EXPRESS COMPUTER

THE EVOLVING CIO
How has the role of CIOs changed over the past decade or so?

VIRTUALIZING ALL THE WAY
The pros and cons

ENTERPRISE APPS
GET INNOVATIVE

From user friendliness to cloud enablement, applications such as **ERP** and **CRM** are getting innovative - but challenges remain in embracing innovation

edit

BIZ APPS: PRETTY AND AGILE

ENTERPRISE
SOFTWARE WAS
STUCK IN A TIME
WARP OF OLD-
STYLE CODING,
BUT THE NEW
WAY OF I.T. IS
FORCING THINGS
TO CHANGE

Is it possible that the world of business is changing so swiftly but that of back-end programming for running operations or handling customer interactions remains a stick-in-the-mud?

Until recently, enterprise software such as ERP and CRM did seem stuck in a time warp of old-style coding with hardly any consideration for agility and beauty.

But then came a raft of phenomena that began changing the usually stodgy world of biz apps. Leading this charge was cloud computing, followed by mobility, consumerization of IT and big data. And of course, social (you just can't escape social!)

It was as if the ground beneath the coders' feet—and also under the feet of their bosses, the CIOs and IT managers—moved with a vibration that sent them scurrying and worrying.

And as they were struggling to keep up with the new, huge demands of end users for anytime, anywhere, any-device access to data and applications, several cloud service providers and startups emerged and offered nifty, better-looking ways to do stuff such as payroll and customer loyalty management.

The established vendors, the multi-hundred pound gorillas of enterprise computing, took a while to adjust to the new way of IT. But, from what I could gather in my past few interactions with industry leaders, they are not only making "adjustments" but completely changing how they used to look at applications. Even the die-hard conservatives are discovering that if they do not change their old ways of serving enterprises, they will become extinct sooner rather than later (it is already "later").

This presents a dilemma to many Indian enterprises. They have sizable IT teams that are used to running IT the old way, content with working on ugly-looking interfaces and slow turnaround times for new plug-ins, modules, etc. Another issue is that it is very difficult for them to tidy things up without causing any disruption to business which, in several cases, is expanding rapidly.

At the same time, most realize that they must retool or replace their critical business applications with a suitable mix of cloud and in-house apps—if they are to achieve the business agility their top management so vehemently craves.

So they are struggling with their existing applications as well as infrastructure and are in various stages of migrating to agile, smoother computing. There is a lot of re-skilling and redeployment of staff they have to do, in addition to re-architecting processes as well as infrastructure.

The biz apps space is indeed going to be interesting to watch.

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Corrigendum

In the August 1-15, 2013 issue of *Express Computer*, the headline for the interview with Dmitri Chen, Vice President, EMC Backup and Recovery Practice, Asia Pacific and Japan was incorrect. The inadvertant error is regretted.

interviews

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ENTERPRISE APPS GET INNOVATIVE

From user friendliness to cloud enablement, applications such as ERP and CRM are getting innovative—but challenges remain in embracing innovation

BY JASMINE DESAI

The moment the word "innovation" pops up these days, one of the most dominant images that comes to the mind is that of Apple. Nevertheless, there is innovation happening even in the traditionally stodgy but critical field of enterprise applications like ERP and CRM.

The global macro-economic situation, compounded with increased pressure on a faster-

28% CAGR GROWTH OF SAAS ERP IN INDIA IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

decision making process, has compelled enterprise application vendors to introduce smarter and innovative technologies. CIOs are trying to embrace these latest technologies and also address their immediate needs of meeting customer expectations to enhance business profitability.

According to IDC, the enterprise application market

> BARRIERS TO INNOVATION INCLUDE LACK OF CLEAR ARTICULATION OF VALUE PROPOSITION, EXPECTATION OF QUICK ROI AND PROHIBITIVE COSTS INVOLVED IN 'BIG-THINKING' INNOVATION.

SUNIL BHAVE,
VICE PRESIDENT, FUJITSU
CONSULTING INDIA

CRITICAL APPLICATIONS WILL BE MORE CUSTOMER CENTRIC AND NOT TECHNOLOGY CENTRIC. ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WILL BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP.

went through significant shift over the years with advent of industry specific solution lines. In addition to this, as the enterprise market segment is saturating fast, there is increasing focus on lower parts of the organizational pyramid and the need for new delivery models. IDC has slightly downgraded its ERP forecast for the coming periods due to the continued mindset of caution and tactical investments by the organization. The view on the CRM market is comparatively more bullish and size is expected to be around INR 16 Billion in 2013, with very similar growth trajectory as ERP for the 5 year period. ERP however, is gaining more and more interesting customers including state governments.

Innovative ERP

Enterprise applications have seen themselves go through a major metamorphosis and IT vendors are constantly innovating to offer products and solutions meeting enterprise needs and expectations. A Gartner report suggests that on-premise ERP market in India is expected to touch USD 538 million by 2017 from USD 178 million in 2013, growing at a CAGR of 17%. According to Forbes, the overall market growth of just 2.2% and the top ten vendors owning 64% of the worldwide ERP market is leading Gartner to predict further consolidation of the industry.

Major efforts are under way to address this market requirement around cloud, mobility solutions and big data and analytics. Cloud solutions are being hosted for enterprises to keep the flexibility to configure different class of enterprise applications either in a publicly hosted cloud or a private cloud. Cloud-based services today are available in several varieties like Software as a Service (SaaS), Computing as a Service (CaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), Desktop as a Service (DaaS), Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), and Business Process as a Service (BpaaS) and all vendors do have their applications cloud-enabled.

Mentions Rajamani Srinivasan, Vice President - Application Sales, SAP India

Subcontinent ,"We are following cloud first approach where we are offering our solutions on cloud. Thus, customers can have it on-premise or on cloud." However, cloud will have its own set of challenges.

Vivek Iyer, National Sales Manager – Teradata Applications, Teradata India Pvt. Ltd. says, "In a cloud environment, application vendors have to ensure customer data privacy and security in a multi-tenant environment and keep up the service SLAs."

In Forrester report 'Global, Industry, And Technology ForcesShape': The ERP Landscape mentions that ERP is changing in response to growing user demands for improvements in usability and accessibility. Vendors are also starting to rethink the underlying infrastructure for ERP applications to enable more real-time data access and accelerate processing of vast amounts of information. More and more firms will find themselves making hybrid investments in a mix of on-premises, hosted, and SaaS ERP deployments for their global operations, with a core suite complemented by components from a partner ecosystem.

"In the next five years, SaaS ERP is expected to grow by 28% CAGR in India. In line with the global trend, end users in India deploy SaaS ERP because of the benefits of faster deployment and the perception that it is cost effective," says Sunil Padmanabh, Research Director, Gartner India. Today, SaaS ERP adoption is clearly in the SMB segment, but large enterprises, including multinationals, have been gradually considering SaaS for their dealer/distributor networks.

ERP is in the early stages of major changes at all levels of the application — from the look and feel of the user interface to the database and the underlying architecture. As these changes take effect, ERP will evolve to provide more focused core functionality supplemented by a wide range of plug-in components and cloud services. Each plug-in will deliver elements of a particular ERP business process and will originate from ERP suite vendors or best-of-breed players or application development partners. In time, ERP suite
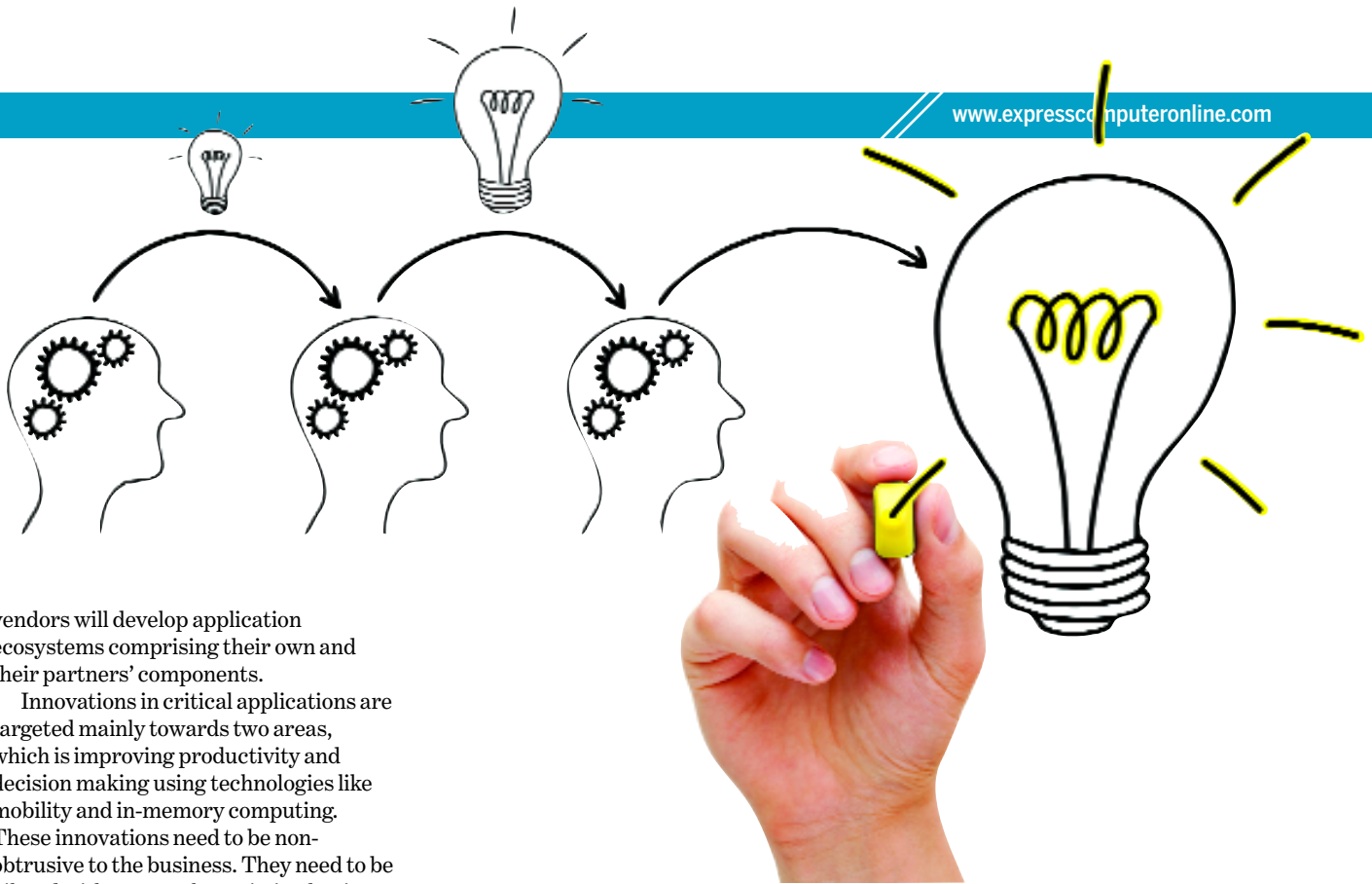
vendors will develop application ecosystems comprising their own and their partners' components.

Innovations in critical applications are targeted mainly towards two areas, which is improving productivity and decision making using technologies like mobility and in-memory computing. These innovations need to be non-obtrusive to the business. They need to be piloted with care so that existing business operations are not disrupted. The other major challenge is to make the correct product/platform choice as areas like big data, mobility and cloud that are evolving rapidly. It is important to sift through the hype. For example. there are multiple mobile enterprise application platforms (MEAP). Some have been developed by the large ERP vendors and there are also native platforms (iOS, Android) and best of breed options like Kony, Sencha, etc.

As per Arun Rangaraju, Senior Vice President and Head, Package Solutions, Mindtree Limited, "One of the important innovations in ERP is to combine OLTP and OLAP. This is primarily being driven by advances in in-memory computing (SAP HANA and Oracle EXADATA)."

Srinivasan of SAP says, "Market doesn't look at it as ERP, but as a business application. The entire application suite is now available on big data or in-memory database HANA. The innovation driven here is that have merged analytical and OLTP capability into one infrastructure. With one installation, customers can drive not only OLTP applications but can get capability of driving analytical coding merged into one infrastructure. It drives an optimized IT infrastructure."

There is also built-in analytics, which can drive real-time business management across organizations. They can run real-time material requirement planning, real-time sales and operations, real-time inventory management. All these things are possible today because of in-memory database that can crunch GB and TB of data. We are following cloud

$538 MILLION

SIZE OF ERP MARKET IN INDIA BY 2017, GROWING FROM US $178 MILLION IN 2013, AT A CAGR OF 17%

first approach where we are offering our solutions on cloud. They can have it on-premise or on cloud.

Tim Moylan, President, Asia-Pacific, Infor mentions, "The ERP scenario in India is witnessing a rapid growth. Going beyond a one-size fits all model ERP solutions both in India and globally, have now evolved to tailor-made and specialized versions by industry type."

Age of innovation in CRM

When it comes to CRM applications, they have been able to go through innovation phase most easily as they are driven by customer needs. In Forrester report 'Navigate The Future Of CRM In 2013' by William Band says, "The strong demand for CRM technology solutions has prompted leading vendors to continue to invest in improving their solutions and make acquisitions to fill out their solution portfolios. In 2013, social CRM use cases spotlighting demonstrable business value will become more common.

For example,field technicians and engineers being able to service to customer complaints without having to step into the office, being able to replace

> THE COST OF ERP IS VERY HIGH. THUS, THE CUSTOMERS' ABILITY TO MAKE CHANGES IS LOW. INNOVATION HERE IS EVOLUTIONARY RATHER THAN REVOLUTIONARY.

SANTOSH SAWANT,
SR. VP & HEAD - ENTERPRISE
SOLUTIONS PRACTICE, IGATE

> MOST ORGANIZATIONS HAVING MULTIPLE VENDOR OFFERINGS FEEL CHALLENGED FOR CONSOLIDATING APPLICATIONS.

SUNIL PADMANABH,
RESEARCH DIRECTOR, GARTNER

parts and record the same, file the report and also bill the customer, all using the mobile application. Mobility will accentuate the impact of big data on bot h customer intelligence and operational efficiency by making everything immediately actionable and adding mobility to big data means enabling frontline employees with real-time insights, when and where they need them.

The key to value-added social customer engagement is to be clear about your objectives. In 2013, mobile CRM solution support will continue to evolve rapidly. Technology vendors are rushing to provide solutions that work across all mobility technology platforms and support all device form factors. Also, more enterprises will embrace emerging CRM solution governance best practices

to better capitalize on the value of on-demand solutions.

Mentions Raju Vegesna, Chief Evangelist, Zoho, "Mobile is changing a lot of things in the market. Mobile computing devices today exceed the total number of laptops and desktops we have in the market. The mobility factor adds a new dimension to software providers."

