

## 000



# Today's IT agility is built on observability.

SolarWinds<sup>®</sup> Hybrid Cloud Observability helps ensure services and online applications are available, operate cost effectively, and deliver a fantastic and predictable digital experience.

- » Modernize IT agility
- » Accelerate cost savings and time to value
- » Resolve issues faster with deep visibility and context
- » Improve user experience and service availability
- » Value across IT Ops, Dev Ops, and security

Learn more about Hybrid Cloud Observability and how we're re-envisioning the solutions you need to drive business results.

Visit solarwinds.com to learn more.



Our events











Our online platforms



tahawultech.com

Our social media

facebook.com/tahawultech

twitter.com/tahawultech



Talk to us: E-mail: mark.forker@ cpimediagroup.com



With D33 now forming the crux of the strategy, all the building blocks are in place for Dubai to go to the next level."

#### EDITORIAL

## **GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Dubai is not a place that is known for resting on its laurels.

Therefore, it should come as little surprise that by 2033, HH. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum wants to double the size of Dubai's economy.

His bold aspirations and ambitions are laid out in the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33).

The plan to double Dubai's economy over the next decade will consolidate its position among the top three global cities.

During our GovTech Awards, which were held last month, it was evident that the priorities of the D33 Agenda were high on the list of all key stakeholders with the Dubai government ecosystem.

It was incredibly exciting to hear their unwavering commitment to delivering on the goals and objectives of the economic reformation program.

Our GovTech Awards were a resounding success, as we brought all the key players from the government sector together to celebrate all their remarkable achievements over the last 12 months.

In addition to this, it was phenomenal to hear from government thought leaders in terms of where we are headed in the future, and with D33 now forming the crux of the strategy, all the building blocks are in place for Dubai to go to the next level.

Pride of place on June's front cover of CNME, are all our deserving winners from our GovTech Awards. 🥏

We have some brilliant interviews in this month's CNME, and first up is our discussion with Guy Mordoch.

He has recently been appointed as the CEO of 'smart cart' provider Cust2Mate.

The company has enjoyed huge success in Israel, but the experienced Mordoch has been brought onboard to take the company international.

In a candid discussion, he reveals that he left a cushy corporate job, because he firmly believes that Cust2Mate can completely revolutionise the retail sector.

Olivier Jouve is the Chief Product Officer at Genesys.

CNME managed to catch-up with him during his visit to Dubai, in an effort to learn more about how the company is going to nurture the incredible capabilities of OpenAI and GPT.

AI is in his blood, and innovation is embedded into the DNA of the company, so that makes for a perfect combination.

Jouve insisted that AI will not replace contact centre agents, but instead will empower them to be 'super-agents'.

The wonderful Lena Halbourian from Commvault is the latest inspirational female leader to be featured in our Women in Tech series.

She talks about her career in the IT industry across the Middle East, the challenges she has overcome, the importance of greater diversity and inclusion - and her hopes and ambitions in her current role at the data protection and management leader.

I was in attendance at Avaya ENGAGE, which was held in Orlando, Florida.

The conference really announced the rebirth of a new Avaya, under the tutelage of CEO Alan Masarek.

He declared during his keynote that the company is undeniably back, and I caught with Todd Zerbe, Senior Vice President of Engineering, at Avaya, to find out more about the transformation.

He said that the decision to rationalise their product portfolio and to focus completely on customer experience was resonating with customers, and he believes will serve as key recipes for success going forward.

In addition to this, we have terrific interviews with Intel, Endava, and IFS, two thought-leadership articles from Axis Communications and Shaffra – and a panel on AI from some of the best and brightest minds from Microsoft.

I'd like to also take this opportunity to wish all our readers, customers and partners Eid Mubarak.



Mark Forker Editor



<caisec=/23>

yber & information security exhibition & conference



Organised By

MERCURY

#### CONTENTS

## computer news middle eas





### 6 News

CNME rounds up the biggest regional and global developments in enterprise technology, which includes the news of the new partnership between SAS and EBLA, Help AG launches a new cybersecurity platform called UNIFY - and a new report from Agile Dynamics shows the potential of blockchain in emerging markets. **10** Guy Mordoch, CEO of Israelibased 'smart cart' operator Cust2Mate, outlines his new strategy designed to help the company scale their global operations.

**14** Olivier Jouve, Chief Product Officer at Genesys, reveals how the company is leveraging the transformative power of AI to reimagine experiences in the contact center space.

20 Intel's Ahmed Ibrahim highlights how the company is fully committed to using AI responsibly - and wants to be a global leader in sustainability.

**32** Todd Zerbe, SVP of Engineering at Avaya, talks about how the company has been completely transformed under the direction and guidance of CEO Alan Masarek.

**36** Commvault's Lena Halbourian candidly documents her journey in the IT and technology ecosystem across the Middle East, in the latest in our series of Women in Tech interviews.

14 GEN ESYS







Published by

FOUNDER, CPI Dominic De Sousa (1959-2015)

ADVERTISING Group Publishing Director Kausar Syed kausar.syed@cpimediagroup.com EDITORIAL Editor Mark Forker mark.forker@cpimediagroup.com PRODUCTION AND DESIGN Designer Ulysses Galgo DIGITAL SERVICES Web Developer Adarsh Snehajan

webmaster@cpimediagroup.com

Publication licensed by Dubai Production City, DCCA PO Box 13700 Dubai, UAE

Tel: +971 4 5682993

© Copyright 2023 CPI All rights reserved

While the publishers have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all information in this magazine, they will not be held responsible for any errors therein.

up.com mark

Publishing Director Natasha Pendleton natasha.pendleton@cpimediagroup.com

Sales Director Sabita Miranda sabita.miranda@cpimediagroup.com OnlineEditor Daniel Shepherd daniel.shepherd@cpimediagroup.com

Contributing Editor SAME & Tahawultech.com Veronica Martin

### WSO2 recognised for their API management

#### WSO2 announced it has been

named a Customers' Choice in the 2023 Gartner Peer Insights 'Voice of the Customer': Full Life Cycle Application Programming Interface Management.

Over the past 12 months, WSO2 has consistently garnered top ratings from customers on Gartner Peer Insights, establishing itself as one of the highest-rated Full Life Cycle API Management solutions. With a rating of 4.7 out of 5 and 91% recommendation rate based on 34 reviews as of February 2023, we believe WSO2 has proven its commitment to delivering outstanding API management solutions and ensuring customer satisfaction.

"We believe being recognised as a 2023 Customers' Choice is a reflection of WSO2's commitment to delivering world-class API management products with an outstanding customer experience to support them", said Sanjiva Weerawarana, Founder and CEO at WSO2. "We will continue to innovate to help our customers become API-driven businesses in today's competitive digital era, and are grateful for all the users that shared feedback with us on Gartner Peer Insights".



Sanjiva Weerawarana, Founder and CEO at WSO2.

## ISACA UAE Chapter & Tahawultech.com host first Infosec & Cybersecurity Congress in Abu Dhabi

ISACA UAE Chapter & Tahawultech. com, in partnership with the UAE Cybersecurity Council, hosted the first edition of the Infosec & Cybersecurity Congress at the Westin Golf Resort and Spa in Abu Dhabi.

Kapil Matta, Security Evangelist, Programs Director at ISACA UAE Chapter had to say this about the event "It was indeed a fabulous event with participation from industry experts. Perfect blend of questions and thought ideas from the panellists covering important topics around risk management and cyber security".

The much-awaited CISO Infosec & Cyber Risk Leadership Awards 2023 honoured leading IT & security stalwarts for their contribution to the industry. Following is the list of winners:



| Dileep Raj Abdul Razack,<br>Department of Municipalities and Transport.    |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Ahmed Alkindi,<br>Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence. |  |  |
| Osama Al Ali,<br>Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development.             |  |  |
| Hany Ali Abusoltan,<br>associated with a UAE government organisation.      |  |  |
| Jayesh Nandanan of Mediclinic Middle East.                                 |  |  |
| Hussein Bahgat, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank.                                    |  |  |
| Mohammed H. AlAbbadi, Fertiglobe.  |  |  |
| Mouza AlRomaithi, ADQ.   |  |  |
| Vishal Bhawnani, Virgin Mobile UAE.  |  |  |
| Parthasarathy Pillairkulam of First Abu Dhabi Bank.                        |  |  |
| Nitin Shingari from Daman -<br>National Health Insurance Company.          |  |  |
|  |  |  |

### emt Distribution aims to empower vendors with latest launch



#### emt Distribution is proud to announce

the launch of its highly anticipated services wing.

Key services include:

- $\cdot$  Phishing solutions
- $\cdot$  Penetration testing
- Application code review
- Managed vulnerability management
- Managed Threat Monitoring
- Managed Endpoint Detection and Response
- Configuration Review
- Mobile Application Scanning

"We are thrilled to launch our cybersecurity services distribution and empower organisations with cutting-edge tools to combat their ever-evolving cyber threats. We aim to protect the digital assets of businesses and individuals, ensuring a safer and more secure online environment, we are also expanding our vendor solutions integrations services with other technology vendors like F5, Fortinet, Forcepoint, Palo-Alto, McAfee and more", says M Mobasseri, CEO, emt Distribution.

