vendors in the marketplace.

Alaa Bawab is one of the most respected IT leaders in the Middle East, and has enjoyed a distinguished career, one in which has seen him work for some of the world's leading and IT and technology companies.

In a candid interview with CNME, he spoke in detail of the capabilities and impact he believes the Lenovo 360 framework is going to have in terms of giving their channel partners great flexibility and autonomy to innovate.

According to Bawab, the new Lenovo 360 has been established to deliver the objectives and targets on four business outcomes for their partners. "The Lenovo 360 Framework is designed to produce solutions that deliver on four business outcomes for our partners. These include enabling greater workforce productivity and collaboration, providing infrastructure flexibility, sustainability improvements, and tailored industry-specific solutions," said Bawab.

In addition to this, Bawab highlighted how the new channel framework will help their partners resolve and overcome challenges that their customers are facing in the new digital economy, which has defined by transformation.

"The Lenovo 360 unleashes the full power of the Lenovo portfolio across intelligent devices, infrastructure solutions and solutions services to enable easier and more seamless global access through a single point of contact for our partners, so they can effectively solve their customers challenges. The framework also provides a catalogue of resources, and access to Lenovo experts, who specialise in building endto-end services and support solutions across our three business groups," said Bawab.

Bawab said the inspiration behind the Lenovo 360 framework is founded on the three key pillars, which are people, programs, and tools.

"When it comes to people, we have begun to align our channel teams across our business units IBG, ISG and SSG into a single organisation across structures that can provide our partners with a faster and much easier access to our broad and extensive portfolio of products, solutions, and services. As part of Lenovo 360, additional investments will be made over time in technical and product experts across regional channel teams to provide greater partner support," said Bawab.

According to Bawab, one other key feature when it comes to the Lenovo 360 framework is



diversity of programs that it has infused into the platform.

"In terms of programs, when it comes to the Lenovo 360 framework, we have introduced multiple programs such as better together. Better together is a new program that has been designed to provide additional acceleration for partners selling our end-to-end portfolio. For example, for IDG partners classically selling end-user devices, an additional accelerator will kick in when selling datacenter-related solutions and vice-versa. As-a-service rebate accelerator will be introduced for infrastructure-as-a-service, or device as-a-service sales. Finally, in relation to solutionbased incentives, an additional

accelerator for partners who sell any of the outcome-based channel ready solutions will be granted," said Bawab.

The Lenovo executive also disclosed that there had been new features and capabilities



Lenovo 360 seizes the opportunity to equip partners with a portfolio that reflects the full spectrum of customer needs to device, to infrastructure, to services and beyond." added to the tools and resources available on their Lenovo Bid platform, and he stressed that this once again would empower the channel to do more with less.

"Looking at tools there will be an evolution of the Lenovo Bid platform, and Lenovo partner hub to support cross portfolio quoting and pricing. Lenovo will also be introducing simple solution builders for each channel-ready solution that we bring to market. The enhancement of these tools will take place throughout the course of 2022. However, processes will be in place to help ensure that our partners are able to deliver on all the solutions that we offer today," said Bawab.

Bawab concluded an excellent interview, one which provided an in-depth understanding of the broad capabilities of the Lenovo 360 framework, by reinforcing the point that Lenovo is fully committed to their channel ecosystem.

"The Lenovo 360 framework reconfirms our commitment as a channel first company, and we are truly the only vendor in the market that delivers the business 100% through the channel. As we launch the Lenovo 360 framework, we will continue to support our channel ecosystem by giving our partners the opportunity to build and diversify their revenue streams. Lenovo 360 also provides the ability for our partners to offer end-to-end solutions from pocket to cloud. Lenovo 360 seizes the opportunity to equip partners with a portfolio that reflects the full spectrum of customer needs to device, to infrastructure, to services and beyond," said Bawab.

COMMVAULT ©

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Fady Richmany**, Regional Vice President, SEEMEA at Commvault, to find out how the company's solutions such as the Power of AND are empowering their clients with the ability to accelerate their digital transformation journey, which has laid the foundations for their best-ever fiscal performance.

> ady Richmany is undoubtedly one of the most respected and revered IT leaders in the Middle East with over 30 years of industry experience.

He has worked with some of the world's most innovative companies during his decorated career, and now he has been tasked with the responsibility of leading Commvault's Go To Market plan as they look to expand and grow their business portfolio across the region and in new emerging markets. Richmany works closely with Commvault's strategic partners

MAY 2022

to solidify their position as a leader in data protection, whilst they have also tailored new solutions to address the new demands of their customers.

In a candid interview with CNME, the charismatic Commvault executive talks about their record-breaking financial performance, their investments across the region, the rise in ransomware attacks – and what differentiates the company from their market rivals.

Over the last 12 months, Commvault has solidified its position as a global leader in data protection, and that has been reflected in your economic performance with the company recording its best fiscal year to date. Can you outline to our readers what has been the key to your success over the last 12 months? We are proud of our recordbreaking performance over the last 12 months. It was the best Q4 and fiscal year in the company's history and we are on track with consistent and predictable growth. SEEMEA is contributing to this as we have expanded our client base and grown the business in the region. This is reflected in our double-digit growth and market share increases across all the significant SEEMEA economies.

Key to our success is our ability to deliver solutions that resonate with our customers. Digital transformation and data protection are both strategic business priorities, and we not only have a long history in this space, but we also have a platform that differentiates ourselves by offering enterprise-grade software and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) offerings that work together with a single pane of glass view. We call this 'the power of AND'.

To explain further, most companies today, including Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), mid-sized business and large enterprises have adopted a 'cloud first' strategy coupled with the requirement to protect their most valuable asset – data commonly known as the lifeblood of a company. We are uniquely positioned with these two priorities, particularly as we see a sharp increase in cyber crime and most notably, ransomware. We at Commvault believe this is our time as we have the best unified platform in the industry that delivers all intelligent services, data protection, data security, data governance and compliance, data insights and data transformation.

Commvault has invested significantly on a global scale in terms of investments it has made in its team, solutions, and innovations. There is huge opportunities across the SEEMEA region, but how do you plan to maximise and grow your market share in the region?

There certainly are significant prospects in SEEMEA for Commvault and in particular, the Middle East, and we have a clear strategy and huge growth potential in these markets. If we look at statistics published by IDC, the research house predicts that "digital transformation investments in the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa (META) are set to double across the 2020– 25 period." The firm says that digital transformation spending in the region will accelerate at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.6% over the five– year period, topping \$58 billion in 2025 and accounting for 40% of all ICT investments made that year.

The pandemic contributed to the acceleration of digital transformation as employees increasingly work from home and distributed environments.