Says V Sreenivasan, Senior VP, ITC Infotech, "Social media integration with marketing and campaign management systems, aimed at identifying customer needs and providing tailor made messages and offers is core to the 'customer centric' theme of most organizations. In the CRM space, Cx (customer experience) is growing, with the need to ensure that the most profitable customers stay loyal."

From a product standpoint, there is a strong push towards creating industry-specific solutions like trade promotion management, channel management and price protection. How will enterprise data integrate with geo-spatial map, where visual representation, where ERP and CRM data is available on a map which is easy to interpret. Innovation in that space will transform the usability of enterprise applications and will symmetrically transom the way end-users access their enterprise application information.

The users of Analytical CRM applications are mainly the marketing department. The marketing department would like to create and run their own campaigns, with minimum dependency on IT. There is constant innovation in this area to make the applications easy to use for non-IT users.

According to Darshana Pai, Vice President & Head – delivery, Hyderabad Delivery Center, Virtusa, "With increasing cost of third party logistics i.e. production and operation, effective management of forecasting and predicting (what is needed, where, and how much) has been driving major innovation in this space."

What is driving innovation?
It can be safely said that it is eco-system of innovation which is happening. The lines dividing the technology will be blurring. Even critical applications will be more customer centric and not technology centric. Enhancing customer experience will be more important than customer relationship.

Nexus of forces as mentioned by Gartner like social media, big data, mobility and analytics that is driving innovation majorly. Gamification experience required by customers and end-users is also leading up to this change. When an organization is trying to adopt all these technology trends, innovation is inevitable.

Pai of Virtusa says, "With cloud and cloud based infrastructure reaching maturity, it is likely that many applications will make the transition sooner than later especially with the cost of computing and size of database going up. simplification and scalability."

According to Padmanabh of Gartner, "The customer facing applications are constantly innovating. But back-end applications are stagnating because lack of cost, initiative etc." Big data technology is likely to change how enterprise applications are built, how companies are able to process and use data for quicker decision making. Also, to improve operation effectiveness of employees in customer services function. It can be used to analyze consumer patterns and behavior and quickly allow CRM systems to package offers that are targeted on that single consumer.

Sudhir Rao, Chief Technology Officer, Enterprise Services, HP India, "Lot of customers want to drive their innovation agenda. However, to do that business factors need to be taken into consideration before getting on directly with innovation, its effectiveness etc. Innovation for different organizations is different. It is more of a process that has to be defined and make sure that goals are achieved."

The way organizations are operating businesses is also leading to innovation. Enterprises are researching as to what information if they had, would change the way they operate across multiple domains in business.

Innovation challenges
"It's tough when markets change and your people within the company don't," mentions Harvard Business Review that sums up the sentiment of challenges in innovation very well. Mentions Ramki Ramamurthy, Vice President - EAS, ADM, AMS, Testing, Dell Services- Apps & BPO, "The customer part of barrier is

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATIONS IN ERP IS TO COMBINE OLTP AND OLAP. THIS IS PRIMARILY BEING DRIVEN BY ADVANCES IN IN-MEMORY COMPUTING

PODAR: LEARNING CLOUD WITH RAMCO

Podar Group of Schools, an 86-year-old education network, deployed Ramco ERP on Cloud with HR and Talent Management for its growing network of educational institutions across India, including a wide spectrum of brands for pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, junior colleges, part-time courses and teacher training courses.

The group was looking for a comprehensive and integrated solution that would connect their network of schools, standardize business operations and help them get a better control over their operations. After evaluating multiple players, they decided to implement Ramco ERP on Cloud with HR and Talent Management. Under the agreement, Ramco ERP on Cloud will be addressing all business paocesses including Finance, Procurement, Inventory, HR and Payroll.

Says Gaurav Podar, Managing Director, Podar Education Network, "What started as a modest beginning has today grown to seven schools and 56 Podar International Schools across the country. "

"As we continue to grow this network, managing the SBUs centrally from our Head Office at Mumbai was becoming difficult. We needed a robust and functionally rich ERP solution that would provide a strong technology backbone to our growth plans. Ramco ERP on Cloud was a perfect fit as it blended functionality with the benefits and efficiency of Cloud. We are looking forward to a quick go-live to reap the benefits of an integrated solution."

TECHNOLOGY VENDORS ARE RUSHING TO PROVIDE SOLUTIONS THAT WORK ACROSS ALL MOBILITY TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS AND SUPPORT ALL DEVICE FORM FACTORS

change management or making business case out of technology that they want to re-deploy and how much they want to standardize." However, that is not the only challenge.

Mentions V Balasubramaniam, VP & Head - Enterprise Technology Solutions at Mphasis, "Privacy of data and security are sometimes biggest challenge towards innovating. Also, some organizations for critical applications are unstable and do not want to bring about innovation because they are worried about follow-up cost and if it will work in production environment." Also, critical applications like ERP have a much larger impact on the overall organization and that is why businesses tend to experiment less here.

According to Santosh Sawant, Sr. VP & Head - Enterprise Solutions Practice, iGate, "The cost of ERP is very high.

Thus, customer ability to make changes is low. In ERP and SCM, the user community is not so tech-savvy and they are quite resistant to any sort of change, which acts as a major barrier towards innovating." Innovation here is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. It is more about adding ad-hoc capabilities rather than creating something completely new. .

Sunil Bhave, Vice President, Fujitsu Consulting India mentions, "Customers are also looking at quicker ROI. In essence, some of the key elements that are acting as a barrier for innovation today are lack of clear articulation of value proposition, expectation of quick ROI and prohibitive costs involved in 'big-thinking' innovation. While there is field innovation or incremental innovation that happens more frequently, in Indian

industry big innovation has suffered due to these factors."

One of the major barriers is also that companies focus too much on their analysis of 'Consumer Needs', which sometimes tend to be short sighted. With the pressure on ROI, fulfilling 'customer needs' tends to take the top priority. This may cause incremental improvement or innovation as opposed to a major innovative approach.

Says Padmanabh of Gartner, "Integration is a key challenge for innovation. Most organizations having multiple vendor offerings feel challenged for consolidating applications. Any multi-vendor application is a big challenge unless it is cloud-enabled."

The biggest barrier is also how organizations are structured and how people are rewarded within organizations. It is important to create a conducive environment for fostering a culture of innovation in any organization. Innovation amongst Indian enterprises is happening, but not as an initiative as it ideally should be. It is more out of necessity.

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Santhosh D'Souza, Director -Systems Engineer, NetApp India, discusses with KTP Radhika, SDS and its features, benefits of NetApp's recently launched clustered data ONTAP solution and trends in the storage space. Excerpts...

"Clustered data ONTAP paves the way for software-defined data centers"

Over the past few months, software defined storage (SDS) has become a catch word in the storage industry. What benefits does it offer to enterprises?

SDS pools hardware storage resources and allows them to be programmatically defined, provisioned and managed in the software. This design provides the means for storage services to be provisioned and consumed based on policies and deployed on a wide range of hardware spanning vendor optimized to commodity to cloud.

Recently NetApp announced its new version of storage OS, clustered data ONTAP solution. How does it deliver more capacity to organizations?

We are proud to launch a new version of our flagship storage operating system – clustered data ONTAP. It gives IT organizations and service providers the capability to rapidly and cost effectively deliver new services and capacity, with no downtime. Clustered data ONTAP paves the way for customers deploying software-defined data centers, which cut through the performance, availability and efficiency limits of traditional hardware-silo models.

The SDS approach pioneered by the new OS focuses on agility in delivery of IT services to application owners while improving operational and resource efficiency. It is the first storage and data management solution that meets the SDS criteria of resources defined in software, provisioned based on policy and deployable on multi vendor hardware platform.

Our customers used to tell us that they require their IT infrastructure to be more responsive to their business, allowing them to make rapid and more informed decisions. Enabling technologies, such as virtualization and private/public clouds offer improved levels of agility and efficiency and require storage solutions that can deliver the full value of next generation data centers built on a shared virtual infrastructure.

Clustered data ONTAP provides the

Please shed some light on NetApp's business plans in India.

Netapp is targeting customers across enterprise, mid-market, IT/ITeS and government segments, while addressing all industry verticals. We currently have over 1,000 customers and around 5,500 systems installed. With presence across key verticals, and the clustered data ONTAP announcement, our addressable market and opportunities will further grow. We will also continue to follow a 100% channel-based model.

optimal storage environment for enterprises of all sizes. Some of the benefits that clustered data ONTAP brings to a variety of our customers across the manufacturing, BFSI and ITES verticals include, improved IT operations and accelerated business-critical application performance, reduced risk and increased agility; by standardizing on a single unified clustered architecture, which scales easily and adapts to the business needs. It also provides high return on investment resulting from an efficient infrastructure for workloads or tenants that have different performance and security requirements.

According to you what are the technology and market trends that are driving adoption of the clustered data ONTAP in India?

Today's competitive environment means that enterprises are facing a tremendous increase in the amount of data used to conduct their everyday business, driven largely by the explosion of unstructured data. IT managers know that applications using and storing video, audio, images, research sets and other large digital files and unstructured data are pushing the boundaries of traditional storage system capacity and performance.

Clustered data ONTAP is an effective response to this explosive data and the paradigm shifts to scale out architecture. It allows customers to plan their data center around their data rather than their hardware equipment. As the hardware ages, data can be transparently migrated to newer hardware without disruption to data access. This non-disruptive operation level is essential in today's round the clock environment and results into improved economics as well as operational efficiency. The trend towards non-disruptive operations, coupled with proven efficiency, massive scalability, uncompromised performance with the management ease has created a ground-swell for clustered data ONTAP amongst enterprises and service providers.

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THE EVOLVING CIO

How do CIOs compare the IT function as it existed 10-15 years back to the situation today? Read on to find out

BY PANKAJ MARU

One of the common factors between time and technology is that both are dynamic in nature. With changing time, technology also changes. But it's the complexity of problems, whether in life or on the business front, that actually allows new forms of technology to get invented and evolved over a period of time.

In the past one and a half decade, the broad base of technology has been moving away from analog to digital. Form factors are shrinking in size and shape, software is getting lighter and quicker with different versions. Enterprise applications and storage are moving out of premises onto cloud and third-party data centers.

> ## INCREASINGLY, THE ROLE OF THE CIO IS TO TRY TO OUT-SMART AND STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF CYBER CRIMINALS AND HACKERS.

STEVE DURBIN,
VICE PRESIDENT, INFORMATION SECURITY FORUM

> ## EVERY EVOLUTION OR INNOVATION IN TECHNOLOGY HAS A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE— WHETHER IT IS ERP, CRM, SOA, CLOUD, VIRTUALIZATION OR BYOD.

SAMRAT DAS,
CIO, TATA AIA LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Among other changes, mobile phones and devices are becoming mainstream in the enterprise world. Personal devices are finding place at work with the BYOD concept, and enterprises see economic value in mobile workforce as well as the work-from-home approach. In addition, legacy and proprietary systems are giving way to open standards; outsourcing and managed services have come a long way from just being a cost cutting norm to becoming quite an essential and well-accepted component of doing business today.

The people who have closely observed, experienced and worked with these changing and evolving technologies in the course of time are the CIOs and IT managers. In fact, they are the ones who have seen the entire life cycle of technology – right from invention to adoption to becoming obsolete with time.

During the course of time, some technologies fail to take off or fade out prematurely, while others find strong footholds through the benefits they offer and become highly popular with mass adoption.

However, amidst these technology changes, it is interesting to know and understand how much impact have the changes made on the roles, responsibilities and day-to-day functioning of CIOs across industries and enterprises.

According to UK-based Steve Durbin, Vice President, ISF (Information Security Forum), information is the life-blood of the modern organization and with the rise of cloud-based technology, mobile and social networking, it flows faster and reaches further than ever before.

"Gone are the days when information could be protected behind an impenetrable firewall along the corporate boundary. Technology solutions for information security are no longer enough— increasingly, the role of the CIO is to try to out-smart and stay one step ahead of cyber criminals and hackers," says Durbin.

Changing technology and CIOs

Recalling the technology changes in the last 10-15 years, Samrat Das, CIO, Tata AIA Life Insurance Company says, "Every evolution or innovation in technology has a business imperative – whether it is ERP, CRM, SOA, cloud, virtualization or BYOD. For every innovation, I look out for IT strategy that is aligned with the business strategy."

Talking about cloud, he says, "I see cloud more on the economics of IT than on the technology of IT. The financial industry is undergoing turbulence globally. So cost pressures are definitely there and cloud gives me the opportunity to leverage the economics of IT."

According to Ram Medury, Vice President – Technology, ICICI Lombard, about 10-15 years ago, technology was still seen as esoteric and something new that had to be mastered and such mastery of technology was seen to generate competitive advantage - for example, the core banking system implementation by some leading banks in the 1990s.

"However, as technology started becoming more and more common and even commoditized, some people started questioning the relative advantage. Innovations such as large ATM networks and core banking systems were soon copied by other players. In the ensuing decade, technologies like cloud computing have matured and it is indeed easier to deploy new technology today," says Medury.

"Applications have become more service oriented, which means that they can be integrated more easily with mobile devices leading to the rise of pervasive computing. All this has meant less sweating on the mundane stuff and more energy on the brainier problems such as business process innovation," he adds.

While Ashish Pachory, CIO, Tata Teleservices Limited agrees that changes have certainly happened in the last 10-15 years, agrees , he also feels that today's professional needs to stay connected anywhere, anytime; which throws up new challenges as well as opportunities for the IT department across enterprises and businesses.

"Today's IT systems and processes are much more concerned with the need to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the data. IT has to stay that one crucial step ahead of the cyber-terrorists. All this has to happen without restricting the business, thus making it a very fine balancing act. The need to render data correctly on a multitude of end-user devices and platforms poses further demands for modern IT," says Pachory.

Amidst those challenges, Pachory sees some new opportunities for the IT departments. "It is also an opportunity for IT to become a lot more integral to the organization and influence its market performance, than say 10-15 years ago when IT was back-end processor. Moreover, unlike past decade or so, the social media boom has brought in an unprecedented need to not only store but also analyze massive amounts of data, which was not on the radar of IT in companies earlier."

Based on the views of CIOs, it is certain that today's IT departments and their CIOs are expected to do and deliver more to their respective businesses and enterprises. The shift in organizational demands from IT departments has translated into re-defining the roles and functions of CIOs.

According to Arup Choudhary, CIO, Eveready Industries, with multiple legacy applications running, 10-15 years ago, the CIOs would be in a fire-fighting mode most of the time, but today's integrated systems have given them time to step back and innovate.

"Cloud is not new. It is the new buzzword for virtualization. In early 2000, Citrix and Tarantela had the thin client solutions that made desktops work like workstations. We had centrally hosted solutions in the past out of a data center. These are being called public, private and hybrid cloud these days," says Choudhary.

