

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY



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IN CONVERSATION



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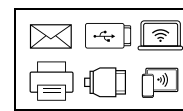
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Head - DevSecOps, Games 24x7

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Building an Effective and Sustainable Cyber Security Strategy

As we move into 2023, building a cyber-resilient organization against a constantly changing global threat landscape remains difficult for cyber security leaders. This cover story analyzes the ways to be prepared, given the intricacy of the threat landscape. Let's deep dive into the new security challenges and opportunities in 2023 and beyond

Amit Singh



India's technology leadership in the Techade will primarily depend on how effectively enterprises manage cyber security and privacy. India has significant potential for growth and technology leadership in the coming years, however, security and privacy could not be taken for granted.

Sumnesh Joshi, Deputy Director General, Unique Identification Authority of India, Govt of India, highlights the need to visualize the upcoming threats and get ahead of the perpetrators. "It's a game we need to win."

He mentions that the role of technology is quite crucial as specified in the Digital India mission to make India a digital economy by 2025. "India is going to lead the world in digital technologies. As we progress digitally, security and privacy have become crucial and not to be taken for granted. There is no meaning of technical progress without security and resilience."

Joshi states that it is important to identify who owns the data in the current scenario. "Aadhaar has played a significant role in providing a digital identity to every citizen using biometric deduplication. This adds to the layer of security. In fact, given the criticality of

the personal data residing with UIDAI, we have taken an island approach to data security."

However, despite using multiple security approaches, educating the last-mile user across the country with over 1.3 billion population is a massive challenge. "With UPI seeing 8 billion transactions in a month and UIDAI having 60 million Aadhaar authentication per day, we need to see how we can use technology to mitigate any unintended sharing of data by the end-users. We can have a multi-factor authentication process depending on the criticality or worth of the transaction. In fact, in India's Techade, security and privacy have become much more critical for our tech leadership," Joshi explains.

Cyber tension adds to the skill gap

With the blurring of our digital and 'real' lives with each new technological feat, the surface area for malicious cyber activities is growing more than ever. On the one hand, this is what makes cyber security such a fascinating subject to work in since the journey is always more important than the destination, and each



“India is going to lead the world in digital technologies. As we progress digitally, security and privacy have become crucial and not to be taken for granted. There is no meaning of technical progress without security and resilience.”

SUMNESH JOSHI, Deputy Director General, Unique Identification Authority of India, Govt of India



“Along with their core responsibility of keeping a company and its assets safe, today CISOs in India are fighting stringent IT budgets, scarcity of skilled cyber security professionals, and having the right IT security systems in place.”

MAHIPAL NAIR,

Managing Director, Trellix India & Vice President/
Head of Human Resources APJ

day presents new obstacles. On the other hand, the ever-changing nature of cyber security, along with the significant risk that comes with being poorly protected, creates high-stakes uncertainty in the cyber security scene.

Cyber security workers are experiencing unsustainable levels of stress as a result of the high level of uncertainty. The psychological impact of this has a direct impact on the decision-making quality and performance of cyber security leaders and their teams. According to a Gartner report, nearly half of the cyber security leaders will shift positions by 2025, with 25 percent changing roles totally owing to several work-related pressures.

This will very certainly contribute to the expansion of the cyber security workforce gap. To fill the worldwide cyber security employment deficit, an estimated 3.14 million specialists are required. According to a recent Fortinet report, 84 percent of firms in India suffer additional cyber risks as a result of unfilled IT roles due to a cyber-skills shortage. Increased breaches are one resulting cyber risk, with 92 percent of firms in India suffering one or more cyber security incursions in the

last 12 months, up from 80 percent last year. According to the survey, more than 94 percent of Indian boards support hiring more IT security personnel, highlighting the demand for security talent.

Struggle to get the required support

As per a recent research report from Trellix, Indian CISOs struggle to get the support required to be resilient against cyber attacks.

- Not enough support. All CISOs in India surveyed said they struggle at some level to get support from the executive board for the resources needed to maintain cyber security strength. 62 percent think their jobs would be easier if all employees across the entire business were better aware of the challenges of cyber security. In addition, 30 percent of CISOs cite a lack of skilled talent on their team as a primary challenge.
- The pressure is high. 84 percent of CISOs in India have managed a major cyber security incident once, and 44 percent report this has happened more than once. 84 percent of respondents feel



fully or mostly accountable for the incidents and 52 percent experienced major attrition from the Security Operations team as a direct result.

- Working with too many of the wrong solutions. With organizations reporting using an average of 25 individual security solutions, 34 percent say a top hurdle is having too many pieces of technology without a sole source of truth. CISOs can find the number of security solutions available to them overwhelming, unnecessary, and challenging.
- The right solutions would make a difference. 98 percent agree having the right tools in place would save them considerable time. 50 percent want access to a single integrated enterprise tool to optimize security investments.

“Along with their core responsibility of keeping a company and its assets safe, today CISOs in India are fighting stringent IT budgets, scarcity of skilled cyber security professionals, and having the right IT security systems in place. There is simply too much to do with too few resources. To make

their lives easier, security leaders must adopt a unified IT security solution that is constantly evolving to protect against the most sophisticated cyber threats along with encouraging a culture of cyber awareness for a resilient organization,” says Mahipal Nair, Managing Director, Trellix India & Vice President/Head of Human Resources APJ.

Widening attacks

Making matters worse, the increase in digitization has had the unforeseen consequence of broadening attack opportunities, giving malevolent actors new avenues to strike. The number of cyber-attacks in India has climbed by 256 percent since 2019, with 1,402,809 incidents reported in 2021, according to the India Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT). The government registered 674,021 cyber occurrences until June 2022, and experts predict that the size and creativity of digital attacks would only increase in 2023.

Phishing has evolved into one of the most common threat vectors used by cybercriminals to breach worldwide enterprises. Year after year, we notice a growth in the number of phishing assaults that are growing



“Being cyber resilient is letting go of the belief that an organization can create an impenetrable barrier between it and cyber criminals. Instead, cyber resiliency assumes that attacks will happen, and operations will be disrupted so safety precautions must be implemented to respond to and recover from cyber-attacks.”

PUSHPENDRA KUMAR GUPTA,
CTO and Global Architects Lead for Global Alliances
Presales, Dell Technologies



“Enterprises have been extensively using traditional tools including backups, DR, and continuous data protection. However, in the current circumstances, we need advanced tools to protect against and enable recovery from cyber disruptions. These can start with immutability and move into more sophisticated capabilities such as vaults and clean rooms.”