We have created a strategy specifically for emerging markets the SEEMEA region which covers 75 countries, segmented into five clusters and further broken down into Tier 1, 2 and 3 countries. Our 'go to market' strategy is to focus on the well – established top five Tier 1 countries in SEEMEA, namely UAE, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Austria, Turkey, and South Africa.

Partners play an important role in the growth strategy of these countries and we are engaging with them to fully leverage our value proposition of our game changing Metallic 'as-a-Service' offering combined with our software. Our offering is geared to meet the demands of rapid digital transformation and we have an established eco-system in these countries to support this growth.

We know that over the last few years cybersecurity attacks have skyrocketed and businesses know that it's no longer a question of 'if' I get attacked, but instead 'when'. However, Commvault

is determined to deliver ransomware protection to its customers. Can you outline to our readers how you plan to do that?

Ransomware is a security issue, an IT issue, a policy issue and now, a C-Level organisational issue. Organisations are currently experiencing IT Collision where CIO, CEO, and board member priorities have converged.

As organisations continue to accelerate their journeys to the hybrid cloud in 2022, they must pre-emptively plan for the inevitability that they may experience a business disrupting cyberattack – like ransomware. Our recent acquisition of ThreatWise, a leading cyber deception company, has positioned us to prevent ransomware events by exposing threats that bypass traditional controls.

The acquisition was not to position Commvault as a cyber security company but rather a data protection company that provides the best security tools to ensure our customers' have a clean copy of data that is protected and 100% free of ransomware infection. There is a relationship between data protection and security and our goal is to ensure our customers' data is never compromised.

This is our time as ransomware threats are not going away, and bad actors will further increase in activity over time. We continue to innovate and be creative with our leading edge Commvault and Metallic offerings to mitigate the risks from ransomware attacks and ensure recoverability of data in the event of a breach.

We do this by building layers of technology and processes that

We win because we help protect, manage, and migrate on-premises workloads to multiple clouds – with a unified solution."

give our customers peace of mind and reassurance that they can avoid, and if necessary, recover from a ransomware attack.

This is particularly important because when it comes to ransomware, as it is not a matter of 'if' but rather 'when' an attack will occur. Our customers need to ensure they are prepared, and we are helping them with our industry-leading solutions. These solutions have a two-prong approach whereby they provide businesses with the ability to prevent a potential attack and successfully recover in the event of a breach. This is achieved through resources, skills and expertise that underpin our protection and prevention services. The resources and expertise are offered as a professional service based on our 'ready, steady and respond' phases that align technical capabilities with recovery objectives, assist in monitoring and maintaining a state of recovery readiness, and then accelerate the rate at which a company returns to its normal business operations in the event of an attack.

We also see data sovereignty becoming more of an issue, particularly with government, making it imperative for us e protect, bouds -

> to create partnerships with hyperscalers, such as Microsoft Azure in the UAE and AWS in Bahrain, that have established local data centres and a presence in SEEMEA countries. This is essential with a proper ransomware defence strategy. Other alliances include local CSP partners with companies such as Injazat, a leader in digital transformation, cloud, and cyber security in the UAE. We also recently concluded a CSP contract with Group 42.

Commvault has customers in global industry verticals such as government, telecommunications, finance, and education, but which one of those industries represents your biggest vertical?

Data protection and data security top the charts in terms of priorities at a board level. Together with our unified platform and intelligent service,

26



we can handle any customer of any size, in any industry. More than 100,000 organisations trust Commvault with their data, and we have established a strong footprint in industries such as defense, education, health, transportation and public security, to name a few. We are in a fortunate and opportunistic position in the SEEMEA region where we are relevant to every single customer across every single industry. Today, data is the most valuable asset; it is the lifeblood of any organisation.

We are the company that excels in data management, protection and security, which makes us relevant to all verticals – be it education, healthcare, energy or government.

The public sector with the branches of state and local governments having highly distinct data needs is a key vertical for us. Another stronghold for us is the banking and financial sector where built-in business continuity, disaster recovery, and personal data privacy and information governance are top priorities when looking for data protection and recovery services. Commvault makes it easy to simplify IT infrastructure, handle data growth and move to the cloud with minimal risk.

Education and healthcare continue to grow in prominence, having emerged from two years of living in a pandemic where factors like home-based learning and contact tracing measures have driven the need for data analytics such as patient care, vaccination status and increased data consumption from endpoints and the cloud for virtual classes.

No matter which industry, customers want choice and flexibility – all of which we offer – allowing them to meet new business needs with less of a burden.

As mentioned above we live in a work from anywhere hybrid world and that has led to an increase in adoption of multicloud environments to support SaaS based applications. Can you tell us more about your enterprise-grade SaaS solution Metallic and what sort of impact that has had in the marketplace? Globally, Metallic continues to scale and contribute meaningfully to our Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR), revenue and total customer growth. In the past six quarters since Metallic has been launched globally, we have crossed a milestone in ARR reaching \$50M.

We are leading the way in a cloud era with intelligent data management. Yet if we look at our 26- year history in data management, we have achieved a number of milestones. From 2008 to 2010, we offered backup and recovery with a patented 'no limits' architecture for data protection. Our next innovation up to 2019 was seen with the intelligence we injected into our data management platform with Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. This enabled us to expand workloads and drive use cases.

What sets us apart now is our unified data management solution that extends across multiple platforms, creating a cohesive view and management spanning on-premises, cloud and edge, including legacy and modern architectures. Our flexibility is seen in our offering of Software and SaaS, used individually or in combination, often exceeding our clients' expectations.

Today, Metallic is our advantage - offering customers the Power of AND – allowing them to embrace our software AND SaaS at will. Since its adoption in the Middle Eastern market nearly six months ago, we have seen an impressive uptake from our customer base. We have also seen our customers needing more complex, wide-ranging, and covering data protection solutions to manage their critical assets across all environments, and that's what we can offer to our customers with the Power of AND.

There are a number of compelling benefits to customers such as time to market. Businesses can now have our services up and running in a matter of days 27

and weeks rather than six to nine months due to the commissioning of hardware. It delivers agility, efficiency, and a cost reduction due to its Opex finance model where the customer pays for what they consume. Furthermore, as these companies scale, the 'pay as you grow' concept means they don't have to invest in future capacity requirements up front.

Importantly, our enterprise software 'brain' is at the heart of our Metallic 'as-a-Service' offering, providing the same unified platform and intelligent services, data protection, data security, data governance and compliance, data insights and data transformation.

Metallic has allowed us to offer a cost-effective, efficient, data protection and business continuity solution to SMEs that features simplicity without the investment of a data centre and is quick to implement. It also caters to any workload.