"However new offerings have sprung up like SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, etc. Mobility and BYOD on the other hand have added a lot of value to the enterprise. Today a person has become location agnostic. It really doesn't matter where you are operating from. You have enterprise-wide visibility wherever you are," he adds.

> TODAY THE WORKLOAD HAS SHIFTED...WHILE THE MANAGEMENT OF SERVER FARMS HAS GONE, IT HAS BEEN REPLACED BY OPTIMIZATION OF NETWORK ACCESS TO THE CLOUD.
>
> **SRIKANTH RAMAN,**
> GROUP HEAD – IT, NARAYANA HEALTH

> ABOUT 10-15 YEARS AGO, TECHNOLOGY WAS STILL SEEN AS ESOTERIC AND SOMETHING NEW THAT HAD TO BE MASTERED AND SUCH MASTERY OF TECHNOLOGY WAS SEEN TO GENERATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

TODAY'S PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO STAY CONNECTED ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, WHICH THROWS UP NEW CHALLENGES AS WELL AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE IT DEPARTMENT

Interestingly, Srikanth Raman, Group Head – IT, Narayana Health says that the role of CIO has moved dramatically from IT infra to information.

"Today, CIOs have less and less to do with the IT hardware, backup software etc., which has become part of the SLA for the cloud service provider. The role for the CIO has evolved into a more strategic delivery of information, thus focusing on the end result rather than on the means as it was earlier," he points out.

Besides the 'value' factor, the new technologies have eased some pressure on IT budgets and CFOs, as well as brought in the much needed efficiency component in today's businesses. The economics of IT plays a huge role in making the new technologies highly popular.

"The economic, social and technological landscape has transformed over the past few years, with the rise of Internet-based technology and mobility. These changes mean that CIOs need to ensure the safety, integrity and security of growing volumes of sensitive data far beyond the traditional information security boundaries," observes Durbin of ISF.

New tech: simple or complex for CIOs?

So, does the new technology make life easy for CIOs by simplifying IT, or has it further added complexities?

"New technologies always bring along opportunities to improve cost efficiencies. However, there could very well be hidden costs of deployment and implementation," says Medury of ICICI Lombard.

He explains that mobility is a great new enabler and it is indeed possible to deploy new applications quickly. However, in the security context, managing multiple devices raises network issues and requires new skill sets. Also, the cost equation is not that sanguine. The same is true with big data as well, as it calls for more robust technology solutions while offering new analytical insights.

On cloud technology, Medury points out that the technology helps in converting capital expenditure into operating and it would be good for cash starved start-ups, but not good for companies which can easily access capital as low interest loans are available today.

"In this context, the role of IT gets fairly complex in ensuring that appropriate SLAs are in place, contracts are structured to meet stringent availability timelines and standards complied with. So while I see new technology bringing new promise, it will take some adjusting before standards mature and things really become simple," he explains.

Talking along similar lines, Pachory of Tata Teleservices points out that very few large organizations have taken the mobility and cloud migration journey. "In that case, I would certainly imagine that it would give a level of freedom from daily chores that enables the CIO to spend more time at home. However, this is yet to be proven! Most of us are at very early stages of adoption."

"I strongly believe that moving to a cloud based application architecture is a lot more than a fork-lift operation. It's an opportunity to re-architect the business processes, get rid of redundant applications, consolidate IT architecture and clean up the data warehouse. This is a lot of work, over a sizable period of time, so I am not really sure that the time has come for CIOs to leave the office at 5 pm!" he says.

Pachory, however, does says that once the organization is able to move to the new technology, then the CIO would be relatively less concerned with issues like hardware and software upgrades, storage enhancements and the operations and management (O&M) aspects.

"There could however be other counter-balancing influences on your peace of mind – like the need for increased security, perceived loss of

control, etc. All in all, there are both sides to the issue but I do believe that in the end, the barriers will be overcome and CIOs will be able to have the time as well as peace of mind to think about their next vacation," opines Pachory.

Adopting new technology by organizations doesn't mean less work or fewer responsibilities for CIOs. According to Raman of Narayana Health, today the workload has shifted, though not necessarily increased or reduced; while the management of server farms has gone, it has been replaced by optimization of network access to the cloud.

"The ability to extract SLA-based delivery is in as against negotiation for hardware purchase. The negotiations now tend to be focusing on aligning with long-term organization vision and strategy," says Raman.

"You have more choice as to what the organization wants to do within the IT department and what can be outsourced. Still, the responsibility in some ways remains the same – the IT systems have to be always available or available anywhere and be secure," he stresses.

According to Das of Tata AIA, one cannot say for sure that today's IT is easier than legacy systems of yore. He believes that innovation is a continuous process and with innovation, there is an evolution of mindsets on IT for enterprises. While 10-15 years back, IT was just looked at as support, today IT is considered as a business enabler.

Though from IT manageability perspective, new technology may have given some breathing space to CIOs but certainly not from the SLA management stand point as SLAs have become a center point in CIO's functioning and responsibilities across enterprises.

"From a CIO perspective, it (new technology) does simplify workload to a great extent, however it brings up another nuance called SLA management with the service provider. If you outsource even with the most stringent of SLAs, you still end up chasing vendors most of the time. The penalty clause in SLA is only reactive in nature," says Choudhary of Eveready explaining the pain staking part of SLA management

that the CIOs have to deal with.

Further, "CIOs need to think of more innovative ways of managing the SLA in future if we go by what the analysts are saying. In my opinion, it does not reduce cost but transfers capital to revenue expenditure. In doing so, the companies can't take advantage of the depreciation factor," he explains.

While, the CIOs are learning to deal with vendors and their SLAs, the old enemy of 'security threats' haven't gone out with time, in fact the 'security scenario' has become extremely intensive today than ever before and it continues to defy IT departments and security strategies of CIOs.

On the security aspect, Durbin of IFS explains that many security solutions require technical infrastructure support and to secure funding for such initiatives, CIOs must assure stakeholders and demonstrate how their function adds value to the business. "This means that the CIO role continues to involve the management of technical issues, but with an increased understanding of compliance and regulatory issues," he adds.

So with the array of changes that are happening in the technology world, some have been good and beneficial to the CIOs while others haven't been. Given those technology changes, the key question arises — how useful it has been to CIOs in their respective organizations, where they are able to get involved in innovative projects and are free from mundane tasks and functioning?

New tech: innovative or intensive for CIOs?

Certainly, the role of CIOs has got evolved with the new technology in recent years and the reach has expanded beyond the walls of IT departments into the company's executive boardrooms. CIOs are asked to talk IT and business and not just IT as today IT is considered as business enabler.

"Definitely the role of CIOs has evolved for the better and attained a strategic dimension as against an earlier operations role. Adopting technologies like cloud and seamless mobility is today a competitive advantage which would

> APPLICATIONS HAVE BECOME MORE SERVICE ORIENTED, AND THEREFORE CAN BE INTEGRATED MORE EASILY WITH MOBILE DEVICES.

RAM MEDURY,
VICE PRESIDENT – TECHNOLOGY, ICICI LOMBARD

> 10-15 YEARS AGO, CIOS WOULD BE IN A FIRE-FIGHTING MODE MOST OF THE TIME, BUT TODAY'S INTEGRATED SYSTEMS HAVE GIVEN THEM TIME TO STEP BACK AND INNOVATE.

ARUP CHOUDHARY,
CIO, EVEREADY INDUSTRIES

enable scalability, growth and on time deployment of IT systems," says Raman of Narayana Health.

According to Pachory of Tata Teleservices, the role of CIOs in organizations is constantly evolving and in today's time it's more about proactively adopting newer technologies to aid business growth.

"The key issue for CIOs moving forward will be integrating and managing a complex environment, where many necessary business services and applications will be provided by service providers. I do think that freedom from routine tasks through an IaaS or cloud adoption would give the CIO the one thing he/she lacks today – time," he explains.

However, Pachory feels that this will take some time for most CIOs. "In the steady state, this does offer the opportunity for the CIO to invest his/her time working more closely with the business, understanding their priorities and ensuring IT readiness to meet those priorities, rather than be in a reactive mode trying to hold it all together."

"This would play a big role in enabling IT organizations to take the leap from being technology leads to becoming thought-leaders that business depends on for creating crucial market differentiation," he adds.

Even Medury of ICICI Lombard agrees with his fellow CIOs and says, "Definitely, I see this trend happening – new technology for instance, has helped abstract out the complexity of managing a data center and rather focus on the business problems on hand. In this new era, successful IT departments and IT managers will play a more strategic and a consultative role such thinking about marketing implications of apps and social media."

"A good IT department should act as a bridge between technological possibilities and business goals. The game is now much less about optimizing the technology itself and more about connecting the dots resulting in innovation leading to the creation of sustainable competitive advantage for the organization," he adds.

Most CIOs agree that the new

THE ROLE OF CIOS IN ORGANIZATIONS IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING AND IN TODAY'S TIME IT'S MORE ABOUT PROACTIVELY ADOPTING NEWER TECHNOLOGIES TO AID BUSINESS GROWTH

technology has a link in making their roles more innovative and constructive toward business and not just IT. However, Choudhary of Eveready Industries takes a slightly different stand from other CIOs. "In my opinion, it is a mix of both. While outsourcing has freed up time for diving into strategy and innovative thinking, the complexity of the enterprise often bothers the CIO in terms of what should be kept in-house and what should move to the cloud," he opines.

"Besides this, the cloud service providers are yet to find a solution to the licensing problems with the software vendors. With so many devices and platform agnostic applications, integration has become a key challenge for CIOs. In my view the IT landscape still remains as complex as it was before; only the stakeholders have changed," criticizes Choudhary.

"They need to manage increasingly complex business relationships in the supply chain and implement risk-based decision-making to accommodate what is a fast-changing threat landscape," says Durbin of ISF.

"In effect, CIOs need to deliver more for less, both in terms of new investment and existing resources. CIOs must accommodate this shifting technology landscape that may be immature from a security perspective while managing the risks as far as possible," he says.

With so many technology changes, CIOs are bound to get influenced and impacted by them. Going ahead, since innovation is a continuous process, the role and responsibilities of CIOs will also evolve with time. However, the ones who are able to embrace the rapidly changing technology and equally manage the associated risks will become successful CIOs of the future.

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Shailender Kumar, Vice President, Fusion Middleware, Oracle India, in a discussion with Heena Jhingan, talks about BPM and its correlation with big data, mobile and enterprise processes. Excerpts...

"Big data is already giving way to fast data"

How is Business Process Management (BPM) evolving in the era of big data and analytics?
Business Process Management (BPM) and data management have always been closely associated with each other. A sound BPM solution cannot succeed without the guarantee of secured data management. And converting data to actionable insight requires human interaction and automation. BPM is what makes data meaningful.

Business process improvements can be advocated in the organization based on the trend analysis of big data. For example, with big data and BPM, a retailer can discover how demand increases for specific products at specific periods of time, combine that with social media responses to understand customer preferences, and match that need in the future by appropriate inventory management. This gives the ability to look in the rear-view mirror and make predictions based on historical data. Even big data in telecom can be used to discover which customers are likely to switch to a competitor. This output can be used by BPM to have the customer service center (CRM) call these customers and propose offers to retain them.

In fact, big data is already giving way to fast data, which is a large volume of varied data arriving at a very high velocity that requires contextual processing in real-time. In most cases, this data becomes meaningless as it ages. BPM here brings the facet of adding human interaction and process improvement, making the business process highly dynamic and data meaningful. Fast data's real-time analysis allows users to make business process improvements to support the trends generated on the fly, deploy more resources where needed and analyze if the business process improvement actually made a difference to operations in real-time.

Mobile is getting central to middleware platforms for integration and BPM. So how is Oracle trying to keep up with this trend?
We are responding to the needs of the growing mobile workforce with solutions that are built specifically with these users in mind. Oracle understands the challenges faced by the mobile workforce for efficient means to access key real-time customer data prior to a customer meeting, to monitor key performance metrics such as bookings, revenue, spend and customer satisfaction on a constant basis, to perform certain day-to-day tasks without having to wait to return to the office and to access insightful analytic reports when there are exception business conditions.

I believe Oracle's middleware solutions like WebCenter are the ideal engagement platforms for social business. It connects people and information by bringing together the most complete portfolio of portal, web experience management, content, social, and collaboration technologies into a single integrated product suite. It also provides the foundation for Oracle Fusion Middleware and Oracle Fusion Applications.

What has prompted the enterprises to shift to an Enterprise-Processes Centric view from an ERP-Centric approach?
Processes in organization are at the heart of what makes or breaks its business and differentiates it from the competition. Focusing on business processes will give an organization a broader view into resource distribution and process efficiency. The cross-pollination of BPM with ERP and customer centric processes like CRM is helping organizations to plan their resources better, increase business productivity and increase customer satisfaction.

Processes that originally resided within an application now extend beyond traditional application boundaries. These business processes are not confined to a set of data or one discrete information system. They are better described as multifaceted implementations of real-world activities—logically organized into steps that span multiple IT systems, departments, channels and touch-points.

The promise of greater efficiency, business visibility and agility in process management is driving many organizations to invest in BPM software.

What do you think are some of the best practices linked with BPM integration?

Successful BPM projects need a high degree of support and engagement from business users. BPM tools should be easy to use and allow business user to model and simulate the business processes. We believe, BPM integration works best in organizations which have a SOA (service-oriented architecture) in place. BPM can then integrate with these standards based services and deliver value in lesser time.

