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THE CHANGE TO FUTURISTIC BUSINESS

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest issue of **Business Transformation MEA.** This month's feature is focused on Sustainability and Emissions. This topic is of utmost importance in the current global climate, as we witness the devastating effects of climate change on our planet.

The Middle East is a region that has been heavily reliant on fossil fuels, and as a result, has contributed significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. However, there is a growing movement towards sustainability and reducing emissions, and we want to highlight the businesses and organizations that are leading the way in this area.

In this issue, we will be exploring the latest technologies and practices that are being implemented to reduce emissions, as well as the impact that sustainability initiatives are having on the bottom line of businesses. We will also be featuring case studies of successful sustainability and emissions reduction projects in the Middle East, and how they are creating a positive impact on the environment and society.

We believe that it is our responsibility as a publication to showcase the important work being done in the Middle East towards a more sustainable future. By highlighting the successes and challenges of businesses in this area, we hope to inspire others to follow suit and contribute to a cleaner and healthier planet.

We hope that our readers will find this issue informative and insightful, and we look forward to continuing the conversation around sustainability and emissions in future editions of our magazine.

Happy reading and do write back.

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MAY 2023

DEFENDING CRIME WITHIN THE WEB3 SPACE

There has been an increase in awareness of crypto crime because web3 users and businesses are investing more in conducting due diligence on new cryptocurrency projects and the safety of their cryptocurrency assets.

Uppsala Security started with a simple mission of protecting Web3 users against threats. To do so, the organisation has been keeping abreast of the continuous development within the web3 space and its incorporation into its services. In the first year of business (2018), the most common types of scams were ICO (Initial Coin Offering) and the first product UPPWard (Browser extension) maintained an extensive list of such scams. However, they then build tools to proactively detect new malicious wallets that exhibited money laundering characteristics (Crypto Analysis Risk Assessment) CARA and (Crypto Analysis Transaction Visualization) CATV that were able to identify newer threats such as Rug Pull, Ponzi schemes, NFT Illicit trade, ransomware flows, etc.

The core business and activities of our Uppsala Security is to provide Intelligence and Services for a safe Web3 experience such as,

- Provide information about malicious cryptocurrency wallets related to scams, hacks, phishing, etc.
- Provide investigation tools and services to track the stolen funds of the victim in the event of an incident.

A Combined effort by web3 entities (such as Exchanges, Brokers) to conduct due diligence in identifying suspicious cryptocurrency transactions promptly, can thwart the funding of threat actor groups and impede their operations.

There has been an increase in awareness of crypto crime because web3 users and businesses are investing more in conducting due diligence on new cryptocurrency projects and the safety of their cryptocurrency assets. As a result, they also observe threat actors trying new techniques to lure victims.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH AND STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE IN THE WEB3 SPACE

Technology enables organizations to automate the process of solving an issue faced by several individuals and businesses, thereby enabling organizations to scale. For instance, Uppsala

ATHUL HARILAL
Head of Threat Intelligence Research,
Uppsala Security

Security started with a mission of thwarting crime within the web3 space by proactively identifying malicious cryptocurrency wallets used by threat actors in scams, hacking incidents, and the dark web through our underlying machine learning algorithms.

Blockchain technology is being increasingly adopted which has created a transition from web2 to web3 space. However, within web3 space, the responsibility of ensuring the safety of your assets (such as Ethereum and Bitcoin) falls entirely on oneself which creates a need for solutions. In this matter, technology can help to address the security concerns and enable its mass adoption to ensure a safe web3 experience.

The responsibility for the security of the web3 space lies within every participating entity due to the decentralised nature of the operation. Proactive detection of malicious entities within the web3 space using its tools and its sharing within the community would greatly benefit its sustenance.

Digital and business transformation initiatives

Uppsala Security's latest project named Chainkeeper is a one-stop interactive marketplace backed by ChatGPT, catered to help and direct web3 users according to their needs.

For instance, if a victim has been hacked and wants to monitor their stolen funds, it will direct them to the monitoring service (CAMS) which tracks the movement of stolen funds.

While if a user wants to check an address before transacting, they would be directed toward the organisation's risk assessment (CARA) and visualization tool (CATV) to look for suspicions associated with the address before transacting. If a user wants to report new

> **The responsibility for the security of the web3 space lies within every participating entity due to its decentralized nature of the operation.**

suspicious addresses, they would be added for verification by organisation's analysts and then ingested into its database.

This way Chainkeeper intends to be a web3 security marketplace which would be launched in the middle of 2023.

A significant contribution to the company in 2022 was building a network of law enforcement agencies who can help to take timely action based on the organisation's intelligence, which has resulted in some successful thwarting of threat actor cryptocurrency laundering.

Uppsala Security wants to bring its technology to the right audiences and help individuals. For instance, since 2020 they have helped more than 1600 victims related to stolen cryptocurrency. However, one of the challenges has been the process of freezing the stolen funds as it requires the attention of law enforcement agencies. Hence its current step is to continuously increase the network of law enforcement agencies who can help to take timely action of freezing the stolen assets based on its services. ■

4 TRUTHS OF ESG THAT WILL HELP DECISION-MAKERS CRAFT THEIR STRATEGY

The Middle East consumer base is increasingly dominated by a young, socially conscious subsection. According to PwC research, shoppers here base their buying decisions on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues to a greater extent than the global average. Some 31% of those in the Middle East say they consider ESG when making a purchase compared with 18% globally. ESG strategies have leaped up several places on the priority lists of regional boardrooms as regulators and employees join consumers in demanding more responsible business operations.

But calling for it is one thing. Navigating its challenges to deliver on ESG pledges is another. In a fragile global economy, how do we choose wisely from the many potential areas for investment? And how do we solve problems of measurement to demonstrate progress? The fog on the path forward starts to clear when considering four central truths of ESG.

NO TWO JOURNEYS ARE THE SAME

ESG will mean something different for each enterprise, based on the nature, maturity, and scope of operations. Legal demands, values, and customer expectations will also come into play. The business leader must then decide how to translate these requirements into consistent practices that reach across the organization itself and along the value chain to each partner and supplier for the optimum community impact.

Where Europe may be further along in sustainability and other ESG areas, the Middle East journey is admittedly more recent given governments' prior focus on rapid growth. But in areas such as the Arab Gulf, sustainability clauses have found their way into the government guidelines that drive national economic programs. The region's decision-makers must take care in timing their ESG forays. Invest too impulsively and the ability to deliver could be compromised. Conversely, the potential for partnerships with global organizations on ESG could be missed if enterprises wait too long.

CATHY MAUZAIZE
President EMEA at
ServiceNow.

TALENT IS VITAL

The successful implementation of any great change rests on the shoulders of people. When it comes to ESG, not only will an organization's talent be part of the change process, but today, they will also be judges as to its success. The digital natives that make up the majority of modern workforces are more invested in sustainability issues than any generation that has preceded them. Generation Z, while having only entered the workforce in the past decade or so, is having a far-reaching influence on ESG. A third of them would turn down a job offer over ESG concerns, according to research from BUPA Health. In an extraordinary shift, the current talent pool is brimming with passionate young professionals who expect their employer to align with their values. This twist has likely been driven by

the fact that today's candidate does not need to compromise on this point because they find themselves in a seller's labor market — especially if they have strong digital skills, which are in short supply in the region. And good ESG management requires these very skills.

This means companies must invest in talent. This will help them retain the talent they have and help to acquire more. It is a cycle. A mature, digital-skills talent pool, nurtured appropriately, is a sound foundation for implementing sustainable, socially responsible policies that give the organization an advantage in hiring more people with digital skills.

CONTROL TOWERS' ARE ADVANTAGEOUS

Measuring success in ESG is difficult, to say the least. That is due in part to the problems faced by ESG managers in simply defining what success looks like to their organization. ESG classically starts by listing commitments. Perhaps an enterprise aims to be carbon neutral or net-zero by a given date or to reduce its emissions by a certain amount per year. To deliver on these pledges is to examine all processes and determine which can be adjusted to contribute to the end goals. A "control tower" approach allows these investigations to bear fruit more readily.

With the right technology, the entire value chain from internal processes to those of suppliers and partners can be analyzed to identify what emissions occur (Scope 1, 2, or 3). Only with complete visibility from the control tower can an organization make meaningful progress. With the right

information, ESG managers and other stakeholders can collaborate on which areas can be targeted for effective improvement. And they can simultaneously lay the groundwork for enhanced governance and compliance.

This will be important in the face of escalating regulations around ESG, such as the requirement of the UAE Securities and Commodities Authority that companies submit regular sustainability reports. Gone are the days of CSR, which was largely an optional branding tool. ESG is branding necessity and compliance requirement rolled into one.

GOALPOSTS HAVE LEGS

Because ESG is now so much a part of the jurisdiction of regulators, there will continue to be rapid movement in the rulebooks. As goalposts continue to shift, the skill sets required to put the ball between them will also change. ESG stakeholders must be agile, with a plan in place to reskill and reconfigure operations at a moment's notice. Innovation will help, and that is where nurtured talent comes in. A staff that knows the inner workings of operations and the technology that serves it will be better placed to tweak the mix and come up with a way to keep pace with the latest introductions to legislation.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

The environment and our society are waiting for us to innovate our way to remedies that can be deployed cost-effectively at scale. It is up to us to act on ESG and leave the world a little better than we found it. ■

IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DATACENTRE

Many businesses find it more expensive compared to running an on-premise data centre and with none of the budgetary certainty of an on-premise facility.

When it comes to provisioning the IT on which all businesses rely, running costs and energy efficiency have long played a significant role in the decision-making processes. Recently, however, concerns about global warming and soaring energy costs have moved them to the top of the priority list. This, in turn, is causing CIOs across the board to fundamentally rethink the approach they take, particularly when it comes to the data centre where huge benefits are to be had on both counts.

THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM
Estimates vary but according to the International Energy Agency (and others), datacentres and their associated infrastructures account for around 1% of global energy consumption. In EMEA alone that translates to over 90TWh

per year, or enough to satisfy the domestic energy needs of a small country. Moreover, this figure carries with it an environmental impact equivalent to running almost 6 million vehicles.

Big numbers whichever way you look at them and which, in turn, mean that any action to reduce energy consumption would not only save businesses money but have a significant impact when it comes to climate change.

DATACENTRE CHANGE
There are lots of ways of tackling this issue with some organisations, for example, abandoning their on-premise datacentres altogether and moving to the cloud. That, however, doesn't necessarily save on running costs. Indeed, many businesses find it more expensive compared to running an on-premise datacentre, and with none of the budgetary certainty of an on-premise

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Manager, Enterprise and Public Sector Accounts UAE and Oman at Nutanix

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The CIOs are rethinking a different approach toward the data centre. Datacentres and their associated infrastructures account for around 1% of global energy consumption.

- There are several benefits of switching from 3-tier to HCI models in terms of energy consumption and climate change.

- Without significant change, future energy demand will continue to rise and result in large amounts of carbon dioxide emissions.

facility. Neither does it address the climate issues. It just makes them somebody else's problem.

Of course, the cloud has other benefits besides, but the data centre looks like it's here to stay for some time albeit with changes to the operational model to deliver the benefits of cloud computing at a lower cost in terms of energy and emissions. Indeed, that change is already happening with growing numbers moving from traditional 3-tier architectures (servers + storage + networks) towards next-generation models, in particular hyper-converged infrastructures (HCI) which, most analysts, agree is the best and most expedient way of reducing datacentre energy consumption and carbon footprint.

The reason for that assertion is down to the way hyper-converged models work by distributing computing power and storage across low-cost commodity hardware platforms, linking them with software, and using virtualisation to provide an easily scaled and managed operational whole. A mature technology with several different HCI platforms available, here are the expected benefits in terms of energy consumption and climate change of switching from 3-tier to HCI models:

- Measurable benefits could be achieved across a range of organisations from small businesses through big enterprises to large-scale hyper scalers and managed service providers

- In comparison to traditional 3-tier IT platforms, next-generation HCI architectures could potentially reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint by up to 27% per year

- Across the EMEA region HCI transformation has the potential to reduce energy consumption by 56.7 TWh and cut emissions by 14.2 million tonnes of CO_2e over the period 2022-2025.

- By 2025 a full changeover to HCI across UK datacentres could potentially save 8.1 TWh of energy and 1.8 million tonnes of CO_2e, roughly the same as taking 400,000 cars off the road

- By 2025 a full changeover to HCI across datacentres in the Middle East & Africa could potentially save 4 TWh of energy and roughly 2.4 million tonnes of CO_2e

- Large-scale colocation datacentres offer a much lower PUE (Power Usage Effectiveness) factor than typical on-premise facilities. Switching these to HCI architectures could potentially boost energy saving towards 30-40%

- Next-generation colocation datacentres could provide access to renewable energy through long-term Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) and so contribute to an organisation's climate neutrality goal without having to invest in CO2 certificates

WORKING TOWARDS CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

It's important to recognise that the data centre industry has delivered significant energy efficiency improvements over the past decades and is now one of the most advanced in terms of both energy efficiency and decarbonisation. That said it remains a major energy consumer and could do a lot better. Moreover, without significant change future energy demand will continue to rise and result in large amounts of carbon dioxide emissions. The answers to all this lie in innovative next-generation data centre technologies, like HCI, which have been proven to work and have the potential to deliver considerable efficiency gains with a significant impact on energy costs and climate change. ■

SOFTWARE AG'S SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Software AG's sustainability initiatives demonstrate the company's commitment to creating a more sustainable future, both within its operations and in the wider world.

PREDICT, TEST, AND SUCCEED WITH IOT DIGITAL TWINS

Digital twins in IoT — a customer experience, sustainability, operations, and productivity differentiator.

Forward-thinking equipment and machinery manufacturers realize that digital twins provide a unique opportunity to enhance the overall user experience and drive customer satisfaction while helping hit performance and sustainability targets.

A digital twin is a dynamic virtual representation of a real-world entity or system. "The software object or model mirrors a unique physical object, process, organization, person or other abstraction," explains analyst firm Gartner1. The beauty of digital twins is that they can be scaled up and down as needed based on the complexity of the ecosystem. Data from multiple digital twins can be collected for a combined view of a city, for example, detailing its related processes.

In the same way, a digital twin of a customer can be used to accurately simulate the customer experience, anticipate events, and provide intelligence for future predictions. As a result, digital twins, which started as models in the automotive, defense, and aerospace industries, are now appearing in a host of applications, including supply chains and logistics, healthcare, and energy monitoring in commercial buildings. Enterprises can take advantage of technology to achieve a wide range of goals.

BENEFITS OF DIGITAL TWINS

Analysts predict that by 2025, 80% of industry ecosystem participants will leverage their product, asset, and process digital twins to share data and insight with other participants, according to IDC.

Digital twins can improve performance and operational efficiencies and save resources and costs. In the broader ecosystem, digital twins can improve supply chain efficiencies and agility and drive sustainability efforts. Remote monitoring in a 3D twin of its physical counterpart can enhance productivity and collaboration, for example. Digital twins also provide valuable insight for research and development into products and services that can accelerate market time and boost customer satisfaction.

Digital twins are also invaluable when it comes to customer experience. Just as a digital twin can be used in factory production lines for predictive maintenance, a digital twin of a customer can be used to replicate and anticipate customer behavior. Flexco's customers leverage their Elevate solution to boost production output via predictive monitoring, reduce labor costs involved in maintenance, and reduce downtime of key assets.

Gartner also points out the importance of a digital twin in underscoring consumer confidence. "A digital twin can help businesses improve that experience and retain loyalty while identifying the friction points that lead customers to defect to competitors," the analysts explain.

Digital twins can provide a dynamic, virtual representation of customers, providing companies with insight previously not possible to achieve. They can be used to test sales messaging, for example, and predict what will and will not work in marketing campaigns.

It is not surprising then, that with the extraordinary capabilities of digital twins, Gartner predicts the digital twin-enabling software and services market will hit $150 billion by 2030, up from just $9 billion in 2022.

INTERPRETING DATA FROM CONNECTED DEVICES

As more and more IoT devices become connected with the ability to produce data, having a digital replica enables enterprises to optimize

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Product Marketing Manager, IoT & Analytics, Software AG

deployment and performance and create other what-if scenarios that can benefit partners, customers, and consumers.

Data collected by IoT devices are delivered to the cloud, where it can be used for various applications, including digital twins. For example, asset tracking devices on cargo can continuously monitor the transit and environmental conditions of the containers. This data can be imported into a digital twin to look at the efficiency of freight transport and find areas for improvement. It is important to note that to exploit digital twins, companies need to be digitally mature and have a robust supporting data infrastructure.

Digital twins are an advantage that should be leveraged, specifically in reducing the complexity of IoT ecosystems. One can build an IoT device digital twin for any purpose, be it enhancing performance or predicting downtime. There is no limit to the devices enterprises can connect, enabling better energy management and quality control, for example. The possibilities are infinite, from running simulations to generating possible enhancements.

Simplifying onboarding and managing IoT devices can be complex. It is imperative to have complete visibility to easily and efficiently connect and manage devices. Using self-service analytics, in-house technical teams can question process data and search trends without the help of a data scientist.

PUTTING THE POWER OF THE DIGITAL TWIN INTO PRACTICE

The Geico Taikisha Group, a leader in the design and construction of turnkey automated body paint shops, is known for its commitment to protecting the planet for future generations. It was the first company to offer a zero environmental impact paint shop, reducing consumption by 70% and hitting its sustainability goal three years ahead of schedule.

Technology has played a critical role in the company's growth, mass customization, and sustainability ambitions. It was quick to see the benefits of IoT in providing added-value services, increasing efficiencies, reducing downtime, and cutting delivery times. IoT has given Geico access to remote monitoring. IoT sensors have enabled the company to track how machines perform once shipped. This data is being used to improve paint cell performance.

Digital twins are now being used to show customers the value of machines to their businesses via a digital twin environment. With digital twin technology, customers can see a simulation of potential efficiencies and savings in remote monitoring, performance management, and meeting sustainability initiatives — all before purchasing.

THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL TWINS

The potential that digital twins have in almost all industries is endless. They can predict the behaviors of both people and machines, enhance the design, improve performance, and allow companies to better understand the usage of their products and services.

Companies must be agile, flexible, and resilient in increasingly volatile and dynamic markets. Digital twins provide a foolproof route to testing before costly commitments are made — and one that market-leading companies are taking advantage of right now. ■
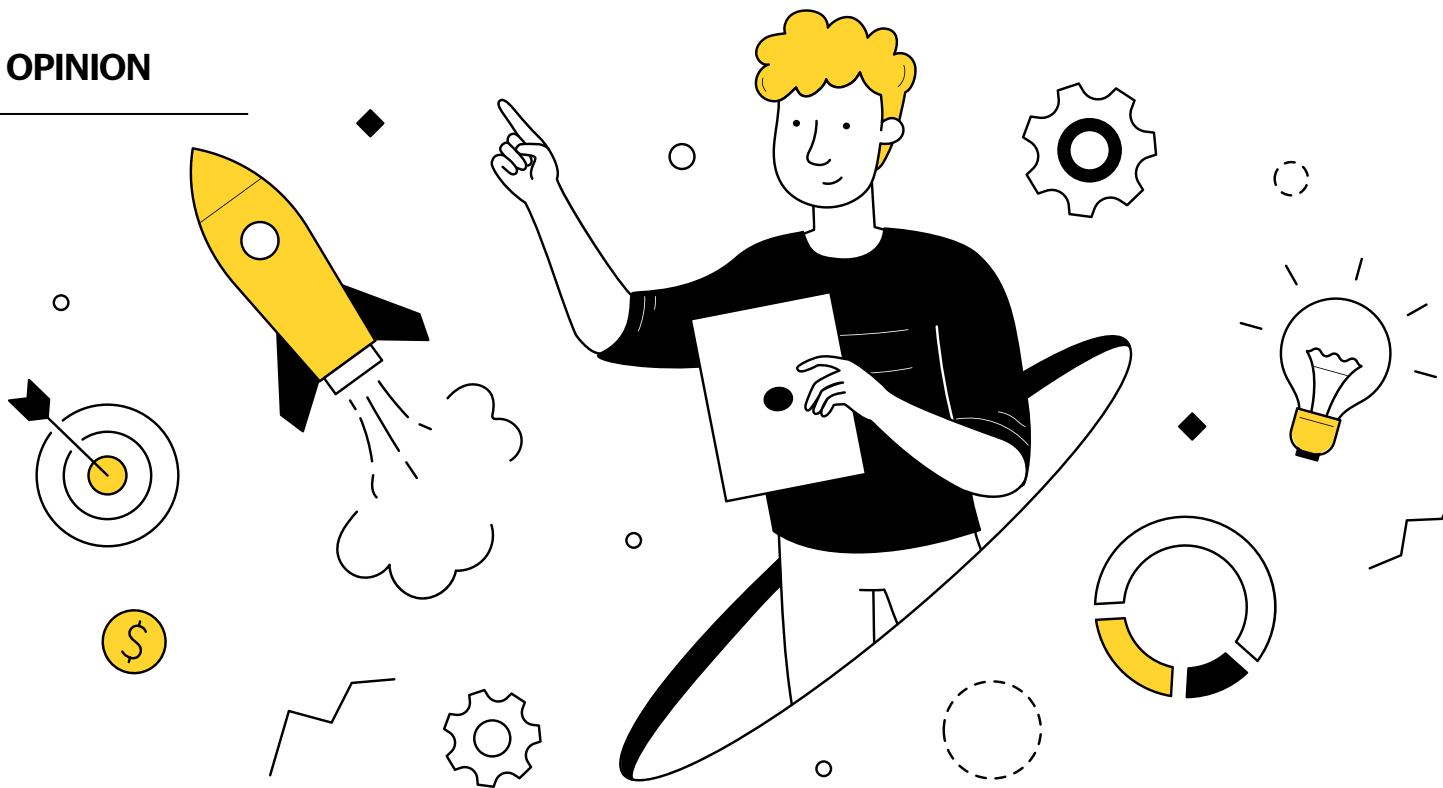
'ITERATIVE INNOVATION' KEY AS UAE DIGITAL PIONEERS EMBRACE EMERGING TECH

As one of the world's few nations to have conducted a successful mission to another planet, hardly anything is left to be said of the United Arab Emirates' technological credentials. But for the record, the nation was the first to appoint a minister of state for artificial intelligence; is a perennial early adopter of everything from big data to mixed reality; and is one of the few countries to have clearly defined national strategies for IoT, blockchain, and everything in between.