HARISH SONI,

Director - Resiliency and Security Practice, Kyndryl

more complex. According to a recent report, the majority of modern phishing attacks rely on stolen credentials, and the growing threat from Adversary-in-the-Middle (AitM) attacks, increased use of the InterPlanetary File System (IPFS), and reliance on phishing kits obtained from black markets and AI tools like ChatGPT are all factors. Adversary-in-the-Middle attacks employ tactics that can circumvent traditional multi-factor authentication mechanisms.

Vishing, or voicemail-themed phishing efforts, on the other hand, emerged from SMS or SMiShing attacks. In these Vishing assaults, attackers use authentic voice fragments of the executive team by leaving a voicemail of these pre-recorded messages. The recipients are then coerced into taking action, such as transferring funds or supplying credentials. Vishing attacks have attacked many US-based companies.

Scams on LinkedIn and other job-search websites are also on the rise. Unfortunately, many large corporations will be forced to shrink around 2022 and 2023. As a result, fraudsters used bogus job advertising, websites, portals, and forms to lure in job searchers.

Victims were frequently subjected to an extensive questioning procedure, with some even being requested to purchase materials in order to be reimbursed afterward.

Newer threats

Logging in to websites and services utilizing third-party authentication, such as a user's existing Google or Facebook accounts, has been normal practice in recent years. These trends indicate a widespread desire for convenience, speed, and personalization at every level of the digital journey. These functionalities are frequently enabled by Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), which aid in efficiency and are applicable to practically all firms that perform digital transactions. These APIs, like any web service, can be exploited and abused if not adequately safeguarded, resulting in security breaches and fraud, putting entire digital ecosystems in danger.

According to F5, 74 percent of Indian consumers are willing to give corporations access to personal data in exchange for better utility and customer service, and 93 percent are willing to save sensitive data into websites and applications



for a more efficient procedure. API technology may be more vulnerable as a result of rapid data sharing. APIs are quickly becoming an entrance point for security hacks and data breaches since every minor feature is integrated with other applications for a seamless user experience.

Building resilience by design

Adding onto the cyber security conversation and offering a prominent solution, Pushpendra Kumar Gupta, CTO and Global Architects Lead for Global Alliances Presales, Dell Technologies, stressed that amid the high focus on cyber security, the due focus on recovery gets missed out.

"The recovery pillar is the most critical aspect of the entire cyber security framework because no solution is full-proof. As the data is exploding so do the attacks with a 400 percent increase in the number of cyber-attacks," said Gupta.

He adds that being cyber resilient is letting go of the belief that an organization can create an impenetrable barrier between it and cybercriminals. Instead, cyber resiliency assumes that attacks will happen, and

operations will be disrupted so safety precautions must be implemented to respond to and recover from cyber-attacks.

Gupta highlights that almost 93 percent of the companies have 3-5 different clouds. Moreover, almost 75 percent of the data will be on the edge by 2025. "So the attack surface has become unlimited further complicating the security. This scenario would require modern security solutions. What we have been doing in the past

will not work."

He further adds that the modern approach gears down to modernization, hardening, and trusted isolation. "While the majority of organizations are well on track to modernizing their security and DR infrastructure, the hardening of security solutions with encryption, retention lock, and 2-person authentication is still crucial. The idea is to move towards network isolation and air gap approach, and At-Rest analytics," Gupta elaborates.

Harish Soni, Director - Resiliency and Security Practice, Kyndryl, adds that the change in focus from data protection to data resilience is part of a journey that focuses on business outcomes. "Enterprises have been extensively using traditional tools including backups, DR, and continuous data protection. However, in the current circumstances, we need advanced tools to protect against and enable recovery from cyber disruptions. These can start with immutability and move into more sophisticated capabilities such as vaults and clean rooms."

Closing notes

On the one hand, 2023 is set out to be a favorable year for cyber security, with privacy-centric policies dominating the regulatory landscape and big technological breakthroughs just around the corner. On the other, a looming recession is forcing companies to cut their cyber security spending. As we move further into 2023, building a cyber-resilient organization against the backdrop of a constantly changing global threat landscape remains a difficult undertaking for cyber security leaders.





Unleashing Innovation in Manufacturing: Insights from Rajkumar Ayyella, CIO, KEC International

RAJKUMAR AYYELLA
CIO, KEC International (RPG Goenka Group),

Rajkumar Ayyella, CIO, KEC International (RPG Goenka Group), in an in-depth interaction with Kalpana Singhal, shares his expertise and perspective on the engineering and manufacturing industries. With over 25 years of experience, he highlights key aspects that excite him about these industries and discusses the impact of initiatives like Make in India and Industry 4.0. He also explains how emerging technologies and automation are enhancing the customer experience and offers insights on accelerating digital transformation amid challenges from COVID-19

■ **You have over 25 years of experience in the engineering and manufacturing industries. Can you highlight three key aspects that excite you about these industries?**

Throughout my career in various companies and industries, I've discovered that the manufacturing sector possesses qualities that are valuable across

different industries. Some of these qualities include project management abilities, commitment to quality, familiarity with safety and environmental standards, commercial awareness, ability to work under constraints, and problem-solving skills. These are skills we acquire in the manufacturing sector, especially in the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) space.

With the government's

emphasis on Make in India, what changes are you witnessing in the market demand in your segment?

Make in India is aimed at attracting global investments to India, creating local opportunities, and generating employment. However, one significant challenge we face is the availability of skilled labor and the need to build manufacturing infrastructure, upgrade technologies, and create labor-intensive

capabilities. Addressing these challenges presents opportunities for the industry's long-term growth and development.

■ **Have you noticed any changes in market demand due to the government's focus on Make in India?**

Absolutely. India was previously seen as a service provider, but the scenario has

now changed. The ongoing Ukraine conflict, events in China, and global dynamics have opened up numerous opportunities for India. Make in India has prompted us to focus on upgrading our infrastructure and labor-intensive technologies. Sectors like MSME, angel investments, and foreign investments are creating opportunities for local talent and research and development. India has emerged as one of the top two innovation hubs, moving beyond outsourcing and offering diverse skill sets for various areas.

■ How is Industry 4.0 revolutionizing the manufacturing world, particularly in the wake of the pandemic? What adoption trends do you see in India?

In the manufacturing industry, technology trends have transformed the way we operate. For instance, in the EPC space, where labor-intensive work is common, we face challenges such as limited internet connectivity and power supply. Technologies like 5G and edge computing, which rely on stable internet access, cannot always be implemented in such environments. Supply chain disruptions have also been a significant challenge for many industries, including manufacturing. These disruptions include a lack of manpower, dependence on single suppliers, and difficulties in identifying reliable suppliers. However, the pandemic and supply chain challenges have also presented opportunities for local talent and the adoption of new technologies.