## GCG launch innovative digital signature solution G-Sign

**GCG Enterprise Solutions has recently** launched "G–Sign" – it's proprietary digital signature solution, which has been swiftly adopted by the UAE Government and its associated offices.

Rapid changes shaping today's business world have given rise to an increased need for faster approval systems across enterprises.

Digital signatures authenticate digital documents, along with the signer's identity and are increasingly being adopted for the increased safety, speed, and security which they deliver, when compared to traditional penpaper signatures.

Elaborating on the values which led to the development of G–Sign, Naser Darwazeh, General Manager at GCG Enterprise Solutions said, "Aligned with our corporate mission and ever since our establishment in 1982, GCG Enterprise Solutions has served to promote innovation as a critical component of business success. In today's highly competitive business environment, those who are quick to harness technological advancements, while embracing better and more efficient ways of conducting business



stand a better chance at winning the commercial race to the future".

He went on say that as the latest digital solution platform from GCG Enterprise Solutions, G-Sign enables organizations to realize their digitalization and paperless journey, while effortlessly integrating the convenience of UAE Pass into their business workflow.

As a highly beneficial solution for commercial enterprises G-Sign facilitates a host of benefits to enterprise and corporate teams, by enabling multiple team members to sign documentation at any time, from anywhere.

Extending easy integration with UAE Pass, G-Sign is approved by the UAE Government and authorities, as a secure solution for regional enterprises. G-Sign also features application code which is written in a well-structured format. It is built utilizing the modular approach, where developers can add or modify specific modules.

The package is also seamlessly deployable on Microsoft Internet Information Services, and provides a Graphical-User-Interface based configuration which allows it to pass the parametric information and connect with UAE Pass services. The Solution is currently being offered through an Annual Subscription model, with the GCG Enterprise Solutions team extending standardized and development support.

Crediting the vision and capabilities of GCG Enterprise Solutions, Naser Darwazeh also went on to state that: "G Sign is the result of the fantastic vision of our pre-sales team, our hard-work, bondless ambition, and our valued collaboration with the UAE authorities".

The launch of G-Sign presents a pivotal advancement in GCG Enterprise Solutions' growing leadership and represents the first of many more innovations which the Company plans to launch in the upcoming future.

## TMF Group expands into KSA through acquisition

**TMF Group announced the acquisition** of various business divisions of PROVEN, a leading business outsourcing organisation.

Since its establishment in 2009, PROVEN has been at the forefront of enabling businesses to operate seamlessly in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern regions, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, and Kuwait. It has since expanded to cater to international markets while maintaining its reputation as a trusted partner for organisations looking to streamline their operations. On announcing this



acquisition, TMF Group's Head of EMEA Frank Welman commented: "PROVEN has demonstrated significant success in the region and this acquisition represents a milestone in TMF Group's expansion strategy. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a jurisdiction full of potential and this transaction will enable us to add high-quality service capabilities to TMF Group's portfolio in the Middle East, where we already have a reputable presence in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. We look forward to welcoming 57 of PROVEN's talented employees to the TMF Group's MEA team after the transaction closes".

\_\_\_\_

## Mindware announces new partnership to protect MEA businesses from digital fraud

#### Mindware, a leading value-added

distributor (VAD) in the Middle East and Africa, announced today its partnership with OneSpan

Under the agreement, Mindware will market and distribute OneSpan's cutting-edge solutions, which encompass high-assurance identity verification, transaction signing, authentication, mobile security,



(L-R) Mr. Jawad Toukna, Vice President of Sales & GM, EMEA at OneSpan & Nicholas Argyrides, General Manager - Gulf at Mindware.

streamlined e-signature workflows, and secure video collaboration tools for digital agreements and transactions.

"We're excited to be partnering with a leading distributor like Mindware in the Middle East and Africa. Together, we are serving a growing demand to provide secure, compliant, and frictionless customer-facing and revenue-generating business processes. This partnership will allow us to scale, and we look forward to growing together in the region," concludes Mr. Jawad Toukna, Vice President of Sales & GM, EMEA at OneSpan.

## SAS unleashes the power of advanced analytics in new partnership

#### SAS, the leader in analytics, has

announced a new partnership with EBLA, an acclaimed systems integrator company in the Arab Gulf region with a strong presence in Qatar. The two companies combined their strengths to provide unwavering support to Qatari organisations embarking on their analytics and decision-making journeys.

"SAS has been a dominant player in a broad spectrum of industries and has made significant investments in Qatar", said Zafir Junaid, Regional Director, MEA Growth Markets SAS. "Collaborating with EBLA is a strategic move that aligns with the company's vision of sustainable growth, exploring untapped markets, and driving the adoption of our revolutionary cloud-based analytics and AI solutions".

Fouad Ghannam, Head of Channels, Middle East, Africa, Türkiye, Ukraine & Central Asia at SAS, added: "As we believe in channel-driven business growth and the value partners can provide, teaming with a strategic partner like EBLA opens up exciting opportunities for both companies in the country, particularly in supporting Qatar's National Vision 2030 objectives for the transformation of the public sector".



## Investigation reveals almost \$30K stolen via fake hardware wallet

#### Cryptocurrency investors often turn

to hardware wallets as a secure way to store their digital assets, assuming that they are impenetrable. However, even the most advanced hardware wallets on the market may not be fool proof, and there are still risks associated with using fake or infected devices. Kaspersky shared the details behind the incident of cryptocurrency theft involving a hardware wallet, which resulted in the loss of 1.33 BTC worth \$29,585.

The attackers made only three changes to the original firmware of the bootloader

and the wallet itself. They removed the control of protective mechanisms, replaced the randomly generated seed phrase with one of the 20 pre-set phrases, and used only the first character of any additional password. This gave the

|     | Transaction history                                      | Show inputs and output                   |
|-----|--|--|
|     | © Sert<br>1.33405191 BTC                                 | Confirmed 🥥<br>Apr 8, 2022, 00:00 AM UTC |
| a o | Transaction heats 5<br>3<br>Senders 2 Recipients 1       | •  |
|     | Received<br>1.33405/91 BTC                               | Confirmed 🥥<br>New 6, 2022, 00d0 AM LITC |
|     | Transaction hours, a<br>9 (2)<br>Senders 1 Recipients 28 | •  |
|     |  |  |

attackers a total of 1280 options to pick the key per one wallet.

'Hardware wallets have long been considered one of the safest ways to store cryptocurrency, but cybercriminals have found new ways to benefit by selling infected or fake devices to unsuspecting victims. Such attacks are totally preventable. Hence, we strongly advise users to only purchase hardware wallets from official and trusted sources to minimise the risk'', comments Stanislav Golovanov, Cyber Incidents Investigation Expert.

## Blockchain technology reveals value potential for emerging markets

#### Agile Dynamics has announced the

launch of its latest research paper. Entitled 'Disrupt and Innovate: Harness the Power of Blockchain', the paper examines how to unlock growth via blockchain protocols.

Within the report, Agile Dynamics examines the growing world of blockchain, including an analysis of different blockchain platforms. The report focuses on 10, selected based on criteria such as Total Value Locked (TVL), Total Active Users, Technical Metrics, Technical Properties, and more. Aspects such as technical designs, blockchain and ecosystem data, and the individuals and organisations behind each platform are taken into consideration to draw insights into what the future of the broader smart contracting platform landscape could look like.

Speaking on the report and its contents, Paul Lalovich, Managing Partner at Agile Dynamics, said: "The world of blockchain is evolving rapidly, and is becoming an increasingly vital component of our ultra-connected world. Our report demonstrates how blockchain could be the most effective solution to begin a technology sovereignty journey, thanks to



its ability to support the concept through providing decentralisation, data ownership and privacy, open source principles, trust and security, interoperability and more. By leveraging blockchain, you have the ability for more control and autonomy over your technology infrastructure and systems. This reduces dependence on external entities, and helps to safeguard your sovereignty. Blockchain is also a distinct and cost-effect means to stimulate innovation and foster growth, particularly in an economic context, and it has been demonstrated to be more cost-effective than any other technology for building out a project with the highest forecasted compound annual growth rate through to 2030".

## Help AG launches new cyber defence platform, UNIFY

#### Help AG has announced the launch

of UNIFY – the Integrated Cyber Defence Platform unifying the customer experience across all Help AG services.

Serving as the single touchpoint for Help AG's Managed Security Services (MSS) customers, the modernised state-of-the-art UNIFY platform provides automation at scale, omnichannel collaboration, and unified visibility into customers' complete cybersecurity portfolio.

Commenting on the launch, Stephan Berner, Chief Executive Officer at Help AG, said: "The future of cybersecurity is service-centric, and Help AG has long been at the helm of this evolution – from the



Stephan Berner, Chief Executive Officer at Help AG.

launch of our Managed Cyber Defence offering in 2015, to the launch of Help AG as a Service in 2021, and now with Help AG UNIFY, which represents our service-centric business evolution 3.0. As a solution to fragmented and overly complex security infrastructures, the UNIFY platform provides an exceptional consolidation of diverse security controls, powered by intelligent automation. This reinforces our outcome-based approach to service delivery with the ultimate goal of delivering added value to our customers".