For mid-sized businesses that may have potentially invested in a data centre, with a mix of workloads sitting on-premises and in the cloud, Metallic provides a unified platform. Larger enterprises usually have the requirement for a data protection solution that spans legacy infrastructure, such as IBM mainframes, alongside later technology including virtual machines and virtualisation.

Add containers and different forms of Kubernetes with different flavours of databases, and native cloud applications such as Salesforce to the mix, and Metallic provides a unified platform that supports all of these systems, technologies and architectures. Customers want choice and flexibility – all of which we offer – allowing them to meet new business needs with less of a burden. Today, Metallic is our advantage – offering customers the Power of AND – allowing them to embrace our software AND SaaS at will. This is the power of Metallic.

Already launched - and with many customers already - in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and having recently announced Metallic GA in Qatar, we are especially pleased to bring secure, scalable, compliant, and cost-effective data management to our customers here. Furthermore, we will continue investing in the SEEMEA region. With this increased availability in our region, we look forward to more opportunities as the solution grows in popularity. Not to mention that we have a few new features in the pipeline for later this year!

Commvault is a global leader in data protection, but what differentiates you from your rivals?

There are a number of differentiators but what sums it up is our ability to 'liberate people to do amazing things with data'. We have a unified solution providing a consolidated view through a single pane of glass, and data that is protected on any platform whether it be cloud, onpremises or hybrid. In addition, our solution includes built in ransomware detection, protection, and recovery from an attack. Yet, in order to understand the real differentiators at a deeper level, we need to look at the five key data challenges that businesses face and how our intelligent data services solve these issues.



Key to our success is our ability to deliver solutions that resonate with our customers."

Collectively, the challenges below form a 'business integrity gap', highlighting the void between where the company's data is today and where it should be for organisations to thrive, accelerate, and digitally transform. Commvault bridges this gap with its portfolio of Intelligent Data Services, closing the business integrity gap and enabling companies to execute on their digital transformation strategy and accelerate business growth

Data sprawl introduces risk and stalls business growth - as companies continue on their digital transformation strategies, there are a number of challenges faced. Data now resides in various locations which results in data sprawl. This introduces complexity and with workloads evolving over time on different platforms, risk is introduced to business. Data environments need to be coordinated and ordered for businesses to not only digitally transform but also thrive. Our data protection addresses 'Data Fragmentation and Failure Points', allowing organisations to manage data across the industry's broadest ecosystem and ensure data availability

• Increasing surface for cyberattacks – as employees increasingly work from home and edge computing gains traction, this is creating an expanded attack surface. Cybercrime is continually on the rise and as such, companies need to not only prevent themselves from ransomware attacks but also have a clear, defined strategy and technology in place to restore data that is free from ransomware. Data Security mitigates the "Increasing Surface for Cyberattacks" by providing protection and recovery from security threats, including ransomware and other data breaches

 Regulation and privacy requirements - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has forced organisations to review their data protection and privacy in order to comply. It made companies reassess how they collect, store and manage personal data of EU customers. Commvault's data governance software has simplified this compliance requirement for companies and delivered peace of mind by enabling businesses to understand where their data lives, how to manage and remove unnecessary personal data and protect the data that needs to be accessed. Commvault's Data Compliance & Governance deals with 'Heavy Government & Societal Demands' by facilitating compliance with data governance and privacy regulations, including GDPR and CCPA to will allow you to expand your business into new regulated markets.

• Inability to scale and innovate with market demands

as data continually increases
exponentially, businesses face the
challenge of managing their data
one of the most valuable assets

in an organisation today. In order to innovate and scale, companies require a data management solution that takes the pressure off IT resources. Commvault streamlines hybrid cloud data protection with automation and orchestration that takes the burden off IT, so they can refocus their energy on projects that drive business results. Data Transformation covers the 'Inability to Scale & Innovate with Market Demands' by enabling the shifting and repurposing of data across environments for application modernisation via DevOps and for increased data access and connectivity for lines of business leaders (LoB).

 A lack of autonomy process efficiency – it is widely acknowledged that the cost of managing data outstrips the cost of storing data. By introducing autonomy process efficiency, Commvault is able to simplify, automate, and consolidate their data management operations. Even as data volumes grow, Commvault customers can confidently manage that growth and find huge gains with the Commvault platform's ability to automate tasks for data management processes. Data Insights addresses 'Lack of Automation and Process Efficiency' by applying data use patterns and machine-learning driven data insights to drive operational efficiency and cost savings for IT operations

At Commvault, we execute and remain focused on what's in front of us but are also aware of what's ahead. We are innovators and have been innovating for 26 years. This is a key metric of success and one we hold ourselves in high regard for – and we continue to deliver.

The industry has recognised us for 10 consecutive years, having named us a Leader in Gartner Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Backup and Recovery Software Solutions. Commvault also achieved the highest score across all three use cases in the 2021 Gartner Critical Capabilities for Enterprise Backup and Recovery Software Solutions, and GigaOm Radar 2021 has reported Commvault a leader and outperformer. These accolades are not easy to achieve.

We displaced the incumbent vendors this past quarter – legacy and upstart.

Customers want choice and flexibility – all of which we offer – allowing them to meet new business needs with less of a burden.

Also, Metallic is our differentiator, and with the Commvault single platform supporting any required vendor environment, in just one pane of glass, we can handle even the most complex data protection task with the Power of AND.

No one else has this breadth and depth. We win because we help protect, manage, and migrate on-premises workloads to multiple clouds – with only one solution. I am truly confident that we have the right team, both in SEEMEA and internationally, to outperform. We are confident and closer to our customers because we understand their needs and we can fulfil them, alongside our partners and distributors as they see the growth opportunity that is coming. And now, it is truly our time. **Come**

ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES

THEATRE OF DREAMS

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to Hozefa Saylawala – Middle East Director at **Zebra Technologies**, to find out how his company is leveraging its portfolio of technologies to empower enterprises in the 'on-demand' economy – and to learn how retailers are embracing a new concept called 'theatre of retail' in a bid to replicate seamless online shopping experiences in physical retail outlets.

> hen the global economy ground to a shuddering halt in March 2020, the way in which we live, learn, work and play was completely reshaped indefinitely.

> Industries were forced to adapt and change in a bid to maintain business continuity and in many cases 'keep the lights on'.

The combination of all these forces paved the way for what some describe as the 'ondemand economy' that we now live in, a society which is fueled by 'experiences' – and that are ultimately underpinned by digital transactions.

We know that the pandemic served as an accelerator for many things, such as the 'work from anywhere' world that has now been adopted globally, hybrid and remote working are here to stay.

However, when it comes to the retail industry, we know there was a sizeable shift towards e-commerce prepandemic but this skyrocketed during the global health crisis - so much so that it changed customer behaviours.