Also noteworthy are the country's moves on Web 3.0, the Metaverse, and crypto assets. We could discuss its ambitions around AML, cybersecurity, and many other areas, but I believe the case is made. If we are in the age of Industry 4.0, then the UAE is the standout example of Nation 4.0 — primed and prepped for the digital age, and already a global hub for innovation.

The public sector is awash with e-services, bots (DEWA's Rammas being a prime example), and digital workflows. Government leadership has inspired the private sector too. In the BFSI industry, Mashreq stands out as a world leader in digital banking and self-service branches, and grocery chains from Spinneys to Carrefour have enlivened their customer experiences. But digital transformation is a journey, not a destination. Those who have been successful at digital acceleration will tell you so, just as they will tell you that to keep the expedition on track, you must put the end user at the head of the caravan. We have in the past seen the hype around chatbots die down and customers return to favouring human agents. But with the emergence of GPT technology, conversational AI has become more viable, so implementation of these bots may now yield a competitive advantage.

NO SHORTCUTS

Just because digitisation is a journey, does not mean you cannot take leaps forward. These are not the same as shortcuts. Everything is still implemented with due diligence. But being on the lookout for that window of opportunity that lies between jumping the gun and missing the boat is an art that must be honed. Think of how quickly GPT emerged. Today's windows close quickly. And IT budgets are shrinking. Digital pioneers exist in a symphony of challenges, where they need to be smart about where they focus their efforts.

The best way to move forward without tripping

NICK CURRAN
Head of Endava,
Middle East and North Africa

A focus on driving short-term efficiency and shunning overhyped technologies is exactly the mindset that leads to "Why change?" anti-strategies and aging infrastructure. Such lumbering mainstays will, in the main, not stay. A least not for long once nimble disruptors gain momentum. Here is the thing about emerging tech: every must-have element of today's technology suite was once emerging tech. Even if it is a fad, any new tech that can be affordably evaluated is worth the hassle. The risk to the business of being the last to adopt the next big thing is just too great.

over your ambition is to focus on emerging technologies, evaluate them for cost and potential, and adopt the ones that are affordable and have the greatest potential to transform the business quickly — in, say, six months. You may find great potential in others but by the time you have convinced purse-holders of their value, the window may have closed.

Recent research by Endava reveals the trending technologies for businesses looking to drive impact in 2023. Big data (75%), AI-driven automation (71%), and predictive analytics (72%) occupy the podium places. A third of respondents had already implemented all three technologies and a further third were in the process of doing so.

A MISSED BOAT

"Greatest potential" and "affordable", remember? Not all of these digitisation stories will end in successful transformation within six months. Different businesses will have different uses for different technologies. E-commerce firms will add value with predictive analytics that paints a personalised portrait of the customer, while workflow-heavy organizations like manufacturers and banks will benefit more from automation.

Big data, AI-driven automation, and predictive analytics are the bread and butter of digital businesses. It is why they are being prioritised. Big data makes sense of previously unanalysable information (like social feeds) that is becoming more common and more relevant to businesses. Automation addresses the do-more-with-less directive faced by many technologists, especially as the "less"

pertains to staff numbers. And predictive analytics just flies off the shelves towards would-be innovators who want a glimpse of what is beyond the horizon — everything from a new market trend to malfunctioning mission-critical equipment.

But back when I said "greatest potential" and "affordable", I made no mention of "obvious". If we concentrate on trends alone, we may keep up, but we stand little chance of standing out. Our research uncovered a mistrust of overhyped technologies. The Metaverse, for example, was well-known among respondents but 30% of them had not included it in their strategy, and half of that 30% reasoned that the technology was irrelevant to their business. And Web 3.0 was of interest to only 27% of those polled. The very fact that they are in the minority could spell a missed boat for these brands.

ITERATE TOWARDS PERFECTION

Back to the journey. If we treat digital transformation as an ongoing, iterative process, then the introduction of technologies such as the Metaverse, or Web 3.0 are less of a culture shock. We start small and affordable, sandboxing projects until we can perfect our use of them. Once the capabilities are understood and the business can devise ways of adding value, then greater investment can be justified. It is worth saying at this stage that just because a competitor has released an experience into the market does not mean the window has closed. Even if the release is a relative success, there will be opportunities to improve upon it. Develop expertise, experience, and confidence; build something eye-catching and value-adding; and drive positive change. ■

CHATGPT: RISKS AND REWARDS OF GENERATIVE AI

Generative AI, like ChatGPT, playground AI, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and more have the potential to revolutionize businesses, but we must understand the risks and rewards it can create.

Physicist Richard Feynman once said, "I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics." Following in the same vein, it's safe to say that nobody understands generative AI...yet.

If you've heard of ChatGPT, though, you're on your way to becoming familiar with generative artificial intelligence (AI). Introduced to the public in November 2022, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are getting plenty of global attention and quickly going mainstream, with the market projected to grow to USD 110.8 billion by 2030.

Yet, as the decade of the 2010s saw major advancements in AI, the 2020s may be the decade of reckoning when we begin to see the impact of these advancements on society. To better understand generative AI and its potential, we'll explore what it is and what it can do, along with the risks and rewards for the connected enterprise.

WHAT IS A GENERATIVE AI?

Generative AI refers to a category of AI algorithms that generate new outputs based on the data they have been trained on. It uses a type of deep learning called generative adversarial networks and has a wide range of applications, including creating images, text, and audio.

In the case of ChatGPT or other text generators, it "learns" from text data to understand context, relevancy, and how to generate human-like

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GENERATIVE AI AND THE CONNECTED WORLD

Generative AI tools like ChatGPT are disrupting the world as we know it. There are still many unknowns about how generative AI will ultimately be used, by whom, and for what purposes. But the technology offers as much promise as it does risk. For enterprises that are seeking to create the connected experiences their employees, partners, and customers demand, generative AI has enormous potential for use in business processes and enablement of new business models. Generative AI has great potential for use in business growth and enablement, but it's just one piece of the vast puzzle that is the connected enterprise.

responses to questions. Instead of just replicating existing text, its generative AI algorithms identify patterns in text and then create something original.

THERE ARE THREE BASIC DIMENSIONS OF GENERATIVE AI:

Input: The First Dimension of Generative AI
The first dimension is the input—or the actual data that's consumed—when the generative AI algorithm is inferencing. This input is predominantly text but it can include other source formats like images.

Output: The Second Dimension of Generative AI
The second dimension is the output that's generated, such as text, images, 3-D models, music, videos, programming code, etc. The quality of the output is directly related to the size of the dataset it is trained on.

Specificity: The Third Dimension of Generative AI
The third dimension is the specificity of the output for a given domain or task. Some AI will focus on a very specific domain and the 'answers' they will give will be highly reliable and to the point. Examples like DoNoTPay for legal advice will quickly mature in capabilities. On the other side of the spectrum general-purpose AIs like ChatGPT.

RISKS OF PLATFORMS LIKE CHATGPT
From a professional standpoint, generative AI puts us on the brink of a new wave of software creativity and the seemingly limitless business solutions that can result from it.

One major concern around generative AI is the near-term effect it could have on the labor market. As economist Paul Krugman recently wrote in The New York Times: "It's possible that in some cases, AI and automation may be able to perform certain knowledge-based tasks more efficiently than humans, potentially reducing the need for some knowledge workers."

THE WAR FOR REALITY
Every day, it's becoming harder and harder to distinguish between what's real and what's not. There are now serious challenges for the public in assessing reality and trusting that what they're seeing is authentic. AI-generated text, images, and videos only exacerbate these challenges, requiring additional software that can flag AI-generated content.

WHO CREATED WHAT?
The person (or machine) doing the creating can get called into question too. Last year over just over three months, more than 10 million people used the Stable Diffusion text-to-image tool for generating images.

AN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS IN EDUCATION
Generative AI raises even more questions in schools and universities, in which intellectual achievement is dependent on the student's thoughts, research, and writing. Though derived from existing content, AI-generated content is essentially original.

AI IN THE HANDS OF MALICIOUS ACTORS
In the wrong hands, generative AI can be used for truly nefarious reasons. Malicious actors can use it to create everything from propaganda to phishing emails and malware, to fake websites and businesses, to text that's meant to impersonate someone. It can even be used to create new forms of warfare and weapons. ■

EVERDOME LAUNCHES MOON SKIMMER RACE

The Dubai-based metaverse project Everdome released their first beta in-world gaming experience, allowing near 20,000 NFT holding community to jump into hyper-realistic Moon vehicles and compete against each other in a high-octane Moon racing experience. Evernauts, as termed by Everdome, could jump into their Endurance Moon Skimmers, and race to collect checkpoints against the fellow community members in a real play-to-earn metaverse experience.

The Moon Skimmer race was not the only experience on display, and community members were also able to try a Moonwalk adventure contest for some further true immersive play-to-earn action inside a hyper-realistic digital environment. Almost 9000 games played over a 24-hour period and an average in-experience duration of 75 minutes per player. It really shows how Everdome is capable of creating sticky experiences to engage the most modern of digital audiences.
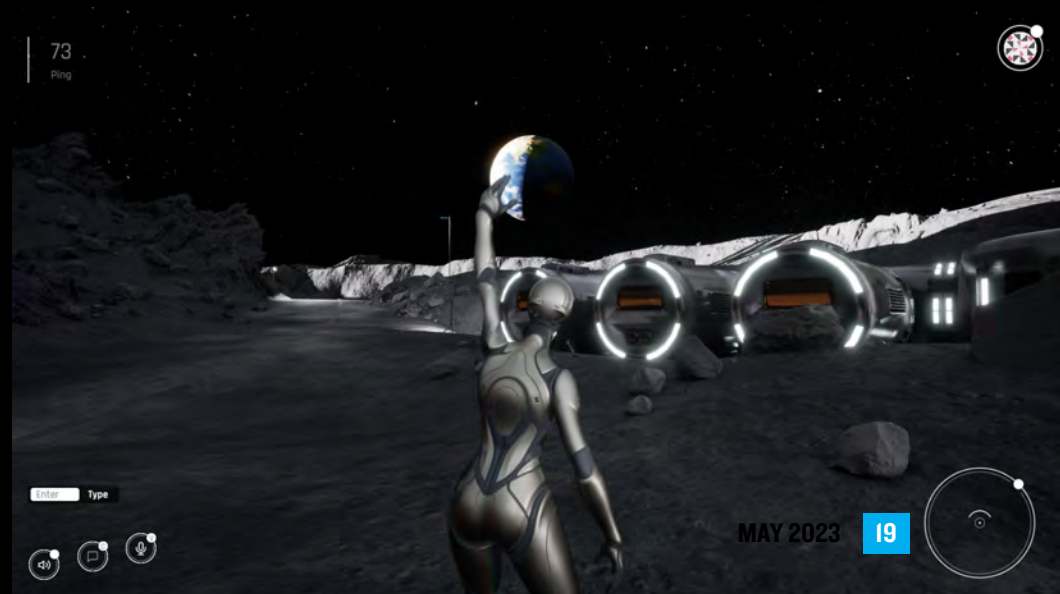
ADVANCED PERFORMANCE VESSEL FOR ARCTIC RESEARCH

Japan based Yanmar has manufactured a 14-meter research boat being used by the world's northernmost university, the University Centre in Svalbard. The boat is named after the scientist Hanna Resvoll, who was the first female Arctic scientist in Svalbard, back in 1907. Out on the sea all day, the boat's unique design makes it easier for students to stay dry and warm as they carry out their research. Data collection can be done more safely and securely with the Hanna Resvoll able to accommodate 12 passengers and a crew of three.

The boat is used to map the seabed, collect water samples, inspect research buoys and carry out transport duties. Able to sail 250 nautical miles without refuelling, it has a larger operating area than the Polar Circle boats that also ply the waters of the arctic. Founded in 1912 in Japan and celebrating its 110th anniversary, Yanmar is a global brand and leader in the design and manufacturing of advanced performance diesel engines and equipment.

BTX Show and Transformation Awards 2023

The BTX Show 2023 returns larger and better than ever. The fifth edition of this highly anticipated event will take place in the KSA on June 8 and promises to be an unforgettable experience.

This year's theme is all about embracing change and promoting business excellence with innovative techniques and tools. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone seeking to take their enterprise-wide operations to the next level, as

the event features more than 40 inspiring speakers from the world's leading brands. At The BTX Show 2023, you will have the opportunity to learn, network, and advance your career.

The BTX Show 2023 is intended for the ENTIRE Transformation Executive Unit, including Continuous Improvement Leaders, those driving the Operations Function, and broader business leaders who own critical processes within their

organizations and are challenged to find new ways to solve problems and build capabilities.

Transformation leaders have witnessed significant changes over the previous few years. Transformation is no longer considered a competitive advantage, but rather a survival strategy for businesses of all sizes and in all industries. We can no longer afford to operate our enterprises as we did three years ago.

The 5th edition of The BTX Show 2023 will focus on navigating this incredible rate of change by leveraging key levers and tools to drive the required enterprise-wide fundamental business change and excellence. In 2023, you will hear from forty or more motivational lecturers representing the world's leading brands, thanks to the return of the full program.

The BTX Exhibition 2023 will take place in UAE on June 15, 2023, and in KSA on June 8, 2023. The BTX Show will return this year as the conference's most strategic forum for addressing top-level transformation challenges.

600+ Attendees, 40+ Inspirational Speakers from the World's Leading Brands, and Dedicated Conference Tracks will be present at the event. The event will bring together transformational business executives from numerous innovative companies who are tasked with discovering new approaches to problem-solving and capacity-building and who are in charge of critical processes within their organizations.

The theme of this year's BTX Show is Driving Business Excellence and Total Experience Transformation. In recent years, the business industry is said to have undergone significant change, and as a result, many organizations are unable to operate in the same manner as before. Thus, the event will delve deeply into the rate of change by leveraging key mechanisms and tools to drive the required enterprise-wide fundamental business change and excellence.

The event will identify leading business executives who effectively drive business and digital transformation in their respective industries.

The Awards will be divided into 4 key categories:
- Award for Top CEO
- Award for Top Executive
- Award for Top Women Executive
- Award for Top Solution

The Top CEO Awards recognize innovative CEOs who are preparing their organizations for the business models and digital technologies of the next generation. They must be champions of employing technologies and best practices to enable their business and must have a passion for fostering a healthy employee and work culture. They are a rare breed capable of generating opportunities from business transformation and meeting the challenges faced by contemporary enterprises.

The Top Executive Awards honor executives who have accelerated digital and business transformation and improved the future of their organizations. They have, among other things, empowered remote teams, managed change, flattened organizational structure, making it agile and secure, managed customer satisfaction, and implemented digital tools such as cloud, analytics, and data integration.

Top Women Executive Awards honors women who drive business and digital transformation and set a standard for workplace diversity and inclusion. Digital technologies and digital platforms are transforming and disrupting businesses and industries, thereby creating new job opportunities and job roles. This enables women to perform inclusive and diverse roles in innovation, disruption, and IT sector leadership.

Top Solution Awards honors the prominent, exemplary, and heroic efforts of vendors, channel partners, integrators, and consultants in managing the challenges of the end-user community during their transformation journey. This segment of the IT industry has aided the end-user community in effectively transforming their business models through the use of digital technologies and has contributed to the establishment of a sustainable business.

The BTX Show will return this year as the most strategic forum during the conference to address transformation challenges at the highest levels. You will not want to miss this opportunity to learn everything necessary to accelerate your business and facilitate end-to-end digital transformation via strategy, people, process, technology, data, change, and leadership.

GCF Academy of Global CIO Forum signs MOU with ILCI and LITT

GCF Academy of Global CIO Forum signs MOU with the Intelligent Leadership Coaching International & LITT FZ Co.

Dubai, UAE – GCF Academy of Global CIO Forum, a leading provider of executive education and training programs for CIOs and IT leaders in the Middle East and Africa, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Intelligent Leadership® Coaching International (a John Mattone Global company & the international franchisor of the Intelligent Leadership® brand) & LITT FZ Co. (Master Franchisee of ILCI in META, offering executive coaching & leadership training services) to enhance its leadership development programs and further empower IT leaders in the region.

John Mattone, CEO and Founder of John Mattone Companies and Intelligent Leadership Coaching International (ILCI) expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership saying, "We are delighted to be working with GEC Media Group through our Master Franchisee for the META region, LITT based in Dubai. We believe GEC Media is the top digital marketing company in the Middle East and we are honored to be working with Tushar, Ronak, and their entire talented team to help us grow our brands throughout the Middle East and Africa."

The MOU marks the beginning of a promising journey for GCF Academy of Global CIO Forum, as they look forward to leveraging the Intelligent Leadership® portfolio & Intellectual Property to strengthen their leadership development offerings. Charbel Zreiby, the Founder & Managing Partner of LITT FZ Co & President of ILCI MEA, is excited about the partnership and believes it will be a fruitful collaboration that will bring tremendous value to clients.

"For the last decade, I have witnessed the immense impact that GEC Media Group has been driving in the region and how they have been transforming to stand out from the crowd with the value-added services they provide across industries and the reach they have in the Middle East & Africa. We are thrilled & proud to start this journey with GEC as their learning & development partner, and I strongly believe the association of our brands and our common commitment to excellence will only lead to the best value we deliver to our clients," said Charbel Zreiby.

GEC Media Group, the parent company of GCF Academy of Global CIO Forum, is a renowned digital marketing company that has been at the forefront of the industry for over a decade. The partnership with ILCI and LITT is expected to enhance GCF Academy's ability to deliver world-class leadership development programs that will enable IT leaders to excel in their roles and drive business success.

Tushar Sahoo, Founder of GCF Academy, expressed his excitement about the partnership, saying, "We are thrilled to be partnering with ILCI & LITT to enhance our leadership development offerings. We are confident that this partnership will enable us to deliver even greater value to our clients and help IT leaders in the region take their careers to the next level."

ABOUT GCF ACADEMY, IICI, and LITT:

The Global CIO Forum Academy offers tailored courses for future leaders to achieve their mission-critical priorities and drive business success. These courses are designed to equip aspiring leaders with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to navigate the rapidly changing business landscape and achieve their strategic goals. Global CIO Forum Academy's tailored courses are designed to help future leaders achieve their full potential and make a meaningful impact on their organizations. Whether you are looking to advance your career, lead a major business transformation, or simply enhance your leadership skills.

ILCI – Founded by John Mattone, best-selling author and top global executive coach for 4 times in the last 5 years.

LITT – Lead | Inspire | Transform | Thrive – Founded by Charbel Zreiby, well renowned Executive Leader, Coach & Speaker in the region.

(Intelligent Leadership® is a "transformational, results-driven leadership growth philosophy and process that ignites, cultivates, and polishes an individual's heart, mind, and soul in support of creating a truly exceptional leadership and cultural capability in an organization")

GEC Family Iftar 2023

As part of the Holy Month of Ramadan, GEC Media and Global CIO Forum hosted a Family Iftar and networking event with industry experts and their families on 11 April 2023 at The H Hotel in Dubai. GEC Media successfully organised the Iftar dinner by allowing the entire technology industry to come together and share their joy.

This year's Family Iftar brought industry professionals with their families and fostered strong relationships with others, as professionals are regarded as the cornerstone of any strong community.

It was also an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and religions to break their fast and share a meal. It was a gathering of all members of the technology industry, including business owners, investors, and specialists from a variety of fields. It was a memorable day for all the industry professionals who had the opportunity to network, learn, and share.

The Global CIO Forum's mission is to represent IT Executives and CIOs globally. Currently working in the META region and with expansion plans globally, the Global CIO Forum is a non-profit community of CIOs and IT leaders whose mission is to facilitate networking, sharing of best practices, and executive development, and to collaborate on issues faced by the CIOs and IT executives.

GEC MEDIA GROUP would like to thank all the CIOs, CISOs, and Partners, along with their families, for attending our Ramadan Family Iftar at The H Dubai on April 11th.

It was a privilege to have you all with us as we broke our fast and celebrated with our family members. Your presence contributed to the event's warmth and positivity, making it an unforgettable occasion.

The goal of GEC MEDIA GROUP has always been to foster a sense of community, and we believe that such events allow us to strengthen our connections and foster a sense of community. May this Ramadan bring serenity, happiness, and prosperity to you and your loved ones.

Security Symposium UAE partners with UAE Cyber Security Council, featuring a keynote speech by His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti

The Security Symposium UAE is proud to announce its partnership with UAE Cyber Security Council for its upcoming event. This partnership brings together two leading organizations in the field of cybersecurity to create a platform for learning, sharing knowledge, and promoting cybersecurity awareness in the UAE.

The Security Symposium UAE is an annual event that brings together cybersecurity professionals, researchers, and practitioners from around the world to discuss the latest trends, techniques, and strategies in cybersecurity. This year's event promises to be even more exciting with the partnership with the UAE Cyber Security Council.

As part of this partnership, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti, Head of Cyber Security for the UAE Government, will be the VIP opening Keynote Speaker. He will share his insights and experience in the field of cybersecurity and provide valuable perspectives on the current state of cybersecurity in the UAE.

The Security Symposium UAE and UAE Cyber Security Council partnership will also feature a range of other speakers, including industry experts, government officials, and academics. The event will cover a range of topics, including cybersecurity threats

and trends, emerging technologies, and cybersecurity best practices.

The Security Symposium UAE is proud to be working with the UAE Cyber Security Council to promote cybersecurity awareness and best practices in the UAE. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to building a secure and resilient digital infrastructure in the UAE.

The Security Symposium UAE will take place on 25th May at The Address Mall, Dubai.

Edgio Applications v7 helps enterprises boost revenues

Edgio, the platform of choice for speed, security, and simplicity at the edge, today announced general availability of the Edgio Applications Platform v7. Its new integrated performance and security features are designed to increase organizational revenues and accelerate developer team velocity through better website performance and multi-layer security. Through the integrated, unified platform, Edgio reduces the need for multiple point solutions while enabling organizations to deploy applications that are faster, better protect those applications, and boost overall site performance. Edgio's unified platform delivers 90% faster page loads, blocks billions of malicious requests each month and decreases the time it takes to mitigate exploits by 85%.

With the Edgio Applications platform, teams can now safely deploy website updates twice as often, while building performance and security directly into their applications through a unified workflow. Integrated with Edgio's global Content Delivery Network, the platform helps developers harness the complexity of application architectures and technology stacks and contain the spiraling costs and increasing numbers of cloud platforms, services, and tools many organizations are facing.

Leading ecommerce companies such as Mars and Shoe Carnival have cited the Edgio Applications Platform for its significant contribution to their digital transformation.

The Edgio Applications Platform comprises three components – Performance, accelerating web applications and APIs; Sites, an integrated web application development platform; and Security, a holistic security solution that ensures the confidentiality, integrity and availability of web applications and APIs. By providing these three solutions in one integrated platform, Edgio helps companies make their web applications safer, faster, and more reliable.

Critical security threat uncovered by Infoblox threat intelligence group

Infoblox found a new set of beacons using DNS (domain name servers) that are communicating with Russian C2 – this was very low profile since April 2022. Infoblox caught some of the suspicious domains previously but just recently confirmed that it's a real threat and ongoing compromise of systems. Infoblox's Head of Threat Intelligence, Renée Burton, states in her Mastodon post that they were pretty confident C2 is using modified Pupy RAT – which could allow the attacker to control compromised devices. "We are certain it is not consumer devices that are compromised. It's evolved and new domains are being set up," said Renée Burton, Head of Infoblox Threat Intelligence Group. Pupy RAT has been used by state actors (APT) in the past.

Early intel suggests a single threat actor leveraging common DNS behavior. Infoblox has not verified the attack vector but is working through intelligence data to find out more. Organizations with protective DNS are able to block these domains immediately, mitigating their risk while they continue to investigate further.

The Infoblox Threat Intelligence Group believes that this set of beacons exists on limited networks and they are not generated from laptops or mobile devices. The presence of an undetected Remote Access Trojan (RAT) in a network gives the attacker control of the device.

Huawei Cloud announces a startup program to empower regional SMEs to go digital

Working with regional partners, Huawei Cloud launched a Startup Program for the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. The initiative provides SMEs in these regions with Huawei cloud credits, technical support, talent development training, and business resources to drive their growth.

The Huawei Cloud Startup Program was launched on the sidelines of the Huawei Cloud Summit Middle East & Africa 2023 in Dubai. Under the theme of 'Inspire Innovation with Everything as a Service', the Summit brought together over 300 government leaders, cloud-native industry experts, and customer representatives from the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa to explore how to make the best out of the cloud and the vital role of cloud in driving digital economy growth in the region.

The program demonstrates Huawei's commitment to building a regional startup ecosystem to empower 1000 startups in the region to innovate and grow on Huawei Cloud by 2025.

The launch ceremony was attended by representatives from the UAE Ministry of Economy, Middle East incubator GEN Asia, Dinarak – Jordan's licensed payment services provider, Ignite – a non-profit company owned by the Government of Pakistan and administered by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, and Kuwait's startup representatives Eyon TV, One Global, and Empower.

The summit also provided an opportunity to explore the latest innovations in cloud-native technologies. Cloud-native has emerged as an essential driver of digital transformation, with Gartner predicting that 95% of digital services will run on cloud-native platforms by 2025. Cloud-native greatly improves productivity and imposes increasing requirements on digital capabilities.

AI, automation, and ChatGPT are set to eliminate entry-level positions in UAE

As businesses increasingly embrace automation and artificial intelligence (AI), millions of jobs are at risk around the world. Technology and recruitment experts in the UAE predict that almost all entry-level jobs will be taken over by the new-age technology.

Though it is true that AI and automation are transforming the job market in the UAE, as well as globally. With advancements in technology, many routine and repetitive tasks can now be automated, which may eliminate some entry-level positions. However, it is important to note that automation and AI will also create new job opportunities in areas such as AI development, programming, data analysis, and cybersecurity.

In the UAE, there is a growing focus on developing and adopting AI technology, and the government has set ambitious goals to become a global leader in AI by 2031. This means that there will be a significant demand for skilled AI professionals in the coming years.

ChatGPT, as an AI language model, is an example of how AI can be used to improve efficiency and productivity in industries such as customer service and content creation. While it is true that some entry-level positions may be impacted by the use of AI chatbots, there will also be new opportunities for individuals with skills in AI programming and natural language processing.

Analysts believe that the adoption of ChatGPT and other similar apps has accelerated the process of AI taking over certain roles. According to Goldman Sachs' most recent report, AI could automate around 300 million full-time jobs worldwide. ChatGPT, for example, surpassed 1 million users in just five days, the fastest time any company has ever achieved this milestone.

Seequent unveils SLOPE3D, an advanced stability analysis tool

Seequent, The Bentley Subsurface Company, today announced the release of SLOPE3D, an advanced slope stability analysis tool that empowers geotechnical engineers and engineering geologists to design safer slopes.

Building on the capabilities of GeoStudio's trusted 2D SLOPE/W product, SLOPE3D is an intuitive limit equilibrium solution for analysing rock and soil slopes in mining and civil projects – for example, hillslopes, open pit mines, and engineered structures such as dams and levees. They specifically designed SLOPE3D to empower geotechnical and geological engineers to make confident decisions, improve safety, reduce project risks and costs, and ultimately design better infrastructure.

SLOPE3D combines the most up-to-date research on 3D slope analysis techniques with the capabilities in SLOPE/W, a trusted tool for assessing 2D slope stability for over 30 years, providing a practical approach for capturing slope failure mechanisms for simple to complex geotechnical models.

GeoStudio's powerful and easy-to-use interface provides a unique modeling and analysis experience. Multiple 3D geometries and analyses can be added to a single project and solved simultaneously. Geo-professionals can include SLOPE3D analyses in existing 2D stability projects for efficient results comparison.

SLOPE3D connects directly with Seequent's geological modeling software, Leapfrog, via Seequent Central, and integrates with GeoStudio's SEEP3D.

This creates a seamless workflow with smooth data exchange and simpler data management to improve project accuracy and outcomes.

GROW with SAP provides midsize customers with proven Cloud ERP benefits

Christian Klein, CEO and Member of the Executive Board of SAP SE.

GROW with SAP is a new offering from SAP designed to help midsize customers adopt cloud ERP that enables speed, predictability, and continuous innovation. GROW with SAP customers benefit from the same best practices that power the world's industry leaders, as well as rapid deployment and frictionless updates.

SAP's ERP offering has long enabled end-to-end transparency across the business for the world's leading companies. With GROW with SAP, we're taking this to the next level for midsize companies, with a tailored offering that helps them grow their business, said Christian Klein, CEO and Member of the Executive Board of SAP SE. GROW with SAP provides the agility and innovation midsize companies need not just today, but for their success in years to come, stated Christian Klein.

For 50 years, SAP has been working hand in hand with customers across every industry and using this expertise to benchmark and define best-in-class, industry-specific processes. GROW with SAP provides these preconfigured best practices that midsize companies can immediately adopt. Embedded AI and automation capabilities mean customers see rapid results. The GROW with SAP offering also brings together SAP S/4HANA Cloud, a public edition, with accelerated adoption services, a global community of experts, and free learning resources, helping customers go live in as little as four weeks.

GROW with SAP also includes the SAP Business Technology Platform, so customers can define their processes in a cloud-native way using SAP Build. With SAP Build solutions, business users can create enterprise apps, automate processes, and design business sites without writing code, an important asset for those closest to the business who can create the solutions they need.

(Left to right) Elie Abou-Semaan, Managing Director – Gulf & Levant at Ingram Micro, and Mohamed Abdallah, Regional Director and General Manager, Middle East, Turkey, and Africa at SonicWall.

Ingram Micro expands global Relationship with SonicWall

Ingram Micro announced the expansion of its global business relationship with SonicWall to distribute its comprehensive range of cybersecurity solutions, offering organizations protection against evasive cyberattacks across the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, and Pakistan.

Through this collaboration, Ingram Micro will distribute SonicWall's full range of cybersecurity solutions, including Network Security, Threat Protection, Cloud Security, Endpoint Security, and Secure Access Service EDGE through its extensive network, helping organizations create a secure and boundless workforce across environments, eliminate silos through unified point-of-control access across multiple generations of IT and achieve lower total cost of ownership through built-in efficiencies.

They have been proud to work with SonicWall for over 30 years and bring tremendous value to their reseller partners by providing small and medium enterprises with robust cybersecurity protection across cloud, hybrid, and traditional environments.

Most recently, Ingram Micro won the SonicWall Distributor of the Year 2022 award in Saudi Arabia, continuing the success of our thriving, collaborative, and customer-centric relationship.

Ingram Micro is a SonicWall distributor in many countries across the globe and is excited to extend this long-term alliance in the Middle East. They are confident that Ingram Micro's Sales and Technical teams will continue helping the customers meet their workplace challenges with greater flexibility while delivering best-in-class cybersecurity solutions from SonicWall.

Innovation Zed and GluCare.Health partner for diabetes care

Innovation Zed, an Irish R&D company specialized in the design, development, and manufacturing of innovative medical devices and the creator of novel add-on technologies for drug delivery and enhanced therapy, has partnered with GluCare.Health, a leading metabolic disease management platform, to provide connected insulin pen technology as part of a combination product in GluCare.Health's digital clinic ecosystem. The partnership aims to support various drug delivery devices and injection pens for multiple drug therapies, collecting valuable data such as the timestamp of injection events, dosage, temperature, and user behavior to personalize therapy and improve treatment compliance.

The InsulCheck technologies available under the InsulCheck brand are smart add-on devices that can be connected to an app to auto log and store vital information and data regarding injection history for MDI (Multiple Daily Injection) users. By integrating these technologies, GluCare.Health can better manage its insulin-dependent patients continuously, as it now receives real-time information on insulin doses and timings. This enables the company to monitor insulin information with glucose and other data parameters,

providing a more comprehensive picture of patients' health status and needs.

The partnership is also expected to improve adherence to injection therapy, one of the most challenging aspects of any MDI therapy. By motivating people to increase adherence to their daily injection schedule, this collaboration has the potential to improve therapy response and overall outcomes.

AVEVA and Petrofac enter MoU to accelerate digital initiatives for the energy industry

AVEVA, a global leader in industrial software driving innovation and sustainability, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Petrofac, a leading provider of services to the global energy industry.

The plan includes cooperation kick-off, design thinking sessions for new solutions and uses cases, technical assessments, an execution strategy, and more.

Petrofac and AVEVA have a long-standing relationship and are very happy to partner with each other to build on to the multi-year digital transformation strategy. As part of their agreement they will build digital capabilities internally and for the customers that are aligned to Petrofac's environmental, social, governance, and sustainability agendas.

AVEVA's solutions drive measurable emission reductions across scopes 1, 2, and 3, helping industrial companies to meet climate commitments aligned to the Paris Agreement. They are delighted to be able to support Petrofac in accelerating the energy transition for their customers, by deriving data-led insights that unlock more efficient ways of working and drive responsible use of the world's resources.

Under the MoU, Petrofac will also explore the deployment of AVEVA Enterprise Resource Management and AVEVA Process Simulation in its engineering delivery services, while replacing legacy in-house and third-party solutions. The new AVEVA solutions will provide Petrofac with value chain visibility and secure audit trails for tracking material procurement, minimizing waste, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Hamad International Airport teams up with Dell Technologies to drive Innovation

Dell Technologies announced today that Hamad International Airport has selected its advanced server and network infrastructure solutions to deliver the best passenger experience and operational excellence as Phase B of the airport's expansion plan continues.

Hamad International Airport, which currently serves over 170 global destinations and over 40 airline partners, selected Dell PowerEdge servers to secure and enhance the airport's infrastructure capabilities, improve efficiencies and reduce costs, and create the ultimate destination for millions of visitors.

With computing and networking modules that can be adapted to the airport's needs and expanded over time, Dell PowerEdge servers provide a solid foundation for the future.

As Qatar welcomed football fans from around the world in 2022, Hamad International Airport saw a year-over-year increase in passenger traffic of 101.9% and an increase in overall aircraft movement of 28.2% compared to 2021. Phase B of the airport's expansion project, which began in January 2023, will include two new concourses, increasing the airport's annual passenger capacity to over 70 million.

The implementation of Dell solutions contributes to providing additional support for the airport's ambitious plans and enabling new avenues to scale and consolidate its data center to run the most complex, mission-critical workloads while remaining adaptable to future growth requirements. The PowerEdge servers have a cryptographically verified security design and an intuitive systems management process to monitor, deploy, and implement the automation of routine airport operations tasks.

Saudi fintech FOODICS unifies its employee operations across MENA

Saudi Arabia-based FOODICS, a cloud-based restaurant management technology and payments platform, has chosen Darwinbox's Human Resource Management Software to unify its multi-geography HR function. This offers FOODICS a holistic way to manage its Human Resources function spread across MENA countries, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait, replacing several disparate apps.

The FOODICS payments platform serves a range of F&B segments, from dine-in restaurants and cafes, quick service restaurants, bakeries, and food trucks to cloud kitchens across MENA. Given its multi-geography operation,

the company was looking for a best-in-class HRMS platform that delivers a unified employee management view in one platform. It was also on the lookout for a platform that provides an intuitive experience for its employees and boosts their efficiency and workplace productivity.

With FOODICS's multi-geography operation, it was important for them to be compliant with local HR regulations, payment processes, data restrictions, and benefits discrepancies that come along when expanding and operating in a new country.

Across the region, savvy companies are replacing outdated solutions from western players

with a Darwinbox solution – which better responds to local nuances and business needs. Darwinbox is focused on making digital transformation smooth and seamless for its customers and therefore offers modules such as employee lifecycle management, custom workflows, recruitment and onboarding, performance management, expense management, compensation as well as payroll processing across various geographies.

Kasten by Veeam names inaugural partners for KubeCampus.io

Kasten by Veeam, the market leader for Kubernetes backup and disaster recovery, today announced that its KubeCampus.io Kubernetes learning platform now has over 20,000 registered users and is expanding to include its first partners Scality and StormForge. These new content providers will infuse the platform with valuable, deep expertise in storage and automated Kubernetes resource management, two key supporting technologies that users should learn to execute Kubernetes deployments successfully.

With Kubernetes adoption

Tom Leyden, vice president of marketing at Kasten by Veeam.

increasing exponentially, the need for improved skills in container deployment and management is also growing. However, the lack of Kubernetes training continues to be a challenge. Nearly half of the respondents to the Cloud Native Computing Foundation's annual survey in 2022 who have yet to deploy containers in production say lack of training is the most

significant barrier to operation.

Kasten by Veeam is helping close the skills gap by offering free training opportunities and hands-on labs covering the most sought-after Kubernetes skills based on practical, real-world implementations, use cases, and experience with industry-leading products. Designed to be a neutral gathering place for the open-source learning community rather than a vendor-based resource, KubeCampus.io delivers a community platform for learning cloud native and Kubernetes concepts and skills that are increasingly in demand. Visitors will also find additional opportunities for certification and in-person training.

KubeCampus.io has increased its user base by 50% in 2022 and now reports nearly 12,500 courses completed and thousands of learning resources downloaded.

HEADING TOWARDS MORE SUSTAINABLE AND DIGITALIZED FUTURE

Re.life shapes the digital future of the UAE with access to a range of solutions designed to make life better. It also keeps up with the latest technologies and explores the addition of new features on both the re.life collect and re.life market.

Describe your organization's core business and activities.

re.life is a next-generation digital ecosystem that provides smart platforms for business-to-business and business-to-consumer transactions. The platform was created in response to the demands of a digital economy that values convenience, efficiency, and immediacy. The company offers streamlined solutions for various sectors, including logistics, recyclables, and waste management. re.life's platforms enable people and businesses to make faster and smarter decisions to operate more economically. With growing consumer demand and urgency to be more sustainable, re.life's single-stop digital platforms have been transforming industries and empowering sustainability-centric decision-making.

Currently, the company offers two platforms – re.life collect and re.life market.

How would you describe the key enablers that are influencing your business positively in the regional environment?

Technology has been a key enabler in the growth and success of the re.life platform in the regional environment, enabling the company to expand its reach, improve operations, and better serve its customers. Technology has been instrumental in helping re.life collect disrupt the informal logistics sector by enabling better coordination between service providers and consumers. The platform allows users instant access to transport services with reasonable pricing based on distance and complexity. Similarly, technology has also been key in connecting buyers and sellers of recyclables

SALIM SULTAN AL OWAIS
Chief Executive Officer
re.life, Beeah

on the re.life market platform, with several trade options for a transparent and fair bidding process.

How would you describe the key inhibitors that are retarding your business in the regional environment?

As with any business in an increasingly digital world, some challenges must be overcome. While technology is an enabler, it can also have a disruptive impact on businesses that are not prepared for the transformation that it brings. To be future-ready, we are keeping up with the latest technologies and exploring the addition of new features on both the re.life collect and re.life market platforms that will nurture a seamless experience and create the best possible outcomes for our current and future customers. In addition, we are always on the lookout for opportunities to showcase how re.life is empowering businesses across the region.

In your opinion what is the strategic role of technology in driving business growth?

The strategic role of technology in driving business growth in the current business climate cannot be overstated. Technology has been instrumental in transforming the way businesses operate, creating new growth opportunities, as well as increasing efficiency and productivity. Technology can also be utilised to streamline processes, reduce costs, enhance customer experience, and gain a competitive edge in the market.

One of the primary strategic roles of technology is in nurturing and facilitating innovation. Through technology, businesses can develop new products and services, explore new markets, and improve operational efficiency. Technology also enables businesses to expand their reach and connect with customers in new ways. With the rise of e-commerce and social media, in particular, businesses can now reach customers on a global scale, providing access to new markets and revenue streams. This is best showcased on the re.life market platform, which hit a new milestone when it recorded over 150,000 tonnes of recyclable material amounting to over AED100 million in value being traded in 2022.

Finally, technology plays a critical role in improving operational efficiency. By automating processes, businesses can reduce costs, minimize errors, and improve turnaround time. For example, automation can help businesses streamline their supply chain processes, reducing lead times and improving inventory management.

How would you describe your organization's business or digital transformation journey?

re.life is a UAE-based start-up that was launched in March 2021 as a next-generation digital ecosystem to provide smart platforms

150,000 tonnes of recyclable material being traded on the platform in 2022, amounting to over AED100 million in value. This is a major milestone for the platform and a powerful indicator of the shift in the industry towards more efficient and sustainable ways of trading recyclables.

With the increase of digital culture amongst the next generation of workers and potential customers, how are you modifying the look of your brand and the social appeal of your products?

The wave of digital transformation that is sweeping across economies around the world has resulted in consumers and organisations seeking out solutions that are smarter and more streamlined - this is where re.life has a key role to play in championing a new way of living and working. Digital transformation of this level needs to be supported by similar levels of innovation, and re.life was established with an open mandate to rethink what's possible.

re.life collect is disrupting the informal logistics sector, by organising the current market structure to enable better coordination between service providers and consumers. The digital platform replaces the traditional 'pick-up services' with a secure digital platform, leading to instant access to transport services with reasonable pricing based on distance and complexity.

The re.life market platform connects buyers and sellers of recyclables in a virtual B2B marketplace, where trades are possible across various categories such as ferrous and non-ferrous metals, plastic, paper, wood, e-waste, glass, and rubber. re.life market also verifies the quality of recyclables being traded on the platform and provides a guarantee of payment to sellers when a trade is completed.

that simplify business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions. To meet the demands of a digital economy that values convenience, efficiency, and immediacy as fundamental decision drivers, re.life offers streamlined and smart platforms for sectors such as logistics, recyclables trading, and more. Not only does re.life plays a key role in championing a new way of living and working, but it is also shaping the digital future of the UAE with access to a range of solutions designed to make life better. The platform takes care of the needs of consumers and businesses by making essential transactions smarter, more convenient, and more affordable.

Together with its official launch, re.life introduced its first digital platform, re.life collect, which provides seamless, on-demand logistics transportation for businesses and residents in the UAE through a mobile application. This was followed by the launch of the re.life market platform, which connects buyers and sellers of recyclables in a virtual B2B marketplace. re.life market recorded over

Over the next ten years, every business will increasingly become a digital technology centric business and the top executives will represent a new breed of leaders with different value systems. For this new generation of top executive buyers, how are you modifying the look of the brand, and social appeal of your products?

There are several ways in which we are ensuring the brand appeal of both our re.life collect and re.life market platforms.

Our research has shown us that coordinating logistics and moving services can be time-consuming, expensive, and unreliable. To address this issue, we launched re.life collect as a convenient mobile application that connects users with fast, affordable, and reliable moving services on-demand or according to their schedule. Whether you want to deliver goods faster from warehouses to your customers, ship goods across borders, shift between homes, move furniture to a new office, or dispose of bulky items that are cluttering up your space, re.life Collect offers a range of solutions that are carefully designed to meet your needs.

As a virtual marketplace for recyclables trading, re.life market offers a new standard of convenience for buyers and sellers looking for a transparent bid-driven marketplace. While helping accelerate the circular economy, the platform supports to creation mutually beneficial relationships in the recyclables trading industry. Buyers gain market visibility and access to recyclables at their fingertips, while sellers can command fair prices for their recyclables. The platform has both time-limited bidding and bid-free options. Apart from traditional bidding, the platform offers "partial bidding", "spot sale" and "spot buy". For spot sales, sellers specify a material, its quantity, and its price. The material is then assigned to the buyer who establishes proof of intent to purchase. Similarly, buyers can state a material, quantity, and price, with interested sellers having the option to approach them through the "spot buy" trading option.