■ How are you leveraging emerging

technologies such as IoT, AI, analytics, and blockchain to enhance the customer experience?

Amid the pandemic, maintaining communication with customers and vendors has been crucial. We have utilized technologies like Zoom and collaborative platforms such as Teams to address the unique operating methods of government bodies, our primary customers. By leveraging RFID solutions, we have enabled end-to-end tracking of stock movement and streamlined the manufacturing process, allowing customers to monitor their orders from factories to the endpoint. These initiatives were implemented during the pandemic.

■ What initiatives have you undertaken to automate processes and bring about re-engineering?

We have undertaken significant projects to bring about automation and process re-engineering. One such project is the lighthouse certification for supply chain plants. It involves reducing cycle times, impacting commercials, adopting process re-engineering, and leveraging technology platforms. Additionally, we focused on world-class engineering, streamlining the entire process from tendering to project execution. We incorporated technologies like AutoCAD, Bookcads, AI, ML, machine learning, RPA, and data analysis to enhance efficiency and reduce turnaround time.

■ How can businesses accelerate digital transformation amid

challenges from COVID-19? What strategy do you suggest?

The pandemic disrupted our traditional ways of doing business, especially for manufacturing and project sites that require physical presence. As an IT professional, my focus was to ensure uninterrupted operations in corporate offices and develop a comprehensive strategy. I created a roadmap with six key areas: infrastructure modernization, IT security, application modernization, digital transformation, and governance and control. Infrastructure modernization involved adopting technologies like VDIs and cloud migration, while network topology was improved using mesh technology with partners like DCL and Airtel. In terms of security, we implemented a zero-trust environment, deploying SOAR and SIM platforms for security operations and automatic response. Endpoint security progressed from EDRs to HDRs. We embraced cloud services for flexibility and scalability, enabling us to leverage platforms like SaaS and PaaS for digital deployments. Our strategy prioritized securing the foundation to mitigate risks and ensure data protection.

■ What are the new security threats in the digital age, and how do they differ from the past?

Security became a crucial concern even before the pandemic, but it gained even more significance during this time. Without a secure foundation, rolling out digital projects becomes challenging. To address this, I pursued a strategy that divided activities into core

and non-core areas. Core activities focused on delivering business value, while non-core activities like managing data centers and workloads were outsourced to experts. We moved workloads to the cloud, leveraging managed services for security operations centers (SOCs). This approach helped overcome the skill gap and scalability limitations. By creating an ecosystem with a strong governance model, we maintained control over our initiatives.

■ How do you select the right technology partner or vendor for executing projects, considering the skill gap and technology requirements?

Rather than focusing on specific skill sets, I prioritize architecture control and strategic roadmaps when selecting technology partners. It's essential to leverage existing capabilities and subscribe to easily adoptable solutions rather than constantly adding new skills internally. Various partners, particularly new edge entrepreneurs, and companies, offer off-the-shelf solutions that can be quickly implemented. The ability to shift between different technologies or platforms, such as transitioning from EDR to XDR or migrating from one cloud provider to another, is crucial. Emphasizing a process and business value-oriented approach over deep technical expertise enables better alignment with core systems like SAP. The goal is to build around existing ecosystems and allow experimentation while ensuring a focus on business processes. Dedicated teams for innovation, operations, and governance and control facilitate efficient execution.

Metaverse will Completely Transform the Gaming Industry: Games 24x7



Sanjay Singh, Head - DevSecOps, Games 24x7, in a candid conversation with Kalpana Singhal, spoke about how Metaverse will be the most significant technology for the gaming industry while elaborating on the latest trends and challenges for the industry

SANJAY SINGH
Head - DevSecOps,
Games 24x7

■ **The online gaming and entertainment industry saw a major rise during the pandemic with consumers' preference for digital mediums. What were the trends in gaming according to you and how did consumer preference change toward casual and skill games during the pandemic?**

We have seen huge growth during the pandemic. We knew that this is not organic growth for sure. It was more of minor gaming and we were almost certain that this growth we are not going to sustain for sure. But I think just after the pandemic or once the pandemic became

a little normal, after all the vaccination and everything, then it slowed down a little bit, and then it has reached a level where it is now continuing at that pace. There is definitely a growth from last year to now in fact, we already see a couple of, maybe a 100% or 200% growth already between 100% to 200% growth already in the overall number of users, the number of active users playing the games, and all that. I would say during the pandemic, of course, it was inorganic, but even now we see the growth. Although the pandemic is almost settled, we continue to see more number of users signing up for the services or playing games actively.

■ **When it comes to skill games, what's**

the difference you have seen during the pandemic?

It was a kind of mixed thing. And even for us, there were a lot of learnings during the pandemic. We have three types of games on our platform: skill-based games, fantasy games, and real money games. We saw growth in all the segments and even today, although it has slowed down a little bit, we continue to see growth in all the segments, including real money and fantasy games. I think during the pandemic, a lot of people picked up this as one of their habits. We are still seeing heavy traction on our flagship products, Rummy Circle and My 11 Circle.

■ **With a sudden rush towards online**

gaming, which I'm sure stressed infrastructure in many cases. How did you handle this sudden surge in your infrastructure?

So, for us, especially given the nature of our business, certain of our games are more seasonal. We see a tremendous search on our platform when there is an IPL or a World Cup, and so for our type of business, the cloud is definitely a solution because we definitely need elasticity. When we see a higher number of users playing on our platform or more signups, we definitely need a cloud-based solution where suddenly, if you have a demand of say, 10 x 20 x, having that much flexibility is very difficult if you have that kind of setup, say OnPrem or Polar location.

And it is very, very short left. For example, during the IPL, which lasts around two and a half to three hours, we notice a massive search and then it taper off shortly after the IPL. So, for the previous three or four years, we've been running our firm in the cloud. And, in fact, in the previous IPL, when we observed the increase, we were prepared for that kind of surge with the AWS cloud.

■ **Please talk about your technology footprints to offer a digital experience to your customers.**

I'll discuss flexibility and how we handle surges. Some of these phenomena, as previously said, are more seasonal in character. The IPL is held once a year. Similarly, the World Cup occurs once a year, and we collect a lot of data during that time. User behavior, infrastructure utilization, and what type of response the user anticipates or has for our microservices or any of the games as such.