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Customer
Loyalty Rings High
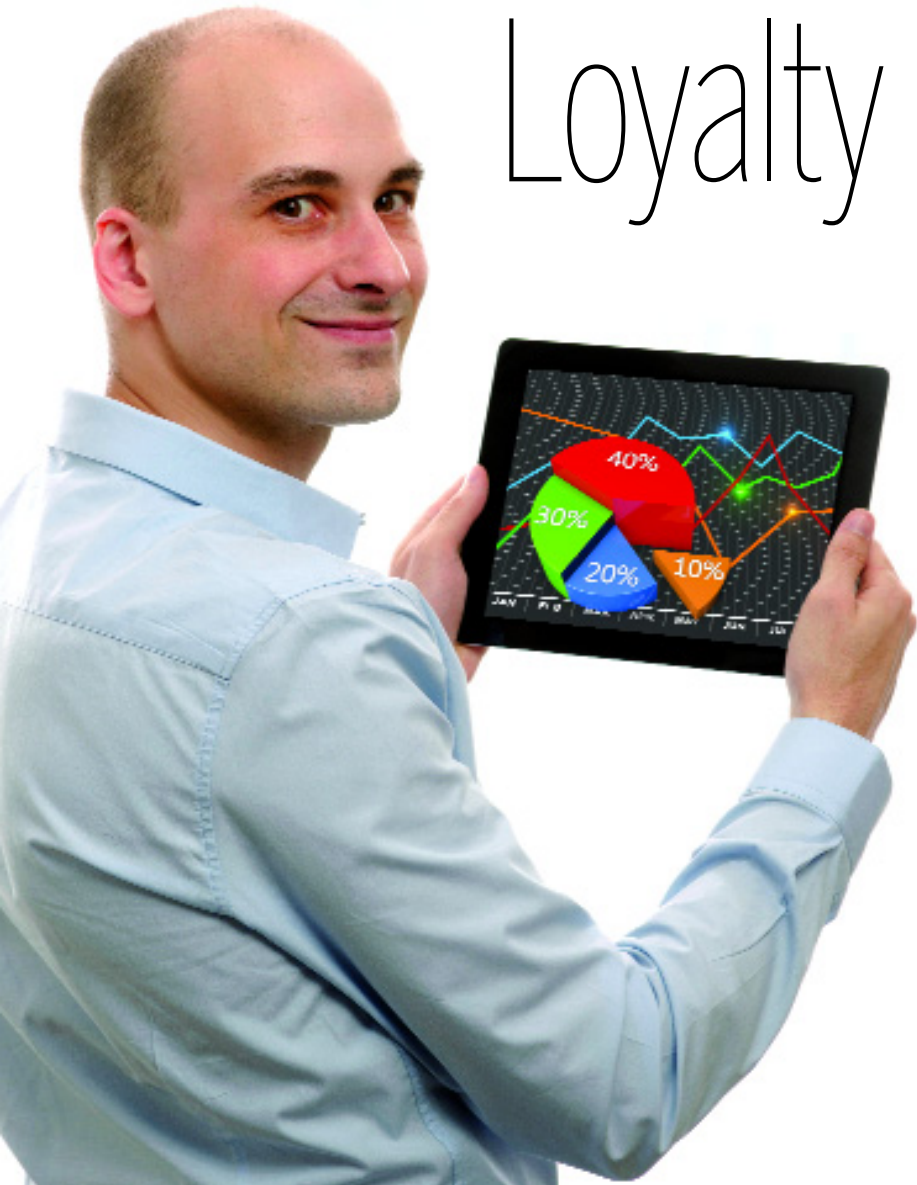
To cater to its clients' mind-boggling requirements, JM Financial Services needed to scale its infrastructure and eliminate frequent system downtime. A look at how the company achieved its objective

BY JASMINE DESAI

Delivering high-level of customer satisfaction is becoming a necessity for every organization, and JM Financial Services Pvt Ltd (JMFS), one of the largest brokerage firms in India, was no exception. JMFS offers comprehensive investment advisory and management services to institutions, banks, corporates, high net-worth individuals and retail clients. Founded in 1998, JMFS today has its footprint in 440 locations in 140 cities in India.

The big challenge

To provide effective financial solutions and sustain a business model that caters to their clients' varied requirements, JMFS has to operate complex trading systems, connect to multiple stock exchanges, and provide real-time trading information to clients. The company required a scalable infrastructure that would meet the high-availability demands of their clients. The challenge looming large in its face, was to eliminate system downtime and ensure the high availability of their trading systems to secure continued customer loyalty. Server consolidation came as the solution.

Explains Titus Gunaseelan, Head, Information Technology, JMFS, "Our previous set-ups consisted of standalone legacy servers, and the challenge of maintaining multiple platforms was affecting our efficiency. To achieve resource optimization, a reduced server footprint and high availability, we needed to consolidate our server infrastructure on a robust platform." Before finalizing on Dell platform, JMFS had a check list of three main criteria: The ability to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of its IT and business challenges; the ability to create an appropriate solution based on their requirements and challenges; and long-term support commitment.

Dell was not the only choice. Even HP was under consideration as they were the incumbent vendor. JMFS replaced their legacy servers with Dell PowerEdge R610 and R710 servers with Intel Xeon processors, virtualized with VMware vSphere 4 server software, and immediately reduced their server footprint by almost 88 percent. "Previously we had a low server utilization of around 10 percent. Through server consolidation we replaced almost 50 physical servers with 6 physical servers, and we are now running close to 70 virtual machines on these Dell servers," confirms Gunaseelan. In addition to virtualizing their data center, JMFS also deployed a Dell EqualLogic PS6000XV storage area network (SAN) solution to provide maximum uptime for their critical applications. The SAN supports a clustered environment of servers at JMFS and provides a highly scalable storage capacity that can expand on demand, which is very crucial to the company's dynamic and rapidly changing business environment.

The implementation of the solution was carried over a period of a month and was completed in November 2012. Dell did the overall execution from an end-to-end perspective. This involved the creation of a well-documented Statement Of Work (SOW) process which was signed off with the JFMS IT team prior to project execution. This was followed up with the actual implementation which was carried out by Dell's services teams.

Big on benefits

JMFS immediately started reaping benefits from the implementation which are spread across the organization. Speaking on plethora of benefits Gunaseelan says, "The benefits of virtualizing your data center extend beyond the immediate savings of reducing your hardware footprint. You also realize benefits such as easy hardware reuse and redeployment, server configuration in minutes, and

> ❛THE BENEFITS OF VIRTUALIZING YOUR DATA CENTER EXTEND BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE SAVINGS OF REDUCING YOUR HARDWARE FOOTPRINT.❜
>
> **TITUS GUNASEELAN,**
> HEAD, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, JMFS

streamlined provisioning and maintenance." The upshot of this is that you ease the burden on your staff so they have time to focus on other things such as supporting users and meeting service-level agreements (SLAs). JMFS has minimized downtime and user disruption through high availability infrastructure and mission-critical applications which now operate 24x7. This has a positive flow-over effect to the customers of JMFS, who now have guaranteed access to real-time trading data, enabling them to make trading decisions ahead of the competition. In this way the solution is supporting the company's initiatives to secure long term customer loyalty.

Through the ease and simplicity of maintaining the virtualized environment, JMFS has reduced IT maintenance resources by almost 15 percent. As data backup and recovery process are automated within the Dell EqualLogic solution, the IT team at JMFS is now able to allocate the time previously spent on manual database restorations to projects that include exploring an organization-wide virtual desktop infrastructure deployment. Gunaseelan explains, "The automatic failover and snapshotting features of the Dell EqualLogic solution have meant that our IT team has readjusted their focus onto value-added projects. The team has become more proactive in thinking about the company's future IT needs." Scalability, performance and better infrastructure utilization were the top three challenges the company wanted to overcome, which they were able to post-implementation.

Every implementation has its highlight. Commenting on the most significant aspect of the implementation Gunaseelan says, "The entire process has been a unique experience. The fact that we got what we started out to achieve with this implementation is the most significant aspect we can think of." As of now, the organization has not made any concrete plan of further leveraging the implementation and choose to go with the flow. However, they can definitely scale up or down and leverage this implementation as per their needs in the future.

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VIRTUALIZING ALL THE WAY

There are several apprehensions CIOs have when it comes to virtualizing their mission-critical applications. So, what precautions and preparations are necessary?

BY JASMINE DESAI

Godfrey Phillips India is India's second largest cigarette maker and markets a range of popular brands such as Four Square, Red and White, Jaisalmer, Cavanders and Tipper. As business grew, Godfrey Phillips India was deploying new systems and applications at a rate that threatened to eat into the company's margins. To sustain growth,Godfrey Phillips India turned to virtualization to meet its requirements. "We were concerned about transitioning enterprise applications, server utilization and the stability of the virtualized platform," says Rajesh Bawa, Senior Manager, IT Operation and Infrastructures, Godfrey Phillips India. After identifying VMware vSphere, the

IT team conducted extensive performance and reliability tests and then began moving its test and development and production environments to the VMware infrastructure.

"We decided to migrate about 30 servers to the virtualized infrastructure in our first phase, including those running Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Communicator," says Bawa. "In the second phase, we shifted across about 20 servers running applications and systems such as Oracle Database, Pentaho open source business intelligence, Oracle WebLogic application server and Oracle E-Business Suite applications." The company migrated E-

Business Suite to the new infrastructure despite the fact Oracle had not certified the product to run on VMware. "As we upgraded our enterprise resource planning system to the latest Oracle release, we moved the entire stack – including development, user acceptance testing, production and Oracle SOA Suite servers – to VMware," Bawa adds.

Godfrey Phillips India has now achieved capital expenditure savings of Rs.1.3 crore and annual operating expenditure savings of Rs.15 lakh, and cut power consumption, space and management costs by 40%. For its Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 platform, the organization has achieved a 30 % performance improvement, largely

HOW HIMALAYA DID IT

The Himalaya Drug Company implemented VMware vSphere and vCenter Operations Manager to consolidate and better manage the infrastructure their SAP applications were deployed on. As the company's business grew, the reliability and availability of its mission critical SAP applications became an increasing priority for the IT team. Peak-load performance issues and frequent maintenance led to downtime that further impacted the business. This was a growing cause of concern for the IT team at Himalaya.

The team at Himalaya took a decision to virtualize its IT environment to address their internal requirements. The company has deployed VMware vSphere 5.0 and has 11 IBM HS22 Blade servers hosting 23 VMs. All business critical SAP applications, including Quality Assurance, and production and development servers are hosted on VMware. The Citrix connect servers were also migrated to the virtual environment.

After the deployment was completed in January 2012, the IT team has noted a 100% uptime for business applications hosted on the virtual environment, even during peak-load times. "Before going live, a number of physical servers were intentionally brought down to check the fault tolerance capabilities of VMware and vMotion. vMotion seamlessly moved the virtual servers to our backup servers with zero-downtime," says Vijay Kumar, Chief Manager – IT.

Inspired by the success of their SAP environment on VMware, Himalaya's IT team intends to virtualize all physical servers in the data center and also strengthen their disaster recovery solution to ultimately have a 100% virtualized infrastructure model.

HETEROGENEOUS VIRTUALIZATION IS HERE TO STAY. WE'RE PAST THE DAYS WHEN I&O TEAMS COULD FORCE ALL APPLICATIONS TO BE VIRTUALIZED ONTO A SINGLE PRIMARY HYPERVISOR

due to its ability to allocate processing and memory resources as required. "It was a critical decision for us as email is our primary tool for business communication in the virtualized environment because it would allow us to undertake faster patch management and testing, quicker backup and install multiple levels of redundancy," says Bawa.

Virtualizing mission-critical application is indeed a 'critical decision' mixed with apprehension for most enterprises in spite of being acquainted with its many benefits. Says BS Nagarajan, Director – Systems Engineering – India & SAARC, VMware, "IT is very confident of virtualization and IT owns infrastructure, but it does not own applications, which are owned by business groups." Thus, businesses have varied concerns and apprehensions, especially around virtualizing mission-critical applications. Questions like, Will the performance get affected? Will the application work in the same way as on physical hardware? How will support from the vendor work? If the application is running fine on physical hardware why should I virtualize? are not uncommon to hear.

Says Santanu Ghose, Director, Business Critical Systems, HP India, "Any issues of downtime or any performance related issue has a very high impact on an organization. Organizations have performance related apprehension. They need dedicated resources with certain CPU etc. but if performance is not guaranteed then they do not want to pursue the course of virtualization." Other major concerns are centered around licensing, ISV support, etc.

Riding the virtualization wave
A recent Gartner report on Magic Quadrant for x86 Server Virtualization Infrastructure mentioned that the majority of Global 1000 enterprises are heavily virtualized, and very few are considering changing their existing virtualization technologies. However, a growing percentage of them have or are planning to have multiple virtualization technology silos, each managed with its own administrative solutions and skills (which may reduce software expense, but which also increases overall operational cost and complexity). Many smaller enterprises and those in emerging economies are still early in their

virtualization effort. These enterprises have several viable alternatives from which to choose.

As per Abhijit Potnis, Director-Technology Services, EMC India & SAARC, "The processing power of x86 processor has gone tremendously high. A lot of SAP and Oracle applications are being moved to the virtualized platform. Organizations should look at what infrastructure they have and applications that are ready to move quickly."

A Forrester report, Server Virtualization Predictions For 2013 by Dave Bartoletti, mentions that the x86 server virtualization infrastructure market is the foundation for two extremely important market trends that relate and overlap: infrastructure modernization and cloud computing. For infrastructure modernization, virtualization is being used to improve resource utilization, reduce costs, improve energy efficiency, improve the speed of resource delivery and encapsulate workload images in a way that enables automation. Virtualization is a horizontal trend in this sense, with the vast majority of enterprises and workloads eventually becoming virtualized.

There is a good amount of transition happening toward virtualization platform and organizations are certainly more open toward virtualizing their core applications. There are customers who are already familiar with it and have virtualized low hanging fruits and there are early adopters that directly virtualize mission- critical applications. As per Nagarajan of VMware, "Organizations can get better performance on an application when virtualized. There are other applications that might get lesser performance, but the difference is so small that organizations do not mind going ahead with it for other benefits they are getting."

Most critical applications are database intensive and organizations might harbor doubts about their performance in virtual environment. Databases are generally very I/O intensive. The good news is that in 2009-10 the marginal I/Ops that could be delivered through a virtual machine were in the range of a few thousands. The I/Ops

> ## ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD LOOK AT WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE THEY HAVE AND APPLICATIONS THAT ARE READY TO MOVE QUICKLY.

ABHIJIT POTNIS,
DIRECTOR- TECHNOLOGY SERVICES,
EMC INDIA & SAARC

> ## I.T. IS VERY CONFIDENT OF VIRTUALIZATION AND I.T. OWNS INFRASTRUCTURE, BUT I.T. DOES NOT OWN APPLICATIONS, WHICH ARE OWNED BY BUSINESS GROUPS.

BS NAGARAJAN,
DIRECTOR – SYSTEMS ENGINEERING–
INDIA & SAARC, VMWARE

that can be delivered today are one million.

The Forrester report by Bartoletti details some important tips and observations on virtualization that can come in handy for CIOs:

● The debate around hypervisor features is over, as the major platforms have effectively achieved parity. The most recent versions of Hyper-V, vSphere, and open source variants of KVM and Xen all provide adequate performance and scalability — not just for low-value applications but also for many performance-sensitive ones. That means it's safe to allow isolated pools of different hypervisors for development and test or for applications optimized for a particular platform, as long as you have the skills and staff to manage multiple hypervisor platforms.

● Heterogeneous virtualization is here to stay. We're past the days when I&O teams could force all applications to be virtualized onto a single primary hypervisor. That's good news for anyone worried about lock-in. Many I&O organizations have already judged open source hypervisors and Linux virtualization to be good enough, and there are plenty of Linux workloads yet to be virtualized. All the virtualization management vendors — from Citrix, Dell Quest, Microsoft, and VMware to startups like HotLink — support heterogeneous VM management today.

● What I&O needs to do about it. More than half of enterprises already use more than one management tool to control their virtual environments. Before you add a new management tool, consider extending what you already have to include management of new or different VM types. Your application and OS choices should determine the best way to virtualize — you can then layer on advanced management for the applications that really need it.

