

EXPRESS COMPUTER

INDIA'S FOREMOST ENTERPRISE IT MAGAZINE 16-31 DECEMBER, 2013, ₹75

INTELLIGENCE AT THE DOOR

Why IP-based access
control makes sense

HOW VOLKSWAGEN
MADE THE MOST
OF VIRTUALIZATION

HOTELS HIGH ON TECHNOLOGY

Digital tools such as social media, analytics and mobile
technology are helping the hospitality industry check into
a new world of customer loyalty and growth



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HOSPITALITY IS SPELLED WITH IT



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WITH MOBILITY
AND SOCIAL
MEDIA PLAYING A
KEY ROLE IN HOW
CUSTOMERS
WANT TO INTER-
ACT, HOTELS ARE
BECOMING MORE
TECH SAVVY

When it comes to technology adoption, the hospitality sector in India does not immediately come to the mind. In fact, it comes more or less as an afterthought once you have counted the top segments such as banking, telecom, IT/ITES and others. And yet, at about 8-9% of India's annual GDP, hospitality is quite significant.

For all the charming campaigns of Incredible India and tons of advertising by tourist-friendly states, however, hotels and restaurants in the country can barely be termed state-of-the-art. Why, in how many of them can you find end-to-end integrated systems, tablet-wielding staff or other signs of tech savvy?

Why has this sector lagged behind when it comes to embracing IT?

The answer to this question lies in the evolution and growth of the segment. Most of India's top hotels have for long focused on aspects of operations that may be high on hospitality but rather low on technology. Things such as cuisine, physical ambience and value-added tour packages have dominated their agenda of luring the foreigner on a mission to explore the old-world enchantments and mysteries of the Indian subcontinent. But facilities such as Wi-Fi and latest gadgets or customized experiences through advanced CRM systems or data analytics have not been accorded priority.

Fortunately, their approach has been changing of late, especially with mobility and social media playing a key role in how customers interact—and want to interact—with places where they want to stay and eat. This is resulting in hotel chains ranging from the top tier to middle level and even the budget ones trying to making their online presence as pleasant as their rooms and recipes. Most have embarked on or planning to undertake technology initiatives that can weave their sprawling properties into better-managed, cohesive operations.

Among the projects hotels seem to favor at the moment are investing in their websites for better user interface, quick-and-easy e-commerce modules, active monitoring of social media, integration of CRM with loyalty programs and promotions, and use of analytics to optimize inventory, yield and pricing. They are also spending on next-generation integrated ERP that is often tailored to the specific needs of hospitality.

The segment would not find it easy to justify investment in technology at a time when, as per reports, every second room is going unoccupied. However, just as they continue to build up more hotels for the future, they should look at IT investments with a long-term window rather than a short-stay approach. They must allow tech to become a permanent, influential guest in their midst.

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BY KTP RADHIKA

An illustration of a man in a dark suit standing on a green grassy hill, holding a large, ornate key to a large, open wooden door. The door is set into a blue sky with white clouds. The man is looking up at the door. The overall scene is surreal and symbolic.



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Transforming network

In a bid to deploy high performing mobile backhaul solution, Summit Communications relies on Juniper Networks solution delivered through AGC Networks



Doing something that has never been done before requires a lot of precision and forethought, and Summit Communications Ltd (SCL) rightly had it. It was clearly a very complex implementation, which would transform the way they catered to their clients on every level. Summit Communications Ltd (SCL) is the telecom arm of Summit Group; one of the largest, diversified business conglomerates operating in diverse businesses in Bangladesh. Around two years ago, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, decided to separate transmission network from access network services and issued NTTN (Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network) and ITC (International Terrestrial Cable) Licenses. SCL was awarded both NTTN and ITC Licenses. Under the NTTN License, over the last 1 ½ years SCL has built 680 km fiber optic network within key metro-cities like Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Summit Communications Ltd currently provides transmission network services to all major Internet Service Providers, Mobile operators, Wi-Max operators, Cable TV operators and even Government agencies.

The deployment began in end of February 2013. The team from AGC went to Dhaka and helped in implementing the

Only recently people started building IP network with fibre as the transmission medium. For us it was a challenge to maintain the proper quality of fiber transmission. Another was meeting the time-line and continuing the network once it was deployed.

Md. Arif Al Islam,
Managing Director & CEO, SCL

solution. AGC invested a lot in gaining technical expertise on Juniper Networks products and their implementation.

SCL needed to deploy a scalable, high performance mobile backhaul solution for its new customer. For this purpose the network was segregated in to 3 Tier architecture-

- Ring network
- Core / Backbone network
- ASBR Network

SCL deployed Juniper Networks' MX series products at core with redundancy and universal access routers having industrial grade features - ACXseries as the ring routers on which the customer's end node equipments were connected. The gateway routers as ASBR are also MX series. MX series caters to voice, video and data simultaneously,

Mentions Md. Arif Al Islam-Managing Director & CEO, SCL, "Only recently people started building IP network with fibre as

the transmission medium. For us it was a challenge to maintain the proper quality of fiber transmission. Another was meeting the time-line and continuing the network once it was deployed." The major portion of the implementation time was spent behind fine-tuning the network, which entailed changing various parameters. For example, they had to see that the signaling reached desired location in time, it had to have an optimum routing. Summit's data center is located in Dhaka.

With this implementation, SCL is able to have optimum utilization of their network links. Establishing network inside Dhaka metro city has been the first step for Summit and now they plan to move to other parts of the country in coming days. Md. Arif Al Islam advising on such complex implementation mentions, "Any organization going for such kind of implementation should make sure that they have available resources and skill-set."

Earlier, SCL customers used to maintain their own backbone – media, static SDH provisioning and OPEX related to it. With SCL's deployment of Juniper Networks solutions, they are able to take advantage of outsourcing the backbone provisioning to external agency with contracted SLA and quality level and focus on their core business.

AGC offers impeccable expertise and skill in deploying a sustainable network for telecom vertical. This came helpful for a grass-root setup like SCL with technology support from Juniper.

Bhavin Barbhaya, Vice President
- Sales, AGC Networks

Juniper being a leader in Networking understood Summit's needs, and together with technologically sound partner such as AGC, we made a winning combination

Jitendra Gupta, Director-Channel
& Alliances, Juniper Networks

HIGH ON TECHNOLOGY

Digital tools such as social media, analytics and mobile technology are helping the hospitality industry check into a new world of customer loyalty and growth

BY KTP RADHIKA

About a year ago, a foreign tourist who arrived at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi lost his baggage owing to his airline's negligence. Despite his best efforts, the gentleman could not locate his stuff, and reached The Oberoi, the hotel he was booked into.

As soon as the tourist reached the hotel, he tweeted that he lost his baggage at the airport and was now staying at The Oberoi. The central agency that was tracking Oberoi's social media activities noticed it and informed the hotel's duty manager at the airport. The duty manager traced and collected the baggage from the airline and

delivered it to the guest at the hotel — to his pleasant astonishment.

"This not only increased the loyalty of the customer, but also gave us satisfaction as a hospitality player. We many a time experience a whole lot of business benefits with new technologies such as social media," says Rajesh Chopra, Senior Vice President - Information Technology at Oberoi Hotels & Resorts.

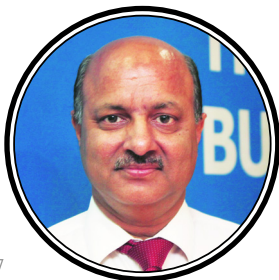
Like The Oberoi, many hotels in India in recent years are adopting a whole lot of modern technologies to streamline their day-to-day operations, better servicing their customers and to make more revenues. In fact, advanced technology has become a



tourists in India by 2015, according to the World Travel Organization (WTO)



According to the most recent report of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), the industry is set to see an investment of about Rs 26,000 crore by 2017.



We experience a whole lot of business benefits with new technologies such as social media.

Rajesh Chopra,
Senior Vice President - Information
Technology,
Oberoi Hotels & Resorts



With more informed and demanding customers, the industry is adopting many technology tools these days.

Douglas Gray,
Chief Solutions Officer,
Bluestar Infotech

boon to the hospitality sector in today's difficult economic situation. Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government of India, estimates the total market size of Indian tourism and hospitality sector at \$117.7 billion and projects it would reach \$418.9 billion by 2022. According to the body, the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the hotel and tourism sector during April 2000 to July 2013 stood at \$6,754.49 million. The world travel organization (WTO) predicts that India will receive 25 million tourists by 2015. According to the most recent report of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), the apex body of regional associations of the hospitality industry, the industry is set to see an investment of about Rs 26,000 crore by 2017. The government has allowed 100% FDI under the automatic route in the hotel and tourism related industry.

However, the hotel industry is currently hard hit by the recent slowdown in the global and Indian economy. The ongoing crisis in Europe and the recessionary environment in other countries are harshly impacting Indian hospitality space. To add to that, the GDP growth in India has slipped to 5% level this fiscal year and most hotels in the country are running half empty. A preliminary report by FHRAI states that average hotel occupancy in the financial year 2012-13 dropped to the lowest in a decade at 58.3% and average room rates fell to Rs 6,214, the lowest in six years. Demand from business and leisure travelers, both domestic and international, is down. That said, supply of rooms has increased dramatically over the past few years, and more inventories are adding up. According to hospitality consultant HVS, in 2012-13 alone, close to 12,782 new rooms were added, taking the total supply of branded hotel rooms up to 96,000. India is expected to add another

54,000 hotel rooms over the next three to four years.

To ward off falling revenues and to increase competitiveness, Indian hotels today are leveraging technology to a great extent. According to Douglas Gray, Chief Solutions Officer Bluestar Infotech, technology is playing a key role and is a key differentiator for the hospitality sector. "The industry has undergone tremendous changes in the past few years. With the emerging markets and more informed and demanding customers, the industry is adopting many technology tools these days. The key areas of technological development for hospitality industry are online booking, mobile technology, customer relationship management (CRM), social media and analytics."

Social means business

Over the past few years, Indian hospitality sector has adopted social media such as Facebook and Twitter as effective tools for its business communication. Consumers have become tech-savvy and are now taking feedback from fellow travelers before they plan a trip. Social media is a big influencer now in shaping and forming consumer's opinion and can play a bigger role in brand awareness. "Social media provides a channel for guests to share information and experience feedback. Hoteliers are using social media tools to analyze guest sentiments and deliver messages via social media in a manner that is effective and communicates the value of the brand. In addition, tools for online reputation management help monitor and respond to social media conversations in a timely and effective manner," says K.S. Bharath, Business Practice Head - Hospitality, ITC Infotech.

A comprehensive strategy for guest engagement is to employ social media

Hoteliers are using social media tools to analyze guest sentiments and deliver messages via social media in a manner that is effective and communicates the value of the brand

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A SNAPSHOT

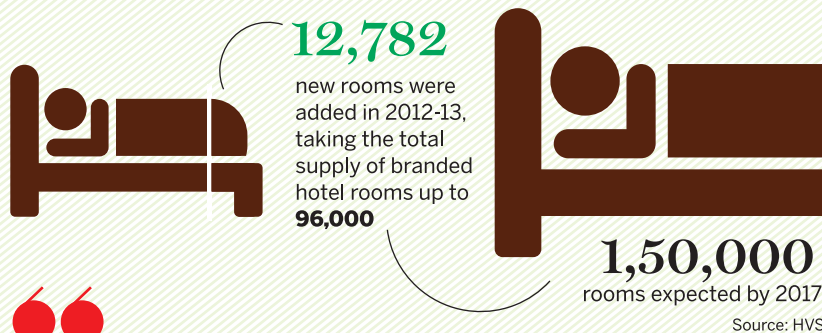


**\$6,754.49
MILLION**

The foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the hotel and tourism sector from April 2000 to July 2013

**Rs 26,000
CRORE**

According to FHRAI, the industry is set to see an investment of about Rs 26,000 crore by 2017.



"We started concentrating and promoting our online presence through own website, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter and through travel agent sites from December 2012. We also used channel managers to track and identify the online data. And the results are much rewarding. We have received 150% more upside on our business in the last one year."

SHARAD BHARGAVA, Associate Director-Development, Golden Tulip Hotel

6 TIPS TO BUILD A SMART WEBSITE

- 1 Technology is the key for success: customers should be able to book smoothly without any hassles. As it involves online payments, transactions should be smooth, bug-free and secure.
- 2 In addition to maintaining their own sites, hotels can tie up with OTAs (Online Travel Agents) to enhance visibility and strengthen web presence. However, they need to have an exit clause in place while entering into such agreements.
- 3 The website should be user friendly, and customers should be able to navigate freely and choose the right products and pricing based on their preferences
- 4 It can be further enhanced if customers can get tailor-made services on the website based on their specific needs and preferences. A website offering customer segmentation, more choices, will certainly fare better than one with few options.
- 5 Hotels can also tie up with Google Maps or Bing, so that customers can easily locate them while searching for hotels in a particular location.
- 6 Mobile apps, no doubt, are the flavor of the day today to enhance online presence and bookings



Tools for online reputation management help monitor and respond to social media conversations in a timely and effective manner.

K.S. Bharath,
Business Practice Head - Hospitality,
ITC Infotech



Hi-speed wired and wireless Internet, mobile docking stations and data ports are standard features available in all our guest rooms.

Prasad Iyer,
Head - Cluster Ecommerce - India,
Malaysia & Maldives,
Marriott International

analytics tools on social media channels. Explains Chopra of Oberoi. Social media tools can be put into good business use for the hospitality sector. Engagement with guests have increased manifold with the help of social media. The moment we get a booking confirmed, we start profiling them and here social media comes in a big way." For the past three years, the hotel is using tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, which help them get further prepared to receive guests. "We are able to serve them with personalized services and are able to avoid situation that our guests dislike. We are getting a complete profile of our guest regarding her interests, hobbies, travel patterns, stay at other hotels, etc." he adds. The hotel monitors social media activities round the clock and negative feeds, if any, are sent to the respective departments immediately for them to take a corrective action.

Social media is also being used for promotions and support. Hotels are even using it for sale of last minute inventory through channels such as Twitter. Increasingly, hotels will use social media to build social profiles of their customers that will help in personalization. Agrees Prasad Iyer, Head - Cluster Ecommerce - India, Malaysia & Maldives, Marriott International Inc: "We are very proactive on social media platforms such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and Twitter. Our social media activities and presence primarily support our quest to increase our engagement levels and share information with our patrons globally."

Activities on social media will influence visits to the hotel's website which in turn will influence rankings on search engines. On-site visibility, which is another important technology tool, is directly impacted by updates on social pages and posting of new content on brand websites.

Presence on online channels enhances a property's visibility and reach, two vital components required to generate business in a highly competitive environment. Within online marketing, hotel managers are beginning to use tools such as search engine optimization, pay per click, mobile website marketing, social marketing etc. Claims Sharad

Bhargava, Associate Director-Development, Golden Tulip Hotel, "Social media and better online presence have a lot of business benefits to offer. We started concentrating and promoting our online presence through own website, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter and through travel agent sites from December 2012. We also used channel managers to track and identify the online data. And the results are much rewarding. We have received 150% more upside on our business in the last one year."

CRM and ERP: the nerves

Hospitality is all about serving the customers. Therefore, ERP and CRM tools are the technological nerves of any hotels. CRM can help hotels retain customers in the long run by providing better customer services and can generate alternate sources of revenue by selling non-core services. A smart CRM tool also helps reducing cost of operations. CRM is essentially supported by various disciplines like guest profile management, loyalty management, sales management, marketing and campaign management, and social media management. "Traditionally, CRM solutions have been expensive to implement and difficult to integrate with disparate hotel systems. Only a few large hospitality chains have been able to achieve true integration. However, new age technologies such as cloud computing and innovative pricing models such as SaaS have enabled product vendors to offer CRM Services at a marginal cost. Hence, one will see increased adoption of CRM amongst hotel chains in India," observes Bharath of ITC.

The hotel industry is also planning to offer competitive prices and value added services which can woo the customers. Currently, a lot of hotels are offering various loyalty programs integrating it with their CRM tools. This really helps them enhance revenues by repeat business from customers. "However, CRM tools can be successful only when they are executed properly. CRMs should not be considered only as technology but should help hoteliers offer customized



solutions by understanding customer psyche,” explains Gray of Bluestar Infotech. CRM also helps hotels to prepare for receiving the guest. “Before the guest arrives, our CRM system prepares pre-arrival reports and helps us receive them in a personalized way. If it is a repeated guest, our CRM systems gives us 360 degree view and helps us in guest segmentation,” informs Chopra.

Modern hotel ERPs are integrated so that a single application can run on a single database. It effectively covers all the departments in a hotel that includes front office and reservation, restaurant sales, sales & marketing, banquet & conferences, housekeeping, inventory & purchase, engineering & maintenance, HR & payroll, credits, finance & accounting, asset management and gate pass. It also streamlines and makes the day to day operations easier.

Take this example. Berggruen Hotels,

Larger hotel chains are using business analytics in fields such as inventory management, pricing and yield management to maximize revenues

a leading player in the mid-market segment was facing challenges working with multiple vendors for point-of-sale, material management, financial accounting and property management solutions. This was a hurdle when the company decided to scale up. The hotel wanted a fully integrated hotel management software which could seamlessly manage both front and back office requirements. They then implemented IDS NEXT's (a technology solutions provider for the hospitality and leisure industries) integrated ERP solution FortuneNEXT 6i. The solution

not only provided them a centralized system but also provided greater visibility into hotel processes and efficient automation for all management operations. Vikas Chadha, Chief Financial Officer, Berggruen Hotels, says, “In keeping with our long-term growth plans, we wanted an integrated and efficient software with both on-site and off-site support mechanism. Now with an integrated ERP solution, the management can quickly access centralized cost centre wise reports to determine profitability and take positive corrective action immediately.”



A lot of guest room and back-of-house facilities management data is being analyzed to optimize factors such as power consumption and cost optimization.

Debasis Basu,
Vice President, Travel and Hospitality
Practice, Cognizant

Mobility solutions and mobile applications are changing the way the hospitality sector operated traditionally. New age mobile solutions can manage and connect a guest throughout the entire guest life cycle.



Analyzing customers

Hotels have been collecting information about customer preferences for a long time. However, the adoption and application of business analytics in hospitality is in the emerging stage compared to other industry verticals such as BFSI or telecom. That said, larger hotel chains are using business analytics in fields such as inventory management, pricing and yield management to maximize revenues. The hospitality industry has a big opportunity in applying business analytics in the areas of customer profiling, segmentation, and uniquely targeting offers, promotions and advertising. “BI and analytics enables hospitality service providers to see more clearly who their target customers are, observe their behaviors through purchase history data, and tailor offers, promotions and advertising at specific demographic and psychographic sub-segments of the mass consumer market,” observes Gray.

Analytics makes it easier to find out what product or service a customer really wants. “Hotels have lots of data that shows guest information such as likes, dislikes, nationality, demography and spend patterns, etc. Such data is voluminous and complex but highly useful for hoteliers to thoughtfully use in targeting their guests with several

tailored campaigns and promotions. This data need to be analyzed and presented in a form that is actionable for hoteliers,” views Binu Mathews, Chief Executive Officer, IDS NEXT.

Analytics are being used in the sector to also achieve operational efficiency. “A lot of guest room and back-of-house facilities management data is being analyzed to optimize factors such as power consumption, cost optimization, and so on. In the age of Internet of Things, there will be an explosion of data being generated by different devices. It will be interesting to see what data stewardship guidelines are used to curate and filter this data to achieve actionable insight,” feels Debasis Basu, Vice-President, Travel and Hospitality Practice, Cognizant.

New BI tools are providing deep insights from data collected about customers, helping the hotels to personalize their services and do closed loop marketing and CRM. “For example, hotels have started collecting data on which side of the bed and what kind of pillow the guest typically sleeps on. This data is used to personalize the guest’s next stay in terms of choice of pillows and orientation of other in-room accessories such as the iPod docking station and alarm clocks,” explains Basu.



Mobility and more

Another important technology trend that grabs the sector is mobility. Mobility solutions and mobile applications are changing the way the hospitality sector operated traditionally. New age mobile solutions can manage and connect a guest throughout the entire guest life cycle.

"Most hotel websites allow for apps to be downloaded onto a mobile device. This allows guests to check for availability, create a reservation, update their preferences both for rooms as well as for restaurants," explains Bharath of ITC.

"We have enabled 'Golden Tulip mobile app' for guest reservations and are planning to launch 'Food and Beverages apps' soon," reveals Bhargava. Mobile devices sometimes can also act as a room key and allow guests to check-in and access their rooms. "Marriott recently launched the mobile check-in feature using the Marriott mobile app which has been one of the newest features in the hospitality sector. Our mobile web apps have been very strongly adopted by our international and domestic guests," adds Iyer. Digital payments can be enabled through mobile devices as near-field communication (NFCs) and mobile payment are becoming popular.

Mobile apps are equally important within the property to help increase service quality. Staff enabled with mobile devices can respond instantly to priorities. This can also be integrated with guest recognition solutions for real time guest information and preferences. Mobile devices are also being used for in-room entertainment management, ordering room services and verifying check-out bills. They can also act as virtual concierges. Hotels are also using the concept of active kiosks, where hotels can give targeted messages to their guests and interact with hotel staff through video chats for service requests. "When the guest or passenger is on the move, the best way to provide contextual services is through a mobile device. In the hospitality industry, killer apps can be constructed where different partner service ecosystems collide for example, in-property contextual offers of spas and golf, and enabling business services such

In keeping with our long-term growth plans, we wanted an integrated and efficient software with both onsite and offsite support mechanism.

Vikas Chadha,
Chief Financial Officer,
Berggruen Hotels

Though the traditional front desk continues to operate, where group check-in is concerned, assisted check-ins for groups by staff using mobile devices are common. There is also an increasing trend of self-service check-in kiosks being used.

as wirelessly printing documents or taking guest feedback," feels Basu.

Technology shifts and upgrades are happening in other areas such as front desk management, better inside room technologies, smart card technology, loyalty program solutions and around data security. The days of waiting in the queue to fill in registration cards and check-in are far behind. Though the traditional front desk continues to operate, where group check-in is concerned, assisted check-ins for groups by staff using mobile devices are common. There is also an increasing trend of self-service check-in kiosks being used. Hotels also have started using RFID-enabled loyalty card for room access.

Improvement in in-room technologies is also helping the hospitality industry to serve their customers better. "Hi-speed wired and wireless internet, mobile docking stations and data ports are standard features available in all our guest rooms. Interactive smart TVs will also be available in some of our new hotels. Wireless internet in public areas like lobby, corridors, restaurants, meeting rooms, business centers, indoor and outdoor function areas is now a default feature across all our properties," reveals Iyer.

Future stay

As technologies become more integrated and advanced, the face of the hospitality sector will change a lot in the coming years. Technologies like augmented reality will give travelers a look-and-feel of the hotel before they arrive at the spot. Modern technologies will even allow the hoteliers to understand food preferences of the guests before they enter the restaurants, or display the latest headlines about a VIP when he arrives. Some of the biggest changes might happen in guest rooms, where interactive bathroom mirrors can be used as touchscreens for browsing or TV displays are projected on to walls. Industry experts believe that these new technologies will not only give the hotels an image makeover but boost their business as well.

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COLUMN

SUDHIR AHLUWALIA

THE TURNAROUND BLUEPRINT

What are the key components of a successful turnaround for a company teetering on the brink of collapse?

Consider a company that has over a thousand people on its rolls. It has a good brand name and is well regarded by customers. Over several years, till a turnaround activity was initiated, the company was hovering on the borderline of profit and loss. Its debt had been rising each quarter, debt servicing costs had started outstripping profits, cash flow was under stress, staff salaries were delayed and the company was well on its way to go under.

Desperate to survive, the company had resorted to cutting down on indirect and even direct expenses. It needed to be constantly in touch with debt and equity financiers to meet its debt servicing and bailout funds need. Its revenue generating workforce frequently threatened to quit. The promoter was highly susceptible to blackmail and unreasonable demands from within and without.

The above story is not unique. Indeed, many a small, mid-sized and even large IT services companies in India are enduring this state.

Generically speaking, stagnation is intimately linked to leadership, business direction, business process and, above all, people. There is no set formula to turning around a company. It is a living body composed of people, each unique with a mind of its own.

Still we can split a turnaround activity into the following phases:

Phase 1: Observation

During this phase, the consultant seeks to build a comprehensive understanding of the company. In addition to taking a deep dive into the balance sheet, debt instruments, contracts, company policies, and sales and delivery progress reports, the focus is on meeting people.

It is critical to do in-person one-to-one meetings with all senior and mid level people. This gives a good insight into the company's working style, psyche of

workforce, hierarchy, and decision-making processes in addition to allowing the consultant to understand the strengths and capabilities of individuals.

The body language of employees and the atmosphere on the shop floor give a good insight into the prevailing company psyche. It is important for the turnaround expert, in this phase, to be an observer and not become a participant in the organization dynamics, which, in such companies, is often sick and debilitating.

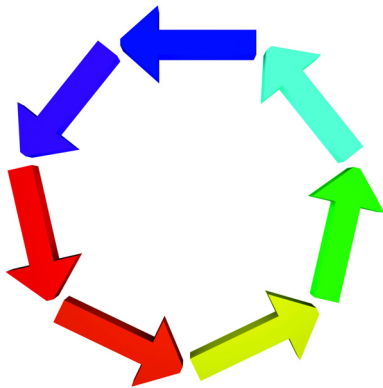
Phase 2 a: Problem identification and prioritization

Companies are complex entities and it will be presumptuous to assume that all issues can be understood through observation alone. Promoters are extremely wary in the early stages of the turnaround and selecting the right business segment to provide a fix becomes critical. Quick results from the fix will generate confidence and support for making broader and more sweeping changes, that become inevitable as we go along.

I prefer picking up a project that not only has the maximum bottom and top line impact, but where resistance to change is likely to be minimal. The change fix is often a mix of financial and process re-engineering supported by organization change measures. Alienation of the workforce should at all costs be avoided during this phase.

Phase 2 b: Identifying performers and step-by-step re-structuring

In every organization there are performing people. In a knowledge industry like IT, the role of people is paramount. The re-structuring process commences in the identified business unit area and the change is driven by people from within that unit. Performing people are encouraged to lead and the non-performing ones are rapidly weeded out. An atmosphere of positivity and



An atmosphere of negativity pervades a sick organization. This has to be replaced by positivity. Change is to be led by the promoter

belief is encouraged. Negativity and organization politics is best ignored. The focus is to bring about rapid and perceptible change to a sick company.

Phase 3 a: Building monitoring systems

Change, for it be effective, is quantified and measured. Key result areas are identified, quantified and tracked at least once a week. It is best to help business units prepare short term (say, one quarter) detailed activity plans with achievable targets. This makes for better management and improves focus. Monitoring is robust and sustained.

Phase 3 b: Working on the promoter

This is the most important component of a turnaround. Sick companies often have an atmosphere of helplessness that is fueled by internal mistrust, back biting, fear and general non-performance. An atmosphere of negativity pervades a sick organization. This has to be replaced by positivity. Change is to be led by the promoter. Frequent and often long sessions are held with the promoter. Promoter buy-in to all changes is critical to success. Promoter sessions are in-confidence sessions.

Phase 4: Tapering the role of the turnaround consultant

The turnaround consultant, as he succeeds — in partnership with the promoter — in driving the company to success, often becomes an escape valve for the workforce and a trusted counselor of the promoter. He has to wean the organization off himself. This is done gradually and with tact. This weaning is accompanied by training, counseling and empowerment of business unit heads. Turnaround is only possible when the vast maturity of the performing workforce is behind change.

A successful turnaround, even in the worst cases, starts showing positive trends in three to four months of commencement of the exercise. However, full turnaround normally would take at least a year, and advisory support should continue for at least two years.

A good turnaround consultant has to



A successful turnaround, even in the worst cases, starts showing positive trends in three to four months of commencement of the exercise.

be fearless and willing to push for change even when it is uncomfortable. He should be willing to walk off the company in case he believes that successful turnaround is not possible. Such an eventuality, however, only occurs if the support to the consultant by the promoter is half-hearted. Or the company does not have the right person helping the turnaround.

Sudhir Ahluwalia is a business expansion consultant.

INTELLIGENCE AT THE DOOR



Moving intelligence to the door through IP-based access control reduces system failure points and streamlines system monitoring and management

BY RANJIT NAMBIAR

There are a number of important access control developments to watch. These include the latest Internet Protocol (IP)-based solutions, which are bringing intelligence to the door and even further to Near Field Communications (NFC)-enabled smartphones that, in the future, will also enable users to employ gestures as another factor of authentication.

IP-based solutions simplify operation, expansion and customization while enabling the physical access control system (PACS) to share the same network with other solutions and applications. Moving intelligence to the door through IP-based access control, also reduces system failure points and streamlines system monitoring and management. Also, the open architecture of IP-based intelligent controllers makes it easier for users to enhance and modify the infrastructure when needed, since they are no longer tied to proprietary software.

As IP-based access control solutions grow in popularity, they will also be deployed using wireless locksets and NFC-enabled handsets. In the first deployment phase, NFC-enabled handsets will emulate traditional cards. Future solutions will leverage the phone's own network connection and the cloud to move access control intelligence and decision-making right into the palm of one's hand. Additionally, we will see new authentication factors that go beyond something the cardholder "has" (the card) to include a gesture-based version of something the cardholder "knows." The latter factor has typically been a password or personal identification number; but tomorrow this could be a user-defined series of hand motions.

Moving to IP-based solutions

Most organizations today have installed security, access control, video surveillance incident response, perimeter detection and alarm monitoring systems. Despite their synergies, these are generally disparate and isolated systems that cannot easily share information, if at all. With IP-based solutions, there is the opportunity to create a single, integrated system that enables users to reap more from their investments, while also realizing the benefits of one system with a single interface to multiple applications. Organizations can invest in a single, unified IP network, and logically control multiple technologies that previously co-existed only on a physical level.

The ability to combine physical and logical access control on the same credential improves user convenience and security while reducing deployment and operational costs. Plus, organizations can leverage their existing credential investment to seamlessly add logical access control for network log-on. The result is a fully interoperable, multi-layered security solution across company networks, systems and facilities. In this environment, organizations can enforce more consistent policies, while facilitating the use of consolidated audit logs throughout the enterprise.

While there had previously been concerns about the security of IP-based access control, the industry now realizes that IP-based access control actually improves security in many valuable ways. Organizations gain a more comprehensive view when video surveillance is integrated with access control. The ability to manage video management and analytics subsystems, intrusion devices and associated IP-based edge devices through



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We will see new authentication factors that go beyond something the cardholder "has" to include a gesture-based version of something the cardholder "knows"

a single user interface enables organizations to immediately combine and correlate all information, significantly enhancing situational awareness.

Building the right foundation

In order to seamlessly exchange information between previously disparate systems, organizations must build their IP-based access control solution on an open and scalable platform. Systems based on an open architecture also simplify expansion, customization and integration, since new technologies can be incorporated into existing architectures without requiring a software overhaul. The use of standards-based solutions also delivers the necessary flexibility to work with a variety of products and suppliers, and to customize solutions for specific needs.

The next requirement is modularity, which enables organizations to start with a lower-cost system that delivers entry-level benefits of networked security intelligence, and then add features as they need them. Earlier, proprietary systems locked organizations into one system size and performance level. Much more effective is to use today's advanced controllers, thin-client software, and IP connectivity to build a migration path with numerous affordable investment stepping stones, from traditional mechanical locks with no intelligence, to door solutions with full, IP-networked intelligence and functionality. As facilities expand or the organization encounters new demands, it should be possible to easily adapt solutions to support virtually any card/reader configuration that might be required — from controlling two or three doors with a few dozen card holders, to managing hundreds of doors across many different facilities with 100,000 card holders, or more.

To ensure the highest possible security, it is necessary to use a controller platform with fully trusted connections from host to controller to reader to credential. All reader/controllers and IO modules should also feature security capabilities such as an on-board encrypted Hi-O communication bus, as well as elements including 12/24VDC lock support, mounting options, and plug-and-play IO

modules that extend IO at and behind the door.

Mobile solutions and gesture-based passwords

Wireless intelligent locksets and readers are already seeing growing adoption with the availability of new lower-cost, more energy-efficient products. We also are seeing the advent of mobile access control with NFC-enabled handsets that will enable users to carry credentials on phones, and these, too, will be used within the network environment. At first, these phones will simply behave like smart cards. Identity information will be communicated from the phone to a reader, and on to an existing access control system, that makes the decision whether or not to unlock the door based on a pre-defined set of access rights. This model will provide a very safe and convenient way to provision, monitor and modify credential security parameters, issue temporary credentials and cancel lost or stolen credentials.

The next phase of mobile access control deployment, the smartphone will use its on-board intelligence and wireless connection to complete most of the tasks now performed by the access control system. With this model, mobile devices (rather than an access control system) become the access decision-makers, and doors (rather than cards) become the ID badges. This paradigm reversal, sometimes called duality, will change how the industry offers access control solutions. Organizations will no longer need intelligent readers connected to back-end servers through physical cabling — just stand-alone electronic locks that can recognize a mobile device's encrypted "open" command and operate under a set of access rules. This will dramatically reduce access control deployment costs, and the industry will begin securing interior doors, filing cabinets, storage units and other areas where it has been prohibitively expensive to install a traditional wired infrastructure.

Gesture-based access control technology will make this access control environment even more convenient. With a simple user-defined gesture, individuals will be able to control a variety of RFID

devices. By leveraging the phone's built-in accelerometer feature, it will be possible to use both two- and three-dimensional gestures. Because the phone's accelerometer senses movement and gravity, it can tell which way the screen is being held. This allows for a novel way of adding another authentication factor to the existing authentication scheme. For instance, a user could present the phone to a reader, rotate it 90 degrees to the right, and then return it to the original position in order for the credential inside the phone to be read, and for access to be granted.

Using a gesture as an authentication factor will increase speed, security and privacy, and make it much harder for a rogue device to surreptitiously steal the user's credential in a "bump and clone" attack. Gestures will generally provide an additive capability for ID verification. They could be used to unlock apps, to lock and unlock doors as an alternative to mechanical keys. They also could be used by a person to secretly signal the system and security personnel when he or she is being forced to enter under duress. It will also be possible, and perhaps even desirable, to make gesture the only (single) authentication factor, although this likely would only be for access to areas within a building that have lower security requirements.

Access control continues to advance in security and convenience with developments including IP-based solutions, the ability to carry credentials on NFC-enabled smartphones, and the advent of convenient authentication factors including gesture-based "passwords." IP-based access control simplifies system operation, expansion and customization, and enables the PACS to be integrated with many other solutions on the same network. As access control intelligence moves to the door, this also streamlines system monitoring, management and reporting, and as it moves to NFC-enabled smartphones, we will be able to secure far more doors electronically than was ever before possible, while taking advantage of convenience features including gesture-based control.

Ranjit Nambiar is Director, IAM, South Asia, HID Global.

DEEPAK AGARWAL
STMICROELECTRONICS

Deepak Agarwal, Senior Manager - Technical Marketing, Secure Micros, STMicroelectronics, talks to Heena Jhingan about India's smart card adoption story. Excerpts...

“About 35 million active smart cards have been provided to BPL families”

What is the status of smart card adoption in India? Which sectors do you think are driving this growth?

With a population of more than 1.2 billion and various e-Governance initiatives in process, India is fast adopting smart card technology. Government initiatives such as Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), PDS (Public Distribution System) already use the technology. Till now about 35 million active smart cards have been provided to BPL families under RSBY. Registrar-General of India (RGI) under the Home Ministry is conducting a pilot project of providing smart cards having biometrics for identification of citizens in select coastal states. It has already covered about 12 million people living along the coastline of nine states and four Union Territories in the first phase of the project. Many states have already migrated from paper based driving license to smart card based driving license. The smart card can hold not only the license data, but now traffic police can also enter data related to traffic violation. Therefore, there are many areas where major programs are already in progress to upgrade existing solution to smart card based solution. Recently, after mandate from RBI, the migration is happening from magnetic strip banking cards to chip based cards.

What has been the impact of this fast paced adoption on the semiconductor market?

The fast adoption of the smart card technology brings not only innovation in security and semiconductor technology, but also its adoption to provide security in the embedded system. Closely following modern trends in personal security, ST addresses the most demanding market expectations. The current product portfolio is based on 0.13 um and 90 nm in-house Electrically Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory (EEPROM) and flash technology. Taking advantage of all the security improvements



How critical is the semiconductor hardware bit in making smart cards secure?

A smart card contains a tamper-resistant microcontroller chip and secured memory having counter-measures against various attacks. It is difficult to forge or copy and data can be secured. ST's secure-microcontroller platforms rely on a highly secure architecture combined with leading edge CPUs, such as ARM's SC300 and SC000, and advanced embedded non-volatile memory technologies.

that appeared in the last two years, the ST product family is certified EMVCo and Common Criteria EAL5+/EAL6+.

In terms of technologies, what are the key trends dominating the smart card space and how does ST plan to deal with these trends?

Traditionally, smart cards are used in ID, banking, transportation. These are mostly based on standard smart card form factor. We see the emergence of new applications to provide embedded security for different types of devices: mobile phones, PCs, printers and so on. For these types of applications, ST brings the complete system-on-chip solution which includes software too along with hardware. We offer a complete solution for Near Field Communication (NFC) and related secure element (SE) for mobile phones/tablets, Trusted Platform Module (TPM) for PC/laptop security, USB token for secure secured Internet banking transactions as part of e-Commerce and machine to machine (M2M) communication. Our secure microcontrollers cover a complete range of interfaces for both contact and contactless communication, including ISO 7816, ISO 14443 Type A & B, NFC, USB, SPI and Inter-Integrated Circuit.

In the times ahead, users will prefer to carry a single card for multiple applications. What kind of pressure does this put on semiconductor players like you and how prepared are you to handle these demands?

In a scenario where people have to carry various smart cards for National ID, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), Ration card etc., it will be much easier to have one single card with various applications. Smart card technology provides the flexibility to have various applications on a single card. One very such common application in other countries is to have banking and transport in a single smart card. However, this requires collaboration between different bodies providing the services.

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POWERING A SMOOTH RIDE



Auto major Volkswagen India virtualizes its entire business applications on VMware and improves server utilization rates from 10% to 80%

BY KTP RADHIKA



Better IT solutions will always reward your business with enormous benefits. That is what auto major Volkswagen India witnessed after virtualizing its IT infrastructure.

The Volkswagen plant in Chakan, Pune, occupies a total area of over 2.3 million square meters, with buildings covering about 1,15,000 square meters. The plant was built with an investment Rs. 3,800 crores and has a production capacity of 130,000 vehicles a year. It is one of the most modern plants of the Volkswagen group with a state of the art IT infrastructure. However, this was not the scenario way back in 2009, when Volkswagen started their production from India.

In their initial days, the company used to produce around 100 to 200 cars per day. All of their software applications were running on physical servers in a single data center at that time. Then in 2010, Volkswagen increased its

IT INFRASTRUCTURE AT VOLKSWAGEN

- IBM System x3650 M3 servers (2U) (using Intel Xeon processors)
- NetApp MetroCluster storage system
- Brocade 300 SAN switch
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Microsoft Windows Server 2008, Red Hat Enterprise Linux

production volume. The company started to produce more than 500 cars per day. But the existing IT infrastructure couldn't handle that hike. They started facing server downtime frequently. Their applications were not supporting the increased volume. Thus the IT team decided to improve the reliability and availability of their IT systems. What the team wanted to ensure was the continued operation of their proprietary application that controlled the production line conveyor system used to assemble cars.

Rajat Kapoor, Assistant Manager, Information Technology & Processes, Volkswagen India says, "We had traditionally run this application on physical servers in a single data center, with no provision for business continuity in the event of an outage. However, this was not meeting the firm's ongoing requirements. Any problem with this application could result in the entire production process being stopped. Each time we halt the line for 15 minutes or



We expect that the new system will be able to support our growth for at least the next three to four years without any interruption.

Rajat Kapoor,
Assistant Manager, Information
Technology & Processes,
Volkswagen India



longer, we effectively lose a car which in turn costs us a huge production loss. We had a few outages of this length while we were running this application in a physical infrastructure." The company also faced several hardware failures.

The solution

Volkswagen wanted to make sure the continuity of delivering vehicles to meet the demand from the market. Thus they decided to virtualize their IT system. After examining a range of solutions, the management decided to deploy VMware's vSphere infrastructure. NetApp's MetroCluster was deployed for their storage needs. "We analyzed and evaluated different options and finally decided to go with VMware. Before deploying the solution, we also did some analysis and testing to check the compatibility of the solution," states Kapoor. The solution has sync mirror technology. "So if you are writing anything on to the storage, it will be written to the secondary data center as well at the same time," he adds.

Along with VMware vSphere, Volkswagen India could take advantage of products such as VMware vSphere vMotion, which allowed it to eliminate application downtime during server maintenance, and VMware vSphere high availability, which provided them protection against server or operating system failure.

They first decided on the servers that are critical for business operations and then identified the ones to be virtualized first. After procuring the needed servers and storage systems, the IT team converted physical servers into virtualized servers through the physical to virtual (P2V) conversion process. After six months of testing and assessment, the team was confident and the technology was ready to support the plant's critical systems. "We covered over 40 odd virtual machines and then everything came alive on the VMware platform. A lot of our hardware also got released," Kapoor explains. The company was able to shut down a few of their servers and could thus save a lot on power and cooling.

The company's IT infrastructure now comprises more than 60 virtual machines running on six IBM System x3650 2U

servers, connected to a NetApp MetroCluster storage system. This infrastructure now runs most of their business supporting applications. The virtualization project also involved establishing a second data center on campus. The IT team has been able to create an active-active configuration where processing workloads can be shifted between the two centers as required.

Real benefits

Volkswagen India is now achieving greater returns on its hardware investments. Sameer Pise, CIO of Volkswagen India, states, "With the implementation of this virtualized IT server infrastructure, we now have a significantly reliable and scalable IT solutions to support our ever growing business operations." Business expansion has now become an easy process for the company. The company has achieved a server consolidation ratio of 1:8 and improved utilization rates from around 10% to more than 80%. In addition, the company has reduced the provisioning time for new servers from weeks to minutes, improving the IT team's ability to rapidly respond to changing market demands.

Power and cooling costs are now down by 86%, significantly reducing Volkswagen India's overall operating costs. The continuous replication afforded by VMware virtualization and NetApp storage has reduced recovery point and recovery time objectives from 24 hours to near zero, ensuring the business could continue to operate without interruption in the event of a disaster. "We are now able to commit to significantly higher up-time service level agreements and have a platform that ensures there is no unscheduled downtime and our data is protected across two data centers," reveals Kapoor.

The new platform can also be scaled to meet future changes in business demands. "We are continuously receiving new projects and business plans. The new system is helping us meet our ever increasing business demands. We also expect that the new system will be able to support our growth for at least the next three to four years without any interruption," says Kapoor.

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BALAJI RAO
VMWARE

Balaji Rao, Director – Sales, Enterprise, India & SAARC, VMware, discusses with Jasmine Desai the importance of software defined networking (SDN), hybrid clouds and trends in the Indian market. Excerpts...

“We are not on our way to becoming a storage vendor”

What does the next wave of cloud adoption look like?

Most of our customers go through the plain vanilla virtualization as the step toward the cloud journey. The application is no more locked to the hardware and it can move freely. Phase two is towards virtualizing business critical applications and creating DR etc. Most of our customers are in phase two today. The third phase is where there will be a lot more automation in the form of cloud. It implies that provisioning is completely automated. Basically, they will automate processes that are manual, but virtualized. They will automate it further in the form of cloud. This is where the next phase of cloud [adoption] is going.

How do you think organizations will address the skill-gap issue?

For all products that we have, including the latest ones, we have trained around 7,000 people last year. Thus, there is good availability of trained people in the market. Now, we are focusing on different components of the cloud as far as the training goes.

Secondly, we have trained partners, to make sure that there is no dearth of skill availability. So we have system integrated partners, OEM partners, tier 2 partners. The third area is where we have our professional services. This is for very niche implementations, wherein partners may or may not have capabilities, we come into the picture. Internal IT is becoming IT as a service. We help them in solving dilemmas such as how should the charge-back mechanism be like? How much should they be charging? What is the road-map that the organization has for IT-as-a-service? This whole thing is laid down as IT as a journey. Once it is done, the customer knows the journey forward and fixes the necessary software components.

How will customers resonate with VMware as a storage vendor?

We are not on our way to becoming a storage vendor. We are wrapping storage hardware from hardware vendors with our software so that organizations get low cost SAN. Our product



Why will there be high interest from enterprise customers around SDN?

The world of networking has not changed much over last many years. You cannot just move around bandwidth. Customers want that flexibility. There is fair amount of complexity involved in routing and a software-based approach will simplify this. A software on top will ease the configuration and management on the whole. The software does the magic.

VSAN is in beta version. So there is storage already available in servers in form of disks. These disks are going up in numbers these days so there is lot of storage available in servers. There are certain number of servers and disks, and we are just wrapping that with software to create a SAN. We are just wrapping the disk with a software to create a SAN. Most organizations do not require an expensive SAN. The question is do they require independent storage for various components? Probably not. Organizations are looking at ways and means to reduce the cost of storage. For virtual desktop environment you do not need independent storage in the back-end if you have something like VSAN.

VMware NFX for customers would mean making a lot of changes internally. So how do you see customers going about making these changes?

We are in the early phase in terms of usage, where we can get customers to use the technology. It is promising that if the hypervisor can take care of the compute and memory can take care of the networking as well, there is going to be lot more flexibility in the networking area and lot more ease of architecture in the networking area. This fits very well into our vision of Software Defined Datacenter. Customers want the same level of ease in the way they manage compute and memory, to manage the network.

What trends are paving the way for these products in the Indian market?

We are looking at customers who are already in phase two of virtualization and are looking at software defined data center. Large organizations that also have a lot of legacy architecture take lot of time to move all components to SDC. One clear trend is that customers moving from UX to x86 platform. UX is lot more rigid than x86 platform. The number of VMs running on servers is increasing and the price of x86 is also coming down. Business critical applications are being virtualized and now organizations are looking at how to automate these as they go further.

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DIGITAL LEARNING



Modern School at Barakhamba Road in Delhi is looking to redefine teaching methods through a digitization project with Educomp

BY MEHAK CHAWLA



When one of the better known schools in the country — Modern School, Barakhamba Road, Delhi — decided to evaluate technology-assisted teaching methods back in 2006, there were not many case studies to lean back on, neither were there many options in the market. However, Modern's vision happened to coincide with the time

Educomp began aggressively marketing their smart class solutions to Indian schools.

According to Gautam Sarkar, IT Head, Modern School, Barakhamba Road, around that time, though technology implementations in education were catching up, there were hardly any vendors who offered content that was in sync with the Indian teaching method. "We went through a lot of demos. It was in the year 2006 that we saw a demo in Singapore and seeing the fluidity of content and its amalgamation with teaching methods, we decided to undertake this project with Educomp. In 2007, we took the decision and started implementing."

As of now, the project has covered 40 classrooms plus some labs and libraries of Modern School, under two phases. The first installation of smart classes in Modern School, Barakhamba Road, concluded on 1st April 2010, in around 24 classrooms. In the second phase, which covered 16 classrooms and was implemented in April 2013, Educomp bought in their latest product offering, Digital Teaching System (DTS) to Modern's premises. This product, according to Subrata Biswas, Head, Technical Evaluation Group, Educomp Smartclass, offers a host of technology enhancements and greater integration between hardware and content. "For instance, all the hardware pieces can be controlled using a single switch console, an exercise that was earlier quite cumbersome. We have improved upon the look and feel and aesthetics. We have also made it compact instead of a 10 piece hardware installation," he elaborates. Both the installations are on a 5 year contract basis.

Project infrastructure

Though the exercise started as a smart class project initially, there were a lot of other technology initiatives, according to Sarkar, that merged with this macro project. For instance, there was the Virtual School initiative that Modern did with Educomp under this project. "In 2007, teachers started posting their homework etc. on the platform. We allocated separate user names for

children and parents. Since then, we have striven to move towards a paperless classroom. We can even upload scanned copies on the portal, something which has greatly helped students on long sick leaves etc.," explains Sarkar.

The one thing that appealed to the school, according to Sarkar, was the license based model followed by Educomp. "Unlike other vendors, Educomp sells content not class wise but license wise. It is not restricted to any number of classrooms. In other cases, there are licenses for 2 classrooms etc.," Sarkar adds. He says that on the content side, there have hardly been any issues faced by the educational institution. "We did not face too many problems on the content side because of two factors — Educomp's content has always been standardized and competent. This was supplemented by the fact that Modern as an institution, never sought to replace teachers by technology. We considered content as a tool to enhance the teaching capabilities in our classrooms. We never went in for capsules of 100% content because we were clear that nothing can replace teachers in a classroom," emphasizes Sarkar.

Another selling point was, that for Modern School, Educomp remains the single point of contact for the entire project. "Educomp is Modern's single point of contact. We have a 5 year contract with them which takes care of end-to-end maintenance," says Biswas.

The entire infrastructure in all classrooms, together with the knowledge center which is where the servers as well as practice/idle units for teachers (to use for practice) are placed, has been set-up by Educomp. In Modern's case, Educomp needed to put only one server, because the load sharing understanding between classes was reached prior to the project. "Our installations in every classroom includes a projector, CPU, UPS, an interactive white board and a traditional green board," reveals Biswas. Also, from the very beginning there were three Educomp people placed on Modern's premises to take care of everything — including day-to-day complexities of making an institution adapt to a new way of operating.



We never went in for capsules of 100% content because we were clear that nothing can replace teachers in a classroom.

Gautam Sarkar,
IT Head, Modern School,
Barakhamba Road



Educomp is Modern's single point of contact. We have a 5-year contract with them which takes care of end-to-end maintenance.

Subrata Biswas,
Head - Technical Evaluation Group,
Educomp Smartclass

Thanks to the scale of the implementation, and Educomp's tie-ups with global content providers, Modern School did not face many hurdles on the content side

In Phase 2, Educomp also brought in more interactive content to the institution with their Classroom Transformation System (CTS). According to Biswas, "CTS is our latest version of content that we have deployed for Modern in phase 2. Earlier content was quite plain. We have enhanced the scope of content by building in a lot of activities and quizzes etc. in multiple choice question format. We have also added some other stuff like weblinks for additional information etc."

Impediments en route

According to Sarkar, money was never a challenge for Modern School as they knew that they were pioneering a new teaching method, and that would come at a cost. "However, we were clear that for an extensive project, RoI should be justified. We were looking to be pioneers in IT based education. We were also clear from the beginning that we can never replace teachers. We wanted to enhance our education delivery and bring more efficiency in the institution by eliminating long and complicated teaching mechanisms," says Sarkar.

The major challenges faced initially were acceptability of the students and the training of teachers. "Teachers did face some initial hassles in adapting to the new teaching style. There was also some discomfort with handling complex technology. Also, there was a risk of costly hardware being under-utilized," details Sarkar.

Another significant matter was to ensure that hardware installation did not lead to any disruption of school's day to day functioning. "Also, we made sure that the kind of content we opted for did not require very high speed connectivity, and that helped in saving costs. Only one device in our hardware set per classroom needed connectivity," mentions Sarkar.

Sarkar adds that while they

anticipated some challenges on the student acceptability front, students, being extremely tech savvy, actually helped the teachers in adapting faster to this mode of teaching. Teachers' training too was done in a methodical way. As Sarkar says, "Educomp provided us with extensive training sessions throughout the year. A very important aspect of the implementation was that Educomp deployed an experienced supervisor, who was also a teacher, on our premises. We supplemented their teaching modules with our own workshops for teachers."

Thanks to the scale of the implementation, and Educomp's tie-ups with global content providers, Modern School did not face many hurdles on the content side. Auto update of the content was a part of their contract with Educomp. "They (Educomp) even produced special and customized content for us when we voiced some particular requirements," adds Sarkar.

Sarkar says that with time, their fears of under-utilized systems have also been laid to rest. "We get statistics of usage of content capsules — like how many hours per month have they been used for etc., and we are quite satisfied with the numbers", he observes.

Subsequent to the expansion it undertook early this year, Modern intends to expand smart classes to standards XI and XII. According to Sarkar, "Our plan is to extend these systems to higher classes because students who are used to the systems from their middle school are demanding these facilities and we are looking to do this expansion in the academic year 2014-15." He sums up by saying that in case of any expansion, they evaluate all competing products in the market to determine the best levels of service and product features for their institution.

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SANJIV KRISHEN
IRIS COMPUTERS

A veteran of the IT distribution business, Sanjiv Krishen, CMD of Iris Computers, shares with Sanjay Gupta his views on the IT distribution business, the challenges it faces and how enterprise technology buying is changing

“Today the competition is so fierce that you keep on discounting”

How do you think will the growing influence of telcos affect the traditional IT channel business?

Well, they are yet another channel. There was a time when people would say, “Who would go to an LFR [large format retail store] to buy a notebook? The notebook sales guy should come to us and tell us why we should buy one.” But things are changing: if you look at the sales of notebooks today, nearly 15-20% of sales are happening through malls and LFRs. And this will at least become 25-30% within a year.

Do you think that a lot of PCs that the state governments are buying for giving away to students are not being used because of lack of power?

That is not entirely true and there is a lot of media hype about it. There is power in most of these places and the machines are being indeed used.

The IT industry is often accused of selling more than what the customers and enterprises need. What are your views on this?

From our perspective, we do not sell directly to the end-customer but to the resellers who, in turn, sell to customers. There are some large projects in which the principals [vendors] do the project sizing and we do the fulfillment. In most cases, the sizing is done by our partners. So as far as we are concerned, we are neither increasing the configuration nor decreasing it — that is not our role.

On the other hand, in the hardware industry, what you can probably accuse the industry is that of under-selling! Because everyone wants to get a foot into the door, so they end up giving a configuration which is less than what is required — in the hope that once the installation is done and the application starts running, they will be able to upgrade the equipment.

So, it is because of price pressure and competition?

Yes, it is price pressure. If the customer has a budget of, say, Rs4 crore, you will give him equipment of Rs4 crore even if the actual need



In government buying, there is a view that it shouldn't just go for the lowest bid but also look at other factors. Does that happen?

If you meet the specs of an order, then invariably the tender goes to the lowest bidder. But that should not always be the case. They should also ask the second lowest bidder to match the price and then get a certain percentage of that business as well.

is for equipment worth Rs6 crore. The thought is that the customers will upgrade their systems later. Which is not really a wrong thought also, because why should you pay for technology today that you might need one or two years down the line?

In terms of enterprise sales, do you think CIOs and senior IT decision makers today have more bargaining power than they had a few years back?

Yes, very much so. In fact, I would say that today the competition is so fierce that you [vendors/partners] keep on discounting and discounting. The margins are very low and the targets given by the principal companies are very high. For instance, vendor X may want to grow 30% this year, so their targets are 30% higher compared to last year. Other vendors are saying the same thing. But the actual market is growing at 5%. So somewhere there is going to be a mismatch between the targets and the customer base that you have in the country. That is when discounting starts.

The distribution business is becoming ever more consolidated with just two large players controlling much of the market. Where does that leave smaller players like Iris?

See, if you look at the size, Ingram and Redington are probably 10 times our size or even more. Again, if you look at the product range, it is much, much larger as they have everything from components and telecom to software and hardware. But if you look at certain product lines, say Lenovo, which became number one notebook vendor in the past couple of years, we do 54% of their commercial business in the country...So even though Ingram and Redington also distribute Lenovo, the dealer has the choice of which distributor to buy from. And we are able to reach out to the partners much quicker and in an easier manner. We are open longer hours and seven days a week, plus we are more flexible...the kind of value adds that give smaller distributors like us an edge.

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GETTING CREATIVE on



The newest offering from Adobe's stable, Creative Cloud, helps AppStudioz standardize processes for app development

BY MEHAK CHAWLA



Application development, in today's era of mobility and BYOD, can be as challenging as it is exciting. Needless to say, for any organization in the app development business, a robust technology backbone is nothing less than a hygiene factor. That is why a platform that would enhance the creative ability of their design team was high on the agenda for AppStudioz.

AppStudioz creates mobile and web application for a multitude of platforms like iOS, Android, Windows and have developed apps like ESPN, Stylematch and My Safety Alert, amongst several others. It's a no-brainer that in their industry, design always remains at the forefront. As a result, when AppStudioz started discussing a scalable technology backbone for their designers, cloud emerged as a default answer. According to Preeti Singh, VP, Technology, AppStudioz, "When we started our cloud discussions we did a lot of research, we held extensive sessions with our designers. The designers who are always in touch with what is happening in the market and what kind of designs are working for the customers, voted overwhelmingly in favor of Adobe's

Creative Cloud."

For Singh, the impact that Creative Cloud could have on their business was clear from the beginning, since a lot of organizations across the industry, including some of AppStudioz's clients, were already using it. So it was a collective decision of the top management, the designers and the IT team at AppStudioz to go ahead with the implementation of Adobe's Creative Cloud.

Another deciding factor was that a majority of people in AppStudioz's India office were dealing with clients based out of US and UK, and a large number of these were designers who were using Creative Cloud. "We wanted to convey that we are also using the same advanced tech platforms as they are, and hence can deliver standardized work from our end," explains Singh.

The decision was always in favor of Adobe, primarily because Photoshop, Illustrator and other components from Adobe are an industry norm in the app development space. "Adobe is an industry standard across and since we were already using Adobe extensively, we wanted to stick to the familiarity factor,"



Adobe is an industry standard across and since we were already using Adobe extensively, we wanted to stick to the familiarity factor.

Preeti Singh,
VP, Technology, AppStudioz

AppStudioz started using Creative Cloud a few months back. At the moment they are not using any external apps in cloud and all their apps residing in cloud are either designing or coding ones



says Singh.

Creative process

The first step of the migration process, reveals Singh, was an elaborate meeting with the design team at AppStudioz in order to establish whether they wanted to shift to another platform. “We saw no point in buying an expensive package if they were not interested in working on it. We figured they were keen to switch primarily because of three reasons: the platform is industry standard, because they were comfortable with Adobe and thirdly because most of their clients were using Creative Cloud and they were keen to bring in standardized formats.”

Another factor was that being in the application development industry, AppStudioz, like any other company was big on scalable graphics. Scalable graphics are graphics that can be scaled up and down without causing any distortion. Creative Cloud’s Photoshop, according to Singh, offered some really brilliant features with respect to scalable graphics. “It also has features that make it easy for us to customize vectors at any point in the design stage. Designers were excited about the features that Creative Cloud would bring to them. For instance, earlier if I had a figure with four sharp

edges and if, at any point in time, I needed to make those edges rounded, I had to remake the entire figure. But with Creative Cloud they have taken this one step further and we can bring in alterations at any stage. So we have more power to do new stuff without having to think about creating a figure from scratch again,” Singh details.

When it came to the revenue model, it was largely the call of the management team, who gave it a go-ahead once they were convinced of Creative Cloud’s features and RoI. “Since we were talking about organizational transformation here, we were absolutely sure that we wanted to opt for all things original. We went in for original software licenses across the board, so all the expenditure happened in a very planned manner,” emphasizes Singh. The IT team assured the management that at the end of the day, the capability enhancements that the organization will get from Creative Cloud will justify the spending.

Settling on the cloud

Singh says that by-and-large, the implementation which happened over a couple of weeks, went pretty smoothly and they did not face any work disruptions. A big reason behind this was

that AppStudioz’s hardware was checked beforehand and had already been upgraded to cloud-ready standards. “The only upgradation that we required at the time of the implementation was increasing the RAM,” informs Singh.

The challenges came only post the implementation. Elaborates Singh, “Although our implementation was quite smooth, there were a few challenges when we started using Creative Cloud. That was primarily because Creative Cloud required a certain level of technical expertise and our team wasn’t up to date with that. It is then that we contacted the Adobe team and held live sessions with them on things like, how to best use Photoshop with Creative Cloud. They came up with some fresh ideas and innovative solutions and it was pretty smooth from there on. It was only a few days of hiccups.” The implementation was done directly by Adobe.

AppStudioz started using Creative Cloud a few months ago. At the moment, they are not using any external apps in cloud and all their apps residing in cloud are either designing or coding ones. Since the company was already a heavy user of Adobe, Creative Cloud got quickly integrated into the system. The benefits are already visible. “The inter-dependencies that Creative Cloud has established between the different software have gone a long way in making our work smoother,” explains Singh.

The design team at AppStudioz is a mix of different types of artists like graphic designers, illustrators and user-interface designers, all working on different kind of software. “For instance, if a designer was working in Illustrator but his work has to be opened in Flash, since that is the default software, the conversion was a complicated process. However, with Creative Cloud, we have more flexibility and our work is largely standardized,” sums up Singh.

As of now, there are 12 designers at AppStudioz who are using Creative Cloud. They are planning to increase the design team by 10 more people, and scalability terms have already been discussed with Adobe.

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(From L to R): Suman Reddy, VP and MD, Pegasystems Worldwide India, and Alan Treffler, Founder and CEO, Pegasystems at a media briefing at Pega Developers Conference 2013

These centers are highly involved in core engineering and software product development along with supporting the company's customers globally.

A new version

The conference coincided with the launch of the company's latest software platform, Pega 7, which is touted as a quantum leap by the company. In fact, the two centers in India have played a major role in the development of version 7, which can help large enterprises and organizations to automate business processes and customer experiences.

"The Pega ecosystem is seeing a huge explosion in India and that is why we hosted the conference here. We anticipate more engagement from developers as well as customers in the ecosystem," said Suman Reddy, Vice President and Managing Director, Pegasystems Worldwide India.

The conference acted as a platform for knowledge-sharing for the growing community of Pega designers and developers in India, and brought together delegates from some of the world's largest organizations, including JP Morgan Chase.

"We use Pega technology to support our business initiatives globally and an initiative such as Pega Developers Conference 2013 provides all the participants with tremendous opportunity to enhance their skill set and drive increased productivity for their organizations. I am delighted to see such a wonderful response to this event," said Rachna Bahadur, Managing Director, Global Group Manager, Centralized Operations - Information and Services, JP Morgan Chase.

Other top officials of Pegasystems (Mike Pyle, Senior Vice President of Engineering; Kerim Akgonul, Vice President of Product Management and Steve Bixby, Senior Director, Product Management) were also present during the conference and shared insights into the company's latest products and solutions as well as their business impact on organizations. Over 1700 people attended the meet.

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BUILDING FOR CHANGE

BPM and CRM player
Pegasystems has great
expectations from its first
developers conference in
India

BY PANKAJ MARU

Pegasystems Inc., a global player in businesses process management (BPM) and customer relationship management (CRM), hosted its Pega Developers Conference 2013 for the first time in India at Hyderabad International Convention Center (HICC) recently.

"At Pegasystems, we have a culture which celebrates innovation. Our vision for the Pega Developers Conference is to create a world-class knowledge sharing

platform to enable the growing Pega community to get hands-on exposure to our latest technologies," said Alan Treffler, Founder and CEO, Pegasystems, during his keynote address at the conference.

"India is a region with immense talent and we are excited to receive such an overwhelming response to the Pega Developers Conference. We are confident that at the end of this conference, there will be a great takeaway for all attendees in terms of practical ideas and new strategies for growth and innovation," added Treffler.

One of the key reasons for the two-day conference to be held in India this time is the fast-growing ecosystem here that includes Pega professionals, developers, partners as well as customers. According to the US-based company, India has a strong base of 12,000-plus Pega certified professionals, while globally the Pega community is around 20,000.

In the past few years, India has been very strategic to Pegasystems' software research and development activities. In fact, the company has set up two R&D centers, one each in Hyderabad and Bangalore, and the total staff strength is expected to touch 900 by end of 2013.

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COLUMN

CHETAN NAIK

BIG DATA FOR INTELLIGENT BUSINESS

As real-time businesses and processes grow, big data will become more powerful

Every zeitgeist in history is marked by a certain evolution that has changed the functionalities of this world forever. In this era of overflowing information, each and every terabyte counts. There is an explosion of “data sets” in the market, and enterprises are awash in all sorts of data.

These large sets of data, known as “big data,” are slated to become the defining factor for success rates, much like the bygone era where the fate of nations was determined by controlling resources, namely oil and energy fields.

It is believed that in today’s world, “big data” will exercise similar power as it will become a key basis of competition, underpinning new waves of productivity growth, innovation, and consumer surplus. The factors fueling the exponential growth of data in future include globalization, growth of new verticals and businesses, and emergence of new and unconventional channels of information exchange: the rise of multimedia, social media and Internet.

As real-time businesses and processes grow, big data will become more powerful as it can provide solutions for time-sensitive processes as well. This data that is available to us in structured and unstructured forms such as text, sensor data, audio, video, click streams, log files and more, has the power to yield newer insights every passing moment with scrutinizing analysis.

Analytics: Where is it going?

Coleridge in his epic lyrical ballad famously wrote, “Water, water, everywhere, not a drop to drink,” referring to the plight of the protagonist who had abundant resources, but could not leverage it due to its non-utility. Data is invaluable and the volume of data available today is immense, much like that water. But utilizing this data to help grow the business, is of prime import. Taking into account the current scenario, it can be safely said that big data is

available in abundance and can be generated in a short time frame, but the credibility and usability of that big data in a manner that can benefit the business is a big dilemma today. Analytical tools not only find and analyze past and present trends, they enable organizations to have greater transparency. However, to stay competitive in business, mere past and present insight and trend information are not enough. Traditional analytical tools could only analyze historical data and help gain an insight on past decision-making.

Businesses need more information about future trends, patterns and customer behavior in order to understand the market better. To this end, BI vendors have now developed predictive analytics to forecast future trends in customer behavior, buying patterns and current market entrants and exits. Predictive analytics, as the name suggests, is concerned with the prediction of future probabilities and trends. The predictive business analytics tools today in the market deliver actionable insights into every aspect of business performance, whether it is current results, customer trends, competitive threats or market opportunities.

In predictive analytics, the core element is a variable that can be measured for an individual or entity to predict future behavior that is called the predictor. To forecast future probabilities with an acceptable level of reliability, multiple predictors are combined into a predictive model and then subjected to analysis. In predictive modeling, once the data is collected, a statistical model is formulated, predictions are made and as additional data becomes available, the model is then validated. Predictive analytics arrive at relevant insights by combining business knowledge and statistical analytical techniques with available business data. These insights in turn help organizations



Factors fueling data growth include globalization, growth of new verticals and businesses, and new channels of information exchange



understand individuals behave in different roles of customers, buyers, seller, distributors etc.

It's getting bigger...

And then arrives the huge explosion that has taken the world by storm- big data. Big data is broadly the term used to describe the process of applying computing power to massive and highly complex sets of information. This technology holds power of massive proportions. It holds the potential to change the way governments, organizations, and academic institutions conduct business and make discoveries. This explosion can be attributed to a few factors. To be honest, one of the primary factors has to be the fact there is actually just more data out there and it is ever-growing. And with digitization of information or in some cases, being born in the digital form in the first place, this growth of available data is not something that can be curbed.

Another factor contributing to the explosion of big data is the advancement in technology and machine intelligence that can process, compare and analyze both structured and unstructured data and there is no denying that progressively inexpensive data storage also helps the cause. With a plethora of

technologies exploding on to the scene, the availability and knowledge of necessary tools needed to leverage big data can be a humongous asset for any organization. Hence businesses should look to multiply the efficiency of big data by using appropriate technologies.

...and better

Business analytics can also increase the efficiency and effectiveness of core business processes and contribute to the creation of high-performing "analytics-driven" organizations. It has been noted "analytics-driven" organizations display more effective and smarter business behavior as compared to their counterparts. An analytics- driven organization stands to gain so much more over its competition because:

- It is more aware with accessible insights into performance that helps employees assess their performance
- It is more focused with relevant and customized insights that help employees understand the strategy and business goals, so that they can prioritize their decisions and actions accordingly
- Due to consistent and commonly shared insights, employees are more aligned in the way they direct their energies and resources towards actions to drive better outcomes
- Also, timely insights ensure immediacy in response time to emerging opportunities and threats and coherent action. In short, an analytics-driven organization is more agile
- Access to forward-looking information engenders a proactive work culture where employees actively identify problems and resolve them before they hurt performance

Surveys have revealed that business analytics helps improve business strategy and decision making and consistently drives better financial results. The sooner businesses embrace the tidal wave of analytics, the faster they will surge ahead of competition.

Chetan Naik is Director and Regional Executive - West, IBM India/South Asia.

Access to forward-looking information engenders a proactive work culture where employees actively identify problems and resolve them before they hurt performance



COLUMN

CAVAN EGAN

5 MYTHS ABOUT CLOUD – BUSTED

Despite acceptance that off-premise is the way to go for IT, there are still many recurring misconceptions that undermine the speed of cloud adoption

It is common knowledge among IT professionals that cloud is no longer merely “hype” and is fundamentally changing the way companies buy and use IT. Businesses have long since come to realize the cost, flexibility and scalability benefits provided by the cloud, and the decision to move away from on-premise IT is a no-brainer.

However, despite this acceptance, there are still many recurring misconceptions that undermine the speed of cloud adoption and leave businesses unsure as to whether it really is a wise move after all. Here, I’ll attempt to tackle these misconceptions and put the five most frequent offenders into perspective.

Myth 1: Cloud is not secure

This is probably the most recurrent issue in all cloud conversations, and is a valid concern since IT deals with sensitive data, company reputation, and customers’ experience. However, the cloud can be as secure as an on-premise IT environment. In addition to traditional firewalls, cloud providers adopt a layered approach to security; beginning with physical security, such as rigorous access control procedures and sophisticated surveillance systems; then logical security with network segregation among the cloud tenants; and separated firewall contexts for each environment managed by the user. Additionally, the use of state-of-the-art intrusion detection and DDoS protection systems help protect the cloud platform from any unwelcome guests. Additional security can also be achieved by encrypting data stored in the cloud, and by extending company access controls and role-based access to the company’s cloud environment.

Myth 2: Cloud is a “best effort”

One great thing about cloud computing is the wide variety of different solutions available. Whether you want something

simple for your personal web page, or you need a basic e-commerce portal to sell homemade cookies online, there are a huge number of cloud providers offering it for a very reasonable price; but there are also more robust clouds made for the enterprise. The point is that not all clouds are created equal, but neither are all business requirements. There are cloud solutions for every need and every budget, but when looking for an enterprise-grade cloud provider, the conversation is different. There is no best effort or one-size-fits-all approach in the cloud; it is all about performance and availability, backed by meaningful and comprehensive SLAs, with penalties in case of violations.

Myth 3: Once you’re in, there’s no getting out

Cloud vendor lock-in is a big concern for many. Data migration, even in the traditional IT world, is one of the biggest burdens when adopting a new technology platform. Many believe that once data is deployed to a cloud environment, they will never be able to get it back, or will never get it back out in a format that is useful. When choosing a cloud provider, enterprises need to pay special attention to which practices are being followed and which industry standards are being adhered to. The ability to use open application programming interfaces (APIs), import and export virtual machines and the seamless integration with private networks and private clouds, needs to be accommodated by the cloud provider.

Myth 4: I’ll lose what I have invested so far

This concern is very common among businesses that have invested in their own data center and dedicated hardware over the years. However, using a public cloud doesn’t mean that you have to retire your actual equipment. In many cases, a cloud environment will complement existing infrastructure and



There is no best effort or one-size-fits-all approach in the cloud; it is all about performance and availability, backed by meaningful and comprehensive SLAs



provide the agility and flexibility that businesses need and help them avoid over-investing in internal platforms. There are many tools in the market that integrate data and systems across on-premises and public cloud environments. The secret is to find a cloud provider that can help map out a cloud strategy that makes use of what already exists in the company's data center whilst providing a growth path for the future, leveraging public cloud environments.

Myth 5: compliance and cloud don't go together

Nowadays, companies see themselves in a constant battle to be compliant with security standards. Whether it's HIPAA, PCI, ISO, SSAE16, or any one of the number of other regulations, every industry has its compliance challenges.

When you add a public cloud into the equation, the first reaction is to think that it will become more complicated than ever. However, in the cloud provider's world, compliance is as important as in any other industry. Cloud providers themselves actively seek to address security compliance requirements in

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 In many cases, a cloud environment will complement existing infrastructure and provide the agility and flexibility that businesses need

order to help their customers with their own obligations. This should give enterprises more confidence when moving to the cloud, and at the same time complement their internal compliance processes.

Myths are often the results of outdated information, rumor, or logical conclusions from faulty assumptions. The best defense is simply to do research, ask questions, and find out what solutions will best fit your company's specific needs. There is no one "right" answer any more than there is one "right" cloud environment. The best approach to cloud adoption is to simply know what you need and want and ask providers how they can best meet your needs.

Gavan Egan is Vice President of Sales (EMEA) with Verizon Terremark.



Andy Jassy, Senior VP, Amazon Web Services, delivering his keynote

AMAZON'S ENTERPRISE PUSH

At its second developer jamboree, the public cloud pioneer makes several big moves for wooing large enterprises

BY SANJAY GUPTA

Amazon Web Services, the cloud computing arm of online behemoth Amazon.com, may keep its revenue under wraps (or, shall we say, in a cloud?), but it makes no pretense about what it is gunning for: the leadership position.

Even so, the unit's exuberant chief, Andy Jassy, started his keynote at AWS's second annual global developer conference, AWS re:Invent 2013, with the remark that it is a "learning conference rather than a sales and marketing one."

Not that he was factually wrong: the 8000-strong crowd gathered at The Venetian, Las Vegas, over three days of November, comprised largely of geeks rather than marketing types. The techies

could be seen swarming all round the place, attending keynotes and technical sessions, visiting stalls and talking to each other — all trying to get a taste of the cloud pioneer's hot new servings.

Nevertheless, Jassy did take a dig at one of its arch rivals, IBM, referring to it as an "old guard technology" company getting "pretty panicky." He was pointing to IBM painting the buses in Vegas (particularly those plying around the AWS venue) blue with advertising that bragged that IBM has a larger cloud business than Amazon. "Their attempt is akin to jumping up and down and trying to snatch a few customers," he quipped.

On a serious note, of course, cloud is no longer about a few customers but a

whole new way of computing that everyone — from mom-and-pop shops to Fortune 500 enterprises — is in the process of embracing.

The cloud battle

It is indeed interesting how things are shaping up in the cloud computing business and how AWS, a mere seven-year-old brat, is able to rake up so much rumble in what was only its second large event. It is open knowledge that besides Big Blue, other top cloud contenders would have been keenly watching what Amazon was up to. After all, as per Gartner's August 2013 Magic Quadrant report for cloud infrastructure as a service (IaaS), "AWS is the overwhelming market share leader, with more than five times the compute capacity in use than the aggregate total of the other fourteen providers..."

That makes Amazon sound like the 800-pound gorilla of cloud computing — unless you consider that IaaS is still just one segment, albeit quite visible and fastest-growing, of the \$47.4 billion public IT cloud services market in 2013 (IDC estimates). However, Amazon has the momentum and, as re:Invent 2013 indicated, the drive to continue to grab the lion's share of the overall cloud

services market.

The direction of the IT market favors Amazon and other cloud-focused vendors too. According to IDC forecasts, by 2017, public IT cloud services will drive 17% of IT product spending and nearly half of all growth across five technology categories: applications, system infrastructure software, platform as a service (PaaS), servers, and basic storage. Furthermore, over the 2013–2017 forecast period, public IT cloud services will have a CAGR of 23.5%, five times that of the IT industry as a whole.

There is no doubt that cloud computing is well past the hype stage and is in an experiment-and-adopt phase. But there is one big issue that AWS and other cloud aspirants must confront when it comes to enterprises. Most large enterprises have already invested in their own huge and complex IT infrastructure (as well as large teams to run them) and they are in no hurry to junk it in favor of the public cloud. So industry experts and observers are of the view that a majority of them will go for private clouds (where the old guard of IBM, HP, Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, etc., have strongly pitched their tents).

Incidentally, "private cloud" is a term that does not sit very well with Amazon,



We work from the customer backwards...our goal is to get the core functionality in the hands of customers, quickly.

Werner Vogels,
CTO, Amazon.com



According to IDC forecasts, by 2017, public IT cloud services will drive 17% of IT product spending and nearly half of all growth across five technology categories



which has of late been trying to make more inroads into the enterprise space. According to Jassy, “Private cloud has none of the benefits of the public cloud; you don’t get the same benefits of cost, agility, etc.” He goes so far as to say that if “you are not using or planning to use the public cloud, you have a competitive disadvantage.”

All the same, he realizes that it’s not going to be a binary choice for enterprises. “We have been spending effort on enabling enterprise resources to work with AWS,” he said in his keynote.

To acquire the girth and weight of an HP or an IBM in the hallowed data centers of enterprises, AWS will need to shift many more workloads to its own facilities. Plus tweak its offerings, support and agreements to suit the eclectic tastes of medium-to-large businesses rather than just startups and online entities, its strongholds thus far.

What’s new for enterprises

No wonder, then, that re:Invent 2013 saw a few key announcements geared toward

enterprises. These include the availability of Amazon Relational Database Service (Amazon RDS) for PostgreSQL (the preferred open source relational database for many developers); Amazon Kinesis, a fully managed service for real-time processing of high-volume, streaming data; AppStream service, which provides developers with the ability to stream heavy-duty 3D games or interactive HD applications from the cloud; and WorkSpaces, a managed desktop computing service in the cloud.

Werner Vogels, Amazon’s technology chief, spent much of his keynote highlighting the features and capabilities of these new announcements — most of which were received with rounds of applause from the audience.

Vogels also gave some insights into what makes AWS tick. “We work from the customer backwards,” he said. The AWS team, before writing a single line of code, keeps in constant touch with end customers. “Our goal is to get the core functionality in the hands of customers, quickly,” he said. He also remarked that

Amazon tries to keep the teams “small enough to be fed by two pizzas.”

However, while the pizza philosophy may work very well internally for innovation and quick rollouts, large enterprises would require custom support probably backed by negotiations and long rounds of handholding — a task Amazon will likely leave to its growing roster of solution partners.

At the event, in addition to technical enhancements and launches, Amazon also announced the expansion of its partner program. “A wider partner base will allow the company to have a better connect with our customers,” Terry Wise, Worldwide Alliance Director, AWS, told Express Computer on the sidelines of the event. Wise said that AWS has also enhanced its APN (Amazon Partner Network) competency program to enable solution providers to more effectively serve the market. The company now boasts of more than 8000 technology and consulting partners worldwide under APN.

According to Shane Owenby, Managing Director of the APAC region



We considered two other providers, Rackspace and Gandi, but they could not meet all our requirements. Also, cost-wise, Amazon turned out to be less expensive.

Akshay Padwal,
CTO, Vserv.mobi

for AWS, the company is going to work even more closely with its key Indian partners such as Wipro and Infosys. Without revealing any revenue numbers, he said that AWS is “growing significantly” in the country. It may be mentioned here that in July 2013, Amazon launched two CloudFront edge locations in India (Chennai and Mumbai) — part of a global network of 42 edge facilities meant to speed up content delivery and distribution. A company announcement at that time mentioned that in the second quarter of 2013, more than 8,000 customers in India “turned to the AWS cloud to run a variety of IT operations.”

All these moves indicate the growing aggressiveness of AWS in the enterprise space, which will be contested more hotly than ever in the next few years.

What customers say

Express Computer spoke to the technology heads of a couple of AWS customers present at the event. Among them is Lorin Kobashigawa, Director of Technology for APAC for the travel site Expedia, which also acquired the portal AirAsiaGo.com sometime back. “This was hosted on a third-party platform and the experience was not very good,” said Kobashigawa. So the company decided to move to the AWS platform.

Regarding the experience of working with AWS, Kobashigawa said that there were some technical snags initially, but Amazon has been “iterating incredibly fast” and was able to address the issues to his satisfaction. Instance management and cost management were also among Expedia’s concerns but, again, AWS, provided the necessary tools to overcome them.

Another customer is Mumbai-based Vserv.mobi, a mobile ad network that serves 31 billion mobile ad requests a month to consumers in India, Southeast Asia, Middle East & Africa and Latin America. The company has two server clusters — one each in Turkey and South Africa — but it relies on the AWS cloud for most of its needs. According to CTO Akshay Padwal, the company uses compute and storage services from Amazon. The main criteria for choosing

AWS? The company wanted to have a global hosting provider and did not want to deal with multiple providers in various regions (for reasons of manageability and in-house skills). “We considered two other providers, Rackspace and Gandi, but they could not meet all our requirements. Also, cost-wise, Amazon turned out to be less expensive,” he said.

Overall, Amazon seems to have learned from its huge customer experience over the years and is making changes to its cloud services at a formidable speed. Several company executives cited the ability of the company to iterate quickly as one of its key advantages over rivals.

The way things are going in public cloud services, Amazon has the size and the momentum. But it has certain challenges as well. According to Gartner’s August 2013 Magic Quadrant report, while AWS is a price leader, it charges separately for optional items that are often bundled with competitive offerings. “This increases the complexity of understanding and auditing bills,” says Gartner. Among other “cautions” that the research firm lists for AWS: “multiple generations of compute instance families” with different levels of performance; AWS support being based on tier-purchase rather than “size-of-spend or relationship” basis; and lack of sufficient consultative sales capacity of the company, especially for enterprise customers.

And then, competitors such as Google are only going to be snapping at its heels more than ever. For one, Google made its own Compute Engine generally available to developers around May 2013. It also announced that it would support PHP, a widely used programming language, with Google App Engine.

On the enterprise front, the old guard vendors, too, are not going to let Amazon easily eat their lunch; they will go all out to keep more and more enterprises hooked to private and hybrid clouds (supplied with their own infrastructure and solutions).

To be sure, the cloud ball is going to roll furiously about in the customer’s court.

One big issue for public cloud providers like AWS is that large enterprises have already invested in huge IT infrastructure and are in no hurry to embrace public cloud

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“We are now expanding mainly into solar power solutions”



Uniline Energy Systems, one of the largest home-grown UPS vendors in the country, recently branched off into solar solutions. Managing Director RK Bansal shares some of the company's new initiatives in an interview to Express Computer. Excerpts:

Please tell us about your new initiatives and solutions for enterprises. How do you see this segment for UPS solutions?

We have the modular UPS (Moduline) for general requirements in enterprise data centers. The capacity can range from 10 to 100 KVA. The enterprise UPS market, in our estimate, is worth about Rs800 crore. Data centers alone account for about half of this amount. For data centers, reliability is the most important criteria in choosing a UPS solution. They just cannot afford to have equipment such as servers fail because of power interruptions. Other criteria for them include affordability, how

much space the system occupies and, finally, what is its efficiency (which means power-saving ability).

How are your solutions different from those supplied by other large vendors such as Emerson and APC/Schneider?

These players are also into a lot of data center solutions other than UPS such as cooling systems and racks. But as far as the UPS is concerned, there is hardly any difference between their products and ours.

What are some of your new initiatives?
We are now expanding mainly into

solar power solutions. There are three basic components to solar: the panels, the electronics and the batteries. We are supplying the electronics (charge controllers, inverters, etc.) to many of the major solar projects in the country. Some of the projects we are working on include Rajasthan government's initiative to power 7,000 villages using solar solutions and an MNC that requires power solutions for its milk-collection booths in villages.

We are also working on projects involving schools that need power solutions for their computer centers.

Tablets won't replace PCs anytime soon: CMR Study

ACCORDING TO THE India Tablets Consumer Usage and Adoption Trends 2013 study by CyberMedia Research (CMR), tablets won't replace PCs anytime soon as 78% respondents feel there is a still some way to go before a tablet becomes the primary computing device.

For the survey, 3,600 respondents (including 1,200 non-users) across the country were interviewed to find how they preferred to use their tablets and what they wanted most from their tablet usage experience.

The survey finds that nearly 87% of respondents reported a preference for Android OS-based tablets, with only 10% preferring the Apple iPad. Samsung enjoys highest recall both among users as well as non-users of tablet devices.

As per the study, three out of every four users claim portability/mobility as the major trigger to purchase a tablet, accessing social networking sites and entertainment 'on the go' being their preferred activities. 51% of tablet users spend more than two hours a day on their device; a positive trend, which is expected to increase in the near future.

Around 40% consumers use their tablets for chatting, messaging and email several times a day, indicating the emergence of tablets as a preferred form factor for communication.

The report states, an encouraging 18% of tablet users have paid for the apps that they use — a positive signal to the developer community to create more

India-specific apps for the country.

Sumanta Mukherjee, General Manager, CMR DSR & InfoTech Practices added, “Consumers are driving segmentation of the market away from one-size-fits-all models toward different devices available at distinct price points. Interestingly, satisfaction seems to peak for tablets in Rs5,000 to Rs10,000 price range as well as Rs20,000 and above price bracket.”

Apalak Ghosh, Lead Analyst, Emerging Technologies Research, CMR remarked “A growing desire for choice in functionality, price and device ecosystem supported by attractive combinations of size and other features are what customers are looking while deciding on their choice of devices.”

10 Years and Counting !

19 Properties of Lords Hotels and Resorts Use IDS NEXT Software



Aakar Lords Inn, Saputara

Lords Hotels & Resorts were looking for a smart Property Management System that was scalable, robust and well-tested. The System also had to measure up to recent technology changes in the hospitality industry. Since October 2004, their properties are using Fortune Suite of Applications from IDS NEXT.



“Compared to other hotel software, we found IDS NEXT offers greater operational efficiency. The software has helped us streamline procedures and organize brand management. It has also helped us retain guests through the guest history feature”

- Rishi Puri, Associate VP, Operations, Lords Hotels & Resorts

Today we power 1000+ rooms of Lords Hotels and Resorts' and have helped the group find solutions in Accounts and Finance, Front Desk and Reservations, Material Management and HR Management.

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Blue Coat launches Blue Coat Content Analysis System

BLUE COAT SYSTEMS introduced the Blue Coat Content Analysis System with malware analysis to automate advanced threat protection at the Internet gateway. The Content Analysis System is designed to block known threats, as well as detect and analyzes both zero-day and advanced malware, sharing new threat intelligence to continually fortify the network. This will allow organizations to bridge the gap between the day-to-day security operations team and the advanced security team that is focused on incident containment and resolution.

"Businesses need a systematic approach, to protect their networks from advanced targeted attacks and zero-day malware, aligning security teams on the right strategy, process and action to block the threats they can, detect the ones they can't and respond to the ones that are already on the network," said Ambarish Deshpande, Managing Director at Blue Coat Systems.

According to the company, enterprises today, are forced to use ad hoc malware analysis or sandboxing solutions that operate in a silo and cannot share the threat intelligence required to bridge the gap between blocking known threats and detecting and analyzing unknown threats or advanced malware. This gap is made worse because existing technologies fail to help security operations teams maneuver through the stages of the advanced threat lifecycle. The Blue Coat Content Analysis System addresses this gap.

SOLUTION FEATURES

Together, these technologies deliver the following benefits for businesses:

- **Sandboxing:** Powered by Norman Shark, a Blue Coat Business Assurance Technology partner, the Blue Coat malware analysis technology is available as an appliance today and on-box and via the cloud in the future.
- **Malware Analysis Orchestration:** The Blue Coat Content Analysis System acts as a broker for multiple sandboxing or malware analysis instances, simultaneously sending unknown or suspicious files to both the Blue Coat sandbox as well as third-party sandboxes.
- **Threat Intelligence Feedback Loop:** New intelligence from the analysis of advanced or unknown malware is shared with Blue Coat ProxySG appliances to automate blocking of newly identified threats at the gateway for a more scalable defense.



Amazon.in introduces guaranteed 'one day delivery' service



AMAZON.IN RECENTLY ANNOUNCED the availability of a guaranteed 'one-day delivery' service for items fulfilled by Amazon in select pin codes across several Indian cities including Bangalore, Mumbai, New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Pune. Customers in eligible pin codes can choose 'one-day delivery' at the time of checkout and will be able to enjoy guaranteed next-day delivery service by placing the orders before the cut off time. Customers in Mumbai and Pune can place orders as late as midnight to receive items next day. For other pin codes, the cut-off time to place orders under this offer is currently 3.00 pm.

'One Day Delivery' guarantee is applicable for items that are fulfilled by Amazon at a charge of Rs 99 per order, and requires no minimum order value. Orders placed with 'one-day delivery' service are guaranteed to be delivered the next business day excluding Sundays and public holidays. Amazon.in will automatically refund shipping charges if orders are not received by the promised day.



Nikom - An ISO 9001 Company and member of IGBC (Indian Green Building Council-CII) has an integrated capability to design and build state-of-Art World class green Datacentres on a turnkey basis for large and medium enterprises. Having successfully designed, implemented, and executed various turnkey datacentre projects for enterprises with server farm space of 200 sq. ft. to 15000 sq. ft., Nikom has won "BEST-IN-CLASS" Award in Asia Pacific Japan Region for their significant contribution in the field of Green Datacentres and Energy Management Solutions. Nikom InfraSolutions Pvt. Ltd. one of the Elite DC Partners of many leading global brands, have been winning consistently and delivering various prestigious Datacentre projects. All the Datacentres and Energy Management Solutions designed, and implemented by Nikom are with highest standards of project excellence, and technical expertise.

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- Energy Management Solutions.
- Project Management of Datacentre Projects.
- Complete Physical Infrastructure Operation of Datacentre.
- Datacentre Audits and Certification.

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India fourth most targeted by phishing attacks: Report

INDIA HAS EMERGED as the fourth most targeted country by phishing attacks, receiving 3% of the total attack volume in Q3 2013. US remained the top country on the chart, targeted with 53% of the total attacks.

According to Q3 2013 Fraud Report of RSA, the security division of IT storage hardware vendor EMC, US \$1.66 billion of losses were incurred worldwide due to phishing attacks in Q3 2013.

As per the report, RSA identified 46,119 phishing attacks in September globally, with a 36% increase as compared to the month of August (33,861). Phishing attacks in the month of September also mark the highest number of attacks in this quarter, while July 2013 saw 45,232

numbers of attacks. Top countries to host these phishing attacks include US (42%), Canada (9%), Germany (5%) and UK (4%).

The report cites that number of phishing attacks recorded monthly is known to vary, and there is limited capability to forecast a trend that is so dependent on fraudster resources. Although total is often tricky to predict, some seasonal trends do repeat every year such as the holiday shopping season when a rise in phishing attacks is expected.

U.S. Inc. incurred a loss of over US \$882 million followed by Germany with US \$294 million and UK with US \$133 million.

Gemalto launches Identity-as-a-Service

GEMALTO, A PLAYER in digital security, has launched CloudEntr; a new service aimed at helping enterprises manage user identities while enabling secure single-sign-on (SSO) access to web-based applications.

CloudEntr will allow users to gain convenient access to all their web-based applications by authenticating just once with a unique log-in credential. With CloudEntr, businesses will be able to smoothly transition from weak user-selected passwords to stronger protection, through complex passwords that don't need to be remembered or two-factor authentication capabilities, including mobile one-time-passwords (OTP).

Gemalto's solution claims that it will allow IT managers to reduce time spent to gain visibility on account provisioning, enforcing password policy and better handling overall password related support services. According to the company, CloudEntr provides an easy way to assign or remove employee access to business applications, saving significant time and enhancing business continuity when organizational or workflow changes take place.

"CloudEntr enables businesses to better manage how employees are accessing web-based business applications for a more efficient IT management, as well as offering users a multi-channel and convenient way to benefit from password best-practices," said François Lasnier, Senior Vice President of Identity and Access. "This new IDaaS offer from Gemalto capitalizes on more than 30 years of experience in digital security, and our long-standing history of enabling trusted services for enterprises and governments."

Emerson launches new Trellis Platform Express Edition

EMERSON NETWORK POWER, a business of Emerson, the global provider of power infrastructure recently launched the Trellis - Platform Express Edition, which is designed to offer the benefits of data center infrastructure management (DCIM) in a streamlined and simplified delivery model.

The solution is designed to give customers a holistic, real-time view of the data center across facilities and IT resources, providing the information needed to improve overall operational efficiency and to plan for the future.

The Trellis Platform Express Edition is a bundled offering of existing Trellis platform functionality that is pre-configured to customer requirements. Key advantages of the solution will be a simplified ordering process and bundled packaging of functionality, making it quick and easy to deploy. Furthermore, the solution can scale and flex as data center needs grow.

For small and medium sized businesses, the solution is designed to address the need to quickly and easily order and deploy a DCIM solution that is right-sized for their organization. For large enterprise data centers considering a DCIM solution, it is designed to address their immediate needs while reducing complexity and time to implement.

By simplifying the purchasing and installation process, many customers who are waiting to get started with a DCIM purchase and implementation can begin with the Trellis Platform Express Edition.

"Emerson's announcement of a prepackaged, simple-to-deploy solution in the Trellis Platform Express Edition squarely addresses end users' needs for a DCIM solution that is easy to understand and implement. With the Trellis Platform Express Edition, there are no surprises or hidden costs, which



makes the DCIM solution easier to sell and easier to buy. By removing complexity, Emerson is streamlining the path for IT organizations to benefit from enhanced visibility, increased efficiency and better capacity planning," added Koppay.

The Trellis Platform Express Edition comprises two offerings. First, the Trellis Facility Manager Express, which is a bundled package of the current Trellis Site Manager, Avocent Universal Management Gateway and Professional Services to handle installation and training.

This bundle has two options, one for tracking and monitoring up to 10 floor-

mounted devices (FMDs), and one for tracking and monitoring up to 25 FMDs. Second, the Trellis Inventory Express bundles the current Trellis Inventory Manager with Professional Services, and can come with a host server.

"By listening to our customers, we saw there was a need to develop a simpler way for them to begin their DCIM projects," said Steve Hassell, President of Emerson Network Power's Data Center Solutions business. "The Trellis Platform Express Edition bundled offering gives organizations the ability to maximize efficiency, minimize downtime and enable accurate planning sooner than they may have hoped."



Trend Micro helps Hindustan Petroleum strengthen its security and boost productivity

GLOBAL CLOUD SECURITY player Trend Micro has deployed comprehensive security solutions for Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL), one of India's largest oil and natural gas companies.

HPCL's data was shielded by a thin layer of anti-virus software and lacked a centralized management and monitoring component to keep track of updates and vulnerabilities. Another challenge was that users weren't able to download security updates directly from the Internet. Many of HPCL's employees did not have Internet connection at all times. As a result, many user machines were

getting outdated when it came to security updates. Apart from malware attacks, this was also resulting in productivity losses for HPCL.

Besides, HPCL had an extensively distributed network with multiple locations across the country. Central management and monitoring, thus, became the need of the hour for the company.

"The solution we had was not comprehensive. It was protecting us only at the client level. But there was no protection at the network level. There were times when, for instance, we could not connect a freshly formatted laptop onto the network without getting infected

by a virus. We realized that having AV software on all the clients was not sufficient. Also, monitoring and patching was not happening effectively," says M.P. Keshava, Chief manager - Information Security and Compliance, HPCL.

"HPCL implemented our enterprise management dashboard, which tracks security performance, reports malware events, and also helps HPCL in setting threat policies, increasing visibility across the enterprise, and improving compliance. Our solution also helped HPCL in tightening its security policies," said Dhanya Thakkar, Managing Director, India & SAARC, Trend Micro.

Mahindra Engineering Services to merge with Tech Mahindra

THE BOARD OF Directors of Tech Mahindra Limited (Tech Mahindra) and Mahindra Engineering Services Limited (MES), recently approved a proposal to merge MES with Tech Mahindra.

MES, is a global engineering consultant and service provider catering to Automotive, Aerospace, Defense & Manufacturing industries. It boasts of over 1300 employees and revenues of Rs250.59 crore as of FY13.

This merger, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, will see the creation of one of the prominent players providing engineering services from India with strengths in Aerospace and Automotive verticals. MES will benefit due to the larger global reach and deeper resource pool of Tech Mahindra, while Tech Mahindra will gain access to some of the key automotive clients across the globe.

Karthikeyan Natarajan, Global Head – Integrated Engineering Services, Tech Mahindra, said, “Mahindra Engineering Services (MES) and Tech Mahindra’s Integrated Engineering Services (IES) merger strengthens the existing services portfolio, enhances presence in US and Germany, provides scale and brings in new clients for further expansion. Our innovation and product development expertise synergizing with the MES domain expertise enables the most comprehensive solution portfolio for our customers and the world at large.”

“This merger is a big leap for us towards addressing growing business demands. Our joint go-to-market strategy will help us capture newer markets and enhance our service portfolio especially in Aerospace and Embedded services segments while bringing value to all our stakeholders,” said Prashant Kamat, CEO, Mahindra Engineering Services Limited.

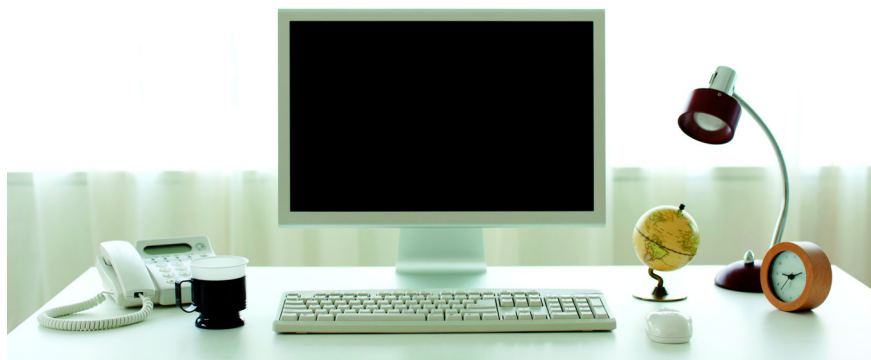


Key highlights of the merger:

- The exchange ratio recommended by the valuers and approved by both the boards is 5 shares of Tech Mahindra (face value of Rs.10 each), for every 12 shares of Mahindra Engineering Services Limited (face value of Rs.10 each)
- Tech Mahindra will issue 0.426 crore new shares, thereby increasing its outstanding shares to 23.73 crore
- The merger is subject to all regulatory authority approvals and the entire process could take approximately

8-9 months, however given the regulatory process involved, it is difficult to predict the exact time frame

S.R. Batliboi & Co. LLP and B S R and Associates carried out the valuation and jointly recommended the share swap ratio. ICICI Securities Limited provided a fairness opinion on the swap ratio to the Board of Tech Mahindra. SBI Capital Markets Ltd. provided a fairness opinion on the swap ratio to the Board of MES. Khaitan & Co. acted as Legal Advisor for the transaction.



Ratnakar Bank adopts Citrix's XenDesktop solution

RATNAKAR BANK, AN emerging private sector scheduled commercial bank has implemented Citrix's desktop virtualization solution for streamlined manageability of IT infrastructure with greater efficiency, enhanced security and better end-user mobility.

Being a technology forward organization, the Bank has always stayed ahead on the technology curve to achieve high standards in service, quality and operations. With a focus on improving its customer interface, the bank raised its capital base to around USD 250 million from USD 50 million in the last two years to upgrade people, systems and processes. To keep pace with the changing business requirements, the bank charted a three pronged agenda of embracing BYOD, reduce cost of application delivery and increase end-user experience without increasing the cost of IT.

In its pursuit of achieving these objectives, Ratnakar Bank recognised

the potential of transitioning to a cloud-based application delivery architecture which would enable managing over 150 branches from a central location. In effect, the Bank replaced its traditional desktops with Citrix XenDesktop, thereby enabling central management and supporting seamless transition to a new core banking platform. The implementation of Citrix solution was facilitated by Anunta technology Management Services Ltd, a company specializing in Application Delivery as a Service (AdaaS).

Anup Purohit, Head-IT, Ratnakar Bank said, "The adoption of Citrix XenDesktop solution is a milestone in our technology transformation journey. The IT centralization process aided by desktop virtualization has significantly improved process efficiencies and service effectiveness, while boosting our strategic and operational imperatives as a Bank."

Microsoft introduces career search support for students in India

MICROSOFT CORPORATION (INDIA) has said that students from participating Ed-vantage academic institutes in India can now avail career search guidance and support. The new offering is powered by 'My Foot In The Door', and will be delivered through professionally trained and experienced recruiters who will assist students in working towards their career milestones.

These career consultants will also deliver pre-interview preparation while guiding students towards individual best fit occupations.

Launched a year ago, Microsoft Ed-vantage endeavors to create a platform for continuous learning and innovation among students, academia and Microsoft partners. The program represents an evolution in the way over 10,000 universities and colleges can adopt Microsoft student solutions to their individual needs, thereby providing the opportunity to compete on the global employment stage on an equal footing.

So far, over 80 Indian colleges and universities have enrolled for Microsoft Ed-vantage.

Microsoft Ed-vantage was launched in response to the feedback received from academic institutions in India. The key aspects of this feedback related to helping the institutions with topics that are most relevant to them, such as partnering with them to bring in more technology innovation and capacity building for faculty and students, and making their students more employable.

ZTE eyes \$800 million revenue from India in 2014

ZTE INDIA, A global provider of telecommunications equipment and network solutions, recently announced that it is targeting \$800 million revenues in next one year. As a part of its massive retail expansion plans, the company also inaugurated its new exclusive experience zone in Gurgaon and will invest US\$ 10 million in marketing and branding initiatives in India.

Despite the telecom sector witnessing slow growth, ZTE India claims to have registered a substantial growth with overall revenues accounting to more than US\$ 400 million until October 2013.

The Chinese firm will leverage its strong position in the global smartphone market to develop products focused on three key segments: 4G, high-end devices, and phones based on newer platforms such as latest Android, Windows and the Firefox operating system.

ZTE India will also continue to focus on strengthening its 4G: TD-LTE and FDD-LTE, bearer & transmission network, FTTH, medium-sized / Enterprise businesses and cloud computing in the next year.

On the inauguration of ZTE's first experience zone, Xu Dejun, CEO, ZTE India, said, "While online purchasing is fast picking up in the country, there is still a large Indian audience which prefers to have a hands-on experience of the product before making any purchasing decision."

"The ZTE exclusive zone in Gurgaon will also showcase the company's limited edition smartphones, data cards and accessories. The company will set up many more stores in other high potential cities and will continue to invest aggressively in our terminals business."



Reinforcing its presence of over 13 years in the country, ZTE recently forayed into the open market with a large portfolio of smartphones and data cards. In addition, ZTE entered the managed services space with MTS after service contracts. After the country's first 4G network in Kolkata, the company has now contributed to the 4G expansion in the Punjab with Airtel.

"India has always been a key market for ZTE which offers immense potential and growth opportunities across our business segments. Today ZTE enjoys a customer base of over 36 million terminals users in the country. This widespread acceptance is a testimony to our differentiated, rich and widely trusted product portfolio, which is backed by a strong service and support network," said Xu Dejun.

"On the operator front, we have built and sustained strong relationships with the major Indian telecom players offering them best-in-class products and services while complying with all government regulations. Having forayed into the open mobile handsets market, we look ahead to offering a similar experience to end consumers," added Xu Dejun.

Realizing an upward trend in the e-commerce segment the company will soon open an online store to address the needs of its growing customer base.

Rackspace Hybrid Cloud to help Cbazaar.com's online sales

RACKSPACE HOSTING, THE open cloud company, has been selected by online Indian ethnic wear store Cbazaar to host and support its online sales backbone using the Rackspace Hybrid

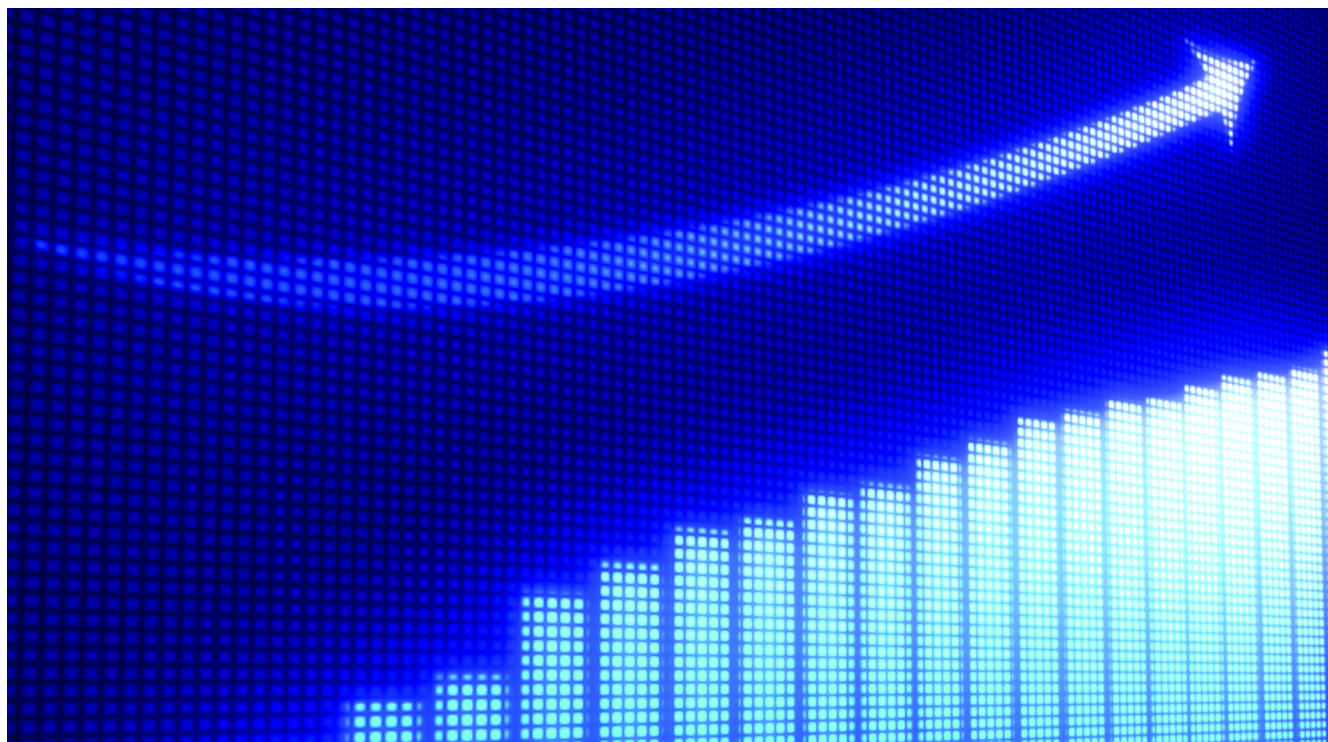
Cloud. Cbazaar operates sales channels in over 130 countries with a clothing collection including over 20,000 exquisite Indian designs and styles.

Building for a new era of growth with open integration, Cbazaar has been able to connect its structured query language (SQL) database inside its new Rackspace Hybrid Cloud model.

"As an online retailer, it's imperative that our customers are able to access our website at all times, especially during seasonal sale periods where we see traffic surge. For every minute we experience downtime, our bottom line is impacted," said Hitesh Haran, AVP – IT, Cbazaar.com.

"We are an innovative retail leader always looking for ways to be agile in our business model in the face of stiff competition. We needed a trusted partner with a global reputation for quality, guaranteed uptime and a breadth of service and we found this in Rackspace. With Rackspace's hybrid cloud, we can combine public cloud, private cloud and dedicated bare metal computing to combine and tailor our services to create the best fit for our applications," added Haran.





Using big data can help companies in APAC up revenues by 25%

HITACHI DATA SYSTEMS

Corporation, a subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd. has announced research results revealing that almost half of the firms surveyed in Asia Pacific believe that big data can improve revenue by 25% or more, with HDS projecting a potential US\$ 250 billion revenue increase among the more than 500 companies surveyed.

However, more than half of firms have made little or no progress in their big data strategies.

"Today, most organizations have a limited data-capital 'budget' that prevents them from realizing the full potential of the information they hold," said Neville Vincent, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Asia Pacific, HDS. "Staff members long for more information and realize its revenue potential, but lack access to it. It is time for C-level executives to ensure cultural

alignment throughout their organizations, and to treat data like a capital asset that can bring a significant impact to their business."

The survey was conducted with over 500 business executives in Asia Pacific and the results show that the firms in the region have had limited success so far in implementing big data practices. While a third say they are well advanced, more than half say they have made only limited progress. Some 80% of front-line employees said that they believe improved access to data is critical, with only 19% able to access the data they need.

Despite the lack of progress, respondents believe in the ability of big data to improve their businesses: more than 70% say that it can deliver gains in productivity, profitability, and innovation.

The reasons for slow adoption of big data strategies are diverse.

Respondents cite poor internal communication and information sharing as well as a lack of in-house skills and software. Nearly two-fifths say their company's big data strategy has not been well communicated. The limited take-up also flies in the face of the wider belief that effective use of data matters; more than three-quarters believe it is critical to success.

Telecommunications (67%), consumer goods (57%) and financial services (52%) industries are leaders in recognizing that big data can greatly improve their understanding of customer needs. However, more than 60% of the firms in the financial services and consumer goods industries haven't started any big data programs. Healthcare and life science are lagging further behind; 72% of them haven't started any big data programs.

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