And we log that in our system to assist us prepare for the next occasion. Because we can forecast that, hey, here is the traffic that we are expecting in the next event, and based on that, we are ready with the infrastructure, and based on that, we are ready with any optimization that we need to do on the services side, any optimization that we need to do on the database side, and any optimization that we need to do, for example, on the observability side. As I previously stated, all of this data, together with historical data and trends, will undoubtedly assist us in preparing for the next catastrophe.

■ **What kind of people**

are actually playing, whether it is a student or it is the youth?

So, I believe it is popular among youth, between the ages of 20 and 40. Based on research, we see a higher number of users on our platform between the ages of 20 and 30.

■ **Are there any compliances involved in gaming? What are the rules and regulations which you need to comply with?**

There are some guidelines. You may be aware that this industry is currently unregulated. But, of course, there are some rules, particularly when it comes to money transfers and anything else that falls under the rigorous PCA criteria. Of course, there are Indian government rules. The RBI recently issued regulations, stating that you must keep your log files for at least six months, and so on. There are these guidelines that appear from time to time. In fact, I've noticed that practically every alternate month for the last four and a half months, there is a guideline that we must follow.

■ **What are the major challenges you see in the security and operations of online games in the current scenario, and how are you addressing these challenges?**

I believe that security in general, not only in the gaming sector but also in the IT world, has become a buzzword. We have found a significant increase in numerous attacks, both during and after the pandemic. And, as you may

know, there are well-known brands. Again, I'm not going to name them, but in the last six to eight months, we've seen a large number of stories in which these well-known businesses were compromised and attackers gained access to sensitive information and data from the system.

It has become quite crucial and important for, I believe, the entire tech business as a whole, particularly in the gaming industry, as we have seen, particularly in the last couple of quarters, a massive number of kinds of attacks are coming our way. They are not human, but they attack in an automatic manner. And, especially in light of the recent breaches and all of the credential stuffing and such, many of these bots are attempting to steal some of our users' and workers' credentials once more.

Furthermore, we note that the bots are attempting to become real players and then play against a specific, player on our site. Which is currently a significant threat. So far, we have been able to detect and sort of stop it. But what else is becoming smarter by the day? It is an enormous challenge. Not just for our sector, but I believe for the entire tech industry.

■ **What are the best practices on how business can accelerate their digital transformation amid challenges from Covid 19 and other macroeconomic scenarios?**

We are attempting to improve both the bottom line and the top line. The basic line is that we should cut costs wherever possible. And how we can optimize the cost, whether it is a cloud

cost, infrastructure cost, or any of the licenses or products that we use. That is one factor that affects the bottom line. The bottom line is how we continue to provide the best user experience on our platform because otherwise, you have a number of players in the market who run away the second they perceive a decrease in performance or an issue.

There is a lot of focus from our side on how to give the best experience for our users starting from signing up for the service to the way when the users play or do any kind of activity, whether it is money transferred or playing any kind of games, if at all they're facing a problem or there is some kind of trend of deteriorating any particular service, how quickly can we detect and apply effects immediately before even users start noticing that kind of issue or degradation.

■ **According to you, what are the three most influential technologies which we'll see large adoption in your industry over the next couple of months or maybe in a year?**

I believe the metaverse will play a significant role in this sector in a year or so. At the same time, in terms of short-term goals, we now have a number of services running as microservices but on a specific set of hardware or infrastructure, which we are attempting to transition into more Kubernetes-based or container-based services. We are undergoing one transition. The other is, how can we manage capacity dynamically? That is another transformation we are undergoing.



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Gartner's annual CDO survey reveals major priorities and challenges for chief data and analytics officers

Discover insights from the annual CDO survey with Kevin Gabbard, Senior Director at Gartner. Learn about the major priorities and obstacles for chief data and analytics officers (CDAOs) in this critical business capability for global enterprise. The survey identifies areas for investment and attention in enterprise change, change management, and investment in people and resources. Find out how the best CDAOs balance technical and business requirements to provide proactive value for their organizations.



As a senior director at Gartner in the chief data and analytics officers research team, Kevin Gabbard discusses the annual CDO survey which aims to identify major priorities and obstacles for



KEVIN GABBARD,
Senior Director, Gartner

chief data and analytics officers (CDAOs).

This year marks the survey's eighth year and around 500 to almost 600 global CDAs were asked about leading their organizations, team performance, and delivering value to their organization. The survey aims to identify areas where opportunities and barriers exist for this emerging business role, which is a critical business capability for global enterprise. While data and analytics is a deeply technical topic, it is also a vital business role. Therefore, there is an opportunity to position it as an indispensable business

capability enterprise-wide. However, one of the challenges we see is that the responsibilities of CDAOs are expanding rapidly, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to lead an organization where there may be 15 or 20 major areas of responsibility.

To be successful, CDAOs need to be able to connect disparate requirements to overall enterprise success and find areas where business stakeholder outcomes can be championed by the data and analytics organization. The survey has shown that control of a budget and resources are crucial for getting work done in an

enterprise. Furthermore, the ability to orchestrate across other stakeholders and borrow resources from others is essential to attract effort resources across the organization.

The best CDAOs recognize that technical competence alone is not enough to be successful. They need to be able to balance both technical and business requirements and provide a proactive point of view on the value that data and analytics can provide to the organization. While talent is scarce, creativity is essential to deliver value for organizations. CDAOs need to invest in themselves and have an openness to their strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities to be successful.

Two findings from the survey show that the most effective CDAOs take direction from the corporate strategy and put data and analytics in service of the overall organization strategy. They also recognize that stakeholder outcomes are critical for data and analytics success.

Overall, the survey identified opportunities for investment and attention in enterprise change, change management, and investment in people and resources across the enterprise.

Bluesky: The Revolutionary Social Media Platform Taking the Internet by Storm!

Bluesky is a new social media platform that has been making waves in the industry since its inception. Created by none other than Jack Dorsey, the founder of Twitter, Bluesky is a platform that has gained popularity among Twitter power users and has even caught the attention of US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. At its core, Bluesky is similar to Twitter in that it allows users to post short messages of up to 300 characters and pictures. However, it differs from Twitter in many ways. For instance, it does not support videos and direct messages yet. Additionally, it operates on a decentralized framework that lets users create independent social media experiences by joining a specific “server” with its own rules, interests, and participants. This feature is a breath of fresh air for users who are tired of the one-size-fits-all approach of other social media platforms.

One of the most significant similarities between Bluesky and another social network, Mastodon, is the ability to choose between providers. This is very different from Twitter, which has one site running the network. The service has attracted many Twitter power users who are frustrated with Elon Musk’s management of Twitter and recent changes to the platform. As of April 2022, Bluesky has over 40,000 users, and it has raised \$13 million from Twitter.