#### CUST2MATE

# CHECK 'MATE'

CNME Editor Mark Forker secured an exclusive interview with **Guy Mordoch**, CEO of smart cart platform Cust2Mate, to find out more about how the Israeli start-up company is primed to completely disrupt and transform experiences in the global retail sector.

uy Mordoch has enjoyed a phenomenal career in business. In a decorated and distinguished career, one spanning two decades, he has worked for some of the world's biggest multinational corporations in places such as Tokyo, Singapore and London.

However, Mordoch has now decided to change direction and move away from the corporate world and pursue a new challenge with mature start-up company Cust2Mate.

In April of this year, Mordoch was appointed as the new CEO of Cust2Mate, an Israeli-based user-friendly self-checkout 'smart cart' technology provider that is revolutionising customer experiences in the retail sector in Israel.

In a candid interview with CNME, Mordoch discusses his vision and aspirations for the company, one which he believes will completely 'disrupt' the retail industry on a global scale.

He kickstarted the conversation by outlining the capabilities of Cust2Mate's smart cart technology.

"Cust2Mate is the leading 'smart cart' solution provider to the retail industry. The



fundamental basis of the smart cart is the self-checkout capabilities it has, but it is also infused with a lot more valueadded services that is being driven by data in real-time. I believe that our smart cart solves most of the pain points that are faced by retailers. If you examine it from a consumer perspective, we make the shopping experience a lot more enjoyable. There are a lot of applications on the smart cart that only serve to enhance the experience. From a retailer perspective we are significantly helping them to optimise their operational efficiency and reduce their operational costs," said Mordoch.

Mordoch added that the data provided to the retailer in 'real-time' empowers retailers better manage their inventory, stock and real estate in-store.

"We enable the retailer to utilise the real estate in a much more effective way. We also help the retailer to significantly increase their revenues, because we see that the average basket size of a smart cart is 30% higher than that of a traditional cart. In addition to this, a third of the screen is dedicated to advertising, which can either be done by the retailer, or through advertising that we sell to the CPGs and manufacturers. All these factors help retailers increase revenue and gives their customers better shopping experiences," said Mordoch.

One of the biggest flaws since self-checkouts were introduced has been their inability to combat theft and fraud.

However, as Mordoch points out the sophisticated technology used by Cust2Mate makes theft almost impossible.

"It's almost impossible to steal when using the Cust2Mate smart cart. We have implemented four different security measures on the cart that gives the retailer 100% bullet proof protection. Once a customer scans a product, and puts it into the basket there is an AI camera in the basket that identifies if that's the correct item that has just been scanned. We also have a security scale within the basket, so if I am supposed to put in a product that weighs 1.2kg, and I put something in that weighs 1.1kg, then that will raise a red flag. These security measures that are built in are completely seamless to the customer, and doesn't in any way impact on their experience at all. As I aforementioned above the technology deployed by



Cust2Mate only enhances the shopping experience," said Mordoch.

In terms of adoption of new technologies, Mordoch conceded that it is human nature to resist change. conduct a POC phase. I'll put 5,10, or 20 carts into a store, agree on the KPIs with the customer. Customers love our technology. We generate a lot of data on the carts and we can see that the customers

## My focus is to take the company global, and I believe as I said we will completely disrupt the global retail sector."

He spent a large chunk of his career in the telecommunications sector, and he referenced the fact that when the telco industry underwent huge digital transformation around 10 years, they faced constraints in terms of adoption.

We know that some retailers have had their fingers burnt with previous self-checkout technology, so was it hard to convince them to adopt this new technology by Cust2Mate?

"The way we are helping our retail customers overcome this fear of technology is to

absolutely love the smart cart experience. We can see that almost 60% of the traffic is returning customers, so effectively what this means is that people that use the smart cart overwhelmingly want to come back and use it again. So, even if you have a retailer that is a little bit conservative when it comes to new technology like smart carts, when they see that the average basket size is bigger, and customers really like the experience, then it's a no-brainer for them to add more smart carts to their fleet in-store," said Mordoch.



He added that the access to data in real-time was completely transforming the relationship dynamic between the retailer and the customer.

"Data is the name of the game, and we know that traditionally the consumer only meets the retailer at the end of the journey. However, with the smart cart the retailer meets the customer when they come into the store, and that really is a huge difference to the entire experience. It's completely transformative for both the retailer and the consumer," said Mordoch. Cust2Mate have had huge success in Israel, and recently penned a significant deal with the largest DIY chain in the country. It has had wins internationally too, and also signed a deal with a convenience store chain that has 16 outlets in Manhattan.

However, as Mordoch pointed out, a lot of Cust2Mate's focus over the last few years has understandably been on the product. Mordoch's job is to change their strategy and move away from an approach he described as 'opportunistic'.

"My role as CEO is to change the strategy and our overall direction as a company. I think since our inception from a market perspective we were very, very opportunistic. Israel is an easy market for us, and we had a lot of success there. However, everything that we did globally was

We have implemented four different security measures on the cart that gives the retailer 100% bullet proof protection."



on an opportunistic basis. Essentially, what that means is we didn't really have a strategy outside of Israel. I have a made a number of decisions since assuming the reigns as CEO, and the first of those is to make Israel my showcase market. The second decision that I want to take is based on the fact that we see around 50-60% of the smart carts globally are based in the United States. Cust2Mate is a subsidiary of A2Z, which is publicly traded on the NASDAQ. All my investors are in the US, so I need to have a bigger presence in the US and I need

to increase our investments in this market, because it represents the biggest smart cart market globally," said Mordoch.

Mordoch is planning on hiring a local sales team in the United States, that will lead the penetration of the smart cart market for them.

"There are many Israeli companies that believe they can conquer the world from Tel-Aviv, but I don't believe in that. I firmly believe that you need to have local people on the ground talking the local language. Americans prefer to buy from Americans, so our local sales and pre/sales team is going to be a key driver for us in terms of really cracking the US marketplace," said Mordoch.

As referenced at the beginning of the interview, Mordoch has enjoyed a storied and fabled career with some of the biggest companies in the world, so why in the twilight of his career has he chosen to enter the volatile world of start-ups?

"When I'm asked why I joined a start-up company, the joke I tell people is, I was making a lot of money, but I wasn't rich. When you work for a big company, you make a lot of money, but you're not rich. I wanted to take the knowledge that I acquired from working for so many large corporations and implement it into a startup company. The reason I came to Cust2Mate is because I feel that the company is really going to completely disrupt the retail industry. The beautiful thing is in our space it is a blue ocean, and the potential of the

market is astronomical," said Mordoch.

Mordoch declared that he doesn't want Cust2Mate to be a hardware company, or a smart cart manufacturer.

"I want to have the best smart carts that are easy to use, but the whole idea here is the customer experience element - and the data capability, and value-added services that we can deliver on top of the cart. We changed our business model too. We no longer sell carts. I don't want to sell carts. We have moved to a subscription-based model, and we can add additional services to that. The customer will pay more for value-added services based on data. I'm strengthening my product team right now, and I'm hiring a lot more data scientists, AI experts and computer vision personnel to develop this value proposition, which is based on unique services that are based on the data coming from the smart carts," said Mordoch.

Mordoch concluded by saying a big advantage the company has is the fact they don't need to sell the concept because the needs are there.

"We don't need to educate the market on why they should adopt the technology. We just need to build the right strategy and execute it. I love a challenge, but this company already has great technology, a great product, and a proven track record of success. My focus is to take the company global, and I believe as I said we will completely disrupt the global retail sector," said Mordoch. cmm

#### GENESYS

# **'ORCHESTRATE'** THE FUTURE

CNME Editor Mark Forker managed to secure an exclusive interview with **Olivier Jouve**, Chief Product Officer at Genesys, to find out how the company is transforming the contact centre experience to create 'super agents' - and the role generative AI is playing in powering better experience orchestration for employees and customers.

livier Jouve is one of the most respected leaders within the IT and tech ecosystem when it comes to artificial intelligence.

In his capacity as the Chief Product Officer at Genesys, Jouve leads the company's product, artificial intelligence and digital teams to help organizations orchestrate billions of remarkable customer experiences for organisations all over the world.

In a candid exchange with CNME, the charismatic Frenchman said the company's vision was to drive empathetic customer experiences at scale.

Our first port of call during our conversation was the transformation of the muchmaligned contact centre space.

Jouve warned that businesses cannot afford poor customer experiences in the new experience economy.

"At Genesys, we firmly believe that the contact centre is going to yield huge benefits from all the advancements being made in generative AI.



The contact centre provides you with critical data from your customers, so you've got to be able to leverage that data to drive a better digital experience. We know that from multiple reports and surveys that have been commissioned if a consumer has a 'bad experience' with a brand then it is very likely they won't use that company again, so it's imperative that you deliver a seamless digital experience," said Jouve.

Jouve said that the contact centre was a very special space because it was the only system in the entire ecosystem between sales, service and marketing where the truth is fleshed out.

"If an agent comes up with the right information, then it gives them the opportunity to cross-sell, up-sell, or retain the customer. No other system provides you with that opportunity. The contact centre has all the information on the customer, but it also has the ability to influence the customer and that makes it special and unique," said Jouve.