Virtualization, in spite of concerns, is inevitably going to grow among Indian enterprises. By charting a proper roadmap and carefully marshaling technical resources, organizations can indeed maximize their investments in this technology.

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FINDING a new CHEMISTRY

Chemical manufacturer Advance Surfactants streamlines its business processes and gains better visibility into operations with a cloud-based solution from Emkor

KTP RADHIKA

Advance Surfactants India (ASIL), one of the largest surfactants manufacturers in the country, is a part of Advance Group of Companies. Headquartered in Delhi, the company runs plants in seven other locations across India. Till recently, the company was mainly known for its core business of surfactants for the detergent industry. But in the past few years, it has made giant leaps. Last year, when it announced big expansion plans, it found that there was a key technological hindrance on its way to the next level of growth.

ASIL was a highly people-driven company and most of its business processes were manual. According to executives, the company was operating on non-integrated systems and with outdated processes. ASIL had its financial packages and smaller SAP-based ERP packages, with a single module for the entire business process. With such a system, the company was not able to meet its expansion plans and drive next level of growth.

The company also found data sharing across functions a time consuming process that was also prone to errors. Data security and theft was another area of concern. The absence of a proper automated solution meant the management's precious business time was consumed by non-core business areas like IT, HR, finance and logistics. Also, with operations spanning across various cities, it was difficult for the company to manage simultaneous transactions in real time.

With all these challenges in hand, the company realized the dire need for a complete business transformation solution to propel the organization's growth engine. However, it did not want to go with a traditional business process solution. Aashish Mahindru, Director, ASIL, says, "To deploy a traditional business process management solution, we have to make a mammoth investment in time (which usually take 18-24 months) and money. Moreover, we were having a shortage of skilled IT staff. So

> **THE SOLUTION PROVIDES A CLEAR PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANIZATION-WIDE PROCESSES AND INTEGRATED DATA ACROSS VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS.**

VIKRAM DHAM,
CEO & CO-FOUNDER, EMKOR SOLUTIONS

> **THE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE TCO MODEL WILL HELP OUR COMPANY SAVE 25-30% COST OVER A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS.**

ASHISH MAHINDRU,
DIRECTOR, ASIL

we understood that a cloud-based model would better suit our purpose."

The solution

The surfactant manufacturer assessed several vendors before it sealed a deal with Emkor Solutions. Emkor recommended them Business Function as a Service (BFaaS) methodology, a comprehensive business process management solution which integrates people, process and technology. BFaaS offers a pay-as-you-go, on-demand service delivery model. With this model, the company can outsource all critical but non-core business functions such as finance and accounts, HR, payroll, taxation and IT.

Vikram Dham, CEO & Co-Founder, Emkor Solutions explains, "The solution is vertically integrated with Microsoft Dynamics AX 2012 and provides a clear perspective on organization-wide processes and integrated data across various departments like production, quality, accounting, inventory and warehouse, sales and marketing etc. The services include order to cash, procure to pay, master data management, HR process, etc. Additionally, Lync, Exchange and SharePoint as collaboration & communication tools have bridged the gap that existed between the key departments."

Initially, the solution was implemented at ASIL's head office in Rajokri. The subsequent phases of implementation were done at six other plants located at Silvassa, Pitampur, Pondicherry, Roorkee, Mangalore and Kolkata. The biggest issue that ASIL faced during the implementation process was multiple locations spread of their plants. However, Emkor's team managed it all smoothly, says ASIL management. According to Mahindru, one of the major reasons why implementations fail in large organizations is due to long deployment times. With ASIL, the deployment was successfully done in a time span of just four months in all its locations.

The benefits

Mahindru says, "Our main objective of implementing BFaaS was to automate all our processes, enhance efficiency and reduce our overall cost." And now the solution is providing ASIL with real-time information which, in turn, helps it expedite decision making and reduce time to market for new products. It also helps in effective inventory management while reducing the number of documentation errors. BFaaS solution has built-in best practices for improving operational efficiency and integrates quality management module ensuring high quality adherence.

Another key benefit is on the cost part. The pay-as-you-go model allows ASIL to manage its investments in the service in an organized manner that suits their pockets. Declares Mahindru, "There was a minimal initial deployment cost but after that it is all about the monthly subscription and the number of users. Also, the highly competitive TCO model will help the our company save 25-30% cost over a period of three years." The cloud based model is also helping the company save time, effort and focus spent on non-core areas. "Partnering with Emkor has really allowed us now to focus more on our core business imperatives, and we can clearly see positive results, as all our departments can now collaborate effectively," says Mahindru. The deployment also helps ASIL to become a process centric company with increased security, controls, governance and business productivity.

In future, ASIL plans to deploy more services and business outsourcing processes from Emkor. That includes cloud-based accounting and financial services, among others, and the company is preparing to outsource all its non-core activities. "All this falls under our overall strategy to impart BYOD reforms in our organization, so that all our employees will be able to access anything from anywhere at any time," Mahindru sums up.

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Linda Xu, Vice President – Worldwide Product Marketing, Hitachi Data Systems (HDS) talks to Pankaj Maru about key data and storage trends, company's cloud strategy and its impact on product portfolio. Excerpts...

"Most people think security is a key reason for cloud's unpopularity"

What are the key trends in the data and storage space in recent times?

In recent times, I see three major trends - cloud, big data and BYOD. Globally, this year, a lot of adoption is seen in the private cloud. The drive for greater efficiency and cost reduction is seen as the primary reason. Cost is reduced by switching to opex from a capex model. Everyone wants to "do more with less" and with the cloud model, IT can be run much more efficiently.

Big data is the second trend as people want to "do more with less"– cloud helps you "with less" and big data helps you "do more." A CTO or CIO tries to use technology to do more. In the past with advertising, for example, you would just run an advertisement on a billboard. In the big data world, you can get customer level information around a certain product. With big data, all purchase, travel information and interests can be co-related and mapped together to predict a customer's emotions at a moment when he is more likely to make a purchase. So big data is used to generate more revenue for business. In the past, advertising was more mass media and now it is targeted individually. That is the basic promise of big data. The industry though, still has a "wait and see" attitude but as an industry, we need to figure out how to get true value out of big data. The future is definitely very bright but we are just in the process of getting the right data to analyze. Metadata is very important as that can help filter out all the data that is irrelevant.

BYOD, the third trend has been a challenge for IT because all of a sudden people are using mobile devices, regardless of whether they are allowed to or not. The desire to have secure enterprise class solutions to enable BYOD exists. Having an enterprise class BYOD solution is going to drive a lot of the future needs.

How have HDS products and solutions aligned to its cloud strategy? And to what extent do these products have to move to cloud as an offering compared to on-premise?

What does HDS' cloud strategy mean to enterprises in real terms?

From an enterprise's standpoint, it wants to analyze data more effectively to target the customer better and get insights faster. We have a very scientific way of quantifying the impact of our solutions. We categorize our costs into 39 different groups such as the stored data cost, different tiers cost, managing data and backup cost. This strategy has been well accepted by our customers and have saved close to 30% of their operational costs by adopting these technologies.

The cloud strategy was announced about two years ago, which was when we announced the content cloud, information cloud and infrastructure cloud. The vision has never changed though and we are just executing it based on this direction. Our recent announcement is based on the content cloud. We are expanding the content cloud from just the data center and remote offices to mobile devices.

Traditionally, HDS had Virtual Storage Platform (VSP) and Hitachi Unified Storage (HUS) and these are block based storage systems. Because of the importance of cloud, which is not just about storage but also computing power, convergence is really seen as a big trend. The storage, server and network need to work as a single resource pool which is why we are focusing on Unified Computing Platform (UCP) that is solely designed for the cloud. This is truly a private cloud turnkey solution that we offer. From a portfolio perspective, we have truly expanded way beyond what we had for the cloud.

In which direction do you see the cloud is going?

Most people think security is a key reason for cloud's unpopularity. I think the bigger issue though is the lack of standards. When you select a provider for the cloud and if the provider goes out of business, what is the standard if the provider used some proprietary technology and how would you transfer to another provider? I think the use of proper standards is one of the inhibitors for cloud adoption. The near term opportunity though, is in private cloud. IT is going to play a major role in transforming their data center into a private cloud and IT as a service will be a big trend. In the last decade, the data center went through a lot of transitions - it was consolidated, then virtualized and then automated. Post that, the cloud delivery layer came to allow internal customers to consume IT as a service. In the next two years, there will be a cloud transition.

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HUNGRY
FOR GROWTH

TableGrabber, a startup incubated under the Microsoft Accelerator program, gets set on a rapid growth path, leveraging the technical expertise and cloud resources of the IT giant

BY MEHAK CHAWLA

There are many things that right mentoring can do for startups. And if it emanates from the big boys of technology, a startup can indeed go a long way.

Perhaps that is why Microsoft's Accelerator For Windows Azure is already in the limelight even though it's only running its second term currently.

Elaborates Mukund Mohan, CEO-in-residence, Microsoft Accelerator for Windows Azure (India), "The program has been around for 9 months and we are currently running our second batch. We had about 230-250 applicants that applied for the first batch. Out of these, only 11 applicants were selected by us. In the first batch no startup had funding prior to the program and at the end of that batch, there were 9 startups that got funding. In the second batch, we had 435 applicants and we selected 12 companies out of that. This time around, even before the batch has graduated, 7 companies have been funded, 2 of them are not looking at all and one firm has been acquired."

Mohan explains what are the key things they look for in the selection process. "There are three things we look for in every company. One is that we look for a very large market opportunity. Secondly we look for a product that is very disruptive and the third thing we look for is coachable entrepreneurs-people who are ready to learn, listen and take feedback."

To get more insight into the program, we talked to TableGrabber, one of the startups incubated in the second batch of the accelerator program. Here's how their world has changed post-selection.

The startup story

TableGrabber offers a restaurant reservation system providing a real time reservation information to customers. It's much like other conveniences of the day like airlines, hotels, railways and buses: all of which already have well established reservation systems. However, there is hardly any mechanism available for diners today because restaurants don't have a reservation system in place. That is where the firm is looking to come in. They shall provide the back-end solution for the restaurants, something that has so far

AZURE'S LOAD BALANCING LETS US DEPLOY AS MUCH INFRASTRUCTURE AS WE NEED BASED ON THE TRAFFIC ON OUR SITE. IT AUTOMATICALLY DEPLOYS AND SCALES UP.

PAWAN MARWAHA,
CO-FOUNDER & CHIEF GRABBER, TABLEGRABBER

THE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT THE STARTUPS ARE USING IS MICROSOFT'S AZURE ON THE CLOUD SERVICES WHICH IS A PAY-AS-YOU-GO MODEL. BUT FOR ALL STARTUPS IN THE PROGRAM, CREDITS UP TO $60,000 ARE PROVIDED FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS

been missing from the picture.

"Most restaurants cannot manage reservations because they don't have a software to manage it. So we developed a back-end software that allows restaurants to manage their inventory in real time. This software is connected to the website so people immediately know if a table is available or not. We also go further and allow the restaurant to be able to offer a deal or discount as per their discretion. For instance, any table being reserved on a weekday evening might get some discount or even a free welcome drink etc. We are already live in some 350 restaurants in Delhi and Mumbai and have just recently launched in Bangalore," details Pawan Marwaha, Co-Founder & Chief Grabber, TableGrabber.

According to Mohan, one of the key factors behind the selection of TableGrabber was the substantial market opportunity that they were looking to address. "The other thing is that restaurant menus are mostly taken to be fixed entities. With TableGrabber, restaurants somewhat have the flexibility to customize their menu and pricing based on factors such as value, time, season etc. We found this demand based or variable pricing an innovative model."

Microsoft startup accelerator program also makes clear its focus on startups that are utilizing technologies like cloud and mobility. TableGrabber scored here as well. "We are using a lot of cloud based technology in our technology stack. We are also using Microsoft servers based out of Singapore and U.S. Cloud helps us reduce the cost of deploying the software. Restaurants too, don't need to invest in extensive hardware and servers at their end," says Marwaha.

For TableGrabber, it was a well thought of plan to apply to this program. They had been invited by a lot of incubators and accelerators but wanted to choose carefully and certainly Microsoft was at the top of the list. According to Marwaha, "In many cases, incubators are just platforms and they do not have the required manpower or expertise to provide to startups. With Microsoft, that issue was addressed. They have a dedicated team and of course, they come with a lot of brand value."

After the grab

When TableGrabber came to Microsoft, they had what Marwaha describes as "the minimum viable product," which was up and running but wasn't in its ideal state. From this stage, they were able to take their product to something which is scalable and easily deployable. Microsoft not only assisted them with product architecture and deployment but also helped in refining of the product by inculcating customer feedback.

During the program, that runs through four months, startups make weekly commitments both on the product and also on the customer base. "Unlike other such programs, we follow a milestone based approach and measure achievements against preset targets. Every week the startups have to make commitments and they end up paying a fine for the commitments they don't meet," explains Mohan.

Another part of this program is that Microsoft gives startups access to potential customers. TableGrabber has got access to companies like SAP, Goldman Sachs etc. Finally, there is the access to mentors and investors who can chart out a growth path for the startups. "We have got about 120-150 mentors from various companies ranging from small investors to seasoned executives," reveals Mohan.

The technology infrastructure that the startups are using is Microsoft's Azure on the cloud services which is a pay-as-you-go model. But for all startups in the program, credits up to $60,000 are provided for the first two years, so they don't have to pay for any infrastructure at all.

Key take-aways

According to Marwaha, once they got into the program, they had full access to senior architects of Microsoft who helped them through the process of setting up a cloud. With cloud technology, came the many benefits that it is known for. "We have been able to make our product much more scalable without any downtime," says Marwaha.

Thanks to the cloud, TableGrabber now offers its services on a monthly subscription model in order to make it affordable for the restaurants and not

give them a high upfront cost. "The beauty of cloud is that we can deploy as many servers as we want based on our demand. Azure's load balancing lets us deploy as much infrastructure as we need based on the traffic on our site etc. It automatically deploys and scales up."

Fast sailing has been another key take away from the program. "We didn't end up spending too much time on product features because we got a lot of technology insight to be able to deploy them quickly," opines Marwaha.

To top it all, there was the amount of exposure in terms of PR and visibility that TableGrabber got. "We were able to sit down with companies like SAP and Intel to explain our product and even promote it with their employees and get feedback," Marwaha mentions.

TableGrabber is now working on a mobile app for their product which should be out soon. They have also been selected in the Startup Chile program.