Bluesky’s decentralized framework is a feature that many users appreciate. By joining a specific “server,” users can create social media experiences that are tailored to their interests and preferences. This is a significant advantage over other social media platforms that lack this level of customization. Additionally, Bluesky has a strong focus on privacy and security. This is a key concern for many users, and Bluesky’s approach has been well-received.

In conclusion, Bluesky is a new social media platform that has been gaining popularity among Twitter power users. It offers a decentralized framework, which allows users to create independent social media experiences, and a focus on privacy and security. With over 40,000 users and \$13 million in funding from Twitter, Bluesky is poised to become a major player in the social media landscape.

LinkedIn and Google Co-founders launch AI chatbot Pi with human-like conversations



Inflexion AI, a startup co-founded by LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman and Google DeepMind co-founder Mustafa Suleyman, has announced the release of its first AI chatbot product named Pi. Pi uses generative AI technology to engage with users through dialogues where they can ask questions and share feedback. Similar to OpenAI’s ChatGPT, Pi is designed to provide users with human-like conversations that show a high level of emotional intelligence, kindness, and support. According to Suleyman, the CEO of Inflexion AI, the company prioritized developing the technology in-house with a focus on creating a chatbot that can handle personal day-to-day tasks effectively. However, the company has made it clear that Pi is not suitable for generating code or essays and has implemented boundary training to ensure that the AI does not violate its behavior policies or engage in romantic

conversations.

Pi can be accessed through its website, app, and social media platforms, and its service is free. Inflexion AI plans to use user data, including conversational content, to train its AI systems. However, Pi is not currently connected to the internet.

The release of Pi adds another competitor to the crowded field of chatbots powered by generative AI technology. This technology enables people to have in-depth conversations for both professional and personal needs. Inflexion AI was founded in 2022 and was incubated by VC firm Greylock, which led a \$225 million investment in the startup.

Hoffman, who is a partner at Greylock and a Microsoft Corp board member, resigned from OpenAI’s board in March, citing potential conflicts due to his work with AI startups. With the release of Pi, it will be interesting to see how Inflexion AI’s chatbot product will fare against other competitors in the market.

HDFC Achieves Housing Finance Service Excellence with Salesforce

Housing finance provider HDFC is making home financing journeys smoother and faster through a unified customer service and engagement platform.

For over 45 years, HDFC has assisted over 9.8 million customers in realizing their dream of home ownership. The lasting attractiveness of the housing financing company may be due to three factors: a rich heritage, an inventive mentality, and a strong customer focus.

"The biggest differentiator in our industry is service – how quickly we respond to customers and how well we understand their needs," says Renu Sud Karnad, Managing Director, HDFC. "We have tons of customer data dating back 45 years." We can now leverage that data to improve the customer experience, whether through

1:1 personalization or self-service, thanks to AI/ML and other upcoming technologies."

"Home financing isn't an over-the-counter product; it's a journey we take with our customers," says Abhijit Singh, Chief Technology and Digital Officer, HDFC. "Technologies like Salesforce assist us in making that journey as smooth as possible."

Previously, HDFC managed the client lifecycle with in-house software. These old tools were inefficient since they did not properly integrate with third-party systems.

"We wanted to build a more agile, cloud-enabled, and API-first system of engagement to better serve customers," Singh says. As a result, he and his team set out to digitize HDFC's customer lifecycle, beginning with service.



ABHIJIT SINGH,
Chief Technology and Digital Officer, HDFC

Delighting customers with exceptional service experiences

Customer Connect 2.0 is HDFC's customer care and engagement platform, built on Salesforce Care Cloud that enables 4,000+ service agents to achieve service excellence through timely communication.

The platform will be utilized for omnichannel servicing across touchpoints, including the online portal, mobile app, customer servicing emails, call center, and modules used during service center visits.

For maximum visibility, customer queries and requests are collected on the platform. Agents may view all customer and loan data on a single screen at the push of a mouse.

"With Customer 360 and

Loan 360, we have complete visibility into customer interactions and loan details, which helps us resolve queries faster and smarter," Singh explains. "Customers leave each interaction satisfied."

HDFC currently closes 6,000 applications each day on average. Customer follow-up communications are easily linked to the initial case. This has resulted in a 40 percent decrease in the number of monthly cases. TAT for resolution has also been greatly lowered.

Service productivity has also increased. Salesforce Einstein, for example, enables agents to read and categorize emails more quickly. Indeed, service efficiency increased by 30 percent within a few weeks of implementing automatic email classification.



RENU SUD KARNAD, Managing Director, HDFC

"Earlier, agents spent all of their time managing service requests," Karnad recalled. "However, thanks to workflow automation, the team is now free to innovate around key challenges." They consider how to anticipate and prevent common client concerns, how to create a customer care site, and what features to put in our service mobile app. In essence, the team is influencing the future of service."

Data analytics allows service branch owners to manage workloads and make better-informed decisions. Powerful dashboards assist them in determining which problems can be resolved via customer self-service or closed in the first attempt via automation. In turn, executives have a centralized command center perspective to visualize and monitor service performance.

Reimagining sales and lending journeys with powerful customer engagement tools

HDFC also uses Salesforce Sales Cloud to automate and streamline lead generation, qualification, and nurturing.

Sales professionals may manage hot leads and prospects from anywhere by using the 'HDFC & You Partners App' built on Salesforce. All of the information they require to engage prospects more effectively and close more deals is at their fingertips.

"The 360-degree customer view helps us have better conversations with our customers, and they, in turn, expand their footprint with us," Singh explains.

HDFC will soon employ Salesforce's platform capabilities to manage the whole loan origination cycle, from customer on-boarding to credit decisioning and disbursement. MuleSoft's API-led and low-code integration capabilities will connect front-end and back-end systems to improve the customer's financing

experience.

"Getting a loan approved from us should be as easy as ordering a meal on your food delivery app," Singh says. "Automated workflows will reduce data errors, rework, and inconsistencies, allowing us to disburse loans more quickly."

The company is seeking to cut credit appraisal TAT by one-third, resulting in a threefold increase in the number of loans given per month.

Meanwhile, dynamic reports provide sales teams with real-time visibility into key performance indicators (KPIs) for sales productivity, performance, and attrition.

"With instant sales insights, decision-making becomes a lot easier," Singh explains.

These and other advantages were realized thanks to the Salesforce Customer Success team, who worked directly with HDFC to accelerate Salesforce adoption, engagement, and growth.