CNME managed to secure an exclusive interview with Hozefa Saylawala, in a bid to learn more about how Zebra Technologies is helping retailers to strike a better balance when it comes to the 'experiences' enjoyed by consumers online versus instore.

The dynamic and charismatic Saylawala, who is regarded as a thought leader by industry peers, kickstarted a brilliant and organic conversation by highlighting just what Zebra Technologies is bringing to the party for retailers.

"We empower organisations to thrive in the on-demand economy, by making every frontline worker and asset at the edge visible, connected and fully optimised. This allows us to create and digitise automated workflows. We create digital IDs for every frontline worker, assets, or inventory that you have, and once they have that digital ID through the help of our technology you can track, trace, and monitor the movement of these workers, asset, and inventory inside your retail shop, office or warehouse," said Saylawala.

Saylawala stressed that for retailers starting from scratch, it's much easier for them in terms of





We empower organisations to thrive in the on-demand economy by making every frontline worker and asset at the edge visible, connected and fully optimised."

identifying trends, or challenges that their business is going to face because they are essentially working off a clean slate.

However, he added that for an existing retailer that already has some sort of legacy technology deployed, then it is going to be a transformation journey to move from point A to point B, especially considering the fact that we are now living in the on-demand economy. The Zebra Technologies executive spoke about how customer behaviours had changed – and defined what he believes are the fundamental characteristics of the on-demand economy.

"Many consumers now love the sheer convenience of shopping online, but they were very much in the minority prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has really accelerated the growth of online shopping. There were a lot of shoppers pre-pandemic that were resisting this transformation, but during the global pandemic they had no choice but to get on this bandwagon. If I were asked to plainly define the ondemand economy, it essentially means the economic activity created by digital marketplaces and technology companies to fulfill consumer demand via immediate access to goods and services. The exponential growth in online traffic, and the different delivery options that have been created, has undoubtedly added a layer of complexity for retailers - and means that retailers need to be equipped with the solutions and data insights on hand to be able to cater to expectations in the on-demand economy," said Saylawala.

Staying on the topic of customer behaviour, Saylawala spoke about how technology had heightened our expectations as consumers resulting in a very low tolerance for bad experiences with applications. CNME commented on the industry consensus that when consumers have an unsatisfactory experience with a mobile application it is highly unlikely that they will engage with that application again, and instead will look for an alternative. Saylawala declared that the biggest challenges facing physical stores was the fact that frontline staff can't replicate the experience consumers enjoy online.

"Shoppers now expect all the choice, convenience of access, and the speed of online shopping – this has now become a new behavior. We have become so used to being able to compare products and pricing via the click of a button, so this has rather inevitably changed the customer psyche. This has fostered an environment in which we have all become inpatient shoppers because we have become accustomed to accessing information instantly. The problem now is when you take this behavior pattern back to shopping in physical stores, the traditional store associate is no longer equipped to deal with the changing behavior of the consumer who is expecting information and competitive analysis at the snap of a finger, and this is undoubtedly the biggest challenge that physical retail stores are facing," said Saylawala.

What is the solution to this challenge? According to Saylawala, the answer lies in the omnichannel.

"The question now becomes - how do I enable my frontline worker to provide the same experience that is delivered online? How do I ensure that they have the access to the information, or access to the tools that allows them to deliver the same online experience Let's make no mistake about it, there has been a generational shift, and let's be frank, 'Generation Z' is very demanding."

> inside the store? This is what we call the omnichannel experience, which allows you to seamlessly translate that online experience and replicate it instore," said Saylawala.

> Expanding on the challenges facing those physical retailers that are trying to entice shoppers back instore, Saylawala revealed that many retailers had completely transformed their operations and had adopted technologies to personalise experiences and cater to the demands of Generation Z, adding that many retail outlets had now become experience centers,

he called this movement the 'theatre of retail'.

"The theatre of retail concept is something that has been validated more since some retailers in London are now recruiting associates from stage schools in a bid to put the drama back into retail. The idea is that store associates are no longer simply just uniforms at the point of sale, now they must be able to translate the omnichannel journey for an online shopper, who is now walking into a physical store and has expectations, which are very different from what consumers were expecting



before the exponential growth of online shopping. Shops have now become what we call experience centers. Some retailers now have digital mirrors that give you personalisation options on your shoes and clothes, and this is catering to the expectations of Generation Z, who are extremely social media savvy, and want to share their shopping experience online. We are seeing a lot of these transformations inside stores across the UAE, and many stores now have their own cafeterias, and are utilising celebrities and social media influencers to

create a story around the retail brand. If you combine all these factors that is why we term this new experience as the 'theatre of retail'," said Saylawala.

Zebra Technologies commissioned their 14th Annual Global Study earlier this year, which explored in forensic detail some of the challenges that are facing retailers in the experience, or on-demand economy.

However, one of the most interesting trends to emerge was the generational shift from 'Generation Z' that was not only driving the new patterns in customer behaviour - but was also fueling demand from the frontline workers that retailers were hiring from the same generational demographic.

"Let's make no mistake about it, there has been a generational shift, and let's be frank, 'Generation Z' has very high expectations. . However, rather interestingly, workers that are hired instore are also coming from Generation Z, and they also have high expectations. They are going back to their line managers and are saying we need modern scheduling we need better communication tools, and we need to be empowered and equipped with the right solutions to be able to better communicate with their customers. So, on one side of the coin, we have the new shopping behaviors and patterns emerging from the consumers, so when they walk into the store, they are putting their demands to the retail associates, and in turn that is translating into investment decisions that retailers are making to meet these demands. However, retailers are hiring frontline workers from Generation Z, and these employees are used to the new tools, and the new way of working, so they in turn are putting pressure back on the retailers. These are forming the foundations of the rapid changes that retailers are now forced to drive, and if retailers thought they could embark upon this transformation in a gradual way, they are quickly finding out that they need to move fast, and they need to move now," concluded Saylawala.

KEEPING YOUR COOL

CNME Editor Mark Forker managed to secure an exclusive interview with ALEC Data **Centre Solutions General** Manager Bjorn Viedge, to find out why the construction giant has now decided to create a new subsidiary focused on the burgeoning data centre space – and how its new partnership with innovative startup Submer can take the heat off data centre providers struggling to manage cooling costs in the UAE.

34

jorn Viedge is the General Manager at ALEC Data Centre Solutions, of the newly launched data center arm of UAE construction behemoth ALEC.

However, the company is known for not resting on its laurels - and ALEC is now leveraging its knowledge and expertise to capitalise on the opportunities that are emerging in the construction of new data centres, with demand for data centres skyrocketing in the last few years.