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THANKS TO THE CLOUD, TABLEGRABBER NOW OFFERS ITS SERVICES ON A MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION MODEL IN ORDER TO MAKE IT AFFORDABLE FOR THE RESTAURANTS

SUCCEEDING AT SIEM

BY **PRATHAP R & ARVIND KAMATH**

Done the right way, a Security Information and Event Management solution can prevent data breaches and help companies meet compliance needs

GIVING THE MANAGEMENT USEFUL AND ACTIONABLE REPORTS SHOULD CONVINCE THEM ABOUT SIEM'S VALUE TO AN ORGANIZATION. THERE ARE OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE THAT CAN CREATE INSIGHTFUL REPORTS AND GRAPHS OF THE EVENTS

Deploying a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution has been identified as one of the top information security trends in recent years. Not surprising, given the growing instances of data breaches in organizations.

If planned well, an SIEM solution can help monitor and in some cases protect data breaches, apart from fulfilling the compliance requirements. It can also assist with forensic investigations of a suspected data breach. That said, there are a few things that need to be followed to make SIEM deployment successful.

Log management: This is the most difficult and time consuming part of deploying an SIEM solution. In fact, this can be started even before a product is bought. An SIEM product will need to parse all of the logs at a centralized location. One of the easy ways to forward the logs from different and disparate devices is to use a syslog server. This is installed by default on Unix/Linux and there are syslog agents for Windows that are free too.

As you go about solving this puzzle, you will be answering questions such as: What are all the device logs critical to be monitored for security? What kind of logs need to be forwarded? How about proprietary software logs? How can the logs be normalized for better storage? How long should the logs should be archived?

These can be decided based on your company's specific requirements. In a medium to large organization, it usually takes about 10 months to deploy a good log management system.

Define what is to be monitored: The next logical step will be to make sense out of this heap of logs. The most common and important events to monitor are in the authentication logs.

The next challenge is to tackle the situation when you are monitored or alerted for. This is a challenge because it is quite different for each company. One way to arrive at this is to derive from the organization's security policy. For example, you can configure to look for five failed login attempts by a user. However, this might by all means be a genuine user having issues logging in. But we have seen several times that this can also be the work of attackers trying a brute force attack on a system. This is called rule-based configuration.

Another method is to use heuristic based monitoring. By this method, a map of the normal operation logs are taken as a baseline and then alerted if it is not normal on a particular time period. There are several free and open source tools available that can help you watch the logs, correlate and alert.

Think reports: As with any product implementation, delivering ROI to the senior management is crucial to get the budget approved. Giving the management useful and actionable reports should convince them about SIEM's value to an organization. Here again, there are open source software that can create insightful reports and graphs of the events. The commercial tools can give better looking and more detailed reports provided you know what your management would be most interested to see.

There is no doubt that implementing an SIEM product does add value to your organization's overall security scheme. However, following the above guidelines helps to make the right decision in buying a commercial SIEM product. Therefore, make maximum use of your investment.

Prathap R is Lead - IT Security Infrastructure, and Aravind Kamath is Security Analyst - IT Security Infrastructure at Texas Instruments India.

PREPPING THE GOVT WORKFORCE

The task of preparing the public sector workforce for a transformational IT initiative is difficult but not impossible

There is near unanimity amongst public sector practitioners that the toughest part in an e-government program is to first sensitize and convince the workforce to accept technology, then to train and help them to adopt the new system.

The public sector workforce is unique in many ways.

Workforce is hired for life, exit coincides with superannuation: Voluntary exit options in the public sector are extremely limited. A traditional government department has more than half its staff above the age of forty. Many of them are quite knowledgeable and efficient at what they do but come from the pre-computer era. They feel comfortable and secure on pen and paper based systems. Convincing them to make a switch to a computer-based paradigm is tough but not impossible to achieve.

Promotions are linked to seniority and there is little incentive to perform: The government promotion norms are fairly inelastic. Employee assessment is done through annual confidential reports and as long as there is no adverse comment in the assessment, every employee is treated at par at the time of promotion. Unlike corporates, no preference is given to high fliers in government rules. Bringing about change in such an environment is dependent largely on persuasion and goodwill.

In-service training, especially of subordinate staff, is infrequent: While the senior civil servants do have an annual compulsory training program financed and organized by the Department of Personnel, Government of India, for subordinate staff, training is infrequent and rare. Barring an occasional computer literacy program, most programs for subordinates are scheme-specific. This makes it difficult for a government leader to undertake preparatory training.

Training is taken as a relief from routine; others regard this as punishment: Most department heads accord low priority to training and often depute non-performing employees to training programs. The best performing subordinates have to be pressured to be relieved for training. An extended training program is largely viewed by staff as an imposition and is accepted with reluctance.

Members of the civil services who normally head departments and provide leadership do not have security of tenure and are moved frequently out of a department: This is particularly true for members of the All India Services. Transfers are often used as a tool to punish, reward, harass and sometimes even arm twist the person to submit to extra governmental influence. The leader is forced to spend considerable time on survival than looking to provide guidance and high priority to transformational IT projects.

In spite of the above challenges, government systems have managed to successfully introduce IT automation in traditional departments. UIDAI, citizen services service delivery, bank automation, land records etc are some examples of successful projects.

Based on real life experience in government and outside, the task of preparing the public sector workforce to a transformational IT initiative is best split in three phases:

Phase 1- Pre-automation sensitization: Departments, who have successfully implemented IT projects, spend a lot of effort and money on pre project training aimed to sensitize and expose the workforce to an upcoming change.

It is best to include in the training budget funds for training programs that

MOST DEPARTMENT HEADS ACCORD LOW PRIORITY TO TRAINING AND OFTEN DEPUTE NON-PERFORMING EMPLOYEES TO TRAINING PROGRAMS

explain to employees, the scope and impact of impending automation. Successful e-government programs have benefited from such pre-automation staff sensitization training. States like Karnataka, Kerala, MP and others who have had successful e-government programs have paid a lot of attention to program sensitization training.

Phase 2-Training and change management during IT systems build and implementation phase: Most vendors entrusted with the task of building and implementing an IT solution in a department restrict themselves to application training. Many multilateral and bilateral agency funded projects routinely include training needs assessment and training module preparation as part of their program. These can be used by the IT vendors to provide focused training to select staff of a government department.

Change management programs are also getting increasingly integrated with IT projects. Here staff is classified into

CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ARE ALSO GETTING INCREASINGLY INTEGRATED WITH I.T. PROJECTS. HERE STAFF IS CLASSIFIED INTO INNOVATORS, FOLLOWERS AND LAGGARDS WITH TRAINING OF TRAINERS PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON THE INNOVATORS

innovators, followers and laggards with training of trainers programs focused on the innovators. These innovators are then included in the training team to train the mass of the workforce. Such client-vendor teams are very successful in quicker adoption of IT in a non-IT setup.

Phase 3- Post-automation support and hand-holding: This phase is also supported by IT vendors who are required to provide not only technical but also training support that, over a period of time, tapers off as the department workforce becomes adept in working in an automated environment. This period is often quite long and in the Indian public sector could extend up to two years after completion of the IT project implementation phase.

The task of preparing the public sector workforce is complex and cannot be done by IT vendors alone. It has to be a combined government-vendor effort.

Sudhir Ahluwalia is a business expansion consultant.

COLUMN

TARUN MALIK

MEASURING IT PERFORMANCE

The measurement of IT in line with business drivers can help organizations better leverage its value

The technology landscape has changed and cloud services have matured. Business understands the benefits that cloud services have to offer and as a result, CIOs have to focus on business benefits and agility than building and managing on-premise technology investments. CIOs across the globe are looking for strategic plans and measures wherein they can partner with business for growth.

If we take a step back, every business defines a vision and drivers, sets objectives, identifies and executes key enabling programs in the direction set by the strategic vision. They monitor measurable impact that these programs make on business. As CIOs adopt cloud services, the measure and performance of IT will go through a paradigm shift. Traditional view which offers capex vs opex, operations metrics, servers, uptime, availability, and backup metrics of on-premise infrastructure will not make an impact.

As a trend, we see three key changes developing in how IT is reporting its impact to business. The first one is to align the key performance indicators (KPIs) of IT in line with that of business (for example, demonstrate IT spend, roadmap, blueprint and programs across business drivers of enabling growth, harnessing productivity, employee retention, cost optimizations, etc.) The second is to define quantifiable measurements (for example, by enabling a collaboration platform for the sales team, the number of RFP responses have increased by 10%, which is aligned to the business driver of growth; by enabling unified communication the cost saved on travel is 15%, which is aligned to the business driver of cost optimization; and by enabling consumerization of IT, employee retention was impacted by 8%.) The third key change is about how to report traditional metrics from on-premise services and cloud service in a unified view.

The framework should provide the ability to gather relevant information

THE FRAMEWORK SHOULD PROVIDE THE ABILITY TO GATHER RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION AND CLOUD SERVICES, CONNECT THE INFORMATION INTO KNOWLEDGE AND PROVIDE THE ABILITY FOR DEEP INSIGHT

A ROBUST DASHBOARD

Leverage technology to build a robust dashboard which is designed on business and IT KPI mapping. Steps to build such dashboard are as follows:
- Map Business and IT KPI.
- Define perspectives/pillars/drivers under which IT services will be represented.
- Define metrics for IT KPI along with targets and thresholds.
- Define persona of CXOs and what their views will be.
- Define and map sources of information.
- Build or adopt a solution platform for dashboards that can help configure scorecards, create graphical dashboards with a combination of HTML5 for mobility.

from within the organization and cloud services, connect the information into knowledge and provide the ability for deep insight. With technology changes, this will not only be limited to service related metrics but also help aggregate customer sentiments from social media.

Essential views

There are four essential views that an IT measurement system should focus on. There should be a CEO/COO view. This view enables the CEO and the COO to measure the impact of IT programs and services aligned to growth, innovation, and employees. Another is the CFO view. It enables the CFO to measure the impact of IT programs and services aligned to cost optimization and productivity. The third one is the business head view which enables business heads to measure the impact of IT programs and services aligned to productivity and impact on

operational efficiency. And the last one is the IT Services view that enables the IT operations team to measure service efficiency on operational metrics such as availability and performance.

One of the other critical aspects for success of such a measurement system is user experience. In this age of tablets, handheld devices, and intuitive systems, there are some key trends that we have seen catching on with CIOs. One of them is heat maps, which are true representations of the state of health with visual indicators demonstrating which area to focus on. As human nature, we understand and interpret Red, Amber and Green very fast. The heat map thereby helps us focus on the areas that the CXO needs to deep-dive upon. Another is the tile-

IN THIS AGE OF TABLETS, HANDHELD DEVICES, AND INTUITIVE SYSTEMS, THERE ARE SOME KEY TRENDS THAT WE HAVE SEEN CATCHING ON WITH CIOS: AMONG THEM, HEAT MAPS, TILE-BASED VIEWS AND GIS-INTEGRATED VIEWS

based concept, which is the latest trend. Tile-based views in software help display the latest information in summary even before click-through for more details.

Highly graphical and GIS integrated views are also in demand. Graphs are easy to understand and GIS allows them to relate better. For instance, a data center IT operations dashboard that can demonstrate data centers and services over a GIS heat map.

In summary, the measurement of IT in line with business drivers can help IT communicate its value much easily than justifying spends on servers and services for uptime and availability.

Tarun Malik is Associate Enterprise Architect, Microsoft India.

5 PRINCIPLES DRIVING IT REDESIGN

CIOs must be prepared to adapt their IT infrastructures in a way that supports distributed employees, anytime anywhere collaboration, and the need for business continuity

WITH ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORKFORCE OPERATING IN LOCATIONS OTHER THAN HQ, AND AN ESTIMATED 450 MILLION MOBILE WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD, BUSINESSES NOW OPERATE EVERYWHERE, AND ALL THE TIME

Technology has enabled businesses to become highly distributed. Whether "distributed" means across a region, a country, or around the globe, one thing is certain: headquarters isn't where all of the action is. With about two-thirds of the workforce operating in locations other than HQ, and an estimated 450 million mobile workers around the world, businesses now operate everywhere, and all the time.

The ability to take advantage of business opportunities, people, and resources in previously distant markets has created a vast new set of challenges for organizations. Taken together, they present a difficult dilemma to a CEO or CIO: Continue to deliver acceptable IT services by throwing money, bandwidth, and infrastructure at the problem? Or, save money by consolidating at the expense of the end-user experience? Or, use IT to drive new business initiatives?

Is it possible to do both? Is it possible to eliminate the impact of distance on business? Is it possible to work smarter by leveraging global talent and exploit a geographic arbitrage that globalization has enabled? What about the Cloud ?

With such a pressing need for redesigning IT strategies to encompass global, follow-the-sun business practices, how does the CIO begin to sketch out the path forward?

There are five key principles that CIOs must take into account when thinking about how business is changing today.

Distance doesn't matter: Employees now expect to be able to collaborate in real time with any co-worker. They expect to have access to whatever data or services the company offers no matter where they happen to be. Where in the world that co-worker actually works is irrelevant. They may be working from home, different offices, at airports, manufacturing facilities, or even on a ship somewhere. Knowledge workers need the flexibility to work wherever they must in order to best complete their jobs. That may mean on-site, at customer's office, or from home. IT must therefore be an enabler for the way business needs to operate. Waiting 20 minutes for a file to be sent between workers – even if they are across the world from each other – is no longer acceptable for the employee or for the customer project that they are working on.

Business never stops: With a globalized workforce and a rapidly globalizing customer base, businesses cannot afford their operations to be stopped for even a few minutes. Responsiveness to disaster or failure – often characterized by recovery point objective (RPO) and recovery time objective (RTO) – must go far beyond responding to common problems like a failed SAN or a downed fiber connection. Disasters like hurricanes or flu pandemic might force workers to operate from home for an unspecified period of time. Compromised data centers may require enterprise to rapidly switch operations to secondary locations with no loss in information.

Applications and data must be available everywhere but all in one place: With organizations working harder to protect their valuable data and sensitive customer information, many IT organizations are engaging in IT consolidation projects. Consolidating data makes it easier to track, protect, and restore. Beginning with remote tape backup and progressing to more complicated projects like file servers, document management applications, PLM systems, and web applications, CIOs are demanding that data be brought back from remote offices. At the same time, businesses recognize that the data and applications were "out there" for a reason – that's where they needed to be accessed. So while consolidation is an important strategy for data protection and cost control, it can negatively impact business

operations unless LAN-like performance can be maintained everywhere.

Knowledge must be harnessed and data must be managed: Consolidation helps to eliminate the 'islands' of storage and data that evolve over time. But with organizations being required to react quickly in the face of change, or move in order to take advantage of an opportunity, flexibility in moving data and applications is essential. CIOs must be able to quickly move massive amounts of data, and potentially set up application infrastructure in remote locations overnight. New offices and merged / acquired businesses must quickly be absorbed into the fabric of the existing organization by providing them immediate access to new systems and data.