Investing in the future

HDFC is now attempting to further simplify customer support by providing a myriad of DIY servicing choices for customers via various channels such as the customer portal, mobile app, WhatsApp, and chatbots.

Finally, the organization wishes to assist customers in their home-buying decision.

"Imagine using AR/VR or the metaverse to choose your home," Singh suggests. "The possibilities with technology are endless."

"Blockchain, quantum computing, and the metaverse have opened up tremendous opportunities to transform the way we do business," Karnad continues. But our goal isn't just to increase operational productivity or efficiency; we also want to better understand and connect with our customers. Salesforce technologies enable us to fulfil both goals at the same time."

Digisol to Participate in Bsnl National Event

DIGISOL Systems Ltd., a First Indian Brand in IT Networking will be participating in the BSNL National Event on 14th & 15th May of this year in Shimla.

In this event, the winners of Bharat Fiber Championship League Program will be felicitated. This event will also be an eye-opening experience as FTTH and Bharatnet Udyami Partners from all States will be joining and speaking about the best practices being followed in the FTTH Roll-out.

In this event, Digisol will be showcasing



it's Made in India range of products which include- FTTH XPON ONU's (TEC certified), OLT's (TEC certified), Managed Switch, Media Convertors, FTTH OUTLET Box, Fibre Termination Box products, Splitters etc.

This exhibition will help Digisol products to get recognition among the BSNL franchise partners.

Mr. Samir Kamat, Head of Sales - Active Products, said, "This BSNL National Event is a great opportunity to connect with FTTH business leaders nationwide, where-in lot of knowledge sharing will be involved. By attending such events, we get the platform to explain our Digisol product offerings to them.

Our Active products (OLT'S, ONU'S, MEDIA CONVERTOR, SWITCHES) & Passive products (FTTH), provide a future ready design of products which will be a catalyst in amplifying the IT networking industry and make lives enriched for our end users".

The telecom and IT sectors are prospering, thanks to the FTTH technology, which has established itself as the standard for modern data transport.



Vedanta Aluminium commits to strengthening technology sectors with diverse aluminium portfolio

On National Technology Day, Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, reaffirms its commitment to catering to the emerging demand for aluminium through its high-quality, indigenously developed products for the engineering and technology sectors. The company is constantly expanding its value-added product portfolio to maximize the hi-tech applications of metal.

Globally, there are about 3,000 technological applications of aluminium across various industries, whereas India has explored only about 300 so far. Yet, India remains among the largest importers of aluminium in the world, despite having abundant bauxite reserves, the ore from which aluminium is obtained, and more than sufficient production capacity to meet the domestic demand. Vedanta Aluminium alone produces nearly 60% of India's aluminium. It serves the needs of allied industries by exploring new technological applications of the metal and providing sector-specific customised products, thus strengthening the domestic value chain.

Aluminium has emerged as a critical raw material for both, established and emerging sectors, in developing advanced technologies owing to its exceptional properties. These include a high strength-

to-weight ratio, ductility, malleability, conductivity, corrosion-resistance, and the ability to be recycled repeatedly without losing its properties. The very nature and versatility of the metal provides durability to electronic goods and strength to gravity-defying spacecrafts.

According to a recent World Bank report, aluminium is one of the key metals that will enable the transition to a low-carbon future, spurring its applications in diverse sectors. Vedanta Aluminium is highly regarded as the preferred supplier of aluminium products in technology-led critical sectors such as aerospace, defence, automotive, smart infrastructure and energy distribution. It is the first in India to offer a low carbon footprint, 'green' aluminium range, branded Restora and Restora Ultra, for customers

seeking to decarbonise their operations. Its wide range of applications for current and future purposes is why aluminium is popularly referred to as the "metal of the future."

On the occasion of National Technology Day, Mr Rahul Sharma, CEO, Vedanta Limited – Aluminium Business, reiterated the role of aluminium in emerging technologies, "The world seeks to transition to a low-carbon future, one that is undoubtedly going to be metal intensive. Aluminium, with its unique properties, has established itself as the go-to metal for a slew of high-end technological applications. With one of the largest product portfolios in the world, Vedanta Aluminium is uniquely positioned to meet the rapidly-evolving requirements of our customers through increased product sophistication,

unmatched quality, and operational excellence."

Vedanta Aluminium is actively ramping up production to add new product lines at its aluminium smelters at Jharsuguda (Odisha) and Korba (Chhattisgarh), diversifying its product mix to cater to sunrise sectors such as high-tech manufacturing, electric vehicles, green buildings, renewable energy and battery technologies. Aluminium has the potential to be a significant value creator for the nation and help achieve the vision of 'Make in India for the World'. Vedanta Aluminium is contributing to this endeavour by boosting domestic innovation and tech-driven manufacturing.

Vedanta Aluminium, a business of Vedanta Limited, is India's largest producer of aluminium, manufacturing more than half of India's aluminium i.e., 2.29 million tonnes in FY23. It is a leader in value-added aluminium products that find critical applications in core industries. Vedanta Aluminium ranks 2nd in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) 2022 world rankings for aluminium industry, a reflection of its sustainable development practices. With its world-class aluminium smelters, alumina refinery and power plants in India, the company fulfils its mission of spurring emerging applications of aluminium as the 'Metal of the Future' for a greener tomorrow.



RAHUL SHARMA,
CEO, Vedanta Limited – Aluminium Business

The Transformative Technology of Artificial intelligence - But is it Safe to Use?

By Sundar Balasubramanian, Managing Director, India & SAARC, Check Point Software Technologies



**SUNDAR BALASUBRAMANIAN, Managing Director,
India & SAARC, Check Point Software Technologies**

Check Point Research (CPR), the Threat Intelligence arm of Check Point® Software Technologies Ltd. and a leading provider of cyber security solutions globally, warns that artificial intelligence has the potential to be a transformative technology that can significantly impact our daily lives, but only with appropriate bans and regulations in place to ensure AI is used and developed ethically and responsibly.

There have been reports that since its launch, OpenAI's ChatGPT has amassed more than 100 million users, with 13 million

daily visitors, according to OpenAI. This has sparked other technology giants like Google and others to launch or announce the upcoming launch of their own chatbots, including here in India. A recent announcement by the Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw who during the India Global Forum Annual Summit, hinted at a "big announcement" related to India's new AI chatbot which will be parallel to ChatGPT.