Jouve rejected the idea that AI will replace agents in contact centres, he believes it will empower them to be more effective, efficient and empathetic in their job.

"AI is everywhere in everything that we do. I don't have a single component in my solution stacks that doesn't have AI. I believe that AI is a way to solve problems that we couldn't solve before. Our focus is experience orchestration, and AI helps us achieve that. It is not necessarily replacing people, but instead it's turning agents



into 'super-agents, because you are equipping them with the right tools in real-time to do the job they need to do. We believe that the core value of an agent is empathy, and by providing them with access to the information they need then we are empowering them to be empathetic," said Jouve.

Jouve also added that it is become increasingly clear that more and more people value the experience more than the product.

"You need to free your agents from the archaic processes of the past to deliver the experience that the customer not only wants, but expects. The reason someone is reaching out to a contact centre is because something has failed. They are not ringing to tell the agent that they are super happy with the brand, they have a problem and they want it resolved instantly, and you have to give agents the best tools to deliver the experience the end-user is demanding," said Jouve. from an old clunky on-prem environment and you go to cloud with the same thing -it won't work. Because if you think about how you delivered customer experiences in the past, it was pretty bad. Do

## One of the key benefits that we bring to the table is the fact that we were born in the cloud. We are 100% cloud native."

Jouve believes that the hardest part of the transformation for contact centres has not been around technology, but instead has been about their readiness to be transformed.

But what does that mean? "What that essentially means is you can't do a lift and shift on what you have. If you do a lift and shift you really want to do the same thing? It's all about rethinking the type of experience that you want to deliver – and you can do that by leveraging all the features that come with the cloud. The cloud gives you the agility you need to really drive a new experience. I think once people understand that, it's going to be much simpler for them to transform," said Jouve.

Jouve highlighted the appetite that Genesys has for innovation, by revealing that they deliver new features every single week - and that last year alone the company delivered over 350 new features in their cloud.

He outlined how each industry differs in terms of how digital they need to go to deliver the experience their end-users expect.

"Some industries are going to go much deeper digitally because that's

the type of interactions that their customers want. However, some industries are different. Take for example, healthcare versus hospitality - they don't provide the same experience. At Genesys, we have nearly 5,000 customers that use

our cloud, and we learn from every single experience. We have 35 million experiences happening every single day through our cloud platform, and we learn from that to drive the experiences that our customers are striving to achieve," said Jouve.

We believe that the core value of an agent is empathy, and by providing them with access to the information they need then we are empowering them to be empathetic."



In terms of their innovation roadmap, Genesys is very transparent with customers about future innovation and encourages their collaboration to provide feedback and input to ensure they are positioned to continuously evolve and strengthen their customer and employee experiences.

The Chief Product Officer at Genesys believes it's the fact they are cloud-native that really differentiates Genesys from their market competitors,



"One of the key benefits that we bring to the table is the fact that we were born in the cloud. We are 100% cloud native. There is nothing that we have developed that comes from an older onprem environment. A lot of our market competitors don't have this ability to be flexible and agile when developing new products or solutions, or adding new features and capabilities to existing ones," said Jouve.

Generative AI, OpenAI and ChatGPT has been dominating conversations across the tech landscape over the last few months.

However, some prominent business and political leaders have called for the technology to be slowed down, a position that Jouve can't comprehend.

"I love generative AI from the sense that it is going to completely change everything that we do. Now is not the time to slow down the development of generative AI - we need to embrace it. And, we need regulation to ensure responsible development and use. From a Genesys perspective, we are always very ethical when it comes to how we use our customers data and how we deploy AI models. For example, we don't use any data that we are not authorised to use, and we also anonymise everything." said Jouve.

Jouve shared that Genesys has accelerated its development of AI over the last few years.

"In terms of generative AI, we delivered our first product in 2020, and the way we do sentiment analysis is based on large language models. This isn't something we just started with the onset of ChatGPT. Large language models have been around for several years, but now they are more powerful because a lot of people have invested money in it, smart people are working on it, and we are building the ecosystem around it. That's why we felt the time was right to accelerate our development of new usecases. I have a team of 350 people that are fully focused on digital and AI, because quite simply – it's the future – and it's going to change how we do everything," said Jouve.

He concluded a wonderful conversation by reiterating the commitment being made by Genesys across the Middle East, and announced an exciting new partnership with Amazon Web Services in Dubai.

"I see the Middle East as an incredible opportunity for us. I was in Rivadh and the sheer scale of transformation is incredible. We have a solid footprint in the region. We've been here for over 20 years, and we have over 200+ customers. I believe so much in this market that we are going to deploy Genesys Cloud in AWS, in Dubai, by the end of 2023. That means that we will provide data residency to all our customers connecting to the cloud here instead of connecting to a cloud in Europe. That's a big commitment to the region and we believe that this will be a real gamechanger for us," concluded Jouve.

#### ENDAVA

# MEETING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Veronica Martin spoke to **Paul Maguire**, Head of Retail Delivery at Endava, to discuss the new expectations customers have, how digital and physical experiences can be seamlessly blended to create unique experiences - and how retailers can combat fraud.

ow that customers, who following the pandemic became accustomed to the conveniences and personalisation of online shopping, have returned to stores, what are the new expectations they have? Through the pandemic, consumers got used to the convenience of online shopping, but now as the world has opened back up again, there is this desire to go back in stores for the experiential aspect of the retail experience.

Of course, this has already been a trend in the UAE, where creating captivating experiences was already deeply embedded into the nature of the retail industry. But now we're seeing customers who have become accustomed to eCommerce platforms knowing exact what they like, what services suit their needs most, and more, come back into stores. They now



### Businesses have invested a lot of money in e-commerce platforms – often purely due to necessity."

expect this greater degree of personalisation and tailored experiences from physical retailers.

So, while there has been a lot of technology already leveraged in stores in the UAE – it has to evolve from being primarily display related technology to solutions which bridge the gap between the online and physical stores.

#### How can retailers leverage technology to deliver on the promise of 'unified commerce'?

Businesses have invested a lot of money in e-commerce platforms – often purely due to necessity. While supply chain technologies have evolved, the in-store environment has traditionally been quite separate from that. However, people now want the fully integrated experience. They expect retailers to leverage their e-commerce platforms to empower in-store staff to be more knowledgeable around customer preferences. Deeper integration between the technologies used in-store, and for the supply chain and eCommerce aspects of the business, can translate to a more seamless experience for customers. As an example, if an item is unavailable in store, the customer should still have the option of paying for it at checkout, and then either receiving it in-store at a



later date, or having it shipped directly to their home.

At Endava, we are increasingly being asked by retailers to deliver the architectures and integrations that make these sorts of unified experiences possible.

#### What are some of the practical ways in which digital and physical experiences can be seamlessly blended to create truly impressive experiences for shoppers?

There are really two key aspects that retailers must focus on. The first is gaining as deep of an understanding of their customers as possible – knowing their preferences, behaviours, wants and more. Second is to have rich, realtime product related data – so knowing your inventory, what stock is available where, which products pair well together and so on. Combined, this data forms the basis on which impactful experiences can be created.

For example, a fashion retailer can shift away from the current model of simply displaying all their stock on the shop floor, to displaying just a few pieces of each item and then empowering staff to have meaningful interactions with customers as they guide them through the products that are most likely to be of interest and what sizes are available. Once you have this basic infrastructure in place, then you can look at more advanced applications such as changing rooms with mirrors that enable customers to order items in different sizes, or the ability to seamlessly move items from a physical shopping basket to a virtual one.

the potential for backlash. There are lots of changes that have been made around how customer data is gathered – the phasing out of cookies and Apple's introduction of the IDFA being prime examples – and this is the next evolution in data protection. For these reasons, there's more of a balance now between customers understanding and being willing to give their data and retailers respecting it.

## Finally, how much of a concern is fraud for retailers and how can they combat this?

When it comes to fraud, there's a significant benefit in unifying systems. When a retailer has a platform that can correlate in-store and online data, they can become far more capable of differentiating between

### At Endava, we are increasingly being asked by retailers to deliver the architectures and integrations that make these sorts of unified experiences possible."

How can retailers strike that fine balance of meeting increasingly stringent data privacy requirements, with the expectation of a great degree of personalisation?

I think people are much more willing to hand over data now than they were before the pandemic, as regulations have been put in place to make sure people's data is protected. Businesses are also demonstrating a greater commitment to respecting the privacy of customer data as they are keenly aware of acceptable and suspicious behaviour. Sharing data (personal and anonymous) between various systems allows for behaviour patterns to emerge. That means retailers can relax some of the measures they have in place that might cause legitimate customers to be blocked due to the potential for fraud.

This isn't just a very powerful thing in terms of reducing fraud, but also serves to increase acceptance rates, which consequently boosts retail revenues.



INTEL

# **RESPONSIBLE AI**

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Ahmed Ibrahim**, Director, Global Business Development – Service Providers at Intel, to find out how the company is committed to using AI responsibly, the importance of regulation – and its aspirations to be a global leader when it comes to sustainability.

hmed Ibrahim has enjoyed a distinguished career in IT and telecommunications over the last 20 years – and is one of the most respected thought leaders in his field.