There are no second-class enterprise citizens: The days of the "important" people working at corporate HQ are rapidly fading. Employees everywhere are now empowered to make important decisions. Whether it is designing or manufacturing a product, working with a customer, or working on a localized

THE ABILITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, PEOPLE, AND RESOURCES IN PREVIOUSLY DISTANT MARKETS HAS CREATED A VAST NEW SET OF CHALLENGES FOR ORGANIZATIONS

version of an advertising campaign, work happens everywhere. And the work of the distributed employee isn't less important than anyone else's work. Just as importantly, these workers need to interact with their colleagues, applications, and data everywhere. CIOs and IT managers may no longer prioritize workers based on their geographic location. Every member of the enterprise needs to have access to the same applications and at the same level of application performance.

The way that businesses operate is always changing. CIOs must be prepared to adapt their IT infrastructures in a way that supports distributed employees, anytime anywhere collaboration, and the need for business continuity in times of change or disaster. Using performance boosting solutions including both WAN optimization and Application Delivery (ADC) technologies, CIOs now have a way to tie together their distributed enterprises. Mobile and branch office workers can have the same level of application performance as users at headquarters. Applications are more resilient, data centers are more protected, and organizations can respond faster in the event of disaster. Infrastructure can be consolidated without performance loss to far-off locations, yet retain the flexibility to move data and applications, into and out of the cloud on demand. With these kind of IT performance boosting solutions, CIOs now have a way to bring their distributed enterprise closer together.

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LifeSize's Andreas Wienold, Vice President International (APAC & EMEA) and Deepak Braganza, Country Manager, India & South Asia, talk to Pankaj Maru about the company's strategy and approach in the Indian market, and the latest trends in the communication collaboration space. Excerpts...

"A consultative approach is more effective today"

Cisco and Polycom have good presence in India, so what kind of strategy is being planned by LifeSize for the Indian market and how has the company grown in the country so far?

Andreas Wienold: Let me talk in general. For us, the focus is always going to be users. It's very simple, if people use our equipment and they like it more, then they will use it more and will talk about it to other people. So a lot of investment that we are making is in the user experience on video quality, the ease of use, ease of handling the equipment and in making calls. And this is how we win most of our customers and that's why we don't compete on data sheets. We get our customer to play with it, our end points are infrastructure, we don't believe in power points and don't believe in other people's power points. We allow customers to look at our solutions and let them test it before buying, which is different from our competitors which try to sell using PDFs and Powerpoint presentations. Given the tough economic scenario, people are unwilling to spend money and look for value and scalability. Scalability gives us a complete different stand today amongst our competitors.

Deepak Braganza: It is very relevant today. The main reason that drives our partners to sell LifeSize today, is the firm belief that if you demo LifeSize you will never lose. The visual experience is so rich and crisp, that seldom do we lose an order after showing a demo, a customer will compare us with others and that is the time where we will show the power of our systems.

What are the potential sectors where your products are seeing adoption and what is the market approach?

Andreas Wienold: For LifeSize, the solutions do not have limitations. From a small lawyer to a large enterprise, we can help them as much as we can use the large enterprise. We can help enterprises of all sizes, small sized to larger enterprises which could be in public sector or education sector. We can set up a platform for

Andreas Wienold

Our combination is user experience and cost. If you get this right, you can scale up. Mostly, our initial deals are not in 100 units but it is 5, 10 or 15 and if the customer does not get a good experience, they will just buy 5 or 15 units but if the experience is good they would come back for more and you can scale up. This is where, we really position ourselves well. Get the best technology, roll out the best design and solution that works in any location, any office and at a cost effective rate – this is our key proposition.

interaction in a classroom setup which can be recorded and made available to video stream to train pupils at home. The government sector including state, center and defence are also huge verticals for us. On the corporate front, we focus on the upper end of the mid-market as we have a lot of customers and these are fortune 500 customers. Our services are affordable and are easily accessible when it comes to usage in this competitive market. There are plenty of mid-sized and larger enterprises which often come to us and in India, there are plenty of such enterprises. Today, most of the businesses are global, for instance in Bangalore, most of the IT centers have international reach.

Deepak Braganza: In India we are seeing success across all vertical so we are present in large enterprises as well as SMBs. Education sector is picking up slowly, and we have made some good progress in education, and also recently bagged some good projects in healthcare. So we can say all verticals are going well and working for us. Its more about the power of the UVC platform, the flexibility and simplicity that drives it and customers actually look for a consultative approach rather then presenting just a box like - 'this is my box with the product, take it or leave it.' We understand the requirements of customers and take the solution and that is what differentiates us. Consultative approach is more effective today rather then presenting a box and fight over the price. I think this consultative approach is helping us gain so much of the market share gradually.

Andreas Wienold: We have amazing partners and our partner network is through out the country which adds value. When we make our box available to them, they really know our solution - how they need to integrate it in the meeting room, in the unified communications environment, integrating the network and so on. We are different from our competition.

We are independent, we might have been known to be a division of Logitech but we are very separate division of Logitech. While there

are a lot of synergies we can leverage day to day, we have the ability to go out and do what's right for the customer. Some of the competitors have been acquired by larger companies and they have kind of a bag pack of other things, which they need to position too. One of our competitors would obviously love to upgrade their network as they talk about video, another competitor would not easily integrate with other people's UC solutions because its not its own. So our independence, combined with the need and ability, always have made us work as per the scenario of customers.

In a new role as LifeSize's vice president for International markets what kind of expectations do you have from the Indian team and what are your plans for the company?
Andreas Wienold: I don't look for a huge change, what I am looking is a team that is customer centric and develop deals with moral and loyalty for long term customer relationship. We have customers who have been buying for the last 6 -7 years and buy even today, so we want long term customer relationship as customers are the main part and parcel for a business organization. We want a strong customer and a partner base for growth. We need to come up with customer solutions and not with a big box and we have a consulting approach towards customers.

Are there any plans to ramp up headcount, investment as well as channel partners in India?
Andreas Wienold: We have a research and development center here in Bangalore and if we look at it from a distance, its one of the fastest growing organization and more and more of our key objects and software platforms are done in Bangalore. From a market perspective, we will always invest where we see the returns. Our model is scalability but we don't need a lot of people for scalability however, what we need is right kind of people with right skill sets for making right solutions. Our team in India, currently is of right size and more number of people are working here in India than Germany.

Lifesize is third after Cisco and Polycom so any plans to change the market position and which are the areas of improvement?
Andreas Wienold: We care more about the untapped markets, though fighting for shares in the existing markets is important. We have grown from zero and now we are on third spot. We need to be clever on how to convince people to use video who haven't used it before. The industry has never offered the people an answer to it, because it was overpriced. But we defined

Deepak Braganza

From the latest 3G analysis, a maximum number of users are watching YouTube. Also India has over taken Japan on the number of smart phones devices. Local vendors have brought the price point to low-level for mass market. Our approach is device agnostic but to concentrate on the platform and we are betting big on LTE because video wouldn't be purely an enterprise thing and we will see videos will entering home of these enterprise people.

the ways, accepted the market segment and came forth with affordable video solutions and its effects will be seen in the future. We can grow even more through communication, through market segmentation by putting right business we can even grow more.

What's the key proposition that can take your company and its products ahead in the market?
Andreas Wienold: Our combination is user experience and cost. If you get this right, you can scale up. Mostly, our initial deals are not in 100 units but it is 5, 10 or 15 and if the customer does not get a good experience, they will just buy 5 or 15 units but if the experience is good they would come back for more and you can scale up. This is where, we really position ourselves well. Get the best technology, roll out the best design and solution that works in any location, any office and at a cost effective rate – this is our key proposition.

What kinds of trends are emerging in communication collaboration space with the advent of cloud and mobility?
Andreas Wienold: It's difficult to say because we are in middle of everything, which makes our industry interesting, whether it be cloud, mobility or so on. We have virtualized our product as a cloud offering and mobility is huge. I think this will be the one big thing we will see in India. Once LTE gets rolled out here, you will get almost unlimited mobile bandwidth, lot of people at airports or in home will be seen using these devices to make HD video call. And on the mobility side, we are far more advanced compared to the competitors. And we are successful because we can extend our solutions onto specific devices, cover a wide range of devices and no vendor covers more devices than we do. This is going to be a new trend in India. We will see people making video calls within the cities and people in the same city will connect through video conferencing or calls considering the traffic issues in cities.

Deepak Braganza: From the latest 3G analysis, a maximum number of users are watching YouTube. Also India has over takenJapan on the number of smart phones devices. Local vendors have brought the price point to low-level for mass market. Our approach is device agnostic but to concentrate on the platform and we are betting big on LTE because video wouldn't be purely an enterprise thing and we will see videos will entering home of these enterprise people.

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ReStor opens first HDD and SSD repair facility in India

INDIA'S FIRST FACILITY for the test and repair of hard disk drives and solid-state drives came into being with the launch of an ISO-9001:2008 certified lab, ReStor in Delhi-NCR. The facility incorporates a completely sterile clean room type environment with electro-static discharge (ESD) safe setup, a combination of indigenously developed testing bays/racks and imported diagnostics jigs, and is backed by a highly trained, experienced technical team.

Started as a unit of dStor Technologies Pvt Ltd, the entrepreneurial venture of storage industry veteran Sharad Srivastava, the ReStor HDD and SSD recertification / refurbishment initiative aims to help the green cause by facilitating reduction of e-waste, provide more consumer choice with an economically priced segment and enable warranty/AMC service providers cut down their support cost.

"The hard disk drive is one of the most fragile items in the computer, requiring extreme care in handling and protection from shock, vibration and Electro Static Discharge. Among other reasons, the complex requirements of the repair process and the lack of scale resulted in a situation that no facility came up in India for the test and repair of HDDs. Now, with the scenario fast changing, we have set up the first fully equipped centre for the purpose," said Sharad Srivastava, Founder-Director, dStor Technologies.

Presently, most in-warranty faulty drives are exported out of the country for repair, while out-of-warranty drives are largely junked. This puts a heavy eco-burden on a rapidly growing sub-segment of electronics hardware, not to mention being time consuming, expensive and a restrictive practice. Moreover, all major HDD manufacturers have reduced the warranty period on desktop and mobile drives in recent years.

According to CyberMedia Research analyst estimates, presently there are approximately 68 million active installed drives in the country and their average active life is about five years. However, a large proportion can enjoy an extended life with proper care and restoration. Also, other estimates say that about 80,000 drives fail every month in the country, while their warranty is still active.

"Locally available refurbishment / recertification facility will enable storage manufacturers to considerably reduce the buffer inventory required in India to service their customers and bring down the cost of warranty support. While AMC providers and systems integrators will be able to cut down on support cost beyond manufacturer warranty. Not all faulty drives are junk, ReStor can help derive substantial financial value to manufacturers and AMC providers from these services," said Srivastava.

Further, "We request all users and service engineers to treat faulty drives also with care just like new drives to minimize handling related damage and increasing chances of restoration or recovery," added Srivastava and pointed out that test runs at his centre have enabled them to revive up to 50% of the defective drives received.

Elaborating on his plans for the new initiative, Srivastava explained, "Our first test and repair facility in the NCR has just gone on stream. We expect to be servicing about 10,000 drives per month within the next 9 to 12 months at this facility, after which we will take the lab to other key metros."

At the ReStor facility, the company offers a variety of services related to rehabilitation of drives / data, including: repair and restoration, data recovery, customized support for field-returns, RMA management and secure-erase, etc.

ICICI Bank, Movide join hands for mobile payments service in India

MOVIDA, THE MOBILE payments joint venture between Visa Inc. and Monitise recently announced a deal with ICICI Bank, to utilize Movida's mobile payments service for the Bank's customers.

The service will enable ICICI Bank payment card holders to pay bills, recharge prepaid airtime and buy cinema tickets from their mobile phone, anywhere, anytime. It will be possible to access Movida either through a menu-based USSD mobile technology, or an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) in multiple languages. These options make the service easy to use and are widely available from any type of mobile phone, including basic models.

Soon to be implemented by ICICI Bank for its payment card holders, the service is designed to operate across all mobile networks using any payment card – Visa and non-Visa.

Rajiv Sabharwal, Executive Director, ICICI Bank, said: "This tie-up with Movida provides an added facility in an array of mobile payment options that ICICI Bank offers to its customers. We have seen a high level of demand from consumers to use their mobile phones for financial transactions. We are constantly innovating to meet this demand and empower our customers with solutions that offer greater choice and more convenience. This service by Movida will ensure they can get immediate access to a secure and simple solution that can be utilized even without an active internet connection."

Uttam Nayak, Group Country Manager for India & South Asia, Visa, said, "ICICI Bank customers can now use their basic mobile phones, to make payments like telecom recharge and utility bills in a convenient and secure manner. Movida also aligns to the national vision of making India a cashless society. Movida's services combine the strength and robustness of existing infrastructure with the latest mobile payment technology to provide simple, secure services for everyone."

Monitise Group Chief Executive Alastair Lukies said, "India is an extremely dynamic market in which to offer our services, provides the ability to transform the lives of millions of consumers. We've seen a strong commitment from banks in the region to provide relevant payment services to their customers, and are excited to be working with ICICI Bank to make payments truly mobile for its customers."

Naushad Contractor, President Movide and Head of the Visa-Monitise joint venture in India, stated, "A growing population of more than 1.2 billion coupled with widespread access to a mobile phone, make a strong case for a vast mobile payments opportunity. Mobile payments users spend significantly less time and energy paying their bills, recharging their phones or those of family or friends, or waiting in line to buy tickets to the next blockbuster because they are able to do it on the go and around the clock."

Mindtree to use HP software to offer application testing

ACCORDING TO HP, Bangalore based Mindtree has selected its software to offer application testing solutions that shorten the testing cycle for its customers by up to 30%. This enables Mindtree's customers to accelerate the continuous delivery of modern and innovative applications, while maintaining the highest quality possible.

Among its broad technology offerings, Mindtree provides application testing solutions to help businesses and government agencies deploy high quality applications that embrace areas like cloud and mobility. However, the manual testing processes used by Mindtree resulted in long development times and inconsistent quality for new software applications.

To address this and expand its presence in the US $1 billion worldwide software testing market, Mindtree selected HP Software to automate and optimize its entire software application testing business. Mindtree has integrated HP Service Virtualization, HP LoadRunner and HP Unified Functional Testing (UFT) into its testing practices.

"To thrive and succeed, organizations need modern enterprise applications that can respond quickly to customer and citizen demands. By automating our entire application software testing business with HP Software solutions, we can accelerate the delivery of applications and ensure the highest level of quality for our customers," said Ananda Rao Ladi, Senior Vice President, Independent Testing Services, Mindtree.

HP Service Virtualization will enable development and testing teams at Mindtree to work in parallel by providing a simulated, virtual environment. This will reduce the delays development and testing teams face in a conventional application development cycle. With HP LoadRunner, Mindtree is able to obtain an accurate picture of the end-to-end system performance before going live and verify that the new or upgraded applications meet specified performance requirements.

HP UFT will help Mindtree automate the functional testing of business process transactions that span multiple application layers, cutting the cost and complexity of the testing process while improving application quality.