"AI has already shown its potential and has the possibility to revolutionize many areas such as healthcare, finance,

transportation and more. It can automate tedious tasks, increase efficiency and provide information that was previously not possible. AI could also help us solve complex problems, make better decisions, reduce human error or tackle dangerous tasks such as defusing a bomb, flying into space or exploring the oceans. But at the same time, we see massive use of AI technologies to develop cyber threats as well," says Sundar Balasubramanian, Managing Director, Check Point Software Technologies, India & SAARC. Such misuse of AI has been widely reported in the media, with select reports around ChatGPT being leveraged by cybercriminals to contribute to the creation of malware.

Overall, the development of AI is not just another passing craze, but it remains to be seen how much of a positive or negative impact it will have on society. And although AI has been around for a long time, 2023 will be remembered by the public as the "Year of AI". However, there continues to be a lot of hype around this technology and some companies may be overreacting. We need to have realistic expectations and not see AI as an automatic panacea for all the world's problems.

We often hear concerns of whether AI will approach or even surpass human capabilities. Predicting how advanced AI will be

is difficult, but there are already several categories. Current AI is referred to as narrow or "weak" AI (ANI - Artificial Narrow Intelligence). General AI (AGI - Artificial General Intelligence) should function like the human brain, thinking, learning and solving tasks like a human. The last category is Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) and is basically machines that are smarter than us.

If artificial intelligence reaches the level of AGI, there is a risk that it could act on its own and potentially become a threat to humanity. Therefore, we need to work on aligning the goals and values of AI with those of humans.

Adds Balasubramanian, "To mitigate the risks associated with advanced AI, it is important that governments, companies and regulators work together to develop robust safety mechanisms, establish ethical principles and promote transparency and accountability in AI development. Currently, there is a minimum of rules and regulations. There are proposals such as the AI Act, but none of these have been passed and essentially everything so far is governed by the ethical compasses of users and developers. Depending on the type of AI, companies that develop and release AI systems should ensure at least minimum standards such

as privacy, fairness, explainability or accessibility.”

Unfortunately, AI can also be used by cybercriminals to refine their attacks, automatically identify vulnerabilities, create targeted phishing campaigns, socially engineer, or create advanced malware that can change its code to better evade detection. AI can also be used to generate convincing audio and video deepfakes that can be used for political manipulation, false evidence in criminal trials, or to trick users into paying money.

But AI is also an important aid in defending against cyberattacks in particular. For example, Check Point uses more than 70 different tools to analyse threats and protect against attacks, more than 40 of which are AI-based. These technologies help with behavioral analysis, analyzing large amounts of threat data from a variety of sources, including the darknet, making it easier to detect zero-day vulnerabilities or automate patching of security vulnerabilities.

“Various bans and restrictions on AI have also been discussed recently. In the case of ChatGPT, the concerns are mainly related to privacy, as we have already seen data leaks, nor is the age limit of users addressed. However, blocking similar services has only limited effect, as any slightly more savvy user can get around the ban by using a VPN, for example, and there is also a brisk trade in stolen premium accounts. The problem is that most users do not realise that the sensitive information entered into ChatGPT will be very valuable if leaked, and could be used for targeted marketing purposes. We are talking about potential social manipulation on a scale never seen before,” points out Balasubramanian.

The impact of AI on our society will depend on how we choose to develop and use this technology. It will be important to weigh the potential benefits and risks whilst striving to ensure that AI is developed in a responsible, ethical and beneficial way for society.

Elon Musk Unveils “TruthGPT” AI Platform, Vows to Take on Microsoft and Google in AI Race!



Elon Musk, the renowned entrepreneur and CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, has once again made headlines with his announcement of a new AI platform named “TruthGPT”. The platform is set to compete with existing platforms from tech giants Microsoft and Google. In a recent Twitter thread, Musk criticized Microsoft’s OpenAI, the firm behind the popular chatbot ChatGPT, for becoming a “closed source” and “for-profit” organization allied with Microsoft. He also accused OpenAI of teaching the AI to lie, which he deemed to be a dangerous practice. Musk also took aim at Larry Page, co-founder of Google, for not taking AI safety seriously. He mentioned that he has been hiring AI researchers from Google to start a new company to rival OpenAI. This move by Musk has been seen as a direct response to the growing concerns over AI safety and control. Musk has long been a vocal advocate for AI regulation and has warned about the potential dangers of AI, including its ability to cause civilizational destruction and manipulate public opinions.

In addition to announcing TruthGPT, Musk recently registered a new company called X.AI Corp in Nevada,

where he is the only director. This move has sparked a lot of speculation among industry experts, with many wondering what Musk has in store for the new company.

Musk’s departure from OpenAI in 2018 was seen as a major blow to the organization, as he disagreed with some of the company’s plans. Microsoft’s recent multi-billion dollar investment in OpenAI has increased competition with Google and intensified the race to attract AI funding in Silicon Valley.

Musk’s meeting with former U.S. President Barack Obama to discuss encouraging AI regulation shows his commitment to ensuring that AI is used for the greater good and does not pose a threat to humanity. His outspokenness on AI safety and control has brought the issue to the forefront of the tech industry and has sparked a much-needed debate on the subject.

As the race for AI dominance continues, it remains to be seen how Musk’s new venture, TruthGPT, will perform against established players like Microsoft and Google. However, one thing is for sure: Musk’s relentless pursuit of innovation and his commitment to AI safety will continue to shape the future of technology.

91% of Indian Businesses are Considering Ways to Use Generative AI

Almost 91 percent of organizations in India are considering using generative AI for business use. According to Salesforce survey findings, only 4 out of 10 Indian employees currently utilize artificial intelligence (AI) skills, despite its recognition as one of the most in-demand digital skills today.

According to the survey, an overwhelming 89% of Indian workers believe that experience based on skills holds more significance than a traditional degree or industry-specific qualification when seeking employment in the current job market.

However, a significant disparity exists between the skills demanded by companies and those currently possessed by the workforce. While 90% of Indian workers report using digital skills in their daily work, only 25% are utilizing AI skills in their roles, and just over half (52%) are employing skills beyond digital administration.

Fortunately, there is a positive outlook regarding the potential of emerging technologies to transform future job prospects. Coupled with the workers' expressed desire to acquire new skills, this suggests that companies can bridge the digital skills gap by providing continuous, skills-based training to their employees.

Both leaders and employees concur on the importance of AI skills. With the emergence of technologies like generative AI, 93% of Indian workers express excitement about the prospect of leveraging



generative AI in their job roles. Moreover, 91% of respondents state that their companies are exploring ways to incorporate generative AI.

When asked about the significance of AI skills, nearly one-third of workers (29%) rank them among the top three most important digital skills today, with the importance of these skills expected to increase over the next five years.