Ibrahim has excelled at Intel, and now holds a global position with the US technology behemoth.

In a brilliantly forthright exchange with CNME, Ibrahim started the conversation by highlighting the incredible potential of AI technology.

"AI is the fastest growing compute workload with an incredible potential to enhance the way we live, work and play. However, in order to capitalise on this opportunity, we have to leverage AI in a responsible way. OpenAI and generative ChatGPT have exploded onto the scene, but its popularity has left many people wondering is it another technology fad, or is it here to stay? I think its success depends on the accuracy of the data models and if the innovation is pursued responsibly," said Ibrahim.

Ibrahim said Intel plays an important role in AI developments from a chip design and manufacturing perspective. He stressed how Intel was fully committed to using AI ethically and responsibly.

"We also play an important role in generating the compute power needed to support AI workloads. There can be huge challenges in the lifecycle of a new product in the development phase, such as the unintended biases that are baked into certain algorithms that lead to a series of unwanted outcomes. Intel has been recognised globally for being one of the most ethical companies in the world.

everywhere we do business. We have a set of global Intel principles that formalise our commitment to human rights, and we are trying to incorporate this in our products and design principles across our entire portfolio. We are committed to advancing AI responsibly, and we do this by making sure we establish robust guidelines and principles throughout the development of the products lifecycle to reduce the biases that emerge. In addition to this, we collaborate with industry partners to

### Intel has had a longstanding commitment to sustainability and we want to include our customers, partners and suppliers with us on this sustainability journey."

Intel also acknowledges the importance of the choices we make when pursuing new AI developments and technologies. There are so many companies across multiple industries that are making significant breakthroughs in AI that are leveraging Intel chipsets, so we have to apply AI responsibly," said Ibrahim.

Ibrahim also highlighted the need to protect human rights when it comes to AI.

"Human rights are embedded in our values and applies

mitigate any harm that could potentially be done from the use of AI," said Ibrahim.

It is accepted in the industry that with every new technology it takes time to be adopted, but with AI, there are many that fear it could have a negative impact on society.

Ibrahim believes that AI needs strong regulation.

I think with every new technology there is a fear in terms of how do we use this technology properly? Regulations are critically



important when it comes to new disruptive and transformative technologies. If you examine technologies like Wi-Fi or 5G, you can see that they both have strong regulation and governance. The problem comes when you don't have regulations and rules and people deploy the technology and take it in a direction that best suits their business model. Once you create different islands of AI technology then it's going to be incredibly difficult to regulate it because the AI deployment is fragmented between different locations, so interoperability will take

a considerable amount of time. The primary role of the regulator is to be in control when it comes to setting the standards and making these standards open and all of the technology vendors comply with these technology standards," said Ibrahim.

Ibrahim added that Intel is very committed to the opensource community – and regularly engages with them to provide feedback on how they can improve the entire ecosystem.

Before moving away from the topic of AI, Ibrahim pointed out that the four pillars of their responsible AI program is external/internal governance, research, collaboration and inclusive AI.

"I think our internal/ external governance is so important, and that really drives our conversations and dialogue with the opensource community to create a universal framework that can help us achieve the openness that all stakeholders want and to ensure that nobody is misusing an AI solution, or dictating that it can't be used by others," said Ibrahim.

COP28 is being held in Abu Dhabi later this year.

Due to the fact that the IT industry is one of the most

energy intensive in the world, there is growing pressure on IT leaders such as Intel to reduce their carbon footprint.

Ibrahim declared that Intel was fully committed to addressing climate change.

"Sustainability is undoubtedly one of the key areas of focus for all governments and businesses across the Middle East. You can see that all of the Gulf countries are looking to move away from an oil-based economy to a data-based economy. To move to a data-based economy then it's important to have a strong lens on sustainability. We know that climate change is a serious environmental, economic and social challenge. Intel is 100% committed to addressing climate change through our manufacturing, supply chain and products. We have aspirations to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions in our global operations by 2040. We also have plans to drive reductions in supply chain emissions and the carbon used in our products. This is part of Intel's RISE strategy,

which stands for responsible, inclusive, sustainable and enabled. Intel has had a longstanding commitment to sustainability and we want to include our customers, partners and suppliers with us on this sustainability journey," said Ibrahim.

He added that their sustainability vision was built on three key pillars.

"Our sustainability vision is built mainly through three main pillars, which is sustainability by design in our products, platforms, software

"There are a lot of verticals that Intel covers and one of them is with telecommunication providers. I am responsible for the business development relationship between Intel and telecommunication providers globally. I work closely with tier 1 telco global telco operators. We work with them on thought leadership in an effort to let them know what is coming next in the industry. By informing them of how the telco industry is changing we can leverage our knowledge and

## Intel has been recognised globally for being one of the most ethical companies in the world."

and services, the second pillar is to reduce our footprint by working with sustainable suppliers, manufacturers and distributors. The third pillar is all about driving open innovation to enable others to meet sustainability goals," said Ibrahim.

Ibrahim then explained the dynamic of his own global role at Intel.



expertise to help them access some of the latest and greatest technology being developed by Intel. Our customers always look at us as a trusted advisor," said Ibrahim.

He concluded a great conversation by highlighting some of the key focus areas of technology that operators will be looking at.

"There is a lot happening with telco cloud and Open-RAN, and it's my job to help them capitalise on all the new opportunities that are emerging. Intel is a big advocate of virtualisation within the telco industry since 2012, and we're pushing for sustainability to be included in our RAN products too. It's an exciting time for the IT industry globally, and like always, Intel will be at the forefront of innovation and development across all the key industry verticals," said Ibrahim.



# SHAPING THE FUTURE

SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT FIGURES AND LEADERS FROM THE GOVERNMENT IT ECOSYSTEM WERE CELEBRATED AT THE GOVTECH AWARDS 2023.









www.tahawultech.com



www.tahawultech.com























tahawu



























tahawul GOV Innovation

AE Empowel

CUME

www.tahawultech.com













.



AVAYA

# THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Todd Zerbe**, Senior Vice President, Engineering, at Avaya, during their ENGAGE conference in Orlando, Florida, to find out how the company is being completely transformed under the direction of CEO Alan Masarek.

odd Zerbe has enjoyed a decorated 25-year career in software development, one which has seen him hold senior executive positions at companies like Interactive Intelligence Group, Genesys and Blackboard.

In June 2021, he joined Avaya, and was tasked with the responsibility of identifying, designing and developing cutting-edge technology that drives value to global customers as part of the Avaya OneCloud experience platform. In a candid exchange, Zerbe acknowledged that prior to joining the company Avaya's engineering team had become stagnant from an innovation standpoint.

**JUNE 2023** 

"Look. I think it's fair to say that historically, the engineering group at Avaya had got a reputation for not delivering on innovation, and had a real lack of delivery. One of the biggest focuses for us was to firstly determine what our strategy was in terms of what we want to deliver. In order to achieve a reliable backlog, then you need a reliable strategy to deliver on all that. I'm a big believer in development pipelines, and you really need to have stable pipelines because that's where everybody does their integration," said Zerbe.

Zerbe added that they have increased their focus on stabling their main line, creating metrics around Dev escapes, availability around their cloud platforms, and doubling down on more disciplined execution within development.

"We measure our feature output and dates. We look at it from a percentage perspective of how many dates did we hit, how many did we miss, and how many features did we deliver? Our delivery was well, well below 50%, but now we're delivering at around 85% now on time, so when we say we are going to deliver something in June, 85% of the time we're hitting that target. However, we want to get closer to 95%, but we're confident we can achieve that and we are certainly going in the right direction," said Zerbe.

Zerbe added that whilst it might sound relatively straightforward to some, in reality it is very difficult,



especially when you have so many different dependencies and sub-systems.

"Everybody has differing priority lists, and you're trying to get all that stuff together, but it's a challenge. We've been trying to push full-stack teams, so we can reduce and cut down the number of dependencies we have, so a lot of what we

# We have rationalised a lot of our portfolio, and we have become more focused."

are doing is focused around process and execution. Architecture is a hugely important component too, because if you don't have good quality then it is going to create a drag, and if you don't have good architecture then it's going to make it very difficult to add features because you don't have the right extensible architecture required, so we've been really focused on all of these things," said Zerbe. Zerbe also disclosed that they have established a set of cloud principles that they are pushing to their teams.

"We haven't had that cloud DNA in the company, and some of the principles we have created are things like basic fall tolerance such as zero downtime upgrades, it's very basic, but it's a very important tenant of cloud. We also need elasticity, which is critical when you go to things like dedicated instances. You have to be able to scale down as much as you scale up, so you're not consuming that compute, and that allows you to be more effective at doing things like dedicated instances, and being able to provide reasonable price points," said Zerbe.

Zerbe pointed out the importance of independent deployability and highlighted its importance in a number of different areas like agility.

"One of the key things for us, considering we are doing this consume from the cloud off your existing platform, is ensuring that users are consuming the parts that they want to consume. They need to be able to scale separately, and be able to deploy separately, and that really helps with that clarity over, I just want to consume your digital, or consume your media, or consume whatever it is you need to consume," said Zerbe.

Composability was a buzzword for a long time at Avaya, but as the company moves in a different direction it's a term that is being phased out.