With HP Service Virtualization reducing delays and HP UFT enhancing application quality in its testing processes, Mindtree will be better positioned to help clients realize improved delivery times of their applications.

NEC to offer SDN based new solutions

NEC CORPORATION HAS established NEC SDN Solutions, a menu of innovative new solutions that strengthen Software-Defined Networking (SDN) through a combination of NEC technologies, products, services and partner products that enable the provision of solutions to corporations, government offices, telecommunications carriers and data center operators throughout the world.

In October this year, NEC will launch the its SDN solutions portfolio that includes WAN Connection Optimization for Offices and Data Centers, Office LAN Optimization Solutions, Access Authentication Solutions, IaaS Operation Automation Solutions and Data Center Network Integration Solutions. SDN enables sophisticated ICT systems to quickly and flexibly adjust to environmental changes by using software to control network operations.

NEC's Programmable Flow network suite was one of world's first commercially available SDN solutions to leverage the OpenFlow protocol. This has enabled NEC to provide SDN solutions to more than 100 businesses and data center operators throughout the world. Moreover, NEC is conducting joint SDN trials of communications networks that demand high availability and real-time performance, with Europe's integrated communication solutions provider Telefonica and has concluded an SDN related MOU with Portugal Telecom.

NComputing announces new releases of vSpace Server software

NCOMPUTING, THE DESKTOP virtualization provider has announced a new release of its vSpace Server software that extends application and desktop virtualization capabilities to Windows Multipoint Server 2012, Windows Server 2012 and Windows 8.

The vSpace Server software is a core component of the vSpace virtualization platform, a fully integrated, end-to-end solution from NComputing, to deliver the benefits of desktop and application virtualization to millions of users worldwide.

Market pressures, budget constraints and a mobile workforce are increasingly driving organizations to desktop virtualization as a viable alternative to traditional PC computing. NComputing is trying to remove the barriers and accelerates the adoption of desktop virtualization for today's high priority IT initiatives, including mobility, BYOD and migration to new versions of Windows operating environments.

The new software release looks to address today's market needs with a rich computing experience, enhanced collaboration and increased productivity for corporate users. In addition to significant hardware, management and energy cost savings compared to deploying PCs, IT administrators can also enable their users to securely work from anywhere, anytime and on any device.

"The latest major release of the vSpace Server software demonstrates NComputing's continued commitment to simple, powerful and affordable desktop virtualization for mid-size enterprises, small to medium businesses and key verticals. By offering support for the latest Windows environments, users can continue to rely on NComputing technology to grow and adapt to their emerging business needs," said Raj Dhingra, CEO, NComputing, Inc.

NComputing's new vSpace Server software complements the growing global adoption of desktop virtualization and management technology by an increasing number and also type of customers. Today, company have more than 20 million daily users in 140 countries and the solutions are widely recognized for security, ease of use, high-performance and value. Downloads of vSpace Server software have crossed 10,000 over the past three months, demonstrating solid market traction by healthcare, manufacturing, financial services, education and other market segments.

Department of Posts to leverage SAP solutions

SAP HAS ANNOUNCED that the Department of Posts (DoP) has chosen its solutions to strengthen responsiveness and reliability across more than 155,000 post offices. With this implementation, the DoP aims to deliver faster and more efficient services to the citizens, government and private organizations in India. The DoP is among the 30 plus postal customers globally, that have chosen SAP solutions to make mission-critical and customer-facing processes more effective.

"SAP postal services customers are leveraging the latest technology to transform their business, from improving efficiency in back-office and core processes to creating new lines of operations within their existing infrastructure. With our experience, SAP is eager to help India's Department of Posts improve its business and increase transparency across its organization in order to meet the changing demands of its customers,"said Hans G. Landgraf, Head of Business Segment Postal, SAP AG.

Armed with a transformation charter that includes a complete overhaul of operations under an IT modernization project, the DoP will leverage SAP applications that include SAP ERP, CRM and SCM to help increase process efficiencies and meet its business, social and financial inclusion goals. As the DoP generates revenue of over Euro 1.1 billion and employing nearly 474,000 staff, it will also implement SAP solutions for streamlining internal processes in the areas of human resources, payroll processing and finance and accounts.

In addition to running core and back-office operations, SAP Sybase Adaptive Server Enterprise, SAP Sybase IQ software, SAP BusinessObjects solutions and SAP Data Services software will offer the DoP the data warehousing and business intelligence (BI) needed for its entire operations system. The Government of India also intends to utilize the DoP's vast network for its direct cash transfer function, which aims to reduce leakages, cut down corruption, eliminate middlemen, target beneficiaries better and speed up transfer of benefits to eligible individuals. Workers across India, especially those in rural areas, will be able to reap the gains from the direct benefits transfer (DBT) leveraging their existing savings accounts in post offices.

Today, the DoP delivers over 6 billion articles yearly through its vast network of offices. The re-engineering of business process using SAP solutions will enable the DoP to increase its engagement with the Indian population through more customer interaction channels. SAP software will help the organization improve automation of core processes including postal counter automation, track and trace, logistics post, e-commerce and customer interaction channel.

Nice introduces contact center video recording

NICE SYSTEMS HAS announced the launch of its contact center video recording solution, which helps organizations by monitoring and enhancing the quality of service provided via video-enabled contact centers. The solution combines Nice's extensive real-time audio capture expertise with its experience in video surveillance for security.

Nice video recording would enable organizations to continuously monitor agent performance, provide additional coaching as needed and maintain a single standard of performance across the operation.

Quality monitoring is applied to both audio and visual recordings, enabling organizations to better understand not only what was said during a customer interaction but also what was implied through the body language of the agent and the customer.

These visual cues may help discern the customer's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the interaction or transaction. The integration of audio and video recording within a single platform lowers the total cost of ownership and simplifies upgrades and training.

This solution is supported by Nice Interaction Management and it provides the customer with the capabilities for quality monitoring, training and evaluation.

IBM's new solutions for the natural resources industry

IBM HAS ANNOUNCED the availability of an optimization (planning /scheduling) solution related in mining (mine-to-ship) for addressing contractual fulfillment with appropriate process/asset constraints. Besides, company announced new exploration technologies using geospatial modeling and seismic imaging to improve capabilities at finding remote fields and new mines.

According to IBM, the new mathematical algorithms and modeling ideas were developed to enhance recovery and extraction techniques; and its predictive asset management solution is for the capital intensive industry like mining supporting the optimization solution.

With rapid growth seen in the natural resources industry, particularly oil, gas, metals and mining, IBM's Center of Excellence (CoE) for natural resources combines expertise from several departments to extend these technology solutions to help companies ensure greater organizational efficiency, agility and resource utilization. According to the company, the solutions have already been deployed successfully in companies across the world. The IBM CoE for natural resources team works in areas such as computation geosciences, integrated operations with high performance computing and management, optimization solutions, asset management and streaming analytics.

IBM is working with clients in the industry, providing smarter and integrated industry solutions that address unique imperatives of the natural resources industry, making use of its in-house research capabilities, state-of-the-art technology solutions and deep consulting experience to offer sustainable opportunities to the industry. These opportunities will help optimize operational performance and health, safety, and environmental solutions with high reliability and availability.

Speaking about company's big bet on natural resources, Venkataraman Neelakantan, Industry Leader, Manufacturing & Natural Resources, IBM ISA said, "Working with companies in this industry, we have seen an increasing need for maximizing sustainable and value based engagements. The limited supply of natural resources coupled with increasing demand is a key driver for new technologies in this industry. The scale of this industry is so vast, that a fraction of a percentage improvement in any single area can yield a benefit in hundreds of millions or billions of dollars."

Konica Minolta forays into A4 printer market

AFTER PROVING ITS metal in the production and colour printers' category, Konica Minolta Business Solutions India Pvt. Ltd., a global technology company has now entered into A4 printers business. The company recently has launched all new A4 category products at Gurgaon, Bangalore & Kochi.

Konica Minolta has also appointed three new partners, PG Micro Systems Pvt. Ltd , Positive Systems and Anugraha Agencies for Haryana,

Tadahiko Sumitani, MD, Konica Minolta Business Solutions India Pvt. Ltd. (in the center) at the launch

Bangalore and Kochi regions respectively.

"These new A4 series range are set to take our printing solutions offering in the Indian market to new dimensions. Both the home segment and small offices are set to benefit from these products with competitive prices and low cost of operation." said Tadahiko Sumitani, Managing Director, Konica Minolta Business Solutions India Pvt. Ltd.

This new range of printers by Konica Minolta has been launched under two categories, Monochrome series and Color Series. Under Monochrome series, five printer models have been introduced, while in the Color series, eight new models have been released.

Seagate unveils solid state hard drives for enterprises

SEAGATE TECHNOLOGY HAS announced it is shipping the world's fastest hard drive— the Seagate Enterprise Turbo SSHD. Claimed as industry's first enterprise solid state hybrid drive (SSHD), the Enterprise Turbo SSHD combines the capacity of a hard drive with solid-state flash enabling high-speed performance for mission critical data.

The Enterprise Turbo SSHD provides up to a 3X increase in random performance over existing 15K-RPM drives and is available with up to 600GB of capacity. By unifying the best of solid-state and magnetic technologies, Turbo improves tiered storage performance combining accelerated speed with hard disk drive (HDD) high-capacity.

"Typically, the most demanding mission critical applications for 15K drives have improved performance by compromising on capacity and cost per GB," said Rocky Pimentel, Executive Vice President and Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Seagate Technology.

"With the Enterprise Turbo SSHD, we deliver a no compromise drive that provides high-speed performance while enabling customers to leverage all of Turbo's capacity. The result, a combination of performance and capacity that we believe represents a new paradigm shift for mission critical, enterprise storage - a real game changer in storage solutions now and for generations to come," added Pimental.

Over the past year, Seagate and IBM have been putting an enterprise SSHD prototype through its paces. After months of testing in Seagate and IBM labs, the first enterprise SSHD has been introduced as an option for the IBM Series x servers.

Based on preliminary performance testing using standard system benchmarking tools, a 10K-RPM version of enterprise SSHD boasts of IOPS over twice better than a standard 600GB 10K-RPM hard disk drive. The end result is much improved and more cost effective performance for servers running mission critical applications such as big data analytics, virtual desktop infrastructure, and database and transaction processing.

The Enterprise Turbo SSHD enables lower cost server and storage configurations, making it appealing for OEMs and system builders who demand the highest, scalable performance at an affordable cost. It is also designed to deliver up to three times more than the current mission critical HDD random performance at an HDD comparable price. An extremely efficient and economical storage solution, the drive is designed to provide significantly improved $/IOPS.

The drive fine tunes storage tiering by caching at the I/O level, thereby addressing performance gaps and bottlenecks often found in tiered system environments. It also offers a self-encrypting drive option to maximize security for data-at-rest.

PC market grew only by 5%: MAIT study

MAIT, THE APEX body representing India's IT hardware, training and R&D services sectors has revealed the findings of its Industry Performance Review for fiscal 2012-13.

The study found that the total PC sales between April 2012 and March 2013, combining desktop computers, notebooks and netbooks were at 11.31million (113.1 lakh) units, registering a slim 5% growth over the last fiscal. Internet penetration in 22 cities was 65% and 35% among businesses and households respectively.

While desktops sales stood at 6.77 million (67.7 lakh) units clocking a mere 1% rise, the combined notebooks and netbooks sales recorded a good 10% growth over last year with a 4.41 million (44.1 lakh) units.

According to MAIT, PC sales are expected to be around 12.11 million (121.1 lakh) units in FY 2013-14 with a 8% growth rate. Tablets are cannibalizing the PC market and registered a phenomenal 424 % growth in two consecutive years.

Commenting on the industry performance, J V Ramamurthy, President, MAIT, said, "The combination of basic functioning of a PC coupled with affordability is turning the tide favorably towards tablet PC. The socio economic caste census(SEC C) Households which made a significant contribution last year for PC continues to put on a strong show registering an impressive growth of 67%. The industry is hopeful that the overall PC sales for 2013-14 will reach around 12.11 million units, registering a modest 8% growth."

Asian, European governments hit by targeted attacks

TREND MICRO RESEARCHERS has uncovered a targeted attack launched against government agencies in various countries. The email claimed to be from the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, although it appears to have been sent from a Gmail account and did not use a Chinese name.

The fake message document contains a malicious attachment, which exploits a vulnerability (CVE-2012-0158) in Microsoft Office (all versions from Office 2003 to Office 2010 were affected) that was patched more than a year ago. The exploit is used to drop a backdoor onto the system, which steals login credentials for websites and email accounts from Internet Explorer and Microsoft Outlook. Any stolen information is uploaded to two IP addresses, both of which are located in Hong Kong.

"The vulnerability used in this attack is one that is commonly used by targeted attacks. High-profile campaigns like Safe and Taidoor have made use of this vulnerability; if anything it's a commonly targeted flaw in sophisticated campaigns," said Sharda Tickoo, PMM - Trend Micro India.

This particular attack was aimed primarily at both personnel belonging to European and Asian governments. The message was sent to 16 officials representing European countries alone. The topic of the email – and the attached document – would be of interest to these targets. In addition, the information stolen and where it was stolen from – is very consistent with targeted attacks aimed at large organizations that use corporate mainstays like Internet Explorer and Outlook.

It's worth noting, however, that Chinese media organizations were also targeted by this attack. The backdoor itself has also been detected in the wild – but, interestingly, it has been most frequently seen in China and Taiwan with a more limited presence in other Asian countries.

Microsoft takes Office 365 University to students
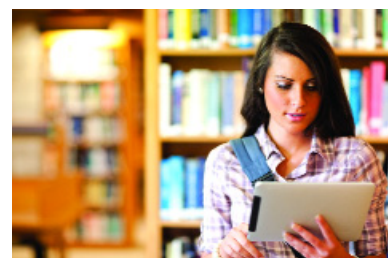
MICROSOFT HAS ANNOUNCED the availability of Office 365 University for full and part-time students studying in accredited colleges and universities in India. Students can now subscribe to Office 365 University which includes the latest and most complete set of Office applications and works across two PCs or Macs, comes with Office on-demand and an additional 20 GB premium SkyDrive storage for Rs 4,199 for a 4-year subscription.

"Office 365 University is in a class by itself and university students will love the capabilities of new Office. It will be a trusted and integral part of students' everyday always-on, always-connected life, taking full advantage of the cloud and touch capabilities, all at the best price," said Ramkumar Pichai, GM - Microsoft Office Division, Microsoft India.

"The special pricing for students will help provide them with opportunities and empower them to develop the necessary skills to be successful in the fast-paced campus environment, making them future ready as they join the workforce of tomorrow," added Pichai.

Apart from full and part-time enrolled university and college students, faculty and staff in accredited institutions are also eligible to purchase an Office 365 University subscription.

Sure power everywhere

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