Despite the growing importance of AI skills, only 40% of Indian workers claim that their current roles involve AI. Furthermore, a mere 34% state that their positions require other related digital skills such as encryption and cybersecurity, and only 27% utilize coding and app development skills.

The travel and tourism industry exhibits the highest utilization of AI skills, with 67% of workers in this sector incorporating AI into their daily roles. However, outside of travel and tourism,

the adoption rate drops significantly, with only 21% in the public sector and 25% in healthcare reporting the use of AI skills.

The path forward lies in upskilling. All surveyed Indian workers believe that businesses should prioritize AI skills in their employee development strategies.

In response to the rise of AI and automation, Indian employees anticipate a growing need for data security, ethical AI, and automation skills in the workplace. Consequently, employees consider "soft" skills such as customer relationship management and creativity to be increasingly important.

With workers eager to expand their digital skill sets, they now favor companies that emphasize emerging technology skills and prioritize skills-based hiring. A staggering 90% of respondents believe that businesses should focus on developing digital skills in

their employees.

The shift toward skills-based hiring is a global phenomenon. The survey reveals that 82% of people leaders worldwide consider skills to be the most important attribute when evaluating candidates, with only 18% prioritizing relevant degrees or industry-specific qualifications.

Furthermore, the majority of global people leaders (98%) believe that skills-based hiring brings substantial business benefits. Talent retention (56%), increased workforce diversity (48%), and knowledge sharing (46%) were cited as key advantages.

Moreover, most people leaders globally anticipate that prioritizing employees' digital skills development will positively impact overall business performance, leading to increased productivity (47%), better team performance (43%), and improved problem-solving capabilities (40%).

German Giants SAP and Siemens Join US Tech Firms in Criticising EU Data Act over Trade Secret Concerns



SAP and Siemens, two prominent German companies, have expressed their concerns over the proposed EU Data Act. The legislation aims to regulate the use of data generated by smart devices and other consumer goods, and is part of a larger effort to curb the power of tech firms and help the EU achieve its digital and green objectives. However, the draft law has been met with criticism from both German companies and US tech giants. The main point of contention for these companies is a provision that would require them to share data with third parties. They argue that this could potentially endanger trade secrets and not effectively safeguard against competitors outside of Europe. As such, they have urged for safeguards to be put in place that would allow them to refuse requests to share data in situations where trade secrets, cybersecurity, health, and safety are at risk.

Another concern raised by these companies is the scope

of devices covered by the legislation. They have requested that the scope not be extended, as this could lead to further restrictions and limitations on their business operations.

The European Commission has acknowledged the importance of protecting trade secrets, but has stated that the Data Act is not seeking to change European or national law on the matter. The proposal aims to strike a balance between the need for data sharing and the need to protect trade secrets.

It is clear that there are differing opinions regarding the proposed EU Data Act, with both German companies and US tech giants expressing their concerns. It will be interesting to see how these concerns are addressed, and if any changes are made to the legislation to address them. Ultimately, the aim of the Data Act is to create a fair and equitable playing field for all parties involved, and it is important that this goal is achieved in a way that benefits everyone involved.

Ash Parikh Takes the Helm as CMO of Trellix to Drive XDR Leadership in the Cybersecurity Landscape

Ash Parikh has been appointed as the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of Trellix, a cybersecurity company that delivers Extended Detection and Response (XDR) services.

In his new role, Parikh will lead global marketing teams to raise brand awareness, generate demand, and develop go-to-market strategies for Trellix's XDR platform. Bryan Palma, the Chief Executive Officer at Trellix, believes that Parikh's experience in SaaS, cybersecurity, and data management is ideal for enhancing Trellix's XDR leadership and making their value proposition available to millions of customers.



ASH PARIKH,
Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), Trellix

Parikh, who has a 30-year track record of leading teams and scaling enterprise software organizations, will report directly to Palma. He was previously the CMO of Druva, a SaaS vendor for data protection and cybersecurity, and spent over a decade leading the marketing organization in various roles at Informatica.

Parikh is a member of the board of advisors for Yellowbrick Data and the CMO Council and has been recognized as one of the Top 100 B2B Marketing Leaders for 2022 by HotTopics. He is ready to use his experience in data and cybersecurity to advance Trellix alongside a world-class global marketing team and tell the Trellix story in the ever-increasing threat landscape.

World Password Day: The Critical Importance of Strong Passwords and Cybersecurity in Today's High-Stakes Digital Landscape



The 10th anniversary of World Password Day is a significant milestone, but the importance of password management and cybersecurity remains as vital as it was a decade ago. In today's world, where cyberattacks are becoming increasingly sophisticated, implementing strong passwords is critical for

protecting against potential threats. Unfortunately, only a third of CISOs have the necessary technology and tools to ensure their organizations' security, making password safety a crucial first line of defense. Weak passwords are like silent vulnerabilities waiting to compromise your network, which is why employee education and organization-wide standards are essential. To celebrate World Password Day, it's time to stop being ambivalent about password security and encourage colleagues to change weak passwords into something fundamentally secure. Douglas McKee, the Director of Vulnerability Research at Trellix Advanced Research Center, emphasizes the importance of strong passwords for individuals and organizations.

Passwords remain the simplest and most effective means of securing identities, according to Manikandan Thangaraj, but weak passwords and reusing the

same login credentials for multiple platforms increase the risk of password attacks. Thangaraj recommends using longer passwords that include all character types and symbols and avoiding dictionary words, common patterns, and usernames. Regulatory standards require companies to use multi-factor authentication (MFA) methods to bolster identity security.

Anil Valluri, MD and Regional VP, India & SAARC, Palo Alto Networks, recommends setting guidelines for passwords, avoiding vulnerable passwords, not reusing passwords, requiring password updates at set frequencies, and using multi-factor authentication methods to make passwords the primary guardians of personal and professional life. The UK's National Cyber Security Centre and NordPass's latest research



ANIL VALLURI,
MD and Regional VP, India & SAARC, Palo Alto Networks

reveal that there are still many bad password management practices. Cybercriminals can now obtain passwords using new graphics cards with virtual memory (VRAM), making once-secure passwords vulnerable, creating new vulnerabilities. Check Point Software provides the definitive keys to achieving secure and strong passwords, including making them longer and more varied, easy to remember but complex to guess, unique and unrepeatable, always private, and utilizing two-factor authentication (2FA) and periodically changing them.

In conclusion, this World Password Day, let's prioritize password safety and take the necessary steps to ensure strong and secure passwords to help protect our organizations and ourselves from cyber threats.



DOUGLAS MCKEE,
Director, Vulnerability Research, