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LEVERAGING ON THE AI OPPORTUNITY

At a time when India is striving to rekindle productivity and growth, AI promises to fill the gap. A full and responsible implementation of AI will open new economic opportunities that would not otherwise exist. But is India fully prepared to seize the enormous opportunities that AI presents? This cover story analyzes the industry preparedness for AI and the desired approach to leverage on the AI opportunity

Amit Singh

Even though AI has been around in some form or other for over sixty years, the last decade has seen the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) globally thanks to massive technological advancements in the field. The result is that AI has become part and parcel of everyday life.

Indian enterprises are investing in AI in search of business resilience, improved customer retention, and enhanced operational efficiencies. According to an IDC study, 46 percent of the Indian enterprises surveyed cited innovation as a key driver of AI investment.

India was the third-largest AI market in the Asia-Pacific region excluding Japan in 2020, behind China and Australia. IDC forecasts that India will be amongst the fastest growing countries in the region in terms of overall AI adoption for 2020-2025.

In fact, over the last few years, AI has emerged as a primary data science function – by utilizing advanced algorithms and ever-increasing computing power. AI is transforming business domains and organizations as AI algorithms are now designed to make real-time decisions and interpret various types of data and media.

Indian AI ecosystem

The patent activity in any country is considered a core indicator of the prevalent research and innovation ecosystem. According to the recent CSET report on Mapping India's AI potential, there were 10 times as many AI-relevant patent applications in 2018 as compared to 2012. In fact, India's global rank on the number of patent families related to AI was 8th, ahead of Russia and France. The top spot is occupied by China, followed by the United States and Japan.

Indian AI ecosystem is further bolstered by the fact that Indian AI startups raised \$836.3 million in 2020, the largest funding outlay in the last seven years at a 9.7 percent year-on-year growth, according to a report from AIMResearch. In 2020, Indian government increased the outlay for Digital India to \$477 million to boost AI, IoT, Big Data, cybersecurity, machine learning and robotics. Indeed, India's AI ecosystem is seeing explosive growth with a lot of inventive startups entering the space.

The consumer revolution set off by AI opens the way for massive disruption as both established businesses and new entrants drive innovation and develop



“We are now moving into the data-led phase where data itself generates hypothesis and machines then verify its efficacy. It's more about predictions derived from data.”

MATHANGI SRI,
VP, Data Science & Head - Data, Gojek

new business models. A key part of the impact of AI is coming from its ability to make the most of parallel developments such as IoT connectivity.

The AI technology function is no longer an emerging technology segment – AI as a function

has pervaded almost all industries and functions – from eCommerce to BFSI and from Manufacturing to Agriculture – Data Science and Deep Learning are increasingly utilized to solve complex business challenges. AI is increasingly utilized across several

B2B, B2C, and even C2C (Consumer-to-Consumer) channels.

How to make data science impactful?

Factors like growth of data-based AI and advancement in deep learning and need to achieve robotic autonomy to stay competitive in the market are expected

to drive the adoption of the AI solutions and services. Pandemic-led disruption is unsettling, but it can also serve as a catalyst for innovation and transformation. 2020 was the year that accelerated digital transformation and strengthened the value of enterprise AI. In 2021, we entered the domain of AI-augmented work

and decision across all the functional areas of a business.

Organizations can divide data-driven decisions in two distinct phases: data-backed and data-led. The data-backed denotes to the phase where data is used to just back or validate any hypothesis from the business teams. "We are now moving into the data-led phase where data itself generates hypothesis and machines then verify its efficacy. It's more about predictions derived from data," adds Mathangi Sri, VP, Data Science & Head - Data, Gojek.

She however highlighted that data-led phase has also gone through Gartner's Hype Cycle having witnessed inflated expectations, trough of disillusionment and enlightenment. "Failures happen as people try to apply AI to everything and anything."

She underlined that data science is a function of the following vectors:

- Well constrained problem
- Changing data landscape
- Organization culture that is open to machine-driven decisions
- Grounded DS team which challenges the status quo and current processes
- Well regulated model building process

- Experimentation DNA
- Integrated teams – Data, Product, Design, and Engineering
- A big focus on business impacts.

Data-led approach to scale AI

To create meaningful business change, AI requires a clearly defined data-led approach. How that data is collected, managed, and analyzed is a cornerstone consideration for companies who see the application of AI to their industry as the key differentiator. "We need to understand that data is actually critical for AI. Hence, a data-led approach is crucial for scaling AI across the enterprise. How this data is collected and pruned is very important," highlights Rajeev Seoni, Director, Digital Futurists Angels.

Discussing the real life use cases of how organizations can accelerate time to value with predictive analytics and optimization, IrshadSaifi, CDIO and Director IT, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co shares that there are certain areas where AI will have major impact in terms of productivity, efficiency and cost savings. "For instance, lawyers spend lot of time on due diligence



“We need to understand that data is actually critical for AI. Hence, a data-led approach is crucial for scaling AI across the enterprise. How this data is collected and pruned is very important.”

RAJEEV SEONI,
Director, Digital Futurists Angels

of documents. With AI, the due diligence can be made easy by saving 60-70 percent of the time spent on manual process. Further, documents need to be thoroughly scanned and proofread before sending to the client. AI can play a major role in replacing the entire proofreading process and spotting errors in the legal documents.”

Elaborating on the importance and challenges in data collection and management, Sonali Subudhi, Head, Data Analytics, IDBI Bank, states that the pace of change that occurred over the last decade has left many organizations getting ambitious and ambiguous. As the pandemic hit, most of the financial institutions entered a crisis mode of building and expanding its digital capability to enable customers do all the banking transactions without visiting the branch.

Data is the backbone of this digital transformation. It is essential to get real-time inputs on customer financial behavior, understanding their needs, positioning products that customer is eligible for, and the risk assessment. “Apps and chat-bots are providing 24/7 services to enable seamless banking, interconnected ecosystem and real-time response. This leaves a huge data

footprint which adds to the enormous complementary data including public credit registry data, grievances data, NCLT, GST, EPFO, as well data from e-commerce, retail, and purchasing behavior data,” explains Subudhi.

She adds that banks do have the core data around occupation, annual earnings, and address; however, most of the times, this data is not updated. Hence, they do data cleaning on a regular basis through complementary data. “For a clean data, we must stick to a standardized process which includes designing and updating regular data dictionary, creating data governance policy, creating data governance council, designating data steward leads, robust data structure, validating data accuracy, monitoring errors or duplicate data/missing data, and communicating to the team about the data.”

Vidhya Veeraraghavan, VP, Head of Analytics (Financial Markets Operations), Standard Chartered Bank adds that in a financial organization, data is essential to detect frauds, cyber-security, loans processing, enhancing customer experience, hyper-personalizing the recommendations, and proactive approach for



“ Lawyers spend lot of time on due diligence of documents. With AI, the due diligence can be made easy by saving 60-70 percent of the time spent on manual process. AI can also replace the proofreading process and spot errors in the legal documents.”

IRSHAD SAIFI, CDIO and Director IT,
Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co

customers. “Majority of the data is essential to track customer behavior and their preferences. All this is based on huge data sets of over

last 6 months to 6 years to define a pattern. So, organizations must have to pick and choose the data attributes relevant to the

use case and then put that into your AI model.”

Krishnamurthy Rajesh, Head -IT, ICRA, highlights

that there is huge amount of data already available; however, the right set of information is missing.



“ For a clean data, we must stick to a standardized process which includes designing and updating regular data dictionary, creating data governance policy, creating data governance council, designating data steward leads, robust data structure, validating data accuracy, monitoring errors or duplicate data/missing data, and communicating to the team about the data.”

SONALI SUBUDHI,
Head, Data Analytics, IDBI Bank

Enriching the data by cutting out the noise is the challenge that most of the organizations face currently. “For decision-making based on data, collaboration is essential between the organizations, industries and the departments. Industries are stepping up efforts to have the information coming from a different sources and enriching it with AI to get a meaningful insight. We are still in the initial phases of AI implementation. In my view, if organizations want to utilize the power of AI, they need to create a roadmap to understand the different touch-points to remove the boundaries of the segment to acquire the data.”

Building trust in AI and analytics

Accuracy of data is a major challenge that enterprises face today with lot of wastage of time and frustration among the stakeholders and the analytics team. In case of retail and e-commerce firms, search rankings of the websites take lot of mindshare of the DS team and the product managers. Organizations can have a simple solution to all these problems by having a good data governance matrix, its real-time availability and ensuring that anomaly detection modules running

in the background so as to avoid any manual interventions. This helps in building trust in the overall AI and analytics program.

“In today’s scenario, not having trust in AI and analytics assets is non-negotiable because in absence of trust the adoption would not be there,” says Kamal Kumar, Head-Analytics, Myntra. He suggested three fundamentals of building trust: Ability to quickly process and stream data, Availability of data collections, and having right data science infrastructure. Applying these steps in a right manner ensures building trust on data.

Kumar underlines few of the challenges that hamper trust include limited data discovery, ungoverned and unknown data environments with underperforming systems, siloed analytics techniques and adoption issues, and slow deployment of new insights to business. “These challenges account for 80-90 percent of the mistrust on AI and analytics functions. However, these challenges can be addressed with universal data access with right kind of controls on access as well as availability of trusted data with scalable systems. Moreover, organizations must have automated

decision-making systems where lot of decisioning may be passed on as a self-service mode.”

He gave out governance structure to ensure success in analytics.

- Data quality to be a team’s objective across the organization
- Set up measurable team objectives and key results
- Results to trickle down to individual team members
- Break down key results in terms of input metrics and track on a weekly window
- Quarterly OKR grading and organization-wide presentation of things that went well and areas requiring improvements
- Blameless post-mortem analysis of tasks gone bad to prevent reoccurrence.

AI-infused automation driving financial sector

AI/ML is finding applications ranging from very basic tasks to advanced operations in the BFSI sector. Basic tasks like cheque clearing, checking and verifying documents through OCR, RPA for applications like customer contact updates or eKYC of customers are being taken over by AI/ML applications.

In addition, banks have made significant progress in automating complex

operations like credit decision-making, instant marketing offers, and fraud mitigation with AI/ML applications.

“AI-infused automation is helping make time-consuming tasks like cheque clearing, application processing, loan approvals and KYC much more efficient. In fact, these applications enable banks to avoid hiring more manpower for the increasing demand for digital processes, loans and credits. While few of banks are at the basic level of data automation and segregation, some of them are implementing AI for credit decision-making and marketing offers. Few of the banks have gone further by setting up a fintech ecosystem in a hybrid setup where they have in-house talent as well as expertise from outside giving out a superior end-customer experience,” details Devendra Sharnagat, Senior Executive Vice President, Data Analytics & Customer Value Management (CVM), Kotak Mahindra Bank.

He further adds, “We have invested significantly in the AI/ML space over the last decade: setting up data warehouse and data lakes, talent acquisition in AI/ML (18 roles from Data Analyst to Big Data Engineer), and state-of-the-art AI/ML platform in the cloud using



“Data is essential to track customer behavior and their preferences based on huge data sets of over 6 months to 6 years to define a pattern. So, organizations must have to pick and choose the data attributes relevant to the use case and then put that into your AI model.”

VIDHYA VEERARAGHAVAN,
VP, Head of Analytics (Financial Markets Operations),
Standard Chartered Bank

ML stack. These initiatives have paid quite well. In fact, for many business departments, AI/ML has influenced decision-making and made an impact

ranging from 5 percent to over 50 percent.”

Sharnagat suggests that besides setting up period goals for 3-5 years, enterprises are required to

gain significant partnerships in this space. "Gone are the days when organizations would build everything on their own. Financial institutions need to partner with fintechs for their AI/ML vision to take proper shape."

Kotak Mahindra Bank has set up an internal training academy for AI/ML in partnership with online training institutes. "We also have clear guidelines for targeted skill upgrade calendar. We are not only training the central AI/

ML team but also to the business teams. We train at least 8-10 people from the line of business on advanced analytics and AI," Sharnagat reveals.

AI revolution to speed up in manufacturing

In case of sectors like BFSI, organizations are approaching maturity with lots of analytics built-in the systems on the customer and supplier fronts, and through the entire ecosystem. However, manufacturing organizations are just moving out of the pilot phase. "We are planning for AI built-in for marketing processes including customer demand management, sales forecasting, and RFQ pipeline management. Apart from AI, we are also looking at inventory and cash-flow management. For sure, we have already come out of the pilot phase and will soon deploy few of the Big Data and AI solutions on cloud," shares Parna Ghosh, Vice President & Group CIO, UNO Minda Group.

He further discloses, "Big data, analytics, and AI attract about 15-20 percent of our focus and budget. Over the next 2-3 years, this share is expected to grow to 40-50 percent with the speed of innovations and execution.

AI is going to revolutionize the areas like cyber security, infrastructure management, data center management and risk management. However, it is likely to take some more time in core manufacturing as the use cases and scenarios are slightly more complicated and customized."

He highlighted that AI projects mostly fail due to the unavailability of internal champions to push and drive the project inside the entire organization. "So, organizations must start building their own team on AI and Big Data and the related services. In addition, the vendors and partners must understand the business, process and functions in depth so that they can come forward with customized solution."

Further, in the manufacturing sector the focus towards digital transformation increased over the last 4-5 years and many of the organizations only started their journey over the last couple of years. So over the next 2 years, AI is likely to see high proliferation as the data sets and data rules will be available.

"Sectors like BFSI, healthcare are having an operating model driven by AI because their data availability is extremely high and they focus more on predictions. Manufacturing,



“ For decision-making based on data, collaboration is essential between the organizations, industries and the departments. Industries are stepping up efforts to have the information coming from a different sources and enriching it with AI to get a meaningful insight. ”

KRISHNAMURTHY RAJESH,
Head -IT, ICRA



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on the other hand, is still working on industry 4.0 initiatives and are moving towards digitalization and automation. Once we are through with this phase, manufacturing organizations will have an operating model for AI to predict balance sheets, profits, cash flow and customer behavior," says Ghosh.

The Covid-19 push

The Covid-19 pandemic is a testament to the fact that intelligence is critical for businesses as they focus on gaining efficiencies, and innovation both internally and externally. While automated customer service agent was the top AI use case for Indian organizations in 2020, we are seeing momentum for use cases like fraud

analysis and investigation, IT automation, recommendation system, and diagnosis and treatment. According to IDC's Future Enterprise Research Survey, 62 percent of organizations in India have plans to increase their AI/ML spend.

Indeed, AI front-runners will have the advantage of superior customer insight. The immediate competitive benefits include an improved ability to tap into consumer preferences, tailor their output to match these individual demands and, in doing so, capture an ever bigger slice of the market. And the front-runners' ability to shape product developments around this rich supply of customer data will make it harder for slower moving competitors to keep pace and could eventually make their advantage unassailable.