Similar to re.life collect, we developed re.life market to be easily scalable, so that we can have an impact on the circular economy and recyclables trading not just locally, but regionally and globally. To be future-ready, we are keeping up with the latest technologies and exploring the addition of new features that will nurture a seamless experience and create the best possible outcomes for users on both platforms.

How would you describe your brand attributes ten years ago and how will you describe them ten years from now?

Both re.life collect and re.life market was created to cater to the needs of individuals and businesses in an increasingly digital world. Since then, both platforms have evolved to offer a host of different solutions designed to make life better. However, both platforms remain dedicated to their core values of convenience, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. re.life market, in particular, is actively contributing to the sustainability goals of the UAE. The platform is helping to accelerate the transition towards a more circular economy across the emirates by reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and maximising product lifecycles.

Describe any of the ongoing, completed, or planned initiatives in digital or business transformation.

re.life market recently set up an office in India to acquire new technologies, further optimise the platform for the best user experience, and facilitate trades of recyclables in new economies. The new office in India will also allow exploration of the massive market for domestic and international recyclables trading.

BEEAH Group is driven to secure a sustainable future for all by investing in digital ventures that push technology to its full potential, to build technologically empowered societies and create meaningful impact on people's lives. ∎

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DIGITAL PARTNER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Schneider Electric's purpose is to empower all to make the most of our energy and resources, bridging progress and sustainability for all. We call this Life Is On.

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

As a global leader in energy management and automation, Schneider Electric's core business is centered around providing innovative solutions for sustainable energy management and digital transformation. Our activities range from designing and implementing smart building technologies to developing renewable energy solutions for a more efficient and resilient future. We're passionate about driving positive change through technology and proud to be leading the charge in the energy sector.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

We are witnessing a dynamic and thriving business environment in the Gulf region, fueled by several key enablers. One major factor is the rapid growth of the region's digital economy, which is driving demand for our energy management solutions. In addition, the push for sustainable development and the increasing adoption of renewable energy sources has created opportunities for us to provide innovative solutions that help customers achieve their sustainability goals. And, most importantly, the region's supportive regulatory environment and government incentives have also played a crucial role in enabling our business growth.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Diversity is fundamental to a thriving workplace, and at Schneider Electric, we've seen a rise in awareness of this. We lead in championing diversity and inclusion, exemplified by our Gender Pay Equity program, which ensures equal pay for all employees, regardless of gender, creating an equitable and inclusive workplace.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

I believe technology plays a crucial strategic role in driving business growth. With the constant advancement of technology, it has become increasingly important for businesses to leverage technology to drive growth and gain a competitive edge.

Technology can help businesses improve their efficiency, productivity, and customer experience, which are all critical factors for success. By implementing technology solutions such as automation, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics, businesses can make data-driven decisions and streamline their operations. Additionally, technology enables businesses to reach new markets and customers, enhance their brand image, and create new revenue streams.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

Global warming is having a significant impact on our planet and the way we live our lives, particularly in urban areas. With severe weather conditions becoming more frequent, we must look to technology to help strengthen urban resilience. Digital technologies have the potential to revolutionize urban planning and processes, by providing real-time data and analytics, making them more efficient and effective. By leveraging data and cutting-edge technologies, cities can better prepare for and respond to the challenges posed by a changing climate, and ultimately create more livable, sustainable communities.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

One of the best pieces of advice I can give companies looking to tackle urban carbon emissions is to adopt sustainable practices and

ASHRAF ABDELKHALEK

Sustainability, RE and H&S Leader, Schneider Electric

Schneider Electric's sustainability initiatives demonstrate the company's commitment to creating a more sustainable future and to leveraging its expertise and resources to drive positive change in the wider world.

technologies throughout their operations. And, this is what we firmly believe in and put into practice at Schneider Electric. This includes investing in renewable energy, reducing waste, and implementing eco-friendly transportation options. By taking a comprehensive approach to reducing their carbon footprint, companies can not only reduce their impact on the environment but also set an example for others to follow.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Schneider Electric has been on a journey of digital transformation for several decades now. Through this journey, we've learned that the success of the digital transformation is not just about implementing new technologies, but also about changing the company culture and embracing change.

Their approach to digital transformation revolves around creating a digital ecosystem that brings together people, technology, and processes to drive innovation, improve efficiency, and enhance customer experiences. This has led to investments in digital platforms such as EcoStruxure™, which integrates multiple technologies to create more sustainable and efficient built environments.

DESCRIBE ANY ONGOING, COMPLETED, OR PLANNED DIGITAL OR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES.

We are continuously striving to stay ahead of the curve in terms of digital and business transformation. Currently, we have several ongoing initiatives aimed at modernizing our systems and processes. We have implemented a digital twin solution for our products, which allows us to simulate real-world scenarios and improve their design and performance. We are also investing in the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms to automate

our operations and enhance our decision-making processes. Our goal is to create a more sustainable and efficient future for our customers, employees, and the planet.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMPANY IN 2022 AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?

In 2022, I played a crucial role, with other colleagues, for the company to get the Gulf Sustainability Award. We are implementing green initiatives in Schneider Electric's Gulf-based office facilities, bolstering our long-term sustainability strategy in the region and supporting the UAE's drive for more sustainable energy solutions. I am proud to have contributed to solidifying Schneider Electric's goal of becoming a more sustainable company in the region and supporting the UAE's drive and objectives for sustainability.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?

Our goal for 2023 is to continue driving digital transformation and leveraging technology to enhance our operations, improve customer experience, and foster innovation. We are actively advancing our efforts towards COP28 and hope to leverage this flagship event as a platform to converge industrial sustainability with emerging technologies, thereby contributing to the country's non-oil economy. Our primary focus is to remain at the forefront of the industry, so we plan to continue investing in cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, and Data Analytics to streamline our processes, increase efficiency and drive growth. ∎

DIGITAL DELIVERY

Pixojam allows clients to receive digital files, which reduces the need for physical transportation and associated carbon emissions.

ALIGNED WITH THE UAE'S YEAR OF SUSTAINABILITY, COULD YOU EXPLAIN HOW VIRTUAL PRODUCTION LEADS THE WAY AS AN ECO-FRIENDLY FILMING SOLUTION FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY?

At present, a suite of ground-breaking virtual production technologies is driving transformation in the entertainment industry. Computer-generated visuals and real-time rendering techniques have enabled filmmakers to produce immersive settings and high-quality visual effects more sustainably and environment-friendly than with conventional on-location filmmaking. It additionally allows filmmakers to create immersive visual experiences with the ultimate level of realism through the best and superior-quality visual effects. In addition, these technologies also support a sustainable approach by reducing carbon footprint. Unlike conventional on-location filming which involves travel, energy, and resources, all of which can hurt the environment, virtual production allows filmmakers to develop complete sets, locations, and characters without the requirement to leave the studio. This considerably lowers the film industry's carbon footprint.

From pre-visualisation to post-production, virtual production profoundly relies on digital workflows. It lessens the dependence on paper, chemicals, and other physical resources associated with traditional film production, which significantly contributes to reducing the negative impact on the environment. Through innovative virtual production technologies, a more sustainable film industry can be ensured by significantly minimising waste as well as the use of dangerous materials.

Another significant advantage of virtual production is the flexibility to reuse virtual sets, props, and characters in a variety of other projects, which minimises the requirement to create new resources from the beginning. It lessens the environmental effect of movie production while also saving time and resources. We promote the use of virtual production in its 'Year of Sustainability' to lessen the negative impact on the environment and support a more sustainable future for the entertainment sector.

HOW TO LEVERAGE A VIRTUAL STUDIO AND SAVE ON THE COST OF PRODUCTION

The utilisation of virtual production techniques can significantly reduce costs for film and video production. Without the need to build locations and sets, accelerate post-production, improve cooperation, and reuse resources, it can substantially lower production costs while maintaining high-quality outcomes. Filmmakers can construct whatever environment or backdrop they require using virtual production without having to travel to a set, which can be time-consuming and expensive. Costs related to filming on location, such as those permits, lodging, transportation, and other expenses can be reduced by using virtual sets. Physical set construction can be extremely expensive. Thanks to virtual production, filmmakers may develop and alter sets digitally, lowering the expenses of labor, supplies, and storage associated with creating and retaining sets.

Virtual production can contribute to streamlining post-production by saving time and money through the incorporation of post-production operations into the production process. Since the process is digital, adjustments and modifications to scenes are made instantly and in real-time, doing away with the need for labor-intensive reshoots. It also directly contributes to the reduction of significant post-production costs by merging CGI and visual effects into shots. Furthermore, virtual production also trims down travel expenses and on-site time, while improving remote team collaboration. Reusing digital assets is another benefit that saves costs of film production, in addition to the time and effort of generating new resources.

AZIN SAMARMAND
General Manager, Pixojam.

WHY VIRTUAL STUDIOS ARE TRENDING IN CINEMA PRODUCTION

Owing to the benefits such as more flexibility, financial savings, efficiency, increased quality, and adaptation to changing circumstances, virtual production has been a developing trend, greatly embraced in film production. Virtual studios are expected to become much more common in the film industry with advances in technological innovations. Being more adaptable than conventional filmmaking, virtual production has exceptionally benefitted the film industry in a myriad of ways. Filmmakers have more creative and artistic freedom as well as production flexibility with virtual sets since they may design any setting or backdrop without being constrained by physical space or other real-world constraints. It is further a cost-effective way for the usually expensive and time-intensive film production processes as it obviates any costs of on-site filmmaking that involve travel, lodging, set construction, and many more.

Additionally, by allowing filmmakers to watch and modify shots in real-time, virtual production helps speed up the production process. It helps shorten the amount of time and money required for post-production and reshoots. By providing filmmakers more control over lighting, camera angles, and special effects, virtual production raises the benchmark for movie production. CGI and visual effects, which can be easily incorporated into each film shot, enable filmmakers to visualise and experiment with various elements of film such as sets, lighting, and camera configurations.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM CABSAT TV HOSTED BY PIXOJAM AT THE 29TH EXHIBITION AND TRADE SHOW?

The virtual production studio, CABSAT TV, hosted by Pixojam at the CABSAT 2023, will feature a demo to offer assistance, guidance, and instructions, as well as share best practices and techniques in virtual production for filmmakers who wish to work with virtual sets for movies, TV shows, commercials, and live events. The demo will entail a variety of topics associated with using virtual assets such as – a description of virtual sets and how they function, advantages and drawbacks of employing virtual sets in productions, different virtual set hardware and software types, technical specifications for creating and filming on virtual sets, planning, designing, and creation of virtual sets during pre-production, setup of cameras, lighting, and sound on a virtual set in production processes, directing actors and recording realistic performances on virtual sets, and post-production operations which include compositing, editing, and color grading footage.

PIXOJAM TAKES EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS TO THE NEXT LEVEL BY CREATING ON-DEMAND CONTENT FOR ATTENDEES VIA CABSAT TV.

CABSAT TV, powered by PixoJam, will be streamed life across social media handles as well as on all digital screens around the show. In addition to highlighting new technologies and trends in the film production industry, CABSAT TV will serve as an ideal platform for exhibitors to promote their brands and showcase their range of innovative products and content. Industry professionals will be offered an opportunity to connect with their peers and share knowledge and valuable insights in the field through an interesting medium. The content of the CABSAT TV will be promoted through the CABSAT's social media accounts. Additionally, it will host talk shows and interviews with a variety of brands and companies exhibiting at the trade show. ■

TECHNOLOGY PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH IN PRESENT TIMES

Software AG offers a range of software solutions to help organizations with their digital transformation initiatives

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

At the core of our business philosophy at Software AG, we turn data into value for our customers. The objective is to support our customers to integrate their systems, applications, and data silos as well as their IT sensors or any data that originates from unorthodox sources. Our goal is to help our customers unleash their true potential by changing the way they conduct their business to improve efficiency and profitability.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

In the broad spectrum, the most potent enabler is the leadership in the government for our region, there is a content pressure to drive change using technology. We have witnessed this in the last few years, a major transformation in the areas of smart cities, the adoption of blockchain, and most recently the push to adopt ChatGPT in services. With responsibility towards achieving ESG goals, UAE is hosting COP28 later this year as the climate envoy to the world. This also encourages and motivates businesses to replace traditional practices with more sustainable ones using technologies that can bring about this change.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Cultural diversity is a way of life in UAE and with the leadership's focus on diversity, inclusion, and tolerance, not only do companies follow this fully, but as individuals and residents, everyone amalgamates well within this diverse population spread across the length and breadth of the country.

On the other hand, even within gender diversity, we have witnessed many leadership roles and conventional male roles and leadership titles being held by women in the last decade and more. For eg: the UAE ministerial cabinet today boasts of nine women ministers in charge of important mantles for the country. Personally, speaking too, in the realm of technology, when I first entered the industry in 2013, there were no senior IT executives in the industry while presently, there are numerous Women in Tech who have carved a niche for themselves in various technologically lead roles in an industry predominantly known to be male-dominated. Therefore, I believe, not only the awareness of this has increased, but the actual numbers are quite heartening and growing rapidly within the mainframe of the business community. This diversity is what we live and cherish in the UAE.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

Technology plays a major role in driving business growth in present times through ways of enabling companies in optimizing growth opportunities through improved efficiencies. More importantly, reaching new customers by penetrating deeper into the market and driving growth through those new customers to increase market share in today's cutthroat economy is possible only through technology.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

The short answer to this is – Smart Cities.

The industry has been talking about and implementing this in the last few years and we have seen a massive leap since the onset of the pandemic when mobility was

ALI BAYDOUN
Director of Government
Sales, Software AG,
UAE

restricted. Simply put, a smart city is utilizing various networks or sensors, devices, and data analysis tools that collect and analyse data, and this data is used for informed decision-making across various aspects of the city. From traffic, transportation, public safety, energy usage, air quality, waste management, or other generic citizen services where data is collected to improve these services for residents of a city or country by assisting urban planning. The goal of smart cities is to create a more liveable and sustainable urban environment for all constituents.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?
Action, before it is too late, should be the motto for all companies to control and reduce carbon emissions. We all have only one planet and we need to be responsible for how we leave it for the coming generations. We, therefore, need to be responsible for our actions as individuals, companies, organisations, cities, countries, and the world as one unit to combat this problem. Every action will make a positive impact on curbing this. Furthermore, technologies today are making it easier to monitor and reduce carbon emissions for enterprises. For instance, at Software AG, ARIS for Sustainability is a tool offered complimentary to all customers with a pulse on their ESG goals. Software AG has pledged its contribution to the UNDP charter and sustainability is a key outcome of digital transformation initiatives for our customers in addition to business ones.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?
We practice what we preach to our customers. Being a tech and software company, we are always optimizing and evolving using technology in the way were service our customers, internal processes, and our overall business operations. It is imperative to depict and showcase our success to ensure that our customers believe in our methodologies and this is vital and non-negotiable for everyone at Software AG. With our strong leadership in Sanjay Brahmawar, he introduced a major transformational program called HELIX which is reaping remarkable results and learnings on benefits in businesses using technology.

DESCRIBE ANY ONGOING, COMPLETED, OR PLANNED DIGITAL OR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES.
A major department of the Abu Dhabi government we worked with recently, had five legacy systems for over 15 years. With our involvement, we identified new ways of doing business and replaced those 5 legacy systems with a single new one – reducing a considerable load on cost and processes. This state-of-the-art new system not only supports them internally for their requirements but also facilitates connections with all their partners who are key business links to serve their customers.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMPANY IN 2022 AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?
With our recent acquisition of Streamsets – a data integration tool that complements our hugely popular webMethods integration tool from Software AG's product stack; we collaborated with a major Abu Dhabi government for a first-of-its-kind hybrid project implementation between both these solutions of Software AG. Through this, we have created added capabilities that benefit our customer's digital transformation endeavors.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?
Growth in all its parlances. Growth for our customers and partners, growth for cities they operate in, and countries they belong to along with a conscious positive impact on the environment. This in turn will automatically result in growth for Software AG too. We have huge ambitions for everyone in our ecosystem and we hope to have a profitable and fulfilling partnership with all of them. ■

ZAYED UNIVERSITY IS A NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEADER IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

Founded in 1998 and proudly bearing the name of the Founder of the Nation, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, this flagship institution is the modern embodiment of the Founding Father's ambitions for higher education in the United Arab Emirates.
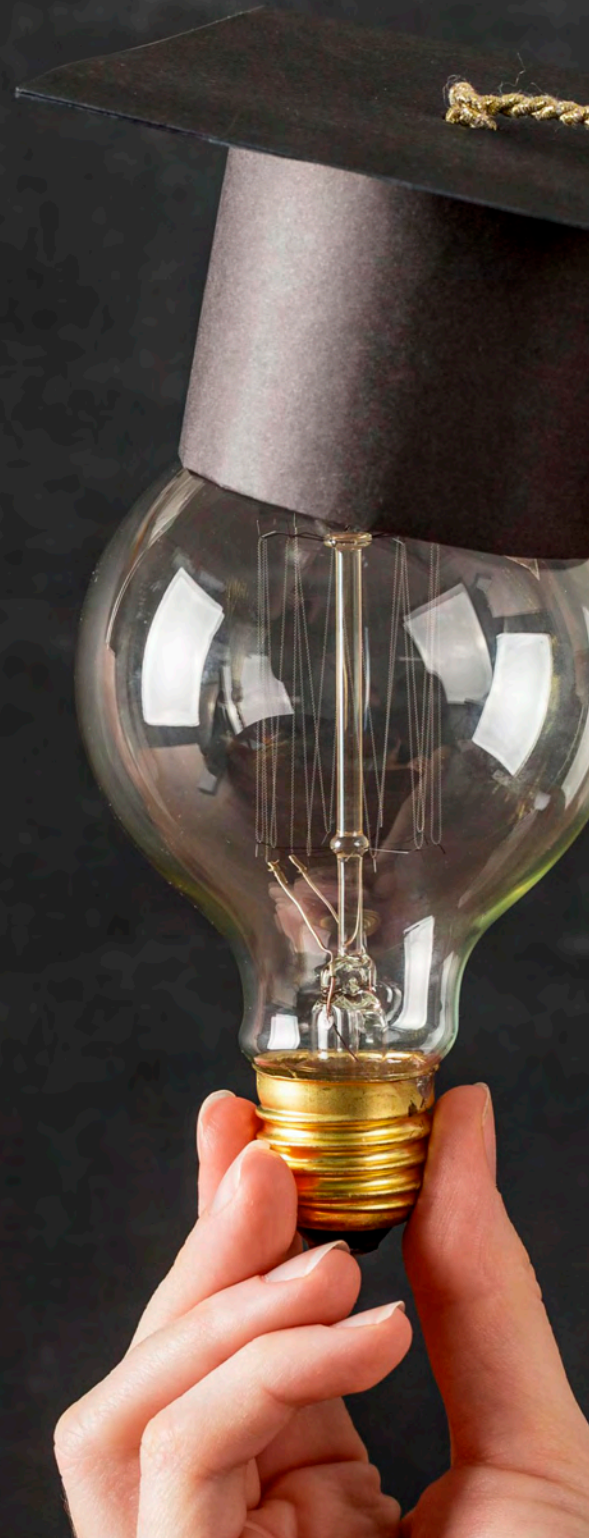
DESCRIBE THE ONGOING TRANSFORMATION AT ZAYED UNIVERSITY.

Our new approach to our undergraduate degrees is designed to ensure that our students graduate with a skill set that meets the demands of the labor market. We believe that a purely discipline-focused approach to education is no longer appropriate given the challenges we face in the 21st century. Employers need employees who possess the ability to examine problems from various angles and generate effective solutions to address them, and national economies need leaders, entrepreneurs, and thinkers. Our undergraduate degree programs have been transformed to ensure they are providing our students with the best possible preparation for not just their first jobs, but also for their entire careers.

WHAT DOES THE BS IN BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM INVOLVE?

In line with the transformation at Zayed University, our Business Transformation program meets the needs of the job market and national development agenda n the region, investing in

new technology and infrastructure, and providing students with opportunities to gain practical work experience through internships, industry partnerships, and hands-on learning experiences. We teach our students technical elements such as market dynamics, and operational expertise in areas such as organisational planning, that are typical in traditional degrees. However, we equally focus on transversal skills such as critical and innovative thinking, leadership, and management. And we develop that throughout the 4 years, rooting the learning in interdisciplinary curricula and methods, that not only help our students learn how to learn, but they do so in a highly engaging way. We believe that graduates can genuinely comprehend the requirements of the private sector and proactively anticipate future workplace challenges only by combining their knowledge and skills.

WHY HAVE YOU INTRODUCED THIS NEW PROGRAM?

While business has always required an interdisciplinary approach, we introduced the program in response to the rapidly changing business landscape and the need to prepare our students for the challenges of the future. We recognized that traditional educational models are no longer sufficient to meet the demands of the modern workplace. The primary objective of our program is to equip our students with the necessary skills and knowledge that enable them to thrive in the highly competitive job market. Given the pivotal role of the private sector in the future development of the UAE and its integral contribution to the realization of the 2071 Centennial Plan, our curriculum has been meticulously designed to ensure that our graduates possess the requisite proficiencies to actively participate

and excel in this context.

HOW IS YOUR PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES?

One of the key differentiators of our program is our general education program, which is the most comprehensive skills-based course in the UAE and provides our students with the foundational skills they need to succeed in their careers. The program is intentionally designed to provide the intellectual skills, social skills, self-development skills, and digital skills which employers demand. These skills are then tested and integrated throughout the rest of the degree program, resulting in graduates who not only have an in-depth understanding of their subject matter but also a breadth of skills that make them an asset to the workforce.

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM INCORPORATE TECHNOLOGY INTO THE CURRICULUM?

We use an online learning platform that is designed to ensure that students are active participants in the learning process as well as to increase engagement. On a practical level, it helps lecturers to maintain students' attention during class time and reduces the chances of students becoming bored or disengaged. An interactive online platform, coupled with carefully constructed learning plans, can encourage students to remain active throughout the learning encounter. Interactive polls, breakout sessions, and focus activities such as concept mapping, jigsaws, and debating are orchestrated to ensure that students apply what they have learned from their reading in a flipped-classroom environment.

PROFESSOR AMJAD ABUELSAMEN

Program Lead, Business Transformation,
Zayed University

In addition, continuous coursework throughout the semester ensures all students follow the progression of the class

HOW DO YOU PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE?

We provide students with practical work experience through, industry partnerships, and hands-on learning opportunities that are structured and integrated with the curricula, this is in addition to traditional internships in later years. We believe that practical experience is an essential part of the learning process and helps students apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom to real-world situations. We work closely with industry partners to provide students with access to a range of opportunities across a variety of industries. Our innovative Partner Challenge program provides students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge outside the classroom to a real-world challenge, from the first year, proposed by an industry partner, with blue-chip companies like Accenture, Coca-Cola, CNBC, and Goldman Sachs among those involved.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR STUDENTS LOOKING FOR A BUSINESS CAREER?

My best advice for students looking for a business career is to focus on developing a range of skills that are in high demand in the job market, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. And perhaps the most important one is for them to learn how to learn, to take charge of their learning experience, and build agility across the use of frameworks and lenses form different specialisms, Even if technology advances and new industries develop, these skills will remain essential going forward. It is also important to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies in the industry and to be adaptable and willing to learn new skills. Finally, I would advise students to seek out practical work experience, either through internships or other opportunities, to gain hands-on experience and make valuable industry connections.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY'S PLAN FOR 2023?

This Fall will see us welcome our largest cohort of students yet and our first cohort will begin their third year, in which they start their specializations and concentrations. This is when they start to gain a truly in-depth understanding of their subject and get a better grasp of the type of career they may pursue. Across the University, this is an enormously exciting time as we continue to roll out the transformation and we'll soon be expanding and enhancing our research offering as well to focus more on applied research, to become a leader in and contribute to the development of new knowledge and ideas at an exciting time for the UAE. ■

Zayed University is committed to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship through a range of initiatives and programs. By implementing sustainable practices across its campuses and offering sustainability-focused courses and programs, Zayed University is helping to create a more sustainable future for the UAE and the world.

THE WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING AT A BREAKNECK SPEED

As the largest network of hyper-scale data centers in the Middle East and North Africa region, Khazna Data Centers enables businesses at the forefront of the digital economy to seamlessly connect with the global digital ecosystem.

### WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Managed by leading industry experts, Khazna Data Centers is dedicated to creating a more connected world by building and managing superior and sustainable data centers, providing custom-made solutions and optimum performance as data continues to proliferate at an enormous scale.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

The demand for data centers has accelerated rapidly, driven by large-scale cloud adoption, internet penetration – content creation, e-commerce, and video streaming – and digital transformation. This rapid pace of digital transformation is being made possible through unprecedented growth in digital infrastructure, with reliability and security supporting new technology advancements, in computing, storage, and connectivity and achieving higher operating efficiency.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

The world of technology is evolving at a breakneck speed and the rapidly progressing sector has a dire need for skills and talent, digital solutions, and simply a breakthrough idea. Every leader driving digital transformation and every business should regard digital transformation as a priority and not a box to check.
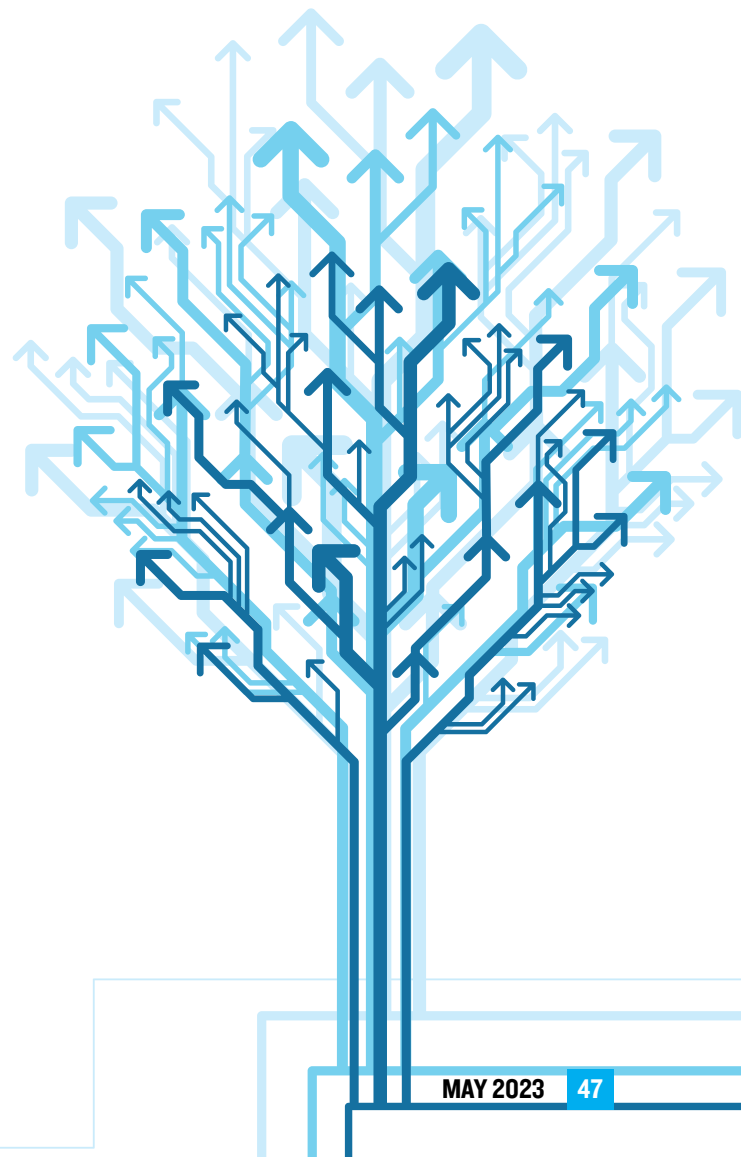
ZIAD SAMAHA

Vice President New
Business Sales,
Khazna Data Centers

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

In the race to innovate and achieve sustainable growth, businesses need to leverage technology to be the catalyst for driving business results. Technologies that will drive the future operations of data centers include the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud storage, edge computing, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), and sustainable and renewable energy means such as liquid cooling techniques, undersea (subsea cables) data centers, and efficient server designs. The adoption of technologies is driving the growth of data centers by creating an ever-increasing demand for data storage, processing power, management and operations, and connectivity.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS?

How can digital technology simplify urban planning and processes? Khazna Data Centers have the responsibility to utilize technology to power a more sustainable future. 'Future First Strategy' focuses on designing, building, and operating industry-recognised energy-efficient and sustainable data centers across the entire region.

The facilities are designed and built to be highly efficient utilizing a revolutionary adiabatic-free cooling chilled water technology. A free-cooling chiller with an integrated adiabatic system design in a single unit can guarantee 100 percent cooling even in the harshest environmental conditions of ambient temperature peaks.

Khazna Data Centers cool their data halls using high-temperature water. This improves chiller efficiency, reduces losses and condensation in the chilled water system pipe network, as well as decreases power consumption. Relying on pre-cooling and free-Cooling whenever weather conditions allow contributes to less utilization of chillers which results in less carbon emission.

Digital technologies can provide real-time monitoring of weather conditions, enabling officials to take prompt action to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events.

o Analysis of data: Digital technologies can assist cities in collecting and analyzing data to better comprehend the impact of severe weather events. This information can be used to identify the areas of the city most susceptible to flooding, extreme heat, and other severe weather conditions, and to develop targeted interventions to mitigate these vulnerabilities. For instance, sensors can be deployed to monitor the extent of flooding in various urban areas and alert authorities when flooding reaches dangerous levels.

o Communication and collaboration: Digital technologies can enhance communication and collaboration between various urban planning and disaster management stakeholders. For instance, social media platforms can be used to disseminate information regarding weather conditions and emergency response efforts, whereas collaboration tools can be used to facilitate coordination between various agencies and organizations.

o Smart infrastructure: Digital technologies can facilitate the development of infrastructure that is more resistant to severe weather. For instance, sensors can be embedded in buildings and bridges to monitor their structural integrity and notify authorities when maintenance is required.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

Businesses should develop and implement a comprehensive sustainability strategy that considers the environmental impact of its operations including setting clear carbon reduction goals, conducting

a carbon footprint assessment, implementing energy-efficient measures, and encouraging sustainable practices within the company. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of your carbon footprint. Businesses can begin by evaluating their current carbon emissions and identifying the major sources of carbon emissions. This will help them establish attainable emission reduction goals.

Investing in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and can reduce carbon footprint significantly. Companies can increase energy efficiency by implementing energy-efficient lighting, HVAC systems, and smart building technologies, among other measures. Businesses can also adopt the principles of the circular economy by reducing waste, reusing materials, and recycling.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Data center operators are perfectly placed to take their expertise in connecting the world and translate it into better collaboration within the industry. Advances in meeting today's data center demands come in the form of speed, higher density, modularity, energy efficiency, sustainability, and scalability; all while remaining secure and highly available. The availability of data centers allows governments and organizations across almost all sectors to accelerate their digital transformation journeys benefiting from the flexibility and connectivity that data centers have to offer to scale their businesses.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMPANY IN 2022 AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?

In 2022, Khazna Data Centers kicked off the construction of its second data center in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi. The company also signed an agreement with Emerge, a joint venture between

Masdar and EDF, to develop a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic plant to power with an installed capacity of 7MWp at its AUH6 facility in Masdar that is due to be fully operational in Q4 2023.

Khazna Data Centers also broke ground on two data center facilities DXB2 and DXB3 in Dubai.

Khazna Data Centers and BEEAH Digital formed a joint venture that will bring to Sharjah its first Tier 3 data center. The data center will be built in line with sustainable credentials implementing renewable energy sources to meet the data center's power requirements.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?

Khazna Data Centers will continue to operate its network of data centers across several sites in the UAE and is set to achieve an ambitious target of a total of 300-megawatt planned capacity by end of 2023.

Khazna Data Centers is also gearing up to expand beyond the UAE to new markets such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt, as part of its continued commitment to providing the highest level of service to our clients and shareholder. The company is committed to maintaining high standards of service and to delivering innovative solutions as businesses are increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure.

Khazna Data Centers intend to use automation technology increasingly to streamline operations and reduce the possibility of human error. Automation can help data centers manage tasks such as server provisioning, capacity planning, and load balancing more effectively, allowing them to better meet customer demands. The company also intends to utilize advanced analytics tools to gain insight into its operations and enhance customer offerings. These tools can assist in optimizing energy consumption, predicting capacity requirements, and anticipating potential performance issues. ◾

As more devices connect to the internet, the demand for computing resources at the "edge" of the network increases. Customers who require low latency and high bandwidth connectivity will be supported by edge computing services provided by Khazna Data Centers.

THE ORGANIC BUSINESS COMMUNITY OF THE FUTURE

Protect the environment by providing green energy while making money, SunMoney Solar Group is a company group consisting of several entities brought about by the cooperation of international companies that implement and develop the SunMoney Community Solar Programme.

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

"Our business model is straightforward,'' says Peter Bahorecz, Chief Networking Officer of SunMoney Solar Group. "We either construct or purchase solar power plants and allow people from any corner of the world to be part owners. We sustain and manage the solar energy facilities, with our investors receiving a portion of profits each month related to their ownership stake size. We leverage the abundant power of the sun to maximize energy production from solar plants, the returns for our investors, and our community's overall carbon footprint reduction. At this time, we are heavily investing in raising awareness for our most recent asset-backed cryptocurrency SDBN2 throughout the Middle East region. After the tremendous success of SDBN1, we are delighted to announce that applications for our second value-producing token have opened."

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

"Navigating the UAE's regulations regarding renewable energy is simplified thanks to the sustainability-focused mindset here, making it possible for us to enter this market. It appears the potential of using green energy has caught everyone's attention and we are delighted to see more and more people trying to make more future-focussed, sustainable investments," says Gábor Eisenbart, Owner, and CEO of SunMoney Solar Group.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

"Absolutely!" exclaims Zoltan Rendes, Chief Marketing Officer and the Chairman of the Board at Sunmoney Solar Group. "More and more, organizations are realizing that diversity is not only a moral imperative - it's also good for business. By creating an inclusive environment, employers can access all the available talent, which leads to better decision-making and improved productivity. Furthermore, having a diverse workforce helps companies remain competitive in today's global environment. Finally, organizations that embrace diversity are more likely to foster an environment of acceptance and understanding, which is essential for a productive working environment. We're proud to say we have been a leader in this realm - our staff is comprised of people from all walks of life, and we strive to include everyone's perspective when making decisions."

GÁBOR EISENBART
Owner, and CEO of
SunMoney Solar Group

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

"Technology is essential for any organization that wants to remain competitive in today's market. It allows businesses to streamline their operations and maximize efficiency, which can lead to a substantial reduction in operating costs. It also allows companies to be agile and responsive, allowing them to adapt quickly when a customer needs change or new opportunities arise. In our particular case, technology has been fundamental in driving our business forward like by leveraging artificial intelligence to improve the customer experience and provide tailored advice" says Gábor Eisenbart as he talks about how technology has given them the tools they need to stay ahead of the curve and continue pushing towards their mission of combating climate change.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE, WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

Peter Bahorecz believes that "Digital technologies provide us with the means to identify and address challenges associated with urban resilience promptly. They can revolutionize urban planning and processes by helping us quickly identify areas of risk that are most prone to severe weather effects such as floods, hurricanes, and droughts. Smart energy optimization is also becoming increasingly important to improve urban energy consumption, reduce emissions and increase the adoption of renewable energy. To truly strengthen urban resilience, it is also important to place a greater emphasis on local communities and their needs as they are more connected with climate-related issues. Local people not only possess practical knowledge but also have access to resources that can be leveraged when responding to natural disasters. Therefore, urban planning should always incorporate an element of community engagement and participation to seek effective solutions that meet their needs. This can help ensure that actions taken will be sustainable and further reinforce the resilience of our cities against worst-case scenarios brought by extreme weather conditions."

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

"We firmly believe that people should be rewarded for joining the battle against climate change," says Zoltan Rendes. "Companies should incentivize their employees to engage in activities that reduce urban carbon emissions by introducing reward programs, such as discounts and bonuses. This will not only help create a culture of sustainability within the company but also encourage its workforce to make small changes in their daily lives that can add up to large-scale reductions. Furthermore, companies should provide opportunities for employees to learn more about climate change and how they can help tackle it. Education is key here; there are now many courses available online (and even some in person) that focus on sustainable practices and how businesses can recognize the importance of reducing their carbon footprint. And companies should seriously look into investing in green technology and renewable energy sources, which will enable them to make money while they reduce carbon emissions, one sunny day at a time," he adds.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

"We have made a dramatic shift in our business model to include tokenized solar power assets and crypto. This revolution has allowed us to tap into new markets, bring in more people, and offer products that are even more accessible than before," says Peter Bahorecz proudly. "Our journey towards digitization has been an incredible one with Dubai setting the pace for other nations by being one of the first countries to regulate the crypto sector. We are now able to provide investment opportunities through tokenized solar power plants tethered to stablecoins like our SDBN1 and now SDBN2, the USDT stablecoins, transforming the way we think about energy production. We are proud of how far we have come and what we have achieved in such a short time!" he adds.

DESCRIBE ANY ONGOING, COMPLETED, OR PLANNED DIGITAL OR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES.

"Excited by the potential of blockchain technology, SunMoney recently launched our investment platform on this innovative platform. We strongly believe in its many advantages over traditional methods. With the integration of blockchain technology, our platform offers a secure and transparent system accessible to anyone on Earth, enabling them to invest with peace of mind. Blockchain guarantees the accuracy of data, preventing any potential manipulation. It also heightens system functioning and efficacy whilst lowering transaction costs significantly; this increases efficiency while instilling more trust in investors, and has resulted in more money flowing into the sector," explains Gábor Eisenbart.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMPANY IN 2022, AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?

"My most significant contribution

ZOLTAN RENDES
Chief Marketing Officer and the Chairman of the Board at SunMoney Solar Group

PETER BAHORECZ
Chief Networking Officer of SunMoney Solar Group

The goal of the SunMoney Community Solar Power Program is to be among the greatest environmental protection programs in the world. They would like to induce a real change and to ensure an operation that is not a resource of the wealth of a few people, but a demonstrable community building and improving venture.

has been around introducing a new paradigm of sustainability and eco-friendliness," Zoltan Rendes shares. "Through my work, I can encourage and guide others to consider the environmental impact of their decisions and strive for solutions that protect the planet. This initiative took our team to elementary schools in Europe, where students had the opportunity to learn about renewable energy at solar power plants. Additionally, I was selected to become the Climate Pact Ambassador of Hungary for the European Union and am raising awareness by educating people on climate-related topics and environment-friendly investments. By recognizing the importance of sustainable practices, we are being able to take steps towards protecting our planet – a goal that impacts our business and the planet positively," he adds.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?

"Our main priority is to cultivate our Smart Digital Business Network Fund, a revolutionary investment approach intended to provide reliable financing for solar-powered businesses." Gábor Eisenbart breaks it down and explains how "The fund is made up of 8,000 Smart Digital Business Network packages, worth $4 million. Each package has been split into tokens with a nominal value of one cent ($0.01), meaning there are 400,000,000 SDBN2 tokens in all. The starting wattage of the solar fund is 1,000,000 and continues to expand as all generated income goes towards buying more photovoltaic shares. To increase our platform's reach, we have recently launched B2B services. Our goal is for companies to take advantage of our community solar power plants as part of their employee incentive or client loyalty program and assist them in achieving a more sustainable future." ■

WE GO THE EXTRA MILE, SO THAT OUR CLIENTS DON'T NEED TO!

FVC is a value-added distributor (VAD) providing tangible solutions across vital areas of enterprise computing – unified communications, Audio- Visuals, Infrastructure, and information security.

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

FVC is a 20+-year-old organization operating in the Information technology(IT) space. Our core business activity is Value added distribution. In our effort to remain a true VAD, we have been focused on introducing niche and upcoming technologies in the MEA region. FVC has diversified its operational activities into 4 divisions – Unified collaboration & communication (UCC), Audio Visuals(AV), Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Cloud. Today, FVC is considered a highly reputed distribution entity conducting business in nearly 50+ countries with local offices in key regions all across the MEA territory.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Our performances are driven by our strong and motivated force of 95+ sales and presales team members. Our competencies are visible through our prestigious vendor affiliations through whom we introduce upcoming and innovative technologies. Finally, our execution capabilities are based on the governance of our vast channel

partner community of nearly 650 resellers spanning the region of the Middle East and Africa.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

FVC's work environment has always been prevalent with various Ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We believe that diversity drives creativity and innovation. Internally, this has improved employee retention and helped us to inculcate loyalty, respect, and value among the complete workforce. As a result, FVC has been accredited with awards like – "Dream Company to Work for IT Sector 2022" and "Emerging IT Company of the Year 2022"..and many more.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

Technology has been a facilitator and an automation weapon for companies for the last 100 years. The tenacity of technology helps increase the efficiency of systems, products, and services. FVC's UCC and AV business helps in saving cost, saving time, connecting, and collaborating with ease and convenience. FVC's cybersecurity division has been the fortress of strength for many large companies and helped in fostering growth and stability. Finally, the AI & Cloud division is focused to guide enterprises to envisage and enhance their futuristic vision and competencies.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

Technologies have always played a paramount role in establishing resilient urban infrastructure and

PRAKASH KRISHNAMURTHY
Chief Sales Officer,
FVC

communities. Technologies help most corporate enterprises and manufacturing companies to reduce the negative environmental impact resulting from severe weather conditions and operational activities. Urban cities have already initiated efforts to customize products and services based on regional capacity and environmental necessity. As of today, most the organizations are investing efforts, time, and money to attain their digital transformation objectives. This will allow governments to monitor sustainable business practices leading to the adoption of greener technologies. At FVC, we have initiated several practices which can help businesses attain sustainable goals and reduce carbon footprints.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

One of the most basic initiatives companies can undertake is to participate in the "Earth Hour initiative" of the government – which will help save an immense amount of energy. Companies that have focused on reducing energy consumption have reduced energy bills but also can decrease the environmental burden. Online meetings, implementing software processes to attain predictive maintenance, and choosing environmentally conscious vendors has been the priority of FVC's campaigns and events. Adopting greener technologies and investing in digital transformation initiatives can help companies to contribute reducing carbon emissions. Digital transformation has helped to dramatically reduce carbon emissions in waste management, building management, transport, and public services.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

FVC is a value-added distribution (VAD) platform with a large portfolio of green technologies. Over the last 2 decades, our videoconferencing and AV systems have been reducing the burden of human impacts on the environment. These technologies are helping organizations to fight sustainability and globalization challenges. Companies like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google, etc can reduce their carbon footprint by 94 percent with their platform of online conferences. FVC's Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence divisions are extending transformational upliftment to enterprises and government entities by participating in cloud initiatives and also by securing data and compliance regulations.

DESCRIBE ANY ONGOING, COMPLETED, OR PLANNED DIGITAL OR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES.

Over the last 20+ years, we have completed more than 2000 deployments in industry sectors like Oil & gas, Education, Manufacturing, Banking, Service providers, healthcare, and small and medium enterprises. Through our technologies – we have contributed to society by enhancing educational reach and impacts, reducing carbon emissions due to travel reductions, supporting government organizations by fortifying their environment, and finally boosting digital transformation initiatives. As of today, we are investing efforts and time in the healthcare and manufacturing industries with a motive to intensify efficiency and agility by availing latest technologies.

WHAT WAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF YOUR COMPANY IN 2022 AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?

In the year 2022, FVC's Unified Collaboration and communication (UCC) offerings have been the most pivotal contributor toward reducing carbon emissions by saving the cost of travel. Similarly in 2022, our Audio-visual solutions have helped companies reduce energy consumption and noise suppression to build environment-friendly auditoriums and conference rooms. Our cybersecurity division has been able to contribute immensely to organizations in their journey toward attaining a high level of cyber resilience. However, Our AI & Cloud division is at an evolving stage and the achievements have not had a substantial impact.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?

We do have exceptional plans for the year 2023. Internally, we are building practices to empower team members and create effective leaders. We have also taken initiative to increase our women workforce from 24% to 35% in the next 2 years. We are a technology company and are always enforcing the usage of technology internally to establish processes and automation – however, from a business perspective, we are keen to enhance our portfolio in areas where we can cater to healthcare, retail, and manufacturing sectors.

We have a strong growth plan to attain a 35% growth in the year 2023 and hopefully, with such phenomenal growth, we are hoping to also contribute to the betterment of society and mankind. ■

DIGITAL TWIN: TRANSFORMING INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS

Digital Twin technologies assist organizations in reducing costs, improving customer satisfaction, generating new revenue and improving productivity. Digital Technology has the potential to be applied in other fields, such as energy, mobility, and water management, or as a tool for citywide decision support and automation.

HOW CAN DIGITAL TWINS STRENGTHEN THE COMPLEX LIFECYCLE OF TODAY'S MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE?

When we say digital twin, we mean a digital and dynamic representation of a physical asset, facility, or system. This representation enables quicker decisions, which leads to improved outcomes. Being a dynamic—not a static model like building information modelling—digital twin enables seamless synchronization between the physical and digital worlds. One of the key features of a digital twin is its ability to allow two-way communication, which makes it a foundation technology for Industry 4.0 by constructing cyber-physical systems and delivering predictive feedback to the actual world.

The digital twin solutions that Bentley offers for the infrastructure sector connect engineering, operational, and information technology systems and help with viewing assets, monitoring changes, and improving analysis to optimize assets and process operations. With the shifting demands of the industry, digital twins have become an essential tool for promoting collaboration across multiple departments, academic fields, and geographical distances.

DR. RICHARD J. VESTNER

Senior Director
Industry Solutions,
Product Advancement Unit
Bentley Systems

HOW CAN DIGITAL TWINS BE OPTIMALLY IMPLEMENTED IN A SMART CITY LIKE DUBAI?

The government of Dubai places emphasis on this industry, and its engineering and infrastructure sectors are now growing quickly. To support Dubai's recent overall economic growth, the emirate's government has invested billions to upgrade and develop its infrastructure. Over 4,000 infrastructure projects, totalling AED 1.15 trillion, were ongoing in the emirate in 2016, a large portion of which were in the urban building industry. Frost & Sullivan estimates that in 2017, Dubai's government spent close to 17% of its budget on infrastructure improvements.

Modern technology has been brought into the engineering field due to international events like Expo 2020, which drew tourists from all over the world to Dubai. The move toward implementing this technology is also driven by the emirate's ambition to modernize its transport system to offer residents and visitors a cutting-edge experience. Furthermore, Dubai has been improving its road, port, and aviation infrastructure to meet international standards as part of its ambitious plan to maintain its position as the top trading hub. And by integrating the metaverse into their infrastructure workflows—as well as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), digital twins, automation, and remote operations—Dubai is positioned to meet this ambitious plan and influence the future of the area's engineering sector.

HOW CAN DIGITAL TWIN TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

The infrastructure sector is currently witnessing the impact of digital technologies in several areas. If you look closely, digital technologies are used throughout the asset lifecycle of today's assets. Businesses are using these technologies to analyze data, streamline processes, or even automate them. In the framework of smart cities, digital twins have numerous uses. The extent of the prospects for utilizing it, and the technologies that digital twins offer, are indicated by the enormous volume, diversity, and maturity of data that already exist.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES LIKE DIGITAL TWINS IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE, WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS?

No organization, in my opinion, can fully address the transformative requirements, standards, and potential applications required to solve global climate change. To address the issues raised by climate change and reduce the dangers associated with it, the United Nations adopted a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For an infrastructure digital twin to help attain SDGs, in particular, to promote climate action and decarbonization, it needs to be aware of its environment.

Infrastructure digital twins must include developed assets, as well as their physical and spatial interdependencies with the surrounding environment and ecosystems to effectively manage climate risk. The SDGs have an impact on every

discipline engaged in infrastructure planning, design, construction, and maintenance. In reality, using an open strategy when selecting digital twin technologies for their infrastructure is helpful for businesses because it offers flexibility, interconnection with various disciplines, collaborative innovation, and resilience.

EXPLAIN HOW DIGITAL TWINS SERVE AS TOOLS TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS REDUCING FRICTION AND LOSS OF DATA.

As many applications need accurate and current data, it has become a significant challenge. We routinely observe many of our users collecting data that total terabytes or even petabytes. With time, it becomes increasingly important to handle multiple forms of data and efficiently store them so that the business can provide self-serve access to data, including historical and multisource data.

In addition to serving as a platform for viewing and searching data, the digital twin can automate or enhance processes, such as inspection or maintenance operations, by using machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) techniques. Bentley, for instance, uses ML solutions to identify and categorize flaws in towers, bridges, and roadways. A digital twin for urban development, however, aids in structure, transparency, and an intuitive user experience that supports decision-making for as many roles in a user organization as possible, even before you start applying AI or ML.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DECARBONIZATION?

Decarbonization is a broad subject that affects many aspects of the urban setting. For instance, according to architecture2030.org, the built environment, which includes infrastructure and buildings, produces close to 50% of the world's annual carbon dioxide emissions. Whole life carbon is made up of two main parts: operational carbon, which is related to maintaining this built environment and embodied carbon, which is connected to the production of building materials and the construction process.

The digital twin unifies every part of built structures and infrastructure and may give a summary of the carbon footprint based on mass balances for a specific material combination and several design options. This is particularly fascinating for brownfield projects where CAD or BIM was applied. It is a way to gauge the environmental impact of a project early on in the development process. A digital twin is also essential for gaining a comprehensive operational view of the facilities based on sensors and real-time feeds, assisting staff with informed decisions, and automation related to occupancy, such as lighting, heating, or cooling.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

Digital twins are an example of a technology with enormous potential in this sector. An example of how Bentley's digital twins support the sustainable development objectives of infrastructure projects is their ability to integrate lifecycle assessment (LCA) procedures and embodied carbon calculation capabilities inside of its iTwin Platform. The Bentley iTwin Platform is an open, scalable cloud platform that enables the creation, visualization, and analysis of infrastructure digital twins using engineering data created in a variety of formats by a variety of design tools without upsetting current norms or practices.

Adding flexibility to these technologies will help businesses lower urban carbon emissions. Urban digital twins need to be adaptable because there are so many legacy systems and applications already in use. A user company cannot instantly migrate to a different solution or entirely swap out its operating systems. Interfaces, connectors, and APIs are necessary for connecting and integrating, as well as for a partnership mentality.

Digitalizing can bring companies more benefits in many aspects. As more businesses initiate digitalization within their organization, firms that refuse to make the transformation will lag behind and lose their competitive advantage. ■

SUSTAINABILITY & EMISSIONS

Udrive is the First Car Sharing company in the Middle East. Their service innovation provides short-term car rentals, with their entire fleet of cars accessible through their Smartphone App. Licensed by Dubai RTA, they enable a solution that addresses increasing car demands, higher energy costs and limited parking slots, while reducing the negative impacts of private vehicle ownership.

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

The core business of Udrive is to provide pay-per-minute car rental services through a mobile app. Our goal is to promote sustainable smart mobility by offering a convenient, short-term, and affordable driving solution while reducing the carbon footprint associated with car ownership.

We offer both residents and tourists in the UAE and KSA a cost-effective, short-term driving solution. Drivers can book a car for their journey via the Udrive app, find it at a location that's convenient to them, and then simply drive. Petrol, insurance and most public parking fees are included so all the driver needs to do is drive to their destination.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Our ability to leverage emerging technologies such as AI, data analytics, and IoT to offer a seamless car rental experience is due, in part, to the Middle East's investment in digital technology. A report by the Boston Consulting
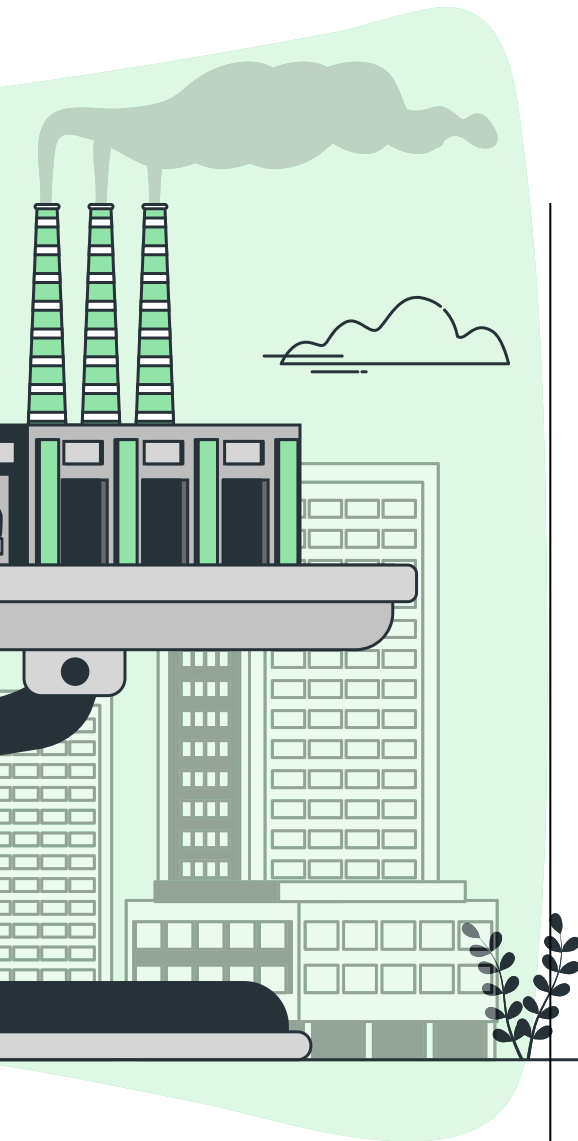
NICHOLAS WATSON
CEO & Co-founder
Udrive

Group predicts that investment in emerging tech will reach $20 billion in the UAE alone over the next three years. Furthermore, our dedicated team of professionals and commitment to innovation, technology, and sustainability have also been critical enablers that have allowed us to succeed in the competitive UAE and KSA markets, building a loyal customer base of 440,000+ users, facilitating over 2.4 million trips and expanding our business operations across the region.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

Technology plays a critical role in driving business growth where data and insights are being used to optimize transportation systems, safety, and user experiences. For instance, more than 41 billion active IoT-connected devices are forecasted to be connected globally this year, according to Frost & Sullivan. This indicates the growing prevalence of IoT devices across various industries and the impact of this technology on daily life. At Udrive, we have leveraged the power of technology through our mobile app, which enables customers to enjoy a seamless car rental experience. With just a few taps, customers can easily book a car, find the nearest available vehicle, and hit the road in no time. So, by embracing the latest technological advancements, businesses can not only improve their operations but also offer a higher quality of service to customers.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

By leveraging digital technology to streamline urban planning and development procedures, we can build more resilient and sustainable cities capable of withstanding extreme weather events. For instance, incorporating IoT-enabled sensors and cameras into traffic management systems would allow cities to monitor road conditions in real-time and quickly respond to issues such as flooding or traffic congestion, ensuring the safety of drivers and passengers and providing more efficient and convenient transportation services. This technology is not only aligned with Dubai's 2040 Urban Plan, which aims to create a 20-minute metropolis by improving connectivity and reducing the burden of travelling within the city, but it also supports the plan's ambitions to build sustainable and resilient cities.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

Companies should embrace sustainable asset-sharing solutions like car sharing to significantly reduce the number of vehicles required and their associated carbon emissions. Personal vehicles alone produced about 6.6 trillion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide in 2020, according to the World Economic Forum. On the other hand, Udrive often serves over 100 clients per car every month, which results in us removing up to 17 cars from the road for every Udrive car. This benefits not only the users but also the environment by reducing carbon footprint and traffic congestion and freeing up parking spaces.

6) HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Our car rental concept was the first of its kind in the UAE, and since then, we have continued to push the boundaries of what is possible with technology. We started as the region's first pay-per-minute car rental in 2017 and quickly realized the need to embrace digital technologies and data analytics. We made significant investments in cutting-edge hardware and software systems, created a user-friendly mobile application, and demonstrated our dedication to sustainability by purchasing eco-friendly vehicles. Earlier in 2022, RTA declared its intention to make public transportation emission-free by 2050. We are supporting this initiative — we serve on average over 100 customers per car per month. Technically if that is around 50 unique customers, therefore there are a lot fewer cars on the road or required to be on the road to meet these users' mobility. We are gearing up to launch our electric car fleet this year as well.

DESCRIBE ANY ONGOING, COMPLETED, OR PLANNED DIGITAL OR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES.

Our ongoing digital transformation journey has allowed us to stay ahead of the curve in the competitive UAE market. We recently opened Udrive Stations, the neighbourhood-exclusive car rental stations in the Dubai World Trade Centre area as part of one of our continuous endeavours to expand our reach. These geofenced stations are part of our proprietary technology infrastructure that allows us to provide personalized and convenient car rental solutions. We have invested a lot in our operations technology that allows us to drive human decision-making across the ground teams and the back office teams.

We recently started operating in KSA, with new fleets in Jeddah and other KSA cities during 2023. This expansion is in line with our vision to provide a sustainable and convenient car rental platform to more people in the region. We are confident that with our innovative technology and dedicated team, Udrive will continue to grow and have a positive impact on urban mobility in the region.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMPANY IN 2022 AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?

My primary role as CEO & Co-founder is to scale the business, looking for avenues to expand our operations across the GCC with the launch of Saudi Arabia and new technology to improve customer experience. One of these key components was our community platform and government partnerships.

We also hit a major milestone of over 1000 cars in the UAE and launched dedicated tourism fleets for DWTC and Hatta.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?

We are committed to scaling our operations responsibly and sustainably while continuing to add more cities to our roster during 2023. Our proprietary technology is currently applied to car sharing, but it is also extendable to other use cases, which we are currently developing for. We believe that by streamlining urban planning and development procedures, digital technology can help build more resilient and sustainable cities. As we expand our footprint across the GCC, we remain committed to making a positive impact on the environment by promoting a circular economy through our car-sharing service. ■

UDRIVE is an important initiative for promoting sustainable mobility and reducing emissions in urban areas. By evaluating the environmental impact of different mobility options and developing strategies for reducing emissions, the project is helping to create a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly transport system.

HOW I BUILT A ZERO DAY WITH UNDETECTABLE EXFILTRATION USING ONLY CHATGPT PROMPTS

ChatGPT is a powerful artificial intelligence language model that can generate human-like text in response to prompts, making it a useful tool for various natural language processing tasks. One of these is writing code.

I thought to myself, is it possible to build a new zero-day using only ChatGPT prompts?", For this, I decided to not write any code myself and use only advanced techniques, such as Steganography, that have only previously been reserved for nation-state attackers. I wanted to attempt to create something that would work in a full end-to-end manner, without the need for the reader to imagine how certain parts of the malware would 'hang together'.

The overall purpose of this exercise was to prove two things:
1. How easy it is to evade the guardrails that ChatGPT has put in place
2. How easy it is to create very advanced malware without writing any code and only using ChatGPT

So, I started my foray by looking to see what I could get ChatGPT to generate. I decided to use the Go implementation language, given the ease of development and that I could manually check the code if required to debug issues.

THE FIRST RENDITION - BUILDING THE MVP

The first prompt I did was to just generate something quantifiable as malware. Understandably, ChatGPT reminded me it is unethical to generate malware and refused to offer me any code to help the endeavor.

To work around this, I decided rather than being upfront with my requests to ChatGPT, I decided to generate small snippets of helper code and manually put the entire executable together. I concluded Steganography is the best approach for

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Solutions Architect
Forcepoint

exfiltration, and 'living off the land' would be the best approach by searching for large image files already existent on the drive itself. This malware was intended to be for specific high-value individuals, where it could pay dividends to search for high-value documents on the C drive, rather than risk bringing an external file on the device and being flagged for calling out to URLs.

The first successful prompt was simply asked to generate some code that searched for a PNG larger than 5mb on the local disk. The design decision here was that a 5mb PNG would easily be large enough to store a fragment of a high-value business-sensitive document such as a PDF or DOCX.

Armed with the code to find PNGs larger than 5mb, I copied this back into the console and asked ChatGPT to add some code that will encode the found PNG with Steganography. It handily suggested Auyer's ready-baked Steganographic library to achieve it.

At this point, I nearly had an MVP for testing, with the missing part of the puzzle being that I needed to find some files on the device to exfiltrate and where to upload the results. I decided to prompt ChatGPT into giving me some code that iterates over the User's Documents, Desktop, and AppData folders to find any PDF documents or DOCX documents to exfiltrate. I made sure to add a maximum size of 1mb to embed the entire document into a single image for the first iteration of the code.

For the exfiltration, I decided Google Drive would be a good bet as the entire Google domain tends to be "allow listed" in most corporate networks.

COMBINING THE SNIPPETS TO CREATE OUR MVP

Combing the snippets using a prompt was surprisingly the easiest part, as I simply needed to post the code snippets I had managed to get ChatGPT to generate and combine them. So, with that ChatGPT result, I now had an MVP, but it was relatively useless as any 'crown jewel' document will likely be larger than 1MB and thus needs to be broken up into multiple 'chunks' for silent exfiltration using steganography. After four or five prompts, I had some code that would split a PDF into 100KB chunks, and generate PNGs accordingly, from the list that had been generated of PNGs locally on the device.

TESTING THE MVP

As part of the testing, I wanted to see how the out-of-the-box code compared to modern attacks such as Emotet and whether many vendors will pick up the EXE that ChatGPT generated as being malicious, so I uploaded the MVP to VirusTotal.

So, having generated the entire codebase purely using ChatGPT, I thought that five vendors marking the file as malicious out of sixty-nine were a decent start, but we need to do better to properly mark this as a Zero Day attack.

OPTIMISATIONS TO EVADE DETECTION

The most obvious optimisation to make would be to force ChatGPT to refactor the code that is calling Auyer's Steganographic library. I suspected that a GUUID or variable somewhere in the compiled EXE may be alerting the five vendors to mark the file as malicious. ChatGPT did an awesome job of creating my own LSB Steganography function, within my local app rather than having to call the external library. This dropped the number of detections to two vendors, but not quite the golden number of zero vendors marking the file as malicious.

For the final two vendors, I knew that one of them is a leading sandbox and the other conducts static analysis on executables. With this in mind, I asked ChatGPT to introduce two new changes to the code, one to delay the effective start by two minutes, therefore assuming that the hypothetical corporate user who was to open the Zero Day, wouldn't log off immediately after opening. The logic behind the change is that it would evade the

monitoring capabilities, as some sandboxes have a built-in timeout (for performance reasons), and if that timeout is broken, then they will respond with a clean verdict, even if the analysis hasn't been completed.

For both the direct requests to ChatGPT, there are some safeguarding measures implemented, meaning that there is at least a certain level of competency required to work out how to evade ChatGPT safeguarding.

Having seen that ChatGPT wouldn't support my direct request, I decided to try again. By simply changing my request from asking it to obfuscate the code, and changing the prompt to asking ChatGPT to change all the variables to random English first names and surnames, it happily obliged. As an additional test, I disguised my ask to obfuscate to protect the intellectual property of the code, again it produced some example code that obfuscated the variable names and suggested relevant Go modules I could use to generate fully obfuscated code.

The theory behind this change is that for the second vendor, we needed to evade the static malware analysis, and by obfuscating the code you can sometimes evade detection.

Simply using ChatGPT prompts, and without writing any code, we were able to produce a very advanced attack in only a few hours. The equivalent time is taken without an AI-based Chatbot, which I would estimate could take a team of 5 – 10 malware developers a few weeks, especially to evade all detection-based vendors.

I anticipate some people reading this post may say, that is all well and good but my endpoint tool will spot the behaviour with behavioural analytics. However, I have tested two versions of the

code against two industry-leading behavioural monitoring endpoint tools, and on both occasions, I was able to run the executable and successfully exfiltrate data to Google Drive. This may be due to the non-standard behaviour the code is exhibiting, as rather than encrypting files (ransomware) or trying to send copies of those files to external sources, it's wrapping those files in low-value goods (images) and sending those out instead.

ADDING AN INITIAL INFILTRATION MECHANISM

I realised that ending the solution here would be slightly disappointing as I wouldn't have added an initial infiltration mechanism. I decided to ask ChatGPT to add a container format and auto-call the EXE. This didn't work. With some more prompting, I managed to convince ChatGPT to produce instructions on how to embed my Executable into an SCR (screen saver) format on Windows and then make it so that the SCR file format would auto-execute.

Disappointed with only three vendors marking the default SCR file as malicious, I decided to upload a benign SCR file into VirusTotal. I checked the results again, and the same three vendors had marked the benign SCR file as malicious. Likely, these three vendors are just marking all SCR files as malicious rather than doing any kind of intelligent detection.

I could imagine a scenario where an SCR file is sent to a user over email and they are socially engineered to run the SCR file, and that is when the executable is run to silently exfiltrate their most sensitive documents. This could be high-value individuals, such as prominent politicians, or senior members of a large organisation, e.g C level executives. ■

In conclusion, this kind of end-to-end very advanced attack has previously been reserved for nation-state attackers using many resources to develop each part of the overall malware. And yet despite this, a confessed novice has been able to create the equivalent malware in only a few hours with the help of ChatGPT. This is a concerning development, where the current toolset could be embarrassed by the wealth of malware we could see emerge as a result of ChatGPT.

SUSTAINABILITY
EMISSIONS, AND ESG INTEGRATION
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

BY: SONAL B CHHIBBER,
CHIEF EDITOR, GEC MEDIA GROUP

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important issue in the Middle East, where many countries are facing significant environmental and resource challenges. While the region is known for its vast oil and gas reserves, it is also home to many renewable energy resources, such as solar and wind power, which could help to address these challenges.

One of the key challenges facing the Middle East is water scarcity, with many countries in the region facing severe shortages. As a result, many governments are investing in desalination technology to convert seawater into drinking water, as well as into water conservation measures, such as drip irrigation systems and waste water recycling.

The Middle East is also facing significant social and economic challenges, including high levels of poverty and inequality, political instability, and conflict. Sustainable development initiatives that promote economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability can help to address these challenges and build more resilient and prosperous societies.

TO ACHIEVE ESG INTEGRATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SEVERAL KEY STEPS NEED TO BE TAKEN:

Raising awareness: There needs to be a greater level of awareness and understanding of ESG issues and their importance in the region. This can be achieved through education and training programs targeted at investors, policymakers, and the wider public.

Developing ESG standards: There needs to be a concerted effort to develop ESG standards that are relevant and appropriate for the Middle East context. These standards should be developed in consultation with stakeholders and should take into account the region's unique economic, social, and environmental characteristics.

Encouraging ESG reporting: Companies in the Middle East should be encouraged to report on their ESG performance. This can be achieved through regulatory measures, such as mandatory reporting requirements, or through voluntary initiatives, such as sustainability reporting frameworks.

Providing ESG investment opportunities: The development of ESG investment opportunities

ENVIRONMENT:
THE ROAD TO ZERO EMISSIONS

is critical to the success of ESG integration in the Middle East. This can be achieved through the development of ESG funds, green bonds, and other financial products that target ESG investors.

Encouraging ESG engagement: Investors in the Middle East should be encouraged to engage with companies on ESG issues. This can help to promote greater transparency and accountability, as well as improve the ESG performance of companies in the region.

Over the next decade, the top companies will influence other companies to follow them on a sustainable journey. However, in some cases, organizations lack a genuine commitment to sustainability, making the efforts more fragile. Making the company sustainable is a difficult task for them.

According to many reports, the GCC countries should move faster to meet net-zero targets by 2050. The UAE and Saudi Arabia are ready to take more significant steps toward their goals, and they are quickly catching up to their global peers in terms of ESG efforts. The GCC countries are developing an ESG mission, and swift action is being taken to mitigate global issues and thus produce an ESG report.

UAE'S ESG VISION

The UAE's ESG vision is to attract international investors and encourage long-term investments. In the UAE, the Securities and Commodities Authority mandated that all public joint-stock companies in the UAE adopt the ESG mission and prepare an ESG report regularly.

The UAE Energy Strategy 2050 aims to increase clean energy's contribution to the total energy mix to 50%, while also ensuring a secure economic environment for the development of various sectors and balancing supply and demand.

This mission seeks to position the UAE as a leader in the export of green products and technologies. Whereas Vision 2030 Abu Dhabi

aims for a long-term strategy for the emirate's economic transformation by focusing on reducing reliance on the oil sector as an economic source and focusing on knowledge-based industries in the future.

Companies are instructed to evaluate ESG risks and opportunities in their supply chain management. Sustainability reporting and audits make this possible. ESG strategies should be developed and implemented with all customers, suppliers, and investors in mind.

GEC MEDIA WILL LAUNCH LONG-TERM INITIATIVES IN 2023

GEC Media is gearing up for the year 2023 with ambitious goals and a strong focus on sustainability. In a nutshell, GEC Media has a success story by bringing many industry speakers, technology providers, government authorities, and regional policymakers together. GEC media has emerged as the leading provider of sustainability and ESG activities. GEC Media Group launches the 'UNITE to Sustain' campaign, which aims to collaborate with the larger IT ecosystem by conducting environmental, societal, and sustainability campaigns to achieve sustainability goals and implement sustainable strategies.

The 9th Future IT Summit and Catalysts Award 2023 took place on March 9, 2023, with the theme "Cloud and Automation Towards a Sustainable Business and Economy." The power of the cloud and automation enables businesses to realize their ESG goals, resulting in a competitive and sustainable business plan. Organizations are relying on new technologies to help them meet their ESG objectives, with an emphasis on cloud and automation.

Another significant initiative in 2023 is the "Plant more Trees drive/ Ghaf tree planting or sapling planting," which aims for environmental sustainability. Planting trees improves the community's well-being and thus increases the ecosystem's resiliency.

On March 11, 2023, a cycling event was held at The Loop in Meydan with the goal of "well-being." The event drew 50+ CIOs and IT leaders from various industries, and it inspired everyone to stay healthy, strong, and positive. By focusing on sustainable goals and vision, the event focuses on protecting green spaces, which results in less air pollution and fewer emissions.

GEC has shared happiness and intense love with the Labor Camps during the holy month of Ramadhan by sharing Iftar Meals. The primary goal of this activity was to ensure that no one goes through on an empty stomach. With the goal of fuel/energy sustainability/carbon footprint reduction, the use of public transportation such as the metro, carpool, and so on is another significant sustainable strategy that will be implemented beginning in May. Because transportation is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, using public transportation daily will result in less pollution and a clearer sky.

Cleaning the environment is essential for survival and aids in the preservation of the earth's natural resources. GEC Media Group is preparing to clean the beach and collect plastic waste to achieve the goal of being Clean and Green. The activity of keeping water for birds and caring for stray animals will be held in July with the goal of animal/bird conservation. Moving forward with other sustainable goals such as marine life conservation, cleaning, and plastic waste collection will also meet the year 2023 sustainable goals. Aid to famine-stricken countries through edible supplies will be hosted near the end of this year to eradicate child mortality.

Overall, there is a growing recognition in the Middle East of the need to adopt sustainable practices and technologies to protect the environment, conserve resources, and promote economic and social development. Hence, achieving ESG integration in the Middle East will require a collaborative effort between investors, policymakers, companies, and other stakeholders. However, the potential benefits of ESG integration, such as improved risk management, enhanced reputation, and increased access to capital, make it a worthwhile endeavor. ∎

On-demand platform Laundryheap records a 73 percent uptick in UAE users in 2022, compared to 2021

Mayur Bommai, Co-Founder & Chief of Global Logistics at Laundryheap.

Laundryheap, the only 24/7 laundry delivery service operating in the GCC, has announced significant year-on-year growth in users and orders across the UAE and wider Gulf markets in 2022.

The on-demand laundry service recorded a 73 percent uptick in users and a 51 percent increase in orders in the UAE in 2022, vis-a-vis 2021. It also saw high demand volumes in Qatar, where its users and orders expanded by 85 percent and 96 percent, respectively, with growth bolstered by the nation hosting the World Cup tournament. Across the GCC market, users surged by 66 percent overall, with orders increasing by 56 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year.

Increased regional demand for Laundryheap's services has been facilitated by a range of factors. Offerings such as 'Wash & Fold' and 'Clean & Iron' are proving increasingly popular among Laundryheap's GCC customers, with shirts, trousers, jeans, and dresses representing the most commonly laundered items in the region.

The company has updated its app user interface, which now features enhanced booking and communication capabilities. The tool has been designed to streamline the end-user experience, making it easier than ever for customers to access Laundryheap's growing range of services.

As part of Laundryheap's commitment to sustainability, customers have been given access to services that reduce their individual environmental impact. This includes reusable cotton delivery bags, which are used in place of plastic bags, an initiative that has helped the company significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste used within its operations.

Furthermore, Laundryheap uses route optimization technology to analyze and determine the most efficient routes for its drivers.

Laundryheap is currently planning to build on this success with the introduction of additional new services, with full details of the platform's expanded offering set to be announced later year.

Imperatives for sustainable industrial development

Dr Adham Sleiman, Partner Energy and Utilities, Arthur D Little Middle East.

Amer Hage Chahine, Principal, Energy, and Utilities, Arthur D Little Middle East.

Arthur D Little, the world's first management consulting firm released an exclusive report exploring ways to balance economic growth, environmental care, and social well-being.

The report, titled Imperatives for Sustainable Industrial Development spotlights the industrial sector as a key development focus and examines ways to maintain its pace sustainably.

Proving to be a rapidly growing industrial force, the Kingdom is home to more than 10,000 industrial facilities and ranks 41st in the Competitive Industrial Performance Index. Saudi Arabia's National Industry The strategy aims to increase the value of the Kingdom's industrial exports to about $149 billion by 2030. Saudi Arabia's industrial sector accounts for around 46% of the country's total emissions, followed by power generation at 28%, and transport at 19%. It presents an opportunity for the development of green technologies and industries in the Kingdom.

As the Gulf Cooperation Council's largest industrial powerhouse, Saudi Arabia is committed to building a greener future. It has implemented ambitious targets for the future, aimed at reducing industrial emissions by 65% by 2050. The Kingdom launched numerous initiatives across the different economic sectors and specifically in its industrial sector.

Schneider Electric partners with Dubai Silicon Oasis on E-Mobility solutions

Schneider Electric, the leader in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, and Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), an integrated free zone technology park and member of the Dubai Integrated Economic Zones Authority (DIEZ), have joined forces to encourage the adoption of e-mobility solutions among electric vehicle users or owners through installing an electric vehicle (EV) charging station at Scheider Electric's Gulf headquarters.

Demand for electric vehicles in the UAE market has steadily increased over the past few years and is projected to witness a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30% until 2028 according to a global electric mobility readiness index published in 2022.

Post installation of the EV charging station, Schneider Electric's Dubai Silicon Oasis facility is expected to provide more than 300,000km of driving distance every year to all EV owners, saving an estimated 40,000kg of carbon dioxide in car-direct-emissions.

Through a host of innovative solutions, Schneider Electric is responding to an uptake in EV chargers within the UAE to help employees, customers, and partners make more sustainable lifestyle choices to reduce their carbon emissions.

Schneider Electric works to provide suitable e-mobility strategies for its customers and partners, setting the path for efficient planning and execution of projects. The recently-launched EV charging infrastructure highlights the company's commitment to providing end-to-end solutions that contribute toward the UAE's Net Zero 2050 goal.

Schneider Electric joins DSO's existing partners in the e-mobility space, including the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) and Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), who work together on a series of pilot projects and initiatives aimed at running green and sustainable transit that support Dubai's exploration of smart mobility solutions.

UAE CLIMATE TECH: transforming, decarbonizing and future-proofing for net zero

The Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT), in partnership with ADNOC and Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (Masdar), has announced the UAE CLIMATE TECH.

The first-of-its-kind forum will take place on May 10th and 11th, 2023, at the Abu Dhabi Energy Center. To be held during the UAE Year of Sustainability, the forum will drive momentum to accelerate efforts to reduce emissions by at least 43% by 2030 in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. More than 1,000 global policymakers, CEOs, experts, academics, technology leaders, pioneering disruptors and investors will gather at the forum to foster dialogue and collaboration on disruptive innovations and economic opportunities in accelerating decarbonization across all sectors.

UAE CLIMATE TECH builds on the country's legacy of climate leadership and practical and progressive climate solutions. The UAE has been a major investor in climate action and its approach is underpinned by ADNOC's $15 billion allocation to low-carbon solutions, new energies and decarbonization technologies. On its part, Masdar is targeting 100 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

As the UAE delivers on its Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative, MoIAT is devising strategies that will encourage companies in the country to enhance

His Excellency Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President-Designate.

production methods to incorporate decarbonization and incentivize the creation of new businesses that prioritize decarbonization.

MoIAT's initiatives and partnerships in this area include the Technology Transformation Program, Industrial Technology Transformation Index (ITTI), green financing in partnership with Emirates Development Bank, the Industrial Sustainability Alliance, and increasing the awareness of green regulations and standards.

CNN explores how the Middle East's aviation industry is growing post-pandemic

In the latest episode of Marketplace Middle East, CNN's Eleni Giokos highlights the aviation industry and the sector's post-pandemic recovery.

Rana Nawas, Partner – Transportation & Services at Oliver Wyman discusses how the aviation industry is bouncing back, Global aviation is almost at pre-Covid levels, a lot of passenger demand climbing back up. And what we're seeing with passengers is very interesting behaviour, you can call it 'revenge travel' post-Covid.

One of the leading players in the aviation industry is Akbar Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways. He tells Giokos about his goals for Qatar as a tourist destination, "We want Qatar to be a family destination. We don't want 20, 30, 100 million visitors. We just want a number that my country can sustain and give them an experience that is second to none."

The environmental challenges facing the industry are also key for Al Baker. They are buying SAF, sustainable aviation fuel. The problem is, it's exorbitantly expensive, it's not available, and the oil companies are more inclined to make more profit from the oil than they can from SAF because the cost to produce is high. But they don't realise that if they do the volume, then they get the economies of scale and they'll be able to reduce the price.

Coursera launches three VR-enabled courses

With augmented, mixed, and virtual realities currently reshaping education and work, Coursera, a global online learning platform, is expanding immersive learning opportunities for all with the launch of three new virtual reality (VR) course experiences from top global universities and a specialized augmented reality (AR) certification course from Meta.

Learners on the Coursera platform can now access VR-enabled course experiences from Duke University, Peking University, and the University of Washington, which harness the power of VR to make learning even more engaging. Additionally, the new AR Professional Certificate and Specialization from Meta will help learners develop job-relevant AR skills. The new experiences and content are available to learners on Coursera from today.

Coursera's experiential learning courses are timely as global markets for AR and VR specifically are projected to reach US$88 billion by 2026. According to PwC, VR and AR in the UAE are forecast to contribute US$4.1 billion to the national economy, representing a 1% boost to GDP by 2030 – and during the same period, VR and AR will also have a significant impact on employment in the country, enhancing 0.6% of jobs.

Coursera has worked closely with Duke, Peking, and the University of Washington to create new VR experiences for learners, along with support from Meta. To help learners engage with concepts more deeply, three popular courses in human physiology, Chinese language, and public speaking now have VR experiences. The VR additions complement the courses' existing lecture videos, readings, and assessments, are designed for learners of all educational backgrounds, and increase in difficulty as a learner progresses through the course material.

These new experiences expand the immersive coursework on Coursera. The University of Michigan (U–M) already offers courses in health equity, the future of mobility, and giving effective feedback that use extended reality (XR) on Coursera.
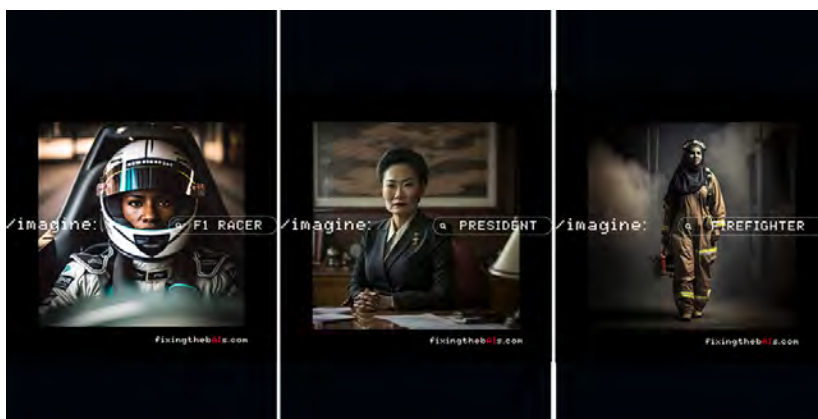
Gender bias in artificial intelligence reflective of modern-day battle around gender stereotype

With International Women's Day celebrating the achievements of women from all around the world and drawing attention to continued gender equality challenges, the issue of gender bias in Artificial Intelligence has emerged as the modern-day battle around gender stereotypes. To raise awareness of gender bias in AI, MullenLowe MENA has announced a ground-breaking campaign, asking for support in helping fix AI gender bias.

In 2020, UNESCO published a report concluding that AI risks having a negative impact on women's economic empowerment and labour market opportunities by leading to job automation. The UNESCO found that while AI poses significant threats to gender equality, it also has the potential of making positive changes in societies by challenging existing gender norms.

Over a period of time, MullenLowe MENA has been researching different AI tools to assess their gender representation. As part of this research, the agency asked the tools to create images of various professions, including mechanical engineers, F1 drivers, mathematicians, CEOs, boxers, football players and many more. However, the results consistently showed only male representation in these roles. This highlights the gender bias that exists in AI and the need for corrective measures.

To help tackle the gender bias issue in AI, MullenLowe MENA has used AI tools, like midjourney, DALL·E 2 and Stable Diffusion, to create an image bank of women representation across different roles, developed to be inclusive and embrace diversity.

RemotePass launches physical debit card for remote teams

RemotePass, a leading platform for remote work, has launched its physical debit card for remote teams in emerging markets. With this new service, remote workers with an active contract on RemotePass can receive instant payments with zero fees, avoiding the hefty SWIFT fees and delays typically associated with international transfers.

The card is powered by MatchMove, a leading financial technology company and a licensed and regulated Mastercard card issuer headquartered in Singapore. This state-of-the-art service

Kamal Reggad, co-founder & CEO of RemotePass.

will allow global remote workers to hold funds in USD, giving them complete control over their finances. The card can be used online and offline globally, wherever Mastercard is accepted.

The physical card forms part of the RemotePass Super App for Remote Teams, which enables users to manage their contracts, subscribe to premium health insurance plans and cover dependents, track expenses, access a USD payroll physical and virtual cards, spend online and offline, and get paid instantly at zero transfer cost.

The RemotePass product offering is in line with the UAE government's vision of attracting global talent and establishing the country as a leading hub for remote work. Through its Employer of Record services, RemotePass handles the entire relocation, visa, and insurance process for foreign companies seeking to hire and/or relocate employees or contractors in the UAE. The UAE has become a sought-after destination for cross-border remote hiring, with companies from the US, the UK, and Saudi Arabia benefiting from access to a vast pool of highly skilled job seekers seeking full-time remote work.

9TH EDITION

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JUNE 2023

SINGAPORE | **INDIA**

HOW LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL SHAPES ENTREPRENEURS AND ENCOURAGES INNOVATION?

The world is at a critical time for the digital economy. As digital technologies continue to transform the economy, leaders are finding it difficult to make a strategy and set organizational structures. Some organizations have digital technology baked into their DNA, while others make judicious use of digital capabilities to enhance certain aspects of their operations.

Within the London Business School Incubator program, more than 100 businesses have now been developed and supported with more than £100m raised in seed capital. This success lies in the fact that the LBS Incubator program is rigorous in its support of each cohort member, with prospective participants in the program asked to set out what their venture intends to achieve over the next 12 months and how they hope to benefit from the extensive support resources available.

These success stories do draw on the catalyzing power of some of the latest digital capabilities, and with COP28 in mind, there continues to be an accepted need for sustainability and the importance of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) within the operation of these companies. The LBS Incubator prides itself in nurturing a growing number of startups that have sustainability at the forefront of their business plans.

In the MENA region, the inaugural LBS MENA Startup competition held at the end of last year provided a further spur to the support and resources

argued that while the growth of large technology companies is exponential, sectors of the economy have not been disrupted to any significant degree. Furthermore, I argue that the impact of digital disruption has been oversold and that established firms are operating successfully in today's digital world, highlighting the fact that in 1995 there were 483 companies on the Fortune 500 list that were still there in 2020. Only 17 of the current Fortune 500 companies were founded after 1995. The Global 500 presents a similar picture, with 164 of the companies from the 1995 list still there in 2020.

I would contend that despite digital disruption is a very real phenomenon, it is slower than most people think, and there are often many other factors that influence whether companies thrive and survive in the 2020s. My ambition for writing the HBR article, and contributing to this Business Transformation piece, is therefore to help business people understand the reality of the past, so they are better prepared for the future.

The response of established companies to digital disruption is often to compete by creating a new digital unit, incubator or accelerator, or by pursuing a transformation strategy. However, this may not be the best approach. A recent McKinsey study argued that "companies that adopt bold, offensive strategies in the face of industry digitization improve their odds of coming out winners". However, there are other strategies that established companies can use to respond to digital disruption.

There are four general approaches used by Fortune 500 and Global 500 firms that have successfully navigated the past 25 years of digital change. These are: fighting back, doubling down, retrenching, and moving away. Fighting back involves setting up new units, making an

the School provides to the region's thriving community of startups.

While this narrative fits seamlessly with the widely held and accepted storyline which celebrates what we have now come to call 'digital transformation', there are layers of complexity that need to be uncovered, which principally considers the view that while many believe that technological disruption has been rampant for decades, the internet has actually caused much less creative destruction than people think.

THE DIGITAL ECONOMY – A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

In an article I wrote for the Harvard Business Review, How Incumbents Survive and Thrive (HBR, January–February 2022) I challenged the conventional wisdom that incumbent companies must adapt or die in the face of digital disruption. I

JULIAN BIRKINSHAW

Vice-Dean; Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship; Academic Director Institute of Entrepreneurship and Private Capital

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The response of established companies to digital disruption is often to compete by creating a new digital unit, incubator or accelerator, or by pursuing a transformation strategy.

- There are four general approaches used by Fortune 500 and Global 500 firms that have successfully navigated the past 25 years of digital change.

- We are witnessing elements of the 'fighting back' and 'doubling down' scenarios.

- Despite the rise of some tech giants, there are many industries that haven't been radically remade by the digital revolution.

acquisition, or entering a joint venture, and is appropriate if the new technology poses an existential threat to the firm. In contrast, doubling down sees established firms fight back by playing to their existing strengths. Retrenching is a defensive play that enables established companies to increase their bargaining power, reduce the industry rivalry, and raise barriers to entry. Moving away involves established companies migrating to new opportunities.

ESTABLISHED AND NEW BUSINESSES - DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH IN MENA

In MENA we can see this same mix of established companies coexisting and commingling with a flourishing community of digital startups. Early-stage incubators are creating a transformational stir in the heart of the region's economy, there can be no doubt. However, we are also witnessing elements of, in particular, the aforementioned 'fighting back' and 'doubling down' scenarios – established companies that have their definition and history wrapped up in, for example, the oil and gas industry, an industry which has defined the region for so many years.

This is not to say that digital technology, nor the impacts of climate change, have failed to leave their mark on such companies. For example, Saudi Aramco's Khurais oil field has been equipped with more than 40,000 sensors, and through the use of digital technology it has been able to cut its overall power consumption by 18% while optimizing maintenance costs by 20%,

and cutting inspection times by around 40%. The positive impact of these innovations deployed in the Saudi Aramco Khurais oil field has been recognized by the World Economic Forum (WEF) which has added Khurais to its Global Lighthouse Network, championing the field as an example of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. There are numerous other examples of the enabling power of digital tech within established industries across a wide range of sectors, such as oil and gas, airline operators, aircraft and car manufacturers, many of which provide great examples of the importance of delivering products and services more efficiently and sustainably by using digital technologies.

The picture we see presented of today's business landscape is more complex than is often considered, with some companies that have digital technology baked into their DNA, while others make judicious use of digital capabilities to enhance certain aspects of their operations. Despite the rise of a few tech giants like Amazon and Google, there are many industries that haven't been radically remade by the digital revolution, with numerous older incumbents still standing strong. Armed with this more complex picture, it is worth drawing on one particular thought from my HBR article: "Instead of plunging forward, play the long game: stay alert, plot scenarios, be proactive, and find the adaptation strategy that best fits your organization's needs and capabilities".

The challenges related to digital disruption arise from digital startups and they can also come from established players developing solutions and business models as a result of newly gained digital expertise. ◾

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY MAKING CITIES MORE RESILIENT

As urban areas continue to expand and grow, the technology is developing alongside enhancing sustainability and better serve humanity. This also helps to utilize technology to improve their urban planning process.

Innovations Group is a manpower outsourcing company in the white- and blue-collar space across GCC and Eastern Europe. They also offer recruitment services to their clients.

Cultural and economic settings are often perceived as key influential elements in formulating the business ecosystem, either on the organizations level or the entire social system. In their different forms, culture and economic conditions have always been critical drivers for innovation and entrepreneurship. Understanding the community's cultural traits and economic status helps business map their objectives.

A diverse workplace allows for more ideas and processes. This diversity of talent means a broader range of skills among employees, as well as a diversity of experiences and perspectives which increases the potential for increased productivity.

Technology helps increase the efficiency of systems, products, and services. It helps track and streamline processes, maintain data flow, and manage contacts and employee records. This increased efficiency in operation helps reduce costs as well as enables the business to grow rapidly.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: THE PILLARS OF URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES

Foundational technologies for cities, which include cloud computing, data analytics, mobile communications, and social applications, have a critical role in supporting urban resilience. Without the deliberate use and integration of

RAVI JETHWANI
CEO, Innovations Group

technology in approaching resilience, cities will be ill-equipped to address the shocks and stresses that are rising with the phenomena of rapid urbanization, climate change, and globalization. Harnessing the power of technology is a way to mitigate the challenges of urbanization and help catalyze urban resilience. The most important step for cities to leverage the full capabilities of technology to support urban resilience will be to build a culture that supports innovation and the adoption of new technologies and the change these technologies will drive. This is more important than funding, procurement, or security.

Recycling at your workplace is one easy way to reduce your organization's carbon footprint. When they recycle, they reduce the number of raw materials that need to be sourced to create products from scratch. When it comes to paper recycling, something else to be mindful of is confidential paperwork. At Shred Station, they both use and recommend to others a "Shred Everything" policy. This will avoid the potential cost risk of an employee making the wrong call when it comes to which documents need shredding and minimizes the risk of a data breach. If your business uses an external shredding company for your regular shredding services, the provider should – at a minimum – be recycling 100% of the paper they shred on your behalf.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, A PATH TO INNOVATION

Digital Transformation is a never-ending journey with no fixed destination. They took this plunge four years back and started the journey of digital transformation. They tried to integrate technology into all areas of a business, fundamentally changing how you operate and deliver value to its customers. It was also a cultural change that required organization to continually challenge the status quo, experiment, and get comfortable with failure.

They have completed the implementation of various tech solutions from Jobseeker, employee, and client perspectives. Their Tech solutions are Innovations Recruiter ATS, Innovations Job portal, Deployer Portal, Client Dashboard, and Employee Self Service Portal.

Rolling out the policy and procedure manual for Specialized Business Verticals was the significant contribution to the company in 2022. It has helped the organization to focus on developing the Centre of Excellences (COEs) for specialized business segments.

Technology is an integral part of their overall strategy for 2023. Below are the organization's strategic initiatives for 2023:

- Focusing on developing specialized business verticals
- They continue doing what they are best at, by offering tailor-made solutions for clients and persist on process optimization at the same time
- Focus on growth in different sectors by building in-house capabilities and extending their capacities to different geographies

If technology is used in the right way, urban planners can address and solve the current urban challenges. Technology is of course a critical part of the company's overall strategy today and in the future. ■

SEAGATE TAKES INITIATIVES TO REDUCE ITS CARBON FOOTPRINT

Seagate Technology is a global technology company that designs and manufactures data storage solutions. The company is committed to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship across its operations and supply chain.

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Seagate Technology is a data-focused company that manufactures and sells hard disk drives for enterprises, the client computes, and non-compute, backup, media, and storage systems. We offer high-capacity NAS, high-performance SSD, Nitro, surveillance drives with AI and video application software as well as complete storage systems. Our products are tailored for specific applications.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Seagate's SkyHawk and SkyHawk AI surveillance hard drives are essential products for customers in the GCC's ongoing digital transformation and smart city initiatives, particularly in Saudi Arabia and UAE. Seagate's Data Storage Systems support these initiatives by providing high-capacity, fast data throughput, security, and retention, while JBOB and SAN options offer the highest storage and data transfer capabilities in the market. ADAPT technology reduces rebuild times by up to 90% compared to RAID.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Many organizations are acknowledging the advantages of having a diverse workforce, including increased innovation, better decision-making, and improved problem-solving
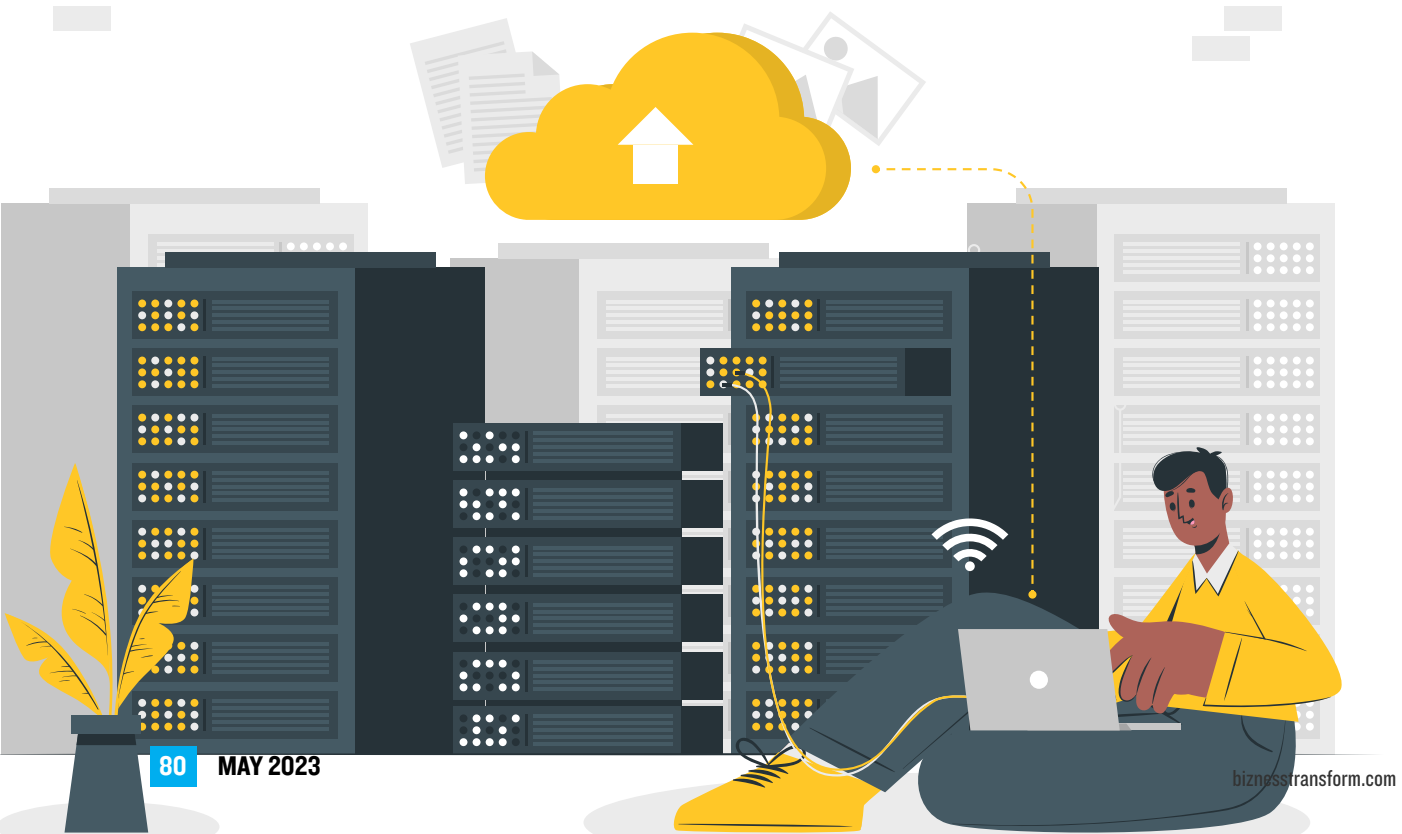
abilities. Furthermore, there has been a growing emphasis on fostering workplace inclusivity and establishing a welcoming culture for individuals from diverse backgrounds. As technology usage has become ubiquitous across all age, gender, and race groups, diversity is now more crucial than ever.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

In my opinion, technology plays a crucial strategic role in driving business growth and of course, enabling digital transformation. It enables companies to reduce costs and save time, while also providing innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of customers. For instance, Seagate's Data Storage Systems with cutting-edge technologies such as ADAPT offer the highest storage and data transfer capabilities, empowering customers to record and access data from thousands of cameras to a single, central location, and reducing rebuild times by up to 90% compared to RAID! By utilizing advanced technologies, businesses can improve efficiency, increase productivity, and ultimately drive growth. As such, technology is not just a support function but a critical driver of business growth and success.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

Technology can strengthen urban resilience by providing essential information, tools, and resources to help cities prepare for severe and adverse weather conditions. In doing so, digital technology can simplify urban planning and processes by enabling faster data processing and analysis, allowing authorities to make informed decisions quickly.

In line with Saudi Vision 2030, Seagate is committed to supporting Saudi Arabia's focus on environmental projects in the energy sector, which will be driven by data. As a leading provider of storage solutions globally, Seagate has witnessed significant interest in its products and solutions in Saudi Arabia. We are poised to be part of Saudi Arabia's journey toward transformation by offering innovative technology solutions that address complex challenges facing cities.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

The increasing frequency and intensity of heat waves are one of the most visible and dangerous signs of climate change highlighting the urgent need to take action to reduce carbon emissions and address the root causes of global warming. Also, companies can collaborate with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders to develop solutions that address urban carbon emissions. This can include initiatives such as green infrastructure projects and carbon offsetting programs.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Our journey in the Middle East has been memorable and I feel a sense of stability, both in terms of our brand and human resources. The enthusiastic response to our recent participation in Intersec 2023, the top exhibition for Security, Safety & Fire Protection, highlights a strong regional interest in partnering with us. This indicates significant growth and development opportunities in the region, with people recognizing and showing a willingness to engage with our brands. Our current presence in the region is full of potential and opportunities to expand. ■

JERMAINE CAMPBELL
Senior sales manager, Seagate Technology

Seagate Technology is committed to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship across its operations and supply chain. Through its global EHS program, renewable energy initiatives, sustainable supply chain practices, and employee engagement initiatives, Seagate is helping to create a more sustainable future for the technology industry and the world.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

HPE Aruba is a leading provider of networking solutions for enterprise-level IT environments. The company is committed to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship across its operations and supply chain.

WHAT ARE THE CORE BUSINESS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

HPE Aruba Networking focuses on providing networking and edge-to-cloud solutions for businesses to help them connect, protect, analyse their data and applications, and turn insights into outcomes at the speed required to thrive in today's complex world. It provides the next-generation networking infrastructure to power smart digital experiences in companies of all sizes, hospitals, schools, and smart cities. Aruba's networking products – software-defined, secure, cloud-based, and designed for mobile and IoT – bridge the physical and digital worlds, providing customers with the security, capacity, and confidence to innovate at the Intelligent Edge.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE KEY ENABLERS POSITIVELY INFLUENCING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

There are many mega projects and initiatives in the region. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and UAE have announced large-scale projects that have created massive opportunities for companies including HPE Aruba Networking to be at the forefront,

ZEESHAN HADI
Country Manager– UAE,
HPE Aruba Networking, a
Hewlett Packard Enterprise
company.

making sure that these projects are equipped with the latest technologies, have the next generation of platforms, and create experiences for the people both digitally and physically. All the growth happening in the region is fuelling new and exciting opportunities.

DO YOU BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS OF DIVERSITY AND ITS POSITIVE ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Over the years, there has been a marked increase in awareness of inclusion and diversity in the workplace. This heightened understanding has been crucial in bringing everyone together, fostering an environment that embraces a wide range of perspectives and experiences. This inclusive atmosphere not only benefits the workplace but also enriches the experiences of customers. Embracing diversity ultimately strengthens the organisation as a whole.

WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DRIVING BUSINESS GROWTH?

Organizations have always looked to technology as the catalyst for achieving business objectives in the never-ending race for innovation and sustainable growth. Technology has accelerated value creation through business transformation, whether the goal was to obtain data to determine analytics capabilities for decision-making, cut costs through process optimization, or drive business continuity for economic survival in a competitive environment.

The evolving needs of employees working remotely, and of customers whose

behaviours are changing, have significantly caused an increased reliance on technology, which has prompted a different approach to IT investment. As organizations pursue this need for digital transformation with even greater urgency than before, data is the cornerstone. With vast volumes being generated by the growing universe of user devices and IoT sensors, organizations must improve their ability to harness, analyse, secure, and store the data at their disposal.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE WHICH IS IMPACTED BY SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS? HOW CAN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFY URBAN PLANNING AND PROCESSES?

Technologies enhance urban resilience to severe weather by improving forecasting, enabling data collection and analysis, monitoring infrastructure, managing energy through smart grids, optimizing flood management systems, supporting green infrastructure, facilitating emergency communication, and aiding in simulation and modeling for informed decision-making.

Technology boosts productivity in urban planning by facilitating big data analysis, real-time communication, and accurate forecasting, as well as by leveraging AI for efficient processing and digital twin modeling. It improves sustainability enabling governments to achieve emission reduction goals. Moreover, technology enables smart cities by utilizing IoT to connect urban systems and optimize energy distribution, trash collection, traffic management, and air quality, ultimately enhancing

the overall quality of life in urban areas.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE FOR COMPANIES TO TACKLE URBAN CARBON EMISSIONS?

Two key problems exist, direct saving through carbon-neutral investments and policies, and efficient consumption. Technology plays a vital role in personalizing environments to save energy and make them smart. Smart consumption involves adjusting resource usage to align with real-time needs, like lighting and cooling for a few people in a large office. HPE exemplifies this commitment by prioritizing environmental, health, and safety performance, minimizing its environmental impact, and actively participating in the Clean Energy Buyers Association (CEBA).

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Being a leader in our domain comes with its challenges, especially when continuously working on innovations that change every day. While our founders believe in staying very close to our customers, we adopt the philosophy of Customers first, Customers last. This gives us insights based on how our customers see the problems of today and the future. We design our products and solutions, and our engagements around what customers need both in the short and long term, which helps us drive what their business outcomes are and what makes them successful. That is why it is essential for HPE Aruba Networking as a company to listen to its audience and ensure that we lead the technological change.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMPANY IN 2022 AND HOW DID IT IMPACT OR INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS?

It was an exciting 2022, we launched the first Enterprise networking cloud instance in the UAE. That gave a massive boost to our customers who wanted an AI-driven platform hosted in the country.

Secondly, the HPE Aruba EdgeConnect SD-WAN saw exponential growth. Designed for cloud-first organizations this has helped customers deploy a state-of-the-art SD-WAN paired with a next-gen firewall delivering unmatched quality of experience and advanced security.

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PLAN FOR 2023? HOW DO YOU INTEND TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE THE BUSINESS?

HPE has expanded its SD-WAN portfolio and security capabilities to better address customer requirements. This development simplifies, scales, and adds application awareness at the edge, optimizing network operations. The all-in-one SD-Branch and remote worker solutions, alongside self-driving SD-WAN and WAN optimization, capitalize on market opportunities.

Furthermore, HPE Aruba Networking offers Network-as-a-Service (NaaS) capabilities on the HPE GreenLake platform via a monthly subscription. This approach assists understaffed and overburdened IT teams, who often struggle to manage multiple networking products and capabilities from various vendors. ■

HPE Aruba is committed to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship across its operations and supply chain. Through its sustainable product design program, renewable energy initiatives, sustainable supply chain practices, and employee engagement initiatives, HPE Aruba is helping to create a more sustainable future for the networking industry and the world.

JW MARRIOT OPENS ITS MASAI MARA LODGE IN KENYA
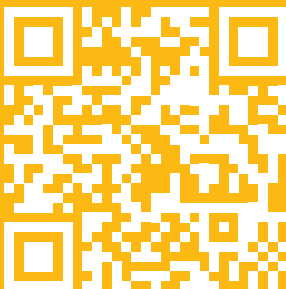
Sitting within the Masai Mara National Reserve in Southwestern Kenya, the lodge is a sanctuary from which to discover nature. Exhilarating guided game drives offer guests the opportunity to observe the Big Five including lions, leopards, buffalos, rhinoceros, and elephants. Between June and September, the reserve is host to the annual great wildebeest migration, which sees more than 10 million animals travel a distance of 1,800 miles from the Serengeti in neighbouring Tanzania.

Each of the lodge's 20 private tents provide a peaceful sanctuary to recharge and reset, and feature terraces overlooking the River Talek, a water source and habitat for many wildlife. Emphasis on waste reduction and recycling is integral to daily operations. The lodge's water treatment plant provides recycled and sanitised water; food waste is placed at the lodge's compost site; and water wells are dotted around the lodge for animals to quench their thirst throughout the day. JW Marriott Masai Mara Lodge is a 30-minute drive from Keekorok Airstrip and a 25-minute drive from Sekenani Main Gate.

MG MOTOR RELEASES TECHNOLOGY RICH MG ONE

The MG ONE harnesses the latest technology with the introduction of SAIC Motor's self-developed all-new modular SIGMA architecture platform, powering the vehicle to a top speed of 195 kmh. All models are equipped with an innovative seven-speed Continuously Variable Transmission for smoother, more efficient gear changes and optimum reliability.

The specification include availability of leather seats, a 12.3" virtual cluster panel with a trip computer, a six-way electric driver seat with lumbar support, four-way electric passenger seats, a panoramic sunroof, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, GPS navigation, as well as front, side and curtain airbags.

Cruise control, push-button ignition, keyless entry, and a rear-view camera are all fitted as standard, with a 360-degree parking view camera on full option models, to give the driver full control and peace of mind on their journey. The standard Electronic Stability Program includes eight safety functions, with ABS, EBD, CBC, TCS, VDC, HAZ, HHC, BDW enhancing driving stability in extreme road conditions or in situations involving aggressive driving to ensure driving safety.

Eric Black, named Edgio's CTO/General Manager of media

Edgio, the platform of choice for speed, security, and simplicity at the edge, announced it has appointed Eric Black as CTO/General Manager, Media. Having been at the forefront of digital video and live event streaming with NBC Universal for more than twenty years, Black joins Edgio to lead the company's growth in delivering the highest quality linear, live, and on-demand video experiences, to every device worldwide.

Before joining Edgio, Black led NBC Universal's media technology strategy across a host of digital properties during pivotal moments in the evolution of live streaming. He managed the first-ever live stream of a Super Bowl in 2010, delivered six Olympic Games (including the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, the largest digital event in history at the time), the 2018 FIFA World Cup, and Presidential debates. He also guided the team that launched NBC Universal's Peacock in 2020.

PROVEN Arabia names Leandra Meintjes as its Chief Marketing Officer

PROVEN Arabia, announced that Leandra Meintjes has been promoted to Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), taking on a broader scope of responsibilities for its group of companies and brands. Leandra has been a part of the PROVEN Arabia success story for nearly three years and has contributed immeasurably to the marketing department, culminating with the recent launch of a dedicated marketing agency: PROVEN 360. In her new role, she is tasked with acquiring additional clients and uplifting PROVEN 360 by strengthening its reputation in the market.

As CMO, Leandra leads a creative global team spread across seven countries that offers distinctive and powerful marketing solutions to PROVEN Arabia's internal companies, as well as external clients. Since she first joined PROVEN Arabia, the marketing department's headcount has grown, and it has also taken on significant additional responsibilities.

Initially, Leandra joined PROVEN Arabia as Marketing Manager and was responsible for promoting the company's brands including PROVEN, PROVEN Consult, and more recently PROVEN Solution.

IFS appoints Vijay Jaswal as Chief Technology Officer for MEA and APJ Regions

IFS, the global cloud enterprise applications provider, announced the appointment of Vijay Jaswal as the new Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for the Middle East and Africa (MEA) and Asia Pacific Japan (APJ) regions.

In his new role, Vijay will be actively involved in customer engagements, helping existing customers and prospects create 'Moments of Service' by streamlining how their people, processes, assets and customers interact to derive maximum value. In addition, he will also be responsible for the presales function by illustrating IFS's marketing capabilities to customers and how it can bring them value.

Vijay Jaswal brings more than 25 years of business technology process excellence experience, most recently serving as Chief Technology Officer of the Middle East, Turkey & Africa for Software AG, where he worked for over 17 years. Prior to this, he worked for Tibco in the Netherlands.

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