"In the past we spoke a lot about composability, but we don't really use that term anymore, and I wasn't really a fan of that term composability because the way we were trying to use it was from a CPaaS perspective, and we are really moving away from the whole idea of CPaaS," said Zerbe.

Zerbe praised the role played by Avaya CEO Alan Masarek in really driving the company in a different direction in a bid to recapture some of the trust that has been lost by some in the brand.

"We have rationalised a lot of our portfolio, and we have become more focused. I think you are really going to

## At the end of the day, those are our two go forward motions, it's AEC and AXP, end of story."

see a different Avaya in terms of execution. There's a lot of different pieces to execute on, you need your sales onboard – and you have to be consistent about your strategy and everyone has to got to be on the one page," said Zerbe.

Zerbe conceded that it's natural for some to be resistant to change, but again praised Masarek for his ability to really hammer home the company's new messaging.

"Avaya has had a long history of different acquisitions, and has launched so many different products, so it's only natural when you're used to selling a certain product in a certain way that there will be some friction. The one thing that Alan is really good at is saying the same thing over and over again. He's really able to cascade our messaging to our customers and partners, and it has had the desired effect. I really do feel that you are looking at a new Avaya," said Zerbe.

Zerbe concluded an excellent discussion by highlighting its roadmap.

"We have done highlevel roadmaps and there is a diagram we always show people, now I think it's really simple, but it's been interesting for me to see some of the reaction, because it's not simple when you show it to folks. I think about our roadmap pretty simply. You have our AXP,

which is our go forward,

and you've got AEC, which is

basically taking that legacy

Aura and lifting it into the

thing in the middle of that

talked a lot about, which is

AXP Connect. That allows

you to get AXP capabilities

over the top of AEC, so

if you're already an Aura

customer, and you don't

want to rip and replace then

this gives you a way of doing

that, and that is the perfect

illustration of innovation

without disruption. At the

end of the day, those are our

two go forward motions, it's

AEC and AXP, end of story,"

said Zerbe. 🚥

cloud, but orchestrating it as a real cloud. The one

is something that I have
### COMMVAULT

# THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Lena Halbourian**, Senior Regional Head of Marketing for Switzerland, Eastern Europe, Middle East & Africa at Commvault, in the latest in our series of Women in Tech interviews.

ena Halbourian is one of the best known and respected marketeers in the technology ecosystem across the Middle East region.

She has enjoyed a decorated career, which at this point has spanned two decades.

In a candid sit-down discussion with CNME, she talked about her career journey, her own leadership style, the challenges she had to overcome, her views on gender-based quotas – and her goals within her own role at Commvault.

#### Can you provide our readers with an overview of your professional career?

Being a self-proclaimed fashion lover and addict, and having studied advertising, I always wanted to be doing something related to fashion.

However, sometimes life takes you in a different direction, which is what happened when I moved to the UAE almost 20 years ago.

I landed my first job in Dubai working for a tech company and began my career as a junior marketer working my way up the ladder as I moved to different tech companies throughout the years. I had the chance to work with some remarkable people,



I always push my team to create a vision, to innovate and to think outside the box. It is extremely important for me to prioritise transparency, honesty and to foster trust and rapport.

I would like to think of myself as a mentor who is focused on developing my team members by providing guidance, constructive feedback and creating an environment where individuals can learn and grow.

## Women are demonstrating their strength, resilience, creativity, inclusiveness and power to make a difference in a male dominated world."

many of which became my mentors and helped me advance tremendously in my career.

A theme throughout our Women in Tech series has been leadership. Can you tell us about your own leadership style, and what are the key characteristics needed in a good leader?

My leadership style is a mix of transformational, authentic and coaching style. Key characteristics of a good leader are first and foremost being a visionary and communicating that vision to their team, a good communicator who can be clear, but at same time a good listener.

Having integrity and empathy by understanding the needs of each team member is important, and valuing diversity and different point of views.

It is also very important for

a good leader to be flexible and to subtly manage change and disruption, plus being accountable for both success and failures, giving credit and taking ownership as appropriate.

We know that in the IT and technology sector globally, only 25% of the workforce is female. Can you tell us some of the challenges you have had to overcome during your career - and what needs to be done to address the gender disparity that exists.

Being in marketing in a male dominated industry, was a challenge in the beginning of my career, as sometimes I used to be the only female in the room, nevertheless I was able to make my voice heard and always made sure to have a place at the table.

I believe the future of WIT is becoming bigger and brighter, as every single day, women are demonstrating their strength, resilience, creativity, inclusiveness, and the power to make a difference in a male dominated world.

### Some companies are keen on gender-quotas, but many believe that will impact meritocracy. What is your opinion on quotas?

I don't believe in quotas. I believe in having the right person in the right place.

It is not about having an equal number of male and female workforce as much as it is a matter of making sure the hired person will be able to perform the assigned job and tasks perfectly and as required.



Having said that, I also believe that the future looks bright for WIT, as more and more people realise the importance of having a diverse workforce in tech, there are greater opportunities for women to enter and succeed in this industry.

Can you tell us about some of the programs Commvault have that are designed to advance female careers in tech?

What I love about working at Commvault is the diversity and inclusion culture we have - and the commitment to building a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected and supported, which helps bring new ideas, perspectives and experiences that are essential to driving innovation and achieving business goals.

Companies, including Commvault are actively seeking out female candidates and many have implemented programs to mentor and support women in tech.

In addition, more women are starting their own tech companies and driving innovation in the field.

There is still work to be done to achieve gender parity in tech, but the future is looking bright.

### Can you tell us more about your role at Commvault and what your key goals and objectives are for the remainder of 2023?

I am the Senior Regional Head of Marketing for Switzerland, Eastern Europe, Middle East & Africa at Commvault. In my role I make sure our voice is heard in the market, by promoting our brand, improving our market position and building brand awareness. It is also very important, as part of my objectives to grow our customer base, expand into new geographies, improve market position, and continue to be a leader in our industry. ame

Having integrity and empathy by understanding the needs of each team member is important, and valuing diversity and different point of views."

## Allied Telesis



## **Next Generation Industrial Switches**

## Our award winning family of IE switches just got better thanks to the IE220 Series

10 Gigabit uplink ports gives you the value and versatility your network requires. The ideal speed where high bandwidth backhauling and scalability is required. Coupled with IEEE 802.3bt PoE++ up to 95W to meet the demand for high power of devices connected to the network – this really is built for enduring performance in the harshest of environments, such as those found in outdoor installations. With rich functionality and advanced security features, our switches deliver the performance and reliability demanded by deployments in the age of the Internet of Things.

For more information, please contact one of our Allied Telesis Account Managers today.



Tel: +971 4 3522 433



MICROSOFT

# **FROM RESEARCH TO REAL-LIFE**

CNME Editor Mark Forker was onsite at the **Microsoft** Innovation Campus in Redmond, Seattle, for a panel discussion that examined the impact Microsoft's new Al integrations are going to have on reshaping our society.

he panel was entitled; AI, from Research to Real-Life – and was chaired by Ashley Llorens, Vice President & Managing Director at Microsoft Research. He was joined on the panel by; Ece Kamar, Partner Research Area Manager and Deputy Lab Director at Microsoft Research, Haiyan Zhang, General Manager, Gaming AI at Xbox at Microsoft, Juan M. Lavista Ferres, Vice President, Chief Data Scientist and Lab Director of the Microsoft AI for Good Lab – and Eric Boyd, Corporate VP, AI Platform at Microsoft.

Llorens began the panel discussion by providing some context on the GPT era, by describing it as a technological phase change.

He added that machine learning is a field that has been alive and well for a long time, but around a decade ago a significant breakthrough in the form of specialised AI changed the landscape.

"I believe this technological change is being driven by this move away from a specialised form of machine learning to a more generalised form of machine learning. The process of self-supervised learning on a much more vast corpus of data that is extracted from the internet, and other sources across different modalities is enabling us to learn more about the much more generalised model at the end of that, and a much more generalised function that can do mappings on natural language and perform many downstream tasks," said Llorens.

Llorens added that this shift has created what he described as two significant implications.

"This shift has definitely created two significant implications. Firstly, you can pick up that model, and it's an incredibly useful tool, and we see that on a global scale with the uptake on ChatGPT. We have seen people all over the world using it to do different tasks and to innovate in so many ways. Then you have an aspect of that model as a more generally useful platform on which to program and build new applications and systems.

With that rapid uptake and the generality of the tool, and it changes everything relative to AI, Machine Learning, or computing in general. However, I think it really raises the stake when it comes to responsibility," said Llorens.

Ece Kumar joined Microsoft in 2010, right after she had completed her PHD.

She said she wanted to join Microsoft in order to build technologies that could change the world.

"My PHD was focused on building AI systems that were useful. However, I always about these new AI models is the response I get when I challenge it. In the past, with previous AI models when you pushed it to a certain point it would just stop, but these new models provide me with so many new ideas and perspectives and they challenge me," said Kumar.

Kumar said that the new AI models are cognisant of physical relationships, but said it is critical that all these capabilities are harnessed in a responsible way.