These trends are mandating organizations to take a fresh approach on their business models and processes in order to survive and thrive in a highly competitive market. Many of the insurance organizations are leveraging AI bots to automate the claims process from beginning to end. Instead of the days or even months it traditionally took to settle a claim, the bot is able to complete the entire pipeline

from claims receipt, policy reference, fraud detection, payout and notification to customers in just few minutes. AI solutions are poised to have a huge impact on the BFSI industry.

Besides, Covid-19 has forced many of the retailers to modify their business models in favor of AI in order to avoid bankruptcy and closure. Only those companies raised the finances bars which could provide an omni-channel experience to their customers.

On the other hand, almost 2/3rd of the Indian organizations are in the early stages of AI maturity, of which 11.6 percent businesses are still at the ad hoc stage, according to the IDC Maturity Benchmark: Artificial Intelligence in India, 2021 report. The report says that more than half of the organizations are still in the opportunistic stage of AI adoption in India. Most organizations are yet to reach the highest levels of maturity, most notably in the areas of people and technology. Only 8.4 percent of the Indian organizations are in the latter stages of AI maturity highlighting the need for an enterprise-wide AI strategy aligned with business goals.

However, AI has the potential to add \$957 billion, or 15 percent



“ In today's scenario, not having trust in AI and analytics assets is non-negotiable because in absence of trust the adoption would not be there.”

KAMAL KUMAR,
Head-Analytics, Mynta

of India's current gross value in 2035, as per an Accenture report. The combination of the technology, data and

talent that make intelligent systems possible has reached critical mass, driving extraordinary growth in AI investment.



“ We have invested significantly in the AI/ML space over the last decade: setting up data warehouse and data lakes, talent acquisition in AI/ML (18 roles from Data Analyst to Big Data Engineer), and state-of-the-art AI/ML platform in the cloud using ML stack. These initiatives have influenced decision-making in upto 50 percent cases.”

DEVENDRA SHARNAGAT

Senior Executive Vice President, Data Analytics & Customer Value Management (CVM),
Kotak Mahindra Bank



“ Big data, analytics, and AI attract about 15-20 percent of our focus and budget. Over the next 2-3 years, this share is expected to grow to 40-50 percent with the speed of innovations and execution. AI is going to revolutionize the areas like cyber security, infrastructure management, data center management and risk management.”

PARINA GHOSH,

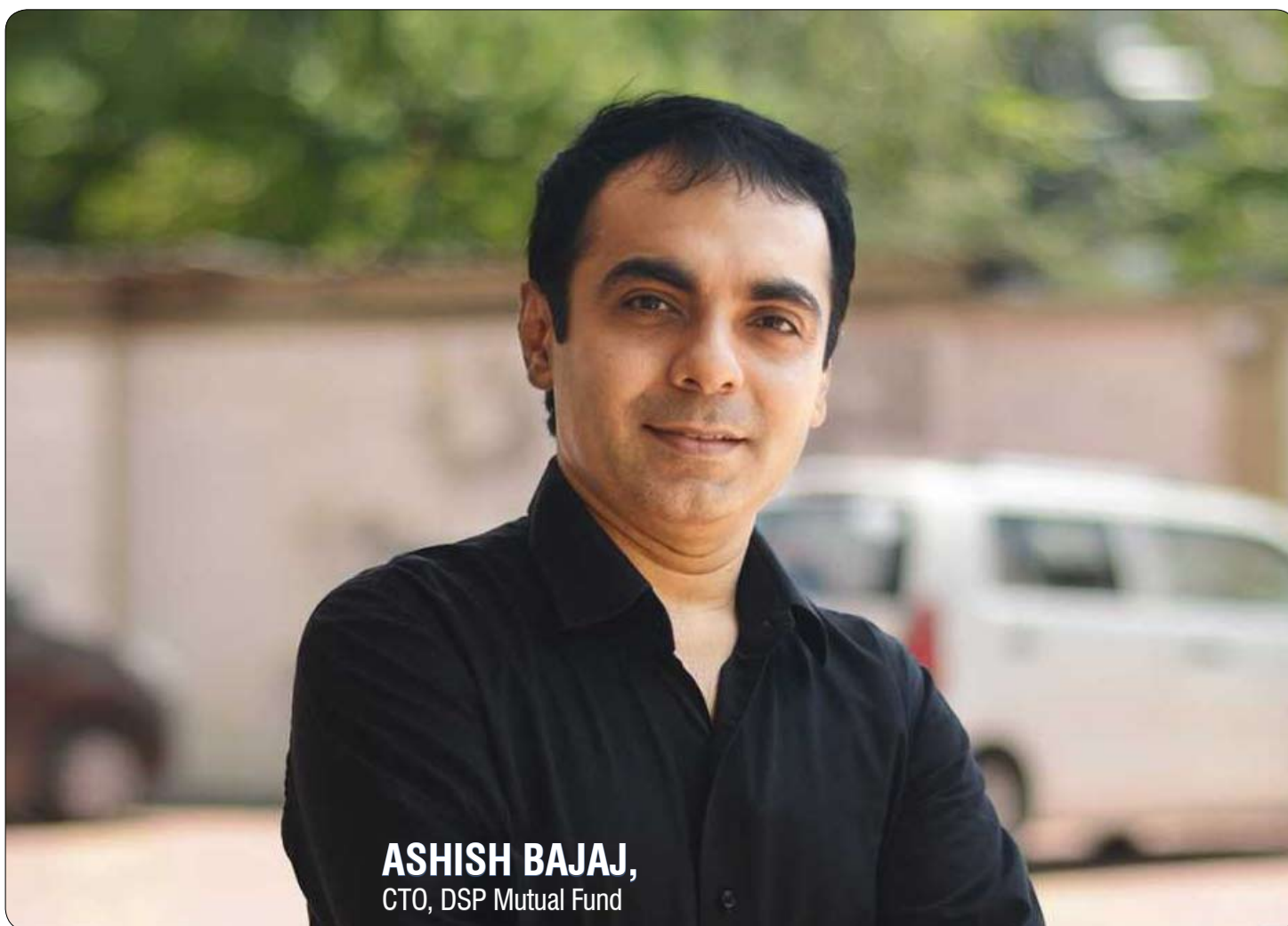
Vice President & Group CIO, UNO Minda Group

A full and responsible implementation of AI will open new economic opportunities that would not otherwise exist. The guiding principle should be to create 'people first'

policies and business strategies, centered on using AI to augment and extend people's capabilities for the benefit of humankind.

DATA LAKE, GOVERNANCE AND AI WILL BE OUR TECH PRIORITIES: DSP MUTUAL FUND

Talking about the transition from legacy infrastructure to a micro-services based architecture a couple of years ago, Ashish Bajaj, CTO, DSP Mutual Fund, highlights how the organization is leveraging automation and his technology priorities over the next 2-3 years during a candid conversation with Kalpana Singhal



■ **DSP Mutual Funds did a major transition from legacy infrastructure to a micro-services based architecture a**

couple of years ago. What technology and business objectives/benefits has it achieved till date?

Any change would

come with its own benefits. An important aspect of your digital transformation is to respond to certain changes quickly. With

this transition two years back. Definitely, we did not see Covid coming in front of us. But yes, there was a strategy to become a digital first team, which

typically means that you need to move away from your legacy processes; rather legacy mindsets. That's important to cater to the next generation of customers around data to next generation of investors who cater to a new data oriented or data believers. I think this transition actually helps to have infrastructure ready for digital transformation. It was not just a transition from server to server less technologies, or using the best of the best what is available on two clouds? But it was also the stepping stone in terms of how we make sure that systems talk to each other rather than working in silos.

The second important aspect which actually helped with this transition of building micro services mesh across multiple application infrastructure is that everyone within the organization just started thinking of how do we re-engineer the business processes. What can we do differently than what we were doing earlier? Because now there is an opportunity there is an advantage of tech support. Very important outcome of this transition is the data culture.

■ **How are you leveraging new-age technologies like automation, AI, IoT and data analytics to enhance the**

productivity and efficiency of the workforce?

Automation is something which will be the continuous emphasis. I remember 20 years back as well there were companies where majority of the internal memos were automated. Today, we are talking about automation of the next level where transaction can happen without much human intervention. We have brought in robotics to make sure that mundane

to unlock the true value and potential of data?

I think companies which are not tech oriented and dependent on OEMs and partners to deliver solution are the ones who face challenges with data. I think there is still a gap in terms of partners' and OEM's understanding of the business. It can only be solved when partners try and understand the business and its uniqueness. Every person

“ The time has come to seriously experiment AI with real life use cases. The entire 2022 is going to be focused towards verifying if real life problems can be solved using AI. ”

tasks are done by systems and tools rather than humans.

We have been focusing in terms of making sure to remove tasks from every employee's basket so that they can focus on their core ability to deliver better. So I think the focus will continue being there.

■ **In a hyper connected world, we are seeing exponential data growth. So, what are the burning issues organizations face with which they are unable**

has a different view to look at data it's a classic example of whether it's a half glass empty or full. Second is the business doesn't understand a lot of tech tools around.

■ **Please talk about your top technology priorities over the next 2-3 years.**

I think the time has come with a lot of legacy infrastructure and applications are out of the focus now. The time has come to seriously experiment AI with real life use cases. The entire 2022

is going to be focused towards verifying if real life problems can be solved using AI.

The second important aspect of the focus area for next two years is going to be governance over information security and cybersecurity. I think the time has come to up the governance score.

The third area, which I am personally focused on, is to ensure making a centralized repository of data lying with everyone across the enterprise: a data lake. Can we have something which every person can access with defined security protocols and make the best out of it rather than working through file sharing of data?

■ **What is your recommendation around digital transformation for CIOs of your industry?**

I think the entire executive participation is important for digital transformation. I think digital transformation should be considered as the change in the culture; it needs to be considered that it's going to impact every person within the organization. Which typically means that you can't enforce changes; you need participation, consensus, and acceptance across the board. Everything we do today need to be rethought from a digital perspective.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, PERSONALIZATION WILL DRIVE TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES FOR LULU GROUP

Anil Menon, Head-IT, Lulu Group India elaborates on major developments in the retail business model as he underlines the technology priorities and focus areas for 2022



ANIL MENON,
Head, IT, LuLu Group India

■ **Please talk about major developments in your business processes/model which enabled improvement in business in 2021.**

With the ongoing pandemic, businesses need to change fast as they need to relook at their processes, business models, channels and their way of working. As the customers are exponentially transitioning towards e-commerce and online transactions, we are making sure to meet their expectations and to adjust ourselves and the business model so that customer experience is not hampered.

While doing this, we realigned both physical stocks and the way if working towards D2C. We get a lot of visibility in the warehouse to make sure that we are able to deliver to the customer with the precise product lines as desired by the customers. In addition, we brought in contactless payment modes to make sure the customers had fewer issues in terms of payments. We also went to the next level of re-looking at the complete

architecture from a standpoint of how much of the technology infrastructure could be moved to the cloud and how much of this could be kept at the couple of data centers we own.

■ **What are your technology and digital transformation priorities for 2022?**

We are working on a lot of digital initiatives to make sure that the customers are at ease, has the flexibility to move around and still be connected to our brands. The entire focus is towards building customer experience and bringing in lots of personalization. In addition, we are engaging workforce management tools to implement our work-from-home learnings over the past two years and ensure employee productivity.

Further, we are increasing our footprint on the cloud while ensuring security for our customers and the retail team. Moreover, we will be focused on formalizing our approach towards data and to utilize data for decision-making.

PATIENT DATA INTEROPERABILITY, GLOBAL STANDARDS WILL DRIVE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Arun Goyal, CIO, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital elaborates on the technology priorities and outlook for the healthcare industry while highlighting about his professional achievements over the last 12 months

■ **Please talk about the highlights of your achievements in terms of business growth, customer acquisitions and new innovations in 2021.**

I would divide my achievements in two parts. One is my role in the National Health Authority as the project director through IQVIA to drive the national digital health mission for Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. I completed the project in August and later joined Sir Ganga Ram Hospital as CIO. In the national health authority, we designed the national digital health mission which will accelerate the healthcare growth of the country. In a federated way, the system is so designed that all the healthcare providers can get connected to the central server of the national health authority and all the patients and citizens of India will have a health ID. The health ID will get integrated through which they can share their health records across the healthcare facilities including hospitals,

diagnostic labs, pharmacies be it public or private. The data can be shared with respect to the patients upon their consent.

On the second part, when I joined Sir Ganga Ram hospital the major challenge was integration between the HIS and ERP system. We achieved seamless integration across the board in the supply chain management in the CM, the Human Resource Management module and the finance module. Now, we are moving into another aspect of implementing EMR of the HIS.

■ **What are the top trends that will shape the healthcare industry in 2022?**

Trends in 2022 will go in line with the ongoing pandemic. The focus will remain on telemedicine, remote services, and how we can improve digitization and offer touch-less services in the healthcare industry. Technologies enabling these will boom in 2022.

■ **What are the key**



ARUN GOYAL,
CIO, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital

technologies which you would focus upon in 2022 and beyond?

We are focusing on EMR implementation. The idea is to digitize the prescription to be provided by the clinicians to the patients. Then, we are evaluating technologies to enable patients to take the prescription ahead, avail in-patient/out-patient services, services at their doorstep, follow-up services, and utilize IoT devices for health monitoring at home which is integrated with our HIS accessible to clinicians.

■ **What is your outlook for healthcare**

industry over the next 2-3 years?

Over the next 2-3 years, I think interoperability and adopting global standards in Indian healthcare industry would be the basis of designing the strategies. This will enable all the healthcare providers to make their data interoperable across and share the data to the patients as well as to the R&D teams and the government. Moving ahead, patients will not be required to maintain their healthcare records and would be able to access their records seamlessly across the healthcare ecosystem.

WORLD TRADE CENTER STEPS UP FOCUS ON IOT, BLOCKCHAIN IN 2022

Niraj Khinvasara, Chief Innovation Officer, World Trade Center Pune enlists IoT and Blockchain as the top technology priorities for the organization to further the focus on digitalization and regionalization in the global trade industry

■ Please talk about few major developments in your business processes/ model which enabled improvement in business in 2021

2021 was a really good year for us; we had about 100 percent growth. We were clinical about our B2B match-making between demand and supply. And those efforts seem to have paid off. The World Trade Center has a very exciting partnership program, which we used effectively to achieve our business goals. 2021 is also a breakthrough year for World Trade Center Pune in terms of customer acquisitions. From the supply side, we have nurtured and strengthened the WPC Pune partnership program; we have close to 15 partners and growing. On the demand side, we just ship a container of low GI sugar to a Mexican customer. We have also set up distribution on this product in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Peru, Argentina, and 16 other Latin American countries.

We are also working with German medical equipment manufacturer to lower the cost of production and to help manufacture and distribute in India.

■ What are the top trends that will shape your industry in 2022?

So I'm going to talk about two trends that are on the top of my mind. First one is IoT which is getting great acceptance as digitalization is picking up further in the trade tech world. If you look at 2022, we are expecting about 18 billion IoT devices. I see a continuous increase in IoT based logistics and shipping.

Second important trend is Blockchain as companies have just started to look at Blockchain and concepts like smart contracts. Further, an interesting concept is getting closer to the port; regionalization is becoming important for companies to get closer to their customers. We're working on this initiative with a major international port authority to open Asia hub at the port. This will facilitate the



NIRAJ KHINVASARA,
Chief Innovation Officer, World Trade Center Pune

Asian companies to get closer to the market and the customers and distribution points.

■ What is your outlook for your industry over the next 2-3 years?

Next two to three years are quite interesting for global trade. We're working closely with the UN as a part of the effort for UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030. Future trends I'm seeing in industry are sustainable trading. We see this trend growing with many other countries adopting this model and contributing towards sustainable trading innovation and growth.

Another interesting trend that will pick up is smart borders. A smart border design encourages the development of interconnected border agencies that operate in a trustworthy and transparent environment.

Further, satellite connectivity is going to be quite impactful in the next two or three years is satellite connectivity. One of the issues facing international trade is seamless telecom connectivity in the middle of the ocean and air. Satellite connectivity as a technology is getting a lot of innovation and focus. With global satellite connectivity, high speed data connectivity will be possible even in remote areas and far overshoots.

WE ARE SERIOUSLY LOOKING AT AI/ML-BASED PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS: UFLEX GROUP

Elaborating on his success with IoT implementation to improve overall product quality and customer experience, Vipin Kumar, CIO-Global, Uflex Group highlights on his focus on AI/ML-based predictive analytics and shop floor automation in 2022

■ **Please talk about major developments in your business processes/model which enabled improvement in business in 2021.**

I think 2021 was a great year from the IT perspective. Continuing from what we saw in 2020 a lot of demand came for IT to enable businesses which continue to work from home. We did a lot of process reengineering; it was one of the highest priorities because part of the manpower went home and part in batches was coming to office. So, a lot of process reengineering and workflow applications occurred.

As most of the manpower was working from home, which saves their time and efforts in commuting every day, the management was concerned if we can increase their productivity by 20 percent as compared to that in office. Hence, through

productivity measuring tools we were able to capture the employee productivity, which actually increased considerably. Being a manufacturing organization, we implemented shop floor solutions to enable employees to do all the inspections and QA of the products remotely. We also got pro-active in addressing failures and disruptions through IoT solutions, which enabled us to improve overall product quality and customer experience.

■ **What are your technology and digital transformation priorities for 2022?**

We are seriously looking at using AI and ML based predictive analytics for business benefits including supply chain and inventory optimization. AI solutions can also help us meet and fulfill customer demands on time every time. So, we are building a lot of technologies of warehouse management, inventory



VIPIN KUMAR,
CIO-Global, Uflex Group

management, and order fulfillment. The idea is to have 360 degree focus on customers starting from CRM to deliveries as well as to bring lot of automation on the shop floor. So, we are aggressively looking at the integration of IT and OT integration in 2022.

■ **What is your outlook for packaging industry over the next 2-3 years?**

My outlook for the coming years is extremely positive. As the

customer purchasing and consumption behavior has changed drastically due to the pandemic, people are buying and storing things which is accelerating demand for flexible packaging. Flexible packaging applications have moved beyond food products and we have a lot of space for further expansion.

In addition, we are now increasing our footprint globally. Further, we are collecting used flexible packaging packets and recycling them to be more eco-friendly.

iValue InfoSolutions Reasserts Partnership with Stratus Technologies for Edge Computing Market in India



iValue InfoSolutions, a technology enabler and Stratus Technologies, fault-tolerant systems for high-availability applications are expanding their 5-year-old relationship. The primary focus of their partnership was focused on Stratus' Fault Tolerant Servers and iValue has been catering and acquiring customers across BFSI, MFG and Space Research via their Fault Tolerant Servers, but now with their Edge Computing Solutions added to the new offering, iValue is looking forward to acquiring more customers in the coming day.

Amarjeet Singh Manchanda, VP – Data Centre & Cloud, iValue InfoSolutions, said, "iValue has always had an advantage of associating with the right mix of technology providers and aiding technology development and usage in India along with 13+ locations. Our partnership with Stratus Technologies is 5-year-old and we have been fostering business for their

Fault Tolerant Servers. Now, Stratus is helping industry leaders bring in digital transformation for their business-critical applications by delivering zero-touch Edge Computing platforms. For customers considering a digital transformation with projects that require local processing, cybersecurity or low latency, Stratus ztC is a converged Edge Computing stack that is simple to deploy and manage, protected from threats of interruption and automated to reduce the burden on IT and OT. It minimizes complexity and the need for significant IT involvement. We are happy to reaffirm and take our partnership to another stage by supporting their Edge Computing Solutions with our expertise for Indian market."

iValue has always prioritized optimization and transformation, employing Customer Life Cycle and Product Life Cycle Adoption frameworks. As a leading technology enabler, iValue supports innovation by

providing comprehensive services that power corporate Data, Network, and Application (DNA) management. It enables organizations to wisely, efficiently, and successfully examine and rethink their existing IT infrastructure. iValue also boasts top 100 brands as loyal customers across more than eight sectors, as well as 5x market growth and a robust staff in 13+ locations. As a top enabler, iValue has persevered in partnering with the proper mix of mainstream and specialty technology vendors to assist customers in their transformative path. Its penchant to select the right partner and aid its customers with niche and trustworthy solutions has helped them grow relentlessly fostering the trust of its 5,000+ customers.

Lin Hoe, Foong, Asia South Managing Director, Stratus, said, "iValue InfoSolutions is a key Stratus partner as organizations in India scale deployment of zero-touch Edge Computing

platform to enable simple, protected, autonomous operations. Stratus' Edge Computing platforms enable rapid transformation at the edge to securely translate data into actionable insight for richer analytical outcomes. Additionally, businesses require Stratus' unmatched uptime and reliability for their critical applications. Our continued partnership with iValue demonstrates the demand for Stratus solutions and the expertise that iValue provides to end users."

This year the company has announced the 2nd generation of its ztC Edge platform, the Edge Computing platform that combines built-in application virtualization and fault tolerance in a more easy-to-install, ruggedized design for the industrial edge. The new ztC Edge offers up to 200 percent greater performance over the prior ztC Edge generation. The computing platform is suited for running critical applications and building Smart Machines in Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Oil & Gas, Food & Beverage, and other industries where data loss and unplanned downtime are not acceptable. Stratus has a vast customer base, but popular types of its customers include banks and credit unions, e-commerce firms, emergency response centers, police departments, fire departments, hospitals, clinics, governments, credit card companies, stock exchanges, telcos/phone companies, and Internet providers.

ITSM – A Major Requirement to Start a Digital Transformation Journey and Ensure High ROI

By Satish Kumar V, CEO, EverestIMS Technologies



IT Service Management can be a key differentiator among enterprises as it provides the agility, improves inter department communication and automation power to manage various business needs and situations. At its core, it is IT delivered as a service and encompasses processes, systems, support, and delivery, i.e., the end-to-end delivery of IT services. ITSM has often been confused with IT support, but it is so much more. And, for a successful digital transformation, we go beyond compartmentalizing IT, automation, and business. We look at it holistically as a change that impacts the enterprise as a whole, as it also includes governance, stability, and continuous monitoring.

What is so important about ITSM?

Enterprises constantly strive to streamline and manage their workflows for maximum productivity. Efficiently managing a remote workforce has been a major challenge in these times. With

a distributed team, it can be an issue to ensure that efficacies are maintained at the highest levels. They also stay on top of maintaining the highest standards across the organization. ITSM offers endless possibilities to improve efficiency through a structured approach. It aligns IT with business goals and unifies the delivery of services, keeping the resources, budget, and ROI in mind – always exemplifies customer experience. Essentially, ITSM is one tool with multiple capabilities. It provides a framework and enables enterprises to use tools that help with workflow automation, driving greater efficiency.

One of the most common approaches to ITSM is ITIL practices, which focuses on best practices for aligning IT services with business needs. ITIL version 4 guides the IT teams to a holistic business and customer-value frame of reference. The guiding principles of ITIL 4 include collaboration, feedback, and simplicity.

How can enterprises

benefit from an integrated ITSM platform?

There are several benefits to using unified service capabilities of ITSM as it can:

- Align IT teams with business goals, and track through success metrics
- Enable cross-department collaboration
- Bring IT and development teams together through streamlined project management best practices
- Empower IT, teams, to share knowledge and improve continuously
- Improve request coordination for prompter and more efficient service
- Promote customer-centric culture with self-service and improved processes
- Respond more quickly to incidents, and prevent future ones
- Better understand the asset lifecycle
- Effectively track changes and change requests
- Drive automation via workflow in ITSM

Considering the importance of ITSM and its benefits, enterprises must ensure that the ITSM tools can fulfill their requirements, as the objective is to enhance the enterprise's ROI. Therefore, some factors to consider include:

Easy to set up and use – The ITSM tool must have an intuitive self-service portal that is user-friendly and makes it easy to request help, search for information, and track progress on issues.

Enables collaboration – It must be an integrated platform for developers and other cross-functional teams to work collaboratively for quicker resolution.

Adapts to your needs – The tool must be flexible enough to support resolution/ escalation or change processes easily.

Other equally important factors to consider when choosing the ITSM tool, include end-to-end asset management, ensure intelligent incident allocation for incident management, have AI-based chatbots for L1 responses, be API-friendly, and offer multi-language support to be effective across the globe.

Clearly, ITSM is at the center of modernizing organizations on their digital transformation journey. As the rise of AI-enabled service gains traction, IT service teams are better able to work together more efficiently to deliver better value quickly. Enhanced and quicker service means better customer experience and improved ROI, making adopting ITSM imperative in enterprises of all sizes.



Over 50% of Organizations Face Gaps in Zero-Trust Implementations

Rajesh Maurya, Regional Vice President, India & SAARC, Fortinet, said, "With the evolving threat landscape, transition to work-from-anywhere, and the need to securely manage

form of a zero-trust strategy in place, they fall short of a holistic strategy and struggle to implement some core zero-trust security basics. An effective solution requires a cybersecurity mesh platform

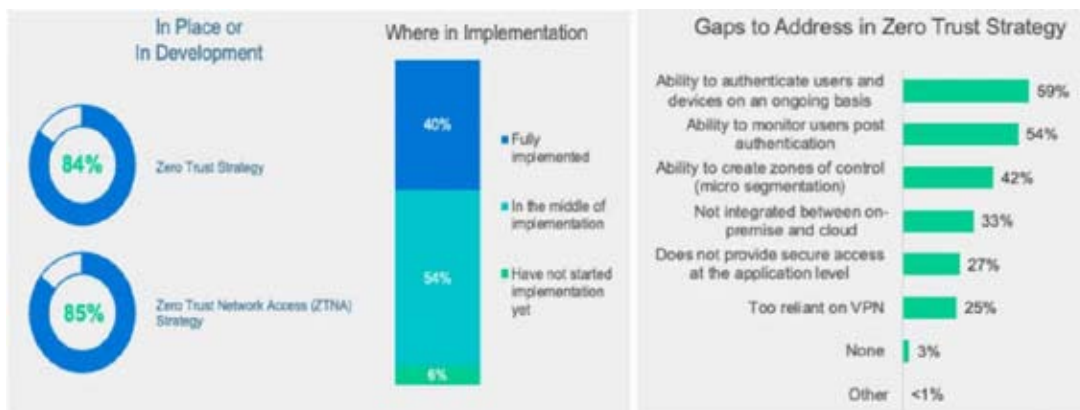
integrated solution that lacks broad visibility."

News Summary

Fortinet has unveiled the Global State of Zero Trust Report. The survey

than half of organizations cannot translate this vision into the solutions they are implementing because they lack some basic core fundamentals of zero trust. For a detailed view of the findings and some important takeaways read the blog. Highlights of the report follow:

A FortiGuard Labs Threat Landscape Report demonstrated an increase in the volume and sophistication of attacks targeting individuals, organizations, and increasingly critical infrastructure. Organizations are looking for solutions to protect against these evolving threats and zero trust is top of mind, but for multiple reasons. Additionally, the shift to work-from-anywhere has put a spotlight on zero-trust network access (ZTNA) in particular, as organizations need to protect important assets from workers connecting from poorly protected home networks.



applications in the cloud, the shift from implicit trust to zero trust is top of mind for organizations. Our survey shows while most organizations have some

approach to address all zero-trust fundamentals across the infrastructure, including endpoint, cloud, and on-premises, otherwise, the result is a partial, non-

reveals that while most organizations have a vision of zero trust or are in the process of implementing zero-trust initiatives, more



Confusion Over Defining Zero-Trust Strategies

The report illustrates some confusion about what comprises a complete



RAJESH MAURYA,
Regional Vice President, India
& SAARC, Fortinet

zero-trust strategy. Respondents indicated they understand zero trust (77 percent) and ZTNA (75 percent) concepts and over 80 percent reported already having a zero-trust and/or ZTNA strategy in place or development. Yet, over 50 percent indicated being unable to implement core zero-trust capabilities. Nearly 60 percent indicated they do not have the ability to authenticate users and devices on an ongoing basis and

organizations. Adding to the confusion are the terms 'Zero Trust Access' and 'Zero Trust Network Access,' which are used sometimes interchangeably.

Zero Trust Is Top of Mind and Priorities Are Varied

Priorities for zero trust are 'minimizing the impact of breaches and intrusions' followed closely by 'securing remote access' and 'ensuring business or mission continuity.' 'Improving user experiences' and 'gaining flexibility to provide security anywhere' were also top priorities.

'Security across the entire digital attack surface' was the single most important benefit cited by respondents, followed by a 'better user experience for remote work (VPN).'

A vast majority of the survey respondents believe that it is vital for zero-trust security solutions to be integrated with their existing infrastructure, work across cloud and on-premises environments, and be secure at the application layer. However, more than 80 percent of respondents indicated that it is challenging to implement a zero-trust strategy

NxtGen Datacenter and Cloud Technologies Offers ECS to PeopleStrong



NxtGen offers Enterprise Cloud Services (ECS) to PeopleStrong, a SaaS-based HR Technology company, and helped them set up their entire User Acceptance Testing (UAT). NxtGen provided a reliable solution to absorb newer technologies to the HR Tech company to increase its scalability.

IT infrastructure plays a critical role in running the business operations of PeopleStrong as their SaaS offerings are hosted on the cloud platform. Scalability, security, high availability, and performance are some of the key parameters that PeopleStrong wanted to focus on, to be the leader in the marketplace. Therefore, NxtGen Datacenter and Cloud Technologies assisted PeopleStrong to set up their entire UAT, which allows them to perform all the activities before going live. In addition, NxtGen provided PeopleStrong with a dev environment to enable them to conduct pre-production POCs, test setups of a few services, users and functionalities, integration validations and change management, etc.

Rajesh Dangi, Chief Digital Officer, NxtGen Datacenter and Cloud Technologies, said, "PeopleStrong was seeking for an on-demand scalable and easy to deploy infrastructure solution to cater for its exceedingly growing userbase. Hence, we suggested to them our Enterprise Cloud Service which struck the right balance between the quality of service and cost optimization and offered PeopleStrong a competitive advantage while supporting its fundamental business goals of delivering exemplary HR tech products."

By leveraging NxtGen's ECS for their UAT Environment, PeopleStrong reduced the size of their data center and eliminated their data center footprint. In addition, UAT facilitated on NxtGen Cloud, helped PeopleStrong provide a significant return on investment and increase their customer confidence through reassurance that all requirements are met. This resulted in the reduction of the numbers of servers, the software cost, and the number of staff required, which resulted in a significant reduction of IT costs without impacting their organization's IT capabilities.

Saurabh Gugnani, IT & Security Head, PeopleStrong, said, "NxtGen is kind of a partner to believe in as they will stand with you for all your deliveries, and they are more like your own team."

Most Significant Benefit of Zero Trust Solution



54 percent struggle to monitor users post-authentication.

This gap is concerning because these functions are critical tenets of zero-trust and it brings into question what the actual reality of these implementations is across

across an extended network. For organizations without a strategy in place or development, obstacles included a lack of skilled resources with 35 percent of organizations using other IT strategies to address zero trust.

Salesforce's New Innovations and Collaborations Power the Future of Commerce



Salesforce has introduced a series of new innovations and collaborations to fuel the future of commerce, allowing companies to modernize their systems, develop more flexible digital strategies, and engage with their customers wherever they are.

Lidiane Jones, EVP, GM, Salesforce Digital Experiences, said, "Today, consumers expect retailers to offer their products anytime, anywhere, and this is transforming the shopping experience. With 25 percent of shopping expected to happen beyond a retailer or brand's website, app or physical store by next year, companies must quickly adapt and embrace emerging channels to provide their customers with more purchasing options and greater flexibility."

These new developments and collaborations combine Salesforce's platform's strength and flexibility with an expansive ecosystem, allowing retailers to build fast, connected, and highly customized shopping experiences. Among today's announcements are:

New integrations future-proof the shopping experience with flexible innovation:

With the proliferation of new channels, retailers need to adapt quickly to meet customers where and how they want to shop. With Salesforce, retailers can build shopping experiences that best suit customer needs and meet their expectations — now and in the future. Integrations announced today include:

PayPal at Checkout for Salesforce Payments: Brands utilizing Salesforce Payments now have even more options to reduce checkout friction and boost sales by integrating PayPal into their checkout experience with a simple, click-based configuration.

Salesforce Commerce for B2B Wholesale Retail: This digital platform for wholesale apparel and fashion companies, built on Commerce Cloud by ISV partner XCentium, offers preseason ordering, in-season re-supply, and fully automated interactions among self-service and sales teams.

Digital intelligence delivers personalized marketing and commerce experiences

In a cookieless world, digital professionals need intelligence across their data to personalize experiences and optimize business growth. New Datorama and Tableau features help companies connect and visualize data from their cross-channel marketing campaigns with customer order data from Salesforce Commerce Cloud and Amazon, providing real-time insights and analytics that optimize relationships, ROI, and revenue.

Salesforce Social Commerce for China with Alibaba:

This platform, which was first introduced in September and is now broadly available, facilitates e-commerce via China-specific channels such as social networks and CN websites. Salesforce Social Commerce, hosted by Alibaba Cloud, offers retailers the

tools they need to develop with China's ever-growing commerce environment, and it easily integrates with digital commerce systems like Tableau, DingTalk, the retailer's ERP, OMS, and others.

Salesforce customers deliver dynamic commerce experiences

Ed Poppe, VP, CRM, Performance Marketing, Build-A-Bear, said, "Our relationship with Salesforce has been instrumental in our digital transformation strategy. Build-A-Bear is a high-engagement brand, and we believe in delivering personalized and interactive experiences to our shoppers across all channels. With Datorama, we're able to gain actionable insights across all our marketing activities and effectively connect them to customer purchases in Commerce Cloud. With these two complementary solutions, we have the digital intelligence to optimize customer experiences."

Jan Steck, SVP, Global eCommerce, Digital Marketing, Claire's, said, "Claire's is committed to making interactions seamless, consistent, and personalized for both our digital and in-person shoppers. With the launch of our new order management system, followed by the same-day Buy Online, Pick Up In-Store, and Click & Collect offerings powered by Salesforce, we continue to produce streamlined omnichannel customer experiences that align with Claire's vision and cater to shopper expectations."

LTI Ties Up with Securonix and Snowflake to Improve Cybersecurity Services



Larsen & Toubro Infotech has tied up with Securonix and Snowflake to strengthen its cybersecurity services.

The collaboration will enable LTI's Active eXtended Detection & Response platform (Active XDR) to detect internal and external risks early, contextualize and defeat threats using enhanced intelligence-led hunting operations, and automate incident response

the latest technologies from Securonix and Snowflake will strengthen our ability to combat ever-growing threats, responding to increasing ransomware attacks and phishing campaigns on critical infrastructure, large enterprises, and federal sector."

Sachin Nayar, CEO, Securonix, said, 'Bring your own Snowflake' is an ideal managed service program, significantly reducing the costs and complexity of scaling advanced threat detection and response services across multiple customer environments. We look forward to bringing additional solutions to market with LTI that more effectively secure today's cloud and complex enterprise environment."



SANJAY JALONA,
CEO, Managing Director, LTI

time. LTI Active XDR secures billions of sensitive alerts and records by storing them in a secure data lake.

Sanjay Jalona, CEO, Managing Director, LTI said, "Guarding against cyber threats has become a top priority for every enterprise. LTI Active XDR, backed by



CHRISTIAN KLEINERMAN,
Product SVP, Snowflake

Christian Kleinerman, Product SVP, Snowflake, said, "Chief Information Security Officers (CISO) are looking for alignment with the CIO to gain richer insights, improve scalability and drive savings. LTI is a strategic partner for Snowflake that has been recognized for its innovation and ability to help customers migrate from legacy solutions. We look forward to extending our partnership into cybersecurity together with industry-leader Securonix and its cloud-native 'Bring your own Snowflake' SIEM solution."

Viewsonic Launches VA2932-MHD Ultra-Wide IPS Screen Monitor



ViewSonic has launched a WFHD SuperClear IPS monitor VA2932-MHD. ViewSonic is extending the variety of screen sizes to provide the perfect multi-tasking display for working or entertainment.

The ViewSonic VA2932-MHD ultra-wide monitor is a 29" monitor with WFHD2560 X 1080 pixels, a 21:9 aspect ratio, and a SuperClear IPS screen. The SuperClear IPS technology provides the same image quality whether users look at the screen from above, below, or on the side. The color gamut covers NTSC 85 percent size (Typ) sRGB 120 percent size (Typ). This monitor's additional value feature is its height-adjustable and swivel stand. It provides a comfortable workstation. The ViewSonic VA2932-MHD ultra-wide monitor costs \$499 and is now available at ViewSonic's flagship shop.

Specification of the monitor:

- Screen Size: 29"
- Aspect Ratio: 21:9
- Panel Type: IPS Technology
- Resolution: 2560 x 1080
- Response Time (Typical GTG): 4ms
- Viewing Angles: 178 horizontal, 178° vertical
- Refresh Rate (Hz): 75
- Blue Light Filter: Yes
- Flicker-Free: Yes
- Color Gamut: NTSC: 85 percent size (Typ) sRGB: 120 percent size (Typ)
- Speaker: Dual 2-watt stereo speakers



SACHIN NAYYAR,
CEO, Securonix

KPMG Partners with Qualys to Manage Security Services for Indian Enterprises



KPMG in India has tied up with Qualys to deliver Qualys solutions to the KPMG Managed Security service. The alliance will combine KPMG's industry-leading and globally recognized cybersecurity services in India with Qualys' world-class cybersecurity innovations, enabling enterprises to protect their network, applications, endpoints, and cloud workloads from security vulnerabilities, provide visibility, and ensure compliance.

As a rising number of significant business processes migrate to the cloud, global organizations are expanding and erasing their network perimeters. Qualys offers these organizations real-time visibility, continuous security, and compliance through a centrally managed cloud platform with a common data model that accelerates integration to create unified capabilities.

The Qualys Cloud Platform expands on demand and integrates seamlessly with KPMG's managed security offerings in India. Qualys VMDR, for example, integrates discovery, assessment, detection, and response into a single cloud-based app, significantly accelerating organizations' ability to respond to threats and efficiently prevent breaches. Customers of KPMG in India will now have access to Qualys Cloud and Container Security applications, in addition to VMDR, for the continuous inventory of resources and assets throughout their international hybrid IT environment.

Atul Gupta, Leader, Cyber Security, KPMG, India, said, "This partnership is aligned to our core values whereby we believe in empowering all our clients to manage cyber risk effectively by having state-of-the-art vulnerability

management services along with a secure broad-ranging digital journey. By partnering with Qualys, we are not only ensuring that our customers have current and latest technology solutions but are also enabling them to create a digitally trusted environment."

Chandra Prakash, Partner, Leader, Managed Application Security Services, KPMG, India, said, "The KPMG in India and Qualys partnership is a powerful combination that seeks to address the security vulnerability management challenges of enterprises considering the rapid cloud adoption, application modernization, Industrial Internet of Things (IIOT), data proliferation and surge in the API economy that we are witnessing today. Our deep expertise in application development and business consulting combined with Qualys' platform for managing vulnerabilities across hybrid

technology environments makes our offering a wholesome one."

Sony Anthony, Head, Cyber Defence Practice, KPMG, India, stated, "This partnership will allow us to drive far more business impact for our clients, thereby unlocking the full potential of digital transformation, allowing us to place them on the best path to success in the new digital business landscape in a secure manner."

Debashish Jyotiprakash, Managing Director, India, ASEAN, Qualys, said, "Our strategic alliance with KPMG in India will help customers streamline their security and compliance solution stack while also providing much-needed visibility, compliance, and the ability to respond to threats. Additionally, a Qualys Cloud Platform located in India, allows KPMG to address the data localization needs of their clients."

Komprise Doubles Sales in 2021 as Unstructured Data Management Becomes an Enterprise IT Priority



Expanded Alliances and Industry Recognition

- Komprise and existing reseller partner Pure announced that Komprise Asynchronous Replication would deliver reliable data replication for Pure FlashArray file customers.

- The company made inroads with its key public cloud partners including achieving: AWS Migration & Modernization Competency, support for new AWS file storage and analytics services, and support for Azure Files NFS.

Komprise received several industry honors in 2021: NAB Show Product of the Year award (cloud computing & virtualization category), Best Enterprise Data Management Solution by New World Report, and CRN Storage 100. Komprise President and COO Krishna Subramanian were honored as a Top Woman of Influence in Silicon Valley, by the Silicon Valley Business Journal.

Kumar Goswami, Founder, CEO, Komprise, said, "Komprise sits in the sweet spot by enabling IT to save 70 percent or more on storage and backup costs through its analytics-first approach, while also extending the value of data through flexible search, tag and transparent movement to cloud-based data lakes, warehouses and AI/ML tools. Our global file index brings visibility across all storage so that enterprise IT teams can make the best decisions on where data should live as needs change."

Komprise, a provider of analytics-driven data management and mobility software, has announced robust growth for 2021 over 2020, with more than a doubling of its revenues and the amount of data under management. Global data growth has been exponential in recent years, resulting in both enterprise pains and opportunities, including huge rises in storage costs, enterprise priorities for cost-optimized cloud migration, and faster AI adoption plans as cloud-based AI and ML services develop.

Amid these trends, Komprise has experienced rapid industry adoption of its value offering for unstructured data management, enabling huge data storage savings while permitting quicker, more automated cloud analytics projects.

Customer Growth

- Komprise revenues, which are subscriptions, grew by 115 percent year-over-year.
- New customer acquisition grew by 200 percent over the year before, particularly in life sciences, media and entertainment, and the public sector.
- Customers spent more on expansions than on their initial purchase, indicating increased adoption and satisfaction.
- Komprise had more than 400 graduates from the Komprise Technical Professional training program in 2021, up 80 percent from the previous year. Customers accounted for roughly half of the attendees.

Intelligent Data Management Platform Innovation

- In October, Komprise

announced Deep Analytics Actions, which delivers a systematic way to find specific data sets across hybrid cloud storage silos and move them to secondary storage and/or rapidly feed cloud analytics tools and services.

- Komprise was awarded a patent for asynchronous restoration of files from delayed recall storage such as AWS Glacier, building on the prior patent for Transparent Move Technology (patented in 2019).
- In June, Komprise announced new capabilities for global data management with multisite controls, giving IT directors a single consolidated view across multiple Komprise-managed sites while enabling local execution to meet site-specific policies and needs.

Channel Point



Artificial Intelligence the big Opportunity for ISVs & Channel Partners

The days of channel partners being a step behind technology giants are gone. Now the latest technologies that vendors offer and curated into cutting edge solutions by ISVs & channel partners, adding a huge amount of value to the solutions, leverage to the vendors and of course- years to the life of user companies.

Artificial intelligence is one space that is fast developing in its applicability to all sectors, globally. In fact, this is one such technology which is along with a shift in the partner ecosystem is accelerating digital transformation, return to smarter working, and building strategic ecosystems that can drive better business outcomes.

However, India still has a long way to go to be able to utilize AI solutions to add value to business solutions, and we are still experimenting. But to take things forward, its time ISVs also work on their AI abilities, deep understanding and agile processes to offer the advantage AI offers to industry. One of the most significant areas where AI is used widely to develop solutions is in the start-up and small scale sector. Perhaps that's where synergies need to be built, because experts say, that's where most of the AI adoption in India will ultimately take place.

However, factors such as lack of clarity of rules and regulations and the issues of integrity and ethics with AI and ML solutions is hampering the market growth of AI in India. Policy documents and working drafts on Artificial Intelligence issued by the Niti Aayog recognize ethical and fundamental concerns with the implementation of AI and hints towards a self-regulatory approach towards the same in coming times. Also, since data plays a huge role in AI and machine learning apps, there are issues of policies and compliances to be resolved a well!

Perhaps it's also time for ISVs & channels to create their own IPs in the AI space! This could be their opportunity to make inroads into the AI adoption that is expected to reach \$500B by 2024, globally. Some of the critical areas where channel partners could add value is chatbots, virtual assistants while the government can utilize AI in citizen services, security, and smart cities. This could provide a significant push to the AI market, especially for the ISV and channel.

In the overall India Artificial Intelligence market share, southern region has captured major pie since 2019 and are expected to lead throughout the forecast period. Further, increasing government spending in research and development of AI based technological advancements would fuel market growth over the coming years.

In 2020, Indian AI startups raised \$836.3 million, the largest funding outlay during the last seven years. During the same year, Indian government increased the outlay for Digital India to USD \$477 million to boost AI, IoT, big data, cybersecurity, machine learning and robotics.

Either case, it's time for India to develop the ecosystem needed in channels for leveraging AI for better business and to grow to meet world standards of technology adoption.

K. Singhal

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