In a candid and forthright interview with CNME, Viedge explains that move into the data centre space was in many respects a 'natural progression' for the construction leader.

"ALEC is a large entity, and we see ourselves as a multidisciplinary construction group. We do highly complex and large-scale construction projects, but within that you have got entities that are highly skilled. For example, ALEMCO executes all the mechanical and electrical installations within these complex projects. In addition to this, we have a technology division that focuses on everything from lighting and controls, video walls, lowvoltage solutions, and guest room management systems. The buildings we are living in now are becoming more and more technologically complex - and it goes without saying

that anytime we do one of these large-scale projects we build a small data centre in one of those buildings, and we have a server room which has got all those components in it, so it was quite a natural progression for us to enter the data centre space," said Viedge.

In response as to why they hadn't focused on data centres in the past, the reason was quite straightforward for Viedge, quite simply the demand simply wasn't there.

"One of the reasons we were not constructing data centres in the past was we never positioned ourselves to focus on data centres, and it wasn't because we didn't have the expertise or capacity to do it, but there just wasn't a demand for data centres. However, that demand is now there as the sheer volume of data being generated continues to grow exponentially, and more and more businesses move towards the cloud. We created this new vertical in a bid to

We have partnered with a company called SUBMER, who are a European-based startup that focus on liquid immersion cooling." leverage all the skillsets that the group already has, and one of the key selling points that we have with our clients is the fact that we can virtually self-execute every facet of a data centre, we can do it all in-house," said Viedge.

Technology across all industry verticals is moving very quickly and is disrupting traditional norms, but as Viedge pointed out, in today's current climate the majority of data centres on the planet are driven with air-cooled technology.

"If you're a refrigeration engineer, you will quickly figure out that air is not the most efficient way of cooling something. In the Middle East region specifically, you have huge issues because of the outside temperature. Places like Norway have quite a natural appetite for data centre construction because they rely on what they call 'free cooling', because all they need to do is open the windows and they get free air at a low temperature, but in the UAE, we don't have that luxury," said Viedge.

The General Manager for ALEC Data Centre Solutions expressed his excitement at the partnership between the company and innovative startup company SUBMER, which he believes is going to completely transform the way data centre providers across the Middle East think about how they can effectively manage cooling efficiency and costs.

"We have partnered with a company called Submer, who are a European-based startup that focus on liquid immersion cooling, specifically single phase. They have a proprietary dielectric fluid which they use, and in essence what they are doing is submerging all your server equipment into this dielectric fluid. For example, take a standard IT rack, that would normally sit in a sever room that is cooled by a cold pack unit, but now what you are doing is taking that whole rack and are submerging it in a bath of dielectric fluid, so you are now using the medium of liquid to do the cooling. By changing your medium from air to liquid your efficiency goes through the roof, but what happens on top of that is you save a huge amount of space, so suddenly your data centre can be much smaller in size, which again brings incremental gains," said Viedge.

He added that the areas that you do still need to cool traditionally with air conditioning units is smaller, and that providers will save vast amounts of water.

"The build cost becomes less, and essentially your traditional data centre solutions that you see nowadays and the equipment that generates the cooling are consuming a great amount of water, but by changing that to new technologies you save a great deal of water on the cooling cycles, so really it's a no-brainer to adopt the new technology," said Viedge.

Viedge highlighted how data

centres are getting bigger, hotter, and more expensive to manage, and said that by 2025, they will amount for 20% of global electricity consumption, so what does the future hold?

» DATA Center

"For innovation to be more sustainable, more and more governments are driving a more efficient approach to the way we are doing things. If you were to analysis data centre energy consumption by percentage, you can see that the active IT equipment only takes up approximately half of a typical data centres energy consumption, cooling will take up 25%, and the movement of air is another 12%, then UPS is 10%, and the rest is lighting. We plan on submerging the servers and all the highdensity compute applications into this dielectric fluid, and by virtue of doing this we will help data centres reduce their cooling costs by 95%, free up 85% more space and more importantly reduce their POE in the data centre by a huge amount," said Viedge.

Viedge then expanded more


on their new partnership with Submer – and explained how the collaboration between the two companies is a 'perfect match'.

"Submer have a very clever portfolio of solutions, but the problem they had was yes, they can sell the solution, but they need some sort of installation entity that can go and retrofit all the design, and this is where ALEC comes in through our refrigeration, mechanical and electrical engineers. We do this for living, so it's very easy for us to take a Submer solution For innovation to be more sustainable, more and more governments are driving a more efficient approach to the way we are doing things." and retrofit it into an existing building, or to design a new build. There is a natural synergy between us because they know that they can't simply sell the product and expect the client to be able to hook it up, they need to have an entity that can integrate the product," said Viedge.

He concluded a fascinating interview by highlighting how the chip density evolution had accelerated this demand for liquid immersion solutions – and reiterated his confidence that ALEC Data Centre Solutions will be well positioned to become a leader in this space through its partnership with Submer.

"Chips are now being developed that are far more powerful than they used to be, and they are also generating a great deal more heat than they used to. This has created an environment where you are reaching an inflexion point, where some of the new generation chips that are being developed just can't be cooled by air anymore. The option now is to adopt a liquid immersion cooling solution, and we hope to become the preferred partner in offering these solutions to our clients, and through our partnership with Submer, and with the knowledge, skillsets, and experience that we are bringing to the table, we are extremely confident that we can become a market leader in helping data centres across the region slash their costs and increase their efficiency," concluded Viedge.

CONFLUENT

PUTTING THE WHEELS IN 'MOTION'

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Fred Crehan**, Regional Director at Confluent, to learn more about data in motion and Kafka, which enterprises are leveraging to deliver better experiences for their customers, the importance of their channel ecosystem – and what really differentiates the company from its market competition.

> S ince its inception in 2014, Confluent, under the tutelage of its CEO and co-founder Jay Kreps has gone from strengthto-strength.

Confluent has built a foundational platform for data in motion which will empower enterprises with the ability to be innovative and succeed in our new digital-first economy.

The Middle East has witnessed a tsunami of digital transformation over the last two years, but it has become evident that many are struggling to cope with the demands of transformation, hence why there is such a swell in demand for platforms such as Confluent's Apache Kafka.

CNME secured an exclusive interview with Fred Crehan, Regional Director at Confluent, to find out more about the company's product offering and how it plans to leverage its platform to help enterprises in the Middle East overcome the challenges they face in today's constantly evolving IT ecosystem.

Crehan is an industry veteran with over 20 years of experience in the IT sector, and in a candid interview the charismatic Englishman expressed his belief that Confluent has built something completely different to that on offer from its market rivals. .

"Confluent is software infrastructure, so in the same way with urban infrastructure when you think of roads, or airports, they are never the destination in itself – instead they connect things together. You have a starting point and a destination, and that's the same with Confluent. We are the central nervous system that connects different parts

MAY 2022





Kafka is very well-known, but there is a lot of complexities in relation to getting Kafka to scale, and that takes a certain amount of expertise to deliver that confidence and value."

> a skills gap everywhere in IT. In addition to this, there is a tremendous appetite for digital transformation, and they play a critical part in ensuring value is delivered. They are very important to us and will always be part of our go-to market strategy," said Crehan.

> However, Crehan pointed out that Confluent doesn't solely rely on their channel partners and outlined that they have a direct sales motion.

> "We believe that we are creating a brand-new category of data infrastructure that we call data in motion. Kafka is very well-known, but there is a lot of complexities in relation to getting Kafka to scale, and that takes a certain amount of expertise to deliver that confidence and value, which is why we play a lead role in the sales motion, but we work side-by-side with our partners to ensure that value is being delivered," said Crehan.

Crehan reinforced how Kafka has become hugely popular with the community of open-source

of the enterprise together, and we make data available to where it is needed in real-time, so customers can deliver a better experience, and optimise their backend infrastructure," said Crehan.

Crehan then highlighted the importance of collaboration and said that having the right partners is a critical part of their go-to market strategy – and singled out the essential role played by system integrators.

"We connect the overall IT ecosystem, so we will never be the destination, but we need data to come from somewhere,

and we need data to go to somewhere, so we have partners by definition in every sort of use-case. We need to work with partners that are going to help implement the entire use-case, and that's where our system integrators are incredibly important to help implement and build those connections together. We provide a lot of 'out of the box' connections as part of our platform, but the system integrators add the brawn to really make those usecases work. System Integrators play a huge role out here in the Middle East, because there is

39

users, and explained how that popularity has propelled the rapid adoption of Apache Kafka globally, he also spoke about the two different options they provide for customers in terms of they use Confluent.

"Kafka has a strong following and is one of the most popular open-source projects globally - and has become synonymous with digital transformation projects. It is quite easy to get started with Kafka, but you start to encounter challenges when you think about 'how do I make this operational, or production ready within the enterprise'? There are two ways to use Confluent, there is an out of the box self-managed version of Confluent, which means you must operate the software within your own datacenter, but the responsibility of the management of Confluent lies with you. However, we do have a wide range of excellent automation tools that make it really easy to manage that, but the responsibility is still with the customer. We also have Confluent Cloud, which is a fully managed service and that takes all the operational burden away," said Crehan.

Crehan stated that the fully managed option was the most preferable option amongst their customers, and he illustrated this by highlighting a direct quote made by one of their clients.

"There is a case study on our website with Instacart, and to quote one of their engineers directly he said, 'Customers The challenges that we are helping these companies, countries, or economies fulfil is that we are helping them to get there faster with reduced risk."

> today are unable to hire people to babysit Kafka' – and that's because it is really difficult to hire good people in every industry, but particularly in IT. There is such a demand for IT skills, and there is a talent war that is ongoing. Hiring people to operate infrastructure is very difficult because it is an operational type of role, and a lot of engineers and developers want to be working on applications that are at the

frontend and that are making a real difference in terms of generating revenue for their companies," said Crehan.

At the Kafka Summit 2022 in London, during his keynote speech, CEO and co-founder of Confluent Jay Kreps conceded that there was still a lot of resistance towards the technology from within the IT ecosystem. According to Crehan, the reason for this is quite simple, and that is that Kafka is 'new'.

MAY 2022



"Data in motion and Kafka was created to answer a real problem, and the problem that it was trying to address was how architectures were built in the enterprise, and they are generally built at the center of the database. Databases will always remain a vital part of any kind of company architecture, but there are limitations. The limitations with databases are the fact that the data is stored, and you have to go and retrieve it, and by the time you retrieve it the data is already out of date, and by the time you have had the chance to react to it, it may be already too late. It completely flips the notion of having to go and fetch data, process it somewhere and then send it somewhere else. It changes the way applications can function with Kafka, because you no longer need to fetch data from a database as you are taking away point-to-point connections as vou don't need it anymore," said Crehan.

Crehan added that he firmly believed that they were now getting to a point where Kafka was becoming pretty much ubiquitous.

"Confluent has a strong value proposition that makes it easy to adopt Kafka, and we are also getting to a stage now, and Jay alluded to this in his keynote that there were thousands of open jobs where Kafka was mentioned. I think what that indicates is that companies are accepting that Kafka is becoming a default technology to enable digital transformation - and it's also becoming a skill that people want to learn, and people see a career in it, so I think when you get to that sort of tipping point it takes the perceived risk out of things that are seen as new," said Crehan.

The Middle East region is seen by many IT and tech companies as a key global market due to the progressive transformation programs being pursued in countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain to name a few.

Confluent has now established their Middle East HQ in Dubai, and Crehan expressed his excitement at the burgeoning opportunities that exist in the IT ecosystem across the GCC region.

"There is a lot of exciting cultural, societal, and economic change happening in the Middle East, more so than anywhere else in the world. There is a huge appetite for change and digital transformation and what the UAE has achieved in such a short space of time is truly staggering. The UAE view technology and digitalisation as a core pillar of their acceleration, as are the other countries in the Middle East. The challenges that we are helping these companies, countries, or economies fulfil is that we are helping them to get there faster with reduced risk, and I think that's the beauty of Confluent as we have done this thousands of times in the past. We do solve a build versus buy conundrum as we provide solutions that address pretty much every type of scenario that companies would have thought of. The challenges in terms of scale, security, access control, no other company on the planet has that visibility and that experience, so there is a benefit to doing things by yourself, but if you want to do things cheaper, faster, reduce the risk and increase your success then you're going to want to buy Confluent to support that," Crehan.

SOLARWINDS

OVERCOMING COMPLEXITY

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Sascha Giese**, Head Geek at IT software leader SolarWinds, to learn more about how its new SolarWinds Hybrid Cloud Observability platform is removing the complexity for enterprises on their digital transformation journey, with a one-stop shop solution that is empowering users to have greater visibility on their IT environments.

> ou have launched a new solution entitled 'SolarWinds Hybrid Cloud Observability'. Can you tell us how this new platform can help businesses overcome issues with their cloud transformation?

I think one of the main reasons for us to go into this new world is to remove complexity quite simply. We know that enterprises globally are embarking upon digital transformation, and for many enterprises that means they are going hybrid, or they already are hybrid, and they want to expand on it, but that comes with quite a few challenges.

It is important that a solution works within a couple of hours and doesn't require days, or weeks for customisation, because nobody has time for that." The people that are tasked with the responsibility of maintaining the environment are a bit overwhelmed because there are so many moving parts and new technologies. In addition to this, most employers don't provide enough training, or time to learn new technologies, so it is very complicated. What we do is provide a one-stop shop, so one system that removes complexity and provides value from a machine in a public cloud, private cloud, or on-prem.

It's very important for users that the metrics are the same, so they get a better understanding of what is happening.

What are the standout features of the SolarWinds Hybrid Cloud Observability platform, and what differentiates it from other rival products on the market?

I could give you twenty, but I'll give you two! For example, when you look at an environment that is quite complex there is stuff in the cloud and on-prem, but even if you remove the infrastructure architecture the application deployment is complicated because we no longer live in a world where we have a threetiered approach.

One of the features will automatically check what other elements in that application delivery chain. For example, if an application is broken, usually the users ring IT, so in a perfect world somebody from IT will want to know this upfront.

If you go into an application and it turns red, well you don't really know is it the application, maybe a mail server, or the database. We have a feature that will automatically see the relationships between those individual elements and if you click somewhere then it will remove all the stuff that is currently not important, so the user can focus on the chain of important elements, now that is one system, and it is completely automated.

However, automations like that won't really give you the details you need for more complicated cases, but we have another feature on our platform



that enables IT personnel to build their own correlations, so they can use any metric versus another metric wherever it comes from to compare those data points which helps to prove a point – and this is another brilliant feature of our platform.

How important is the built-in intelligence and AIOps to deal with the challenges of today's hybrid IT realities?

It is very important as IT is getting bigger and bigger all the time, and we tend to collect an enormous amount of data, and the question has now become what do we do with all this data? However, there is a big difference between data collection and data management. Data management is essentially when you start to do things with your data.

We can do this as humans obviously, we can look at data

and make sense of it and that's fine if there is around 10 or 20 datapoints, but if there is 5,000 then yes, we can still do this, but it will take us weeks. This is where machines enter the playing field, and can do this relatively easy task, which is just time consuming for humans in a matter of minutes or seconds, which then allows us more time to do more creative tasks like working on projects. That's the reason I believe we should be looking at AI or ML for monitoring and managing because it empowers us to work more effectively.

How does SolarWinds Hybrid Cloud Observability alleviate the challenges many organisations face with questions surrounding total cost of ownership? We basically created

this platform based on the

experiences that we collected with our previous platform, so it's not something completely new. It is just a different version of what was there previously, and we decided to streamline it, and focus more on solving use-cases.

We changed things that were perhaps in hindsight a little bit complicated, for example, licensing was quite a complex matter previously because it was a modular approach, and each module had a different way to license a tool. We had a network monitoring product, and a product that provides analytics for data traffic and those products were bundled together for technical reasons and from a licensing point of view, but that didn't make everyone happy to be honest.

This prompted us to completely change our licensing process, it didn't matter how many metrics we collected, or where the data was coming from, we licensed the product by nodes. It is much easier to calculate, and it is based on a subscription level, so there was a low entrance price, which is very good for organisations because they can just tip their toes in and try it instead of spending thousands.

They instantly see a benefit of such a solution because you can start small and see how it works. In terms of total cost of ownership, we have a different measure, and that is time-tovalue, which basically examines how long do you use a solution before you see the actual value, and obviously you try to keep this as low as possible. It is important that a solution works within a couple of hours and doesn't require days or weeks for customisation, because nobody has time for that in the fastpaced digital economy that we live in. **cnme**

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SIMPLY THE BEST

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Kim Grauer**, Director of Research at Chainalysis, to learn more about some of the key findings that emerged from their 2022 Crypto Crime Report – and how the blockchain-based data platform is providing law enforcement with the 'best data' available to help them tackle cryptocurrency crime.

FTs are everywhere, and their popularity has skyrocketed over the last 12 months. However, as is the case with any new disruptive technology, there is always the possibility that the technology can be misused, and this has certainly proved to be the case when it comes to NFTs.

Wash trading is something we hear all about in the crypto space, and it is basically purchasing your own asset to artificially inflate the demand of that particular asset." A comprehensive report compiled by blockchainbased data platform company Chainalysis has illustrated concrete evidence that the surge in demand for NFTs has triggered the attention of cybercriminals, who we know are well accustomed to following 'the noise'.

Since its inception in 2014, Chainalysis has enjoyed phenomenal success and provides cryptocurrency exchanges, international law enforcement agencies and other clients with blockchain transaction analysis software to help them comply with regulations, assess risk, and identify illicit activity.

CNME managed to secure an exclusive interview with Kim Grauer from Chainalysis, to explore in more detail how NFTs are being used for illicit activities. The report conducted by Chainalysis found that there was a significant amount of wash trading happening when it came to NFT marketplaces – and Grauer kickstarted the conversation by explaining what exactly wash trading is.

"Wash trading is something we hear all about in the crypto space, and it is basically purchasing your own asset to artificially inflate the demand of that particular asset. For example, say I launch an NFT, but nobody is buying it, I then proceed to fake demand by buying my own NFT to make it seem like there is a lot of hype around that NFT, in the hope then that this leads to someone believing this hype and buying the NFT," said Grauer.

Wash trading is not a new concept in the cryptocurrency industry, but as Grauer pointed out in the past people were unable to gauge how much of it was happening until Chainalysis entered the fray.

"We've heard about wash trading in the crypto space for a long time, however, it has never been possible, or nobody has been able to estimate accurately the amount of wash trading that is happening. Some analysts will claim that 90% of order book volumes are wash traded, but there is very little evidence to back that claim up. However, our approach is the first real datadriven attempt to demonstrate wash trading happening with NFTs," said Grauer.

Interestingly the research director revealed that contrary to what people would expect, it is not that profitable to wash trade NFTs because of the excessive cost of transaction fees – and explained how they use their technology to track it.

"You can identify wash trading on the blockchain by just looking at did the person who purchased the NFT on the platform receive the money from the person who was selling the NFT on the platform. What we witnessed from the population of people who exhibited this behavior was that the majority didn't make money in this effort, quite simply because they spent more on transaction fees than they received from people who were falling from this scam. One person that we really looked at attempted to wash trade their asset 800 times, but that cost him around \$32,000 on transaction fees, but he only received \$27,000 from people who were victims. There was a smaller population that did make money, and a few of them did make a lot of money, but it's still a big risk," said Grauer.

Grauer added that the people who are engaging in this activity are plugged into the space, and probably have a better sense of what types of NFTs to pump, but stressed it still is going to be a big risk.

In terms of what has really triggered the explosion in interest, demand, and investment in NFTs, Grauer said it was a combination of the fear of missing out on something big, and the philosophical offerings of some NFTs resonated with many potential investors. I think the interesting thing about NFTs is the potential for disruption because it represents this new digital concept of property."

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"I think the interesting thing about NFTs is the potential for disruption because it represents this new digital concept of property. You get the feeling that this is going to be big, but you don't quite know why it's going to be big. I believe that the more philosophical offerings of NFTs are extremely attractive to people, and this could really disrupt how we manage things. I think any space that grows very fast will see people come in and make a bid to make sure they do not miss out on the opportunity, so it explodes faster because investors do not know what is going to happen, but they don't

want to miss out on it. The hype has gone up and we have got a lot of people onboarded into the industry, and now we need to put our money where our mouth is. We need to make these killer applications for people, so a lot is dependent on what comes from these developers and big businesses," said Grauer.

80 or older

The software deployed by Chainalysis has helped law enforcement agencies uncover some of the internet's darkest underbelly, and Grauer explained how they equip agencies with the tools they need to uncover this type of incognito crime.



"We invest the bulk of our resourcing into identifying services, and we have experts in many crime areas. We have an expert in human trafficking and child abuse materials and dark net marketplaces, and they work to make sure that our data platform has all the best data - and is in partnerships with the right people. We enable law enforcement agents to see transactions from human trafficking wallets and then we come in and provide data and investigative support as well. We work with crypto currency businesses, financial institutions, government

agencies and law enforcement, and each of them has a different data need and we fill their data need with a different product. For example, with law enforcement we'll provide them with investigative products, whereas financial institutions we give them compliance products," said Grauer.

In terms of what she viewed as one of the most interesting trends that emerged from their 2022 Crypto Crime Report, she cited the growth in hacking and De-Fi this year.

"A thread throughout our conversation is that all this growth comes with risk, and

people are investing in platforms that have been hacked and are not secure, so there is this need to have sustainable growth where you can onboard new people sustainably in the sense that there are not going to be a victim of an attack. We saw this massive explosion of De-Fi and NFTs, but that was countered by an explosion of hacking and scamming. We are working on industry-solutions to combat that crime. A good illustration of that is the fact that some exchanges are using our software to prevent their customers from sending to known scams and that has had the impact of reducing the amount of scamming by 80%," said Grauer.

In terms of what differentiates Chainalysis from their market rivals, the company's research director was blunt and concise with her response, saying that she believed quite simply that they have the best data.

"We try to illustrate how we are the best in the market with our reports, but I think we really do bring the best data. We have been around since 2014, we have the best attribution, the best sense of how much crime is occurring, and we are really the best in the business in terms of our data quality, and that's why we put out these reports, and in no small part because we need to inform people of the trends, but also because we are confident in the quality of our data. In summary, you won't see this level of reporting in marketing materials from any of our competitors, and the reason for that is, if our rivals could then they would," said Grauer.

OPINION

CULTURE CLUB

Tayfun Topkoc, Regional Director of SAS Middle East, Turkey, and Africa has written an exclusive op-ed for May's edition of CNME, in which he outlines the importance of building and retaining a corporate culture in our new 'work from anywhere' world.

> s we are eventually getting closer to the end of the pandemic, the discussion about the future of work is more relevant than ever. The work environment will be even more flexible, remote and employees already have new expectations in terms of work experience.

Our commitments to employees, communities and environment have allowed us to advance with innovation. This holistic approach to corporate culture keeps SAS ranked among the best workplaces worldwide. In UAE, we are committed to contribute to the country's future. By following closely

on its vision, with innovative solutions, advanced analytics, and AI, we can contribute to building sustainable future and balanced development for UAE's citizens.

The challenge organisations are facing now is that retaining or reinforcing work culture in a work from anywhere in the world is not a

MAY 2022



simple task. Companies have to minimise the risks involved in a remote work environment, such as employee fatigue and decreased job satisfaction. Establishing a work experience that boosts productivity should be a priority, but not through the standard business practices of old. Performance-related benefits are no longer enough. The development of a human-centered, hybrid working model that is based on collaboration is of higher importance and as organisations become more "regionalised" it is getting extremely important. There is also a growing importance of sustainability of an AI practice. The Great Resignation phenomenon and the rise of new, advanced technologies made the markets hungry for the generation of new, advanced skills workers. Organisations are struggling with both finding and retaining the right talents.

To bridge that gap, it is necessary to scale up education. Coming from the University environment and having strong academic roots, SAS has decades of experience in helping people around the world skill up to take advantage of the analytics economy.

Understanding the value of data starts by teaching the basics, including helping students rethink their approach to problem solving. We have partnered with colleges and universities globally to develop more than 400 joint programs in analytics and related disciplines through the SAS Academic Specialisation programs.

In UAE, we are strongly supporting the vision of ensuring excellent quality of education. We have postgraduate and graduate programs at Amity University, University of Fujairah, Middlesex University, and the University of Wollongong in Dubai, and we are working on expanding even further our education footprint. These partnerships enable us to start closing an existing



skill gap and create talent in areas of in Data Sciece, AI and Advanced Analytics, necessary to advance the country toward its vision of knowledge economy.

Retaining talent is another matter altogether. With flexibility being taken for granted and not considered a perk anymore, organisations must consider investing into the improvement of employees' work office environment, care for their mental health, and provide them ways to advance their careers.

We see that generations entering workforce are highly invested into contributing to a better, more sustainable world. They expect companies to do the same.

As companies are now assessing their sustainability agendas, we see a lot of steps into the right direction. And it's not only because of the legislation and impact of climate change to business, it's also expectations from At SAS, we've always been guided by our culture of trust and flexibility."

the workforce that will have big impact on their sustainability efforts.

We are very proud of the efforts and dedication we have at SAS on achieving net zero carbon-emissions, and I truly believe analytics has the power to accomplish remarkable results in ensuring sustainable future while ensuring development of businesses and society.

Meantime, the rise of the metaverse could further reshape the world of work shortly. Building upon the need for better team collaboration, it's highly possible that work meetings will soon move to the metaverse.

Though, we're not just talking about the evolution video conferencing here. Metaverse has the power to eliminate miscommunication across teams, with team members sharing the same virtual office from anywhere in the world. You could even host virtual office events to encourage the team spirit.

Metaverse can also be a capable remote training tool, revolutionise customer support, and much more that we haven't even thought of yet.

At SAS, we've always been guided by our culture of trust and flexibility. We trust employees to do the job they were hired to do and inspire them to be resultsdriven while taking into account their well-being. All told, you shouldn't let today's dynamic and fast-changing workplace environment overwhelm you. By embracing innovation, we can move forward in confidence.



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