"It understands physical relationships, but more importantly it is aware of the

## I believe that this is going to change every single thing that everybody does anywhere in the world."



cared about the value AI systems could provide for people. When I first saw GPT4 in September, what really blew my mind about GPT4 was the fact that we finally had an AI system that can genuinely help us in so many ways. What I find astonishing needs of people. Why this is such a phase transition is for the first time in my life I feel that an AI agent, or co-pilot that I worked on for my PHD 15 years ago is now here. I can build things with it, and it gives me an opportunity to think about what comes

## **INTERVIEW**



next, which is how do we build it responsibly? It is so important that we do that. We've waited so long to have these tools to build things for people in the world, but we need to be responsible with it, but what does that responsibility look like," said Kumar.

Kumar added that Microsoft Research, which was created by Bill Gates over 30 years ago, has a unique culture, and that environment is why they began working on responsible AI before their market competitors.

"Microsoft Research is unique and it has fostered an environment where individuals look at the world and the technologies emerging and say these are the important aspects we need to focus on. That sort of environment is the reason why we started working on responsible AI before anybody else. We saw that AI was really coming to the real world, and as researchers we said it's time for us to examine and consider all the risks. We also open-source all the work we do, and we receive feedback from our academic community, and building that ecosystem has been critical in terms of establishing the best practices and tooling we need to build responsible AI," said Kumar.

Eric Boyd has been central to the multiple GPT integrations that Microsoft have launched since February, and he has described the journey as a whirlwind – but acknowledge what they are doing is going to change the world.

"It's certainly been a whirlwind journey. I believe that this is going to change every single thing that everybody does anywhere in the world. With that realisation comes the question of how do we make this happen, and put it into production? There has been a herculean effort from my team, and some of them have said they've never worked harder in their life, but they are also energised through sheer excitement because they can see the incredible potential it possesses to fundamentally change the world we live in," said Boyd. Boyd highlighted the



importance of establishing the strengths and flaws of GPT.

"It's important to determine what this model is good at, and what it is not good at. The metaphor that we use most frequently is copilot, and that's because the model is incredibly insightful and knowledgeable, and people really think of it as human. It also brings with it those human failings, it's not perfect, it makes mistakes. It's fantastic at summarisation, creating content and coding. However, I think it's ability to make a person more productive is the key pattern that we're seeing from the model," said Boyd.

Haiyan Zhang, General Manager, Gaming AI at Xbox at Microsoft has been at the company for the best part of a decade now, and has always been working between the Microsoft gaming organisation and Microsoft research.

"What I love about Microsoft making video games with Xbox is the fact that making video games is a fundamentally human and creative act. It is an art form delivered through advanced technologies. In gaming, we have been shipping AI for the last 10 years, so we have this experience and legacy of working with AI to really accelerate the player experience with these new Microsoft GPT integrations. ChatGPT and GPT4 are providing so much excitement amongst players and creators within the global gaming community in terms of what it can do for us to really enhance the gaming experience. These creative

what struck me first was the fact that these large language models have tremendous value in terms of understanding and giving knowledge on language. The majority of the knowledge that we have in the medical field are doctors storing plain text about what is happening with a patient. Even though we've been working now in this space for decades, and have been trying to get insights from that data, it's a very difficult task," said Ferres.

According to Ferres, working with natural language is difficult and is more challenging than computer vision.

"In a computer vision program all of the information is stored in the emails. However, in text the majority of the information is stored in context outside of that text. In the case of these large language models, we

## We saw that AI was really coming to the real world, and as researchers we said it's time for us to examine and consider all the risks."

capabilities are really going to empower artists and game developers to broaden their ability to imagine new games and learn new techniques to transform how they make new games," said Zhang.

Juan M. Lavista Ferres, Vice President, Chief Data Scientist and Lab Director of the Microsoft AI for Good Lab described the new integrations as 'revolutionary'.

"When I was first exposed to GPT4, I was like this is going to be revolutionary, but can infer part of that. This provides tremendous power as it enables us to get all this data from years of medical records into insights that gives us knowledge and the ability to advance medical science in general. Every discipline has jargon, and in the medical world you see a lot of that, so converting that jargon into something that humans can understand is very, very powerful. That for me is what makes these AI models completely revolutionary," said Ferres.

#### AXIS COMMUNICATIONS

## CYBERSECURITY NOW A HUGE CHALLENGE FOR REGULATORS

**Steven Kenny**, Architect & Engineering Program Manager, and **Andrea Monteleone**, Segment Development Manager, Critical Infrastructure, at Axis Communications, have joined forces to pen a thought leadership article entitled; Keeping up with cybercriminals: Protecting critical infrastructure and industrial operations.



rganisations that design and implement video surveillance and security solutions for industry and critical infrastructure face intense pressure to provide both physical and cyber protection.

Threats such as ransomware continue to be a serious concern for businesses and organisations in most countries with cyber becoming increasingly relevant.

All members of the value chain must navigate

mitigating these attacks, as well as a changing regulatory environment, to maintain compliance. Cybersecurity, and protecting our critical systems and infrastructure, is a shared responsibility.

## Almost every industry is critical now

Before the digital age, attacks on essential services were exclusively physical. But the universal application of connected technologies in all areas of life has created the opportunity for bad actors to use both physical and digital means to disrupt services.

The result is that major state organisations now must deal with threats on a digital front, ones that have the potential to be very costly.

Due to the highly connected nature of global supply chains, more industrial sectors are now defined as essential.

We abruptly discovered

how much we depend on a huge number of services and products, which are now considered as essential. Just two or three years ago, many people would not have regarded the production and supply of semiconductors as critical.

But supply issues during the pandemic demonstrated how essential chips are to many – if not most – modern industrial processes. The 'butterfly effect', where a small disruption in one system can have a major impact on another in the future, was shown to be true for the globally integrated technology supply chain.

## Cybersecurity is a challenge for regulators

Governments and regulators are having a hard time keeping up with the fast pace of change in cybersecurity. Some have changed the way they regulate the challenges posed by cybersecurity. The NIS directive and more recently the introduction of the NIS2 Directive across the EU is a good example of this. However, some governments, rather than defining what providers of essential services need to have implemented in relation to cybersecurity, put the onus on the providers to prove that they have the necessary measures in place to stay cyber secure. Only time will tell if this approach works or needs to change.

This change has serious implications for the providers themselves and any party providing expertise and solutions within the essential entity supply chain. The entire value chain – upstream and downstream – will be under scrutiny.

## Surveillance solutions need to form part of the supply chain

The protection of essential services has always been a priority. Physical measures – perimeter fences, access control, and security guards – have been enhanced through technology, with advanced video surveillance solutions in place at every essential service facility.

The increasingly connected nature of these solutions has, of course, also placed them on the front line for cyberattacks and under the scrutiny of evolving regulation.

Because of this, we need to ensure surveillance solutions meet the physical and cybersecurity requirements of today and can adapt to evolving challenges and regulations.

This demands 'system thinking'. We must see the

## Governments and regulators are having a hard time keeping up with the fast pace of change in cybersecurity."

security solution as a whole rather than a selection of separate devices and consider the relationships between the hardware and software of the solution itself, along with its integration into the broader infrastructure of the essential service provider.

Engaging with partners throughout the value chain is key to this process, and so is working with managed service providers (MSPs) whose first priority is to meet enterprises' and organisations' security needs.

## Meeting design requirements

Those designing and specifying solutions must consider the potential wider risks posed by the technical offering that they are recommending. While the primary focus of a solution should be to address the defined operational requirements, IT and cybersecurity provisions are now also essential.

And as such, vendors and consultants must ensure any product or service meets the security policies of the individual customer, including all relevant regulation applying to the customer's organisation.

Mitigation factors such as secure boot, signed firmware, security components that enable automatic and secure identification of devices, and a trusted platform module (TPM) should be specified.

Specifications should also include important third-party

certifications, vulnerability policies, security advisory notifications, and a clearly defined security development model.

Finally, a lifecycle management approach should be included. Using device and solution management tools and a documented firmware strategy mitigates the future risk of an attack and safeguards customers moving forward.

Together, resilience, policies and processes will help organisations adapt to the evolving threat landscape.

## Confronting an evolving environment

Enterprises and organisations in the region cannot afford disruptions to their essential services. At a minimum, disruption will have an economic impact which could result in a stop in the production process, but this can also quickly turn into significant societal issues and a potential risk to health and human life.

Adequate protection from cyberattacks is, therefore, vital. Everyone involved in the value chain, especially when it comes to critical infrastructure and industrial operations, needs to respond to this challenge, including those designing and specifying surveillance solutions. While business operations may depend on the shared responsibility of mitigating cyberthreats, the consequences for our society could be much greater if we don't all take them seriously.

#### SHAFFRA

# AI IS NOT A THREAT TO HUMANITY

**Alfred Manasseh**, the co-founder and Chief Metaverse Officer at Shaffra, has penned a thought leadership article outlining why AI is not a threat to humanity, and how if the technology is nurtured properly it can create an exciting and remarkable future for all mankind.

he progress made in artificial intelligence (AI) over the past decade has made its impact even more remarkable as it shifts to the centre of global attention.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, AI is hardwired to have a substantial impact, with estimates from PwC indicating that it could contribute approximately \$320 billion to the region's economy.

The same report suggests that the UAE will likely experience the most significant impact, with an estimated contribution of nearly 14% to its GDP by the year 2030. This demonstrates the vast opportunities that AI offers for economic growth and development.

AI has garnered significant interest for its potential to revolutionise our interactions and the digital landscape. The UAE, in particular, has observed the transformative impact of AI in healthcare,



finance, and the metaverse to name a few.

In healthcare, AI plays a crucial role in tailoring treatment plans to individuals. For example, one hospital centre adopted AI to help ensure the right interventions are made. In finance, AI-driven algorithms are improving risk assessment and fraud detection. Retailers are also exploring the use of AIpowered virtual storefronts, enabling customers to browse and buy products in a more immersive way.

And most notably in the metaverse, AI is the driving force behind immersive and personalised experiences. Governments in the region are embracing this potential to enhance the efficiency, accessibility, and effectiveness of their public services.

In the UAE, the Dubai government launched the Dubai Metaverse Strategy, aimed at increasing the metaverse's economic contribution to \$4 billion by 2030 and AI plays a crucial role in this development. This comes to show that the emergence of new digital technologies is essential for elevating living standards and maintaining a thriving economy.

However, there are people who remain sceptical of AI due to concerns about job loss and fears regarding the impact of this technology on the job market.

On the contrary, artificial intelligence (AI) does not eliminate jobs; instead, it generates new opportunities for employment. As AI continues to develop, it creates the need for positions that did not exist previously, such as AI ethics officers, data protection specialists, and numerous others.

In fact, PwC intends to allocate \$12 billion and recruit an additional 100,000 individuals in domains such as AI and cybersecurity by 2026. This progress is transforming the workforce, requiring a new generation of professionals who can effectively harness AI's potential.

Even in the realm of security and privacy, AI should not be seen as a villain but rather as a protagonist. AI-powered systems facilitate advanced threat detection and mitigation strategies, enhancing the security of our online environments.

This also presents a new opportunity for reskilling and upskilling workforces. McKinsey reports that 45% of current job roles will be automated by 2030.

Additionally, the IDC predicts that corporate spending on AI will have a CAGR of 29.7% from 2022 to 2026, amounting to \$6.4 billion, and enabling companies to achieve increased productivity by investing in the adoption of AI and automated processes.

The integration of AI emphasises the importance of ethics rather than undermining



## The integration of AI emphasises the importance of ethics rather than undermining it."

it. While navigating the ethical dimensions of AI, we gain knowledge in constructing equitable and impartial systems and it is our collective responsibility to shape a future where AI aligns with the values of fairness, honesty, and dignity for everyone.

This is not to say that challenges do not exist, but that they serve as an opportunity to adapt. With the projected economic influence of AI on the MENA region, particularly in the UAE where the impact is anticipated to reach approximately 14% of the GDP by 2030, choosing not to participate in the pursuit of AI adoption is not a feasible choice.

The horizon of AI stretches far beyond our

current capabilities and with each passing day, new breakthroughs and possibilities emerge, empowering us to reimagine what is achievable.

According to the most recent IDC report, AI expenditure in the region will constitute 2% of the global total for 2023, which is estimated at \$151.4 billion and the region is projected to experience the highest growth rate worldwide in the coming years.

The bottom line is that AI is not a threat to humanity; instead, it holds immense potential to shape a remarkable and promising future. When used responsibly, AI becomes a driving force for progress, propelling us towards a world full of endless opportunities. and

#### **IFS CONNECT MIDDLE EAST**

# ENHANCING BUSINESS AGILITY AND RESILIENCE

Veronica Martin spoke to **Michael Ouissi**, Group COO at IFS, during IFS Connect Middle East, to discuss the functionalities and enhancements the latest IFS Cloud release brings, and how it supports organisations to enable customers to better understand key operational challenges.

hat specific functionalities and enhancements does the latest IFS Cloud release bring to industries such as service management to accelerate digitalisation across business operations?

There's a long list of things that have been added to the latest release. I want to pick a few just because they make a huge difference in terms of both customer productivity, but also how we help customers to be more compliant and reduce their carbon footprint.

One is our maintenance shadowing optimisation where, with AI and machine learning technology that we embed into our scheduling optimisation, we are helping clients to predict and reduce the number of failures in production and maintenance, so that they can have more efficient maintenance, procedures, operations, and actually reduce their carbon footprint by being just a much more efficient organisation.

The second piece is in terms of Feld Service Management. For example, embedding our remote assistance technology into the Field Service management will help customers to increase first time fixed rates because you can actually go through it with an end customer now and have a look at what's wrong.

For instance, when the washing machine has got a failure, you can actually get onto a call with your mobile phone as a customer. You'll have a service technician in the background, somewhere remotely that can actually read out error codes and can tell you what the problem is.

He can actually also tell you, can you lift that lid? So, when the service technician then goes out and helps a customer, he has the right spare parts on the van and knows how to repair them. All of this has come as an additional functionality into the platform, making sure the skill the technician has are also the skills that the customer requires.

In a world of constant change, how does the latest IFS Cloud release support organizations in enhancing business agility, building resilience and mitigating risk?

Whatever we do is industry focused. In terms of supply chain resilience, we have added a lot of functionality over the



past 12 months and also in this release that will actually help you create more visibility of your exposure in your supply chain and then act proactively on that in terms of agility, the adoption of new technology.

If you are a customer on IFS cloud, you can now switch that on and actually disrupt the service in your industry, so you can be agile and respond to customer responses where you get feedback that your service isn't great. Now you can actually very easily switch on that functionality and say, look, dear customer, just help me a little bit understanding what we're doing and what we're facing, and then I can go and make sure I've got the right person to fix this.

When you're calling a call centre agent and that person could then actually say, let me hook you up with somebody who actually will just go through the errors with you. You'll get a call in five minutes. That is the kind of agility that customers expect and is one example of how we help customers to disrupt service, be more agile and respond to customer requirements. How does IFS Cloud enable customers to better understand key operational challenges, work more efficiently, and increase productivity through automation and business intelligence?

First of all, we've just introduced capabilities to make sure that, for example, in terms of your assets, what is the health of your assets, what's the performance of your assets? Then go in there and say: this is how we are and what you need to do. This is how you need to maintain the asset. These are the spare parts you need. Do you have best spare parts in stock?

If you don't have them in stock, you will actually want to extend the life of that one part as much as you can. You will have a view of the 3D model of the asset, and then send somebody to do whatever they can to maintain the asset until you've got a spare part. Operational productivity is not just visibility, but also action. How can I drive the right understanding of what's going wrong? I can see something is going wrong, but I need to understand it and figure, do I actually have in stock what I need in terms of skills and spare parts to fix the problem? If I don't, what other route do I have to extend the life of the asset, so my operational performance doesn't drop?

We are helping clients to predict and reduce the number of failures in production and maintenance, so that they can have more efficient maintenance, procedures, operations."



In terms of ESG goals, how does the latest update of IFS Cloud help organizations measure emissions, achieve objectives profitably, and support sustainable and circular manufacturing operations?

We have increased the scope of our ESG reporting capabilities regarding carbon footprint. We are also now complying with regulations that have been set out in the EU for further reporting requirements. In terms of circular manufacturing, we have added capabilities into our manufacturing platform that actually support the reporting, and the documentation of what material has gone into where. We are doing a lot in all those areas.

### Can you share examples of how IFS Pioneer customers have leveraged IFS Cloud to develop business resiliency, drive innovation, differentiation and future growth?

We have been focused on different things we wanted to achieve with pioneer customers. When we are talking business resilience, we have made supply chains much more

resilient to external shocks. The connectivity between a factory, spare and production parts and supply chain, making sure that's a full circle and we can help the customer get superior visibility, but also then take action in terms of, where do I need to change my levels of inventory? Where can I predict I am going to be running out of production and spare parts or anything I require? Our focus is to improve supply chain resilience and become more agile every day. 🚥

When we are talking business resilience, we have made supply chains much more resilient to external shocks."

50

معرض و مؤتمر الخليج العالمي لأمن المعلومات



## THE SUPER CONNECTOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA'S CYBER SECURITY COMMUNITY

SCAN ME

GISEC is the ideal cybersecurity platform to participate & partner with vendors and government entities in the region.

OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTION

PARTNER

SPIRE

H.E. DR. MOHAMED AL-KUWAITI Head of Cyber Security, United Arab Emirates Government

ENQUIRE ABOUT EXHIBITING, SPONSORSHIP & SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES: +971 (04) 308 6469 I GISEC@DWTC.COM

HOSTED BY

مجلس الأمن السيبراني

CYBER SECURITY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT CYBERSECURITY PARTNER





GOLD SPONSOR



ميئة تنظيم الاتصالات والحكومة الرقمية TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL COMPENSION DECLA TOPOSY AUTHORITY



OFFICIALLY SUPPORTED BY





ORGANISED BY



## Switching that Stacks Above the Competition

Highly Scalable Solutions for a Future-Proof Enterprise Network



Future-proof your network with 100G uplink port speeds

Virtual Switching Unit (VSU) • Enterprise Layer 3 Features

Advanced Quality of Service (QoS)



Connect to more...

https://me.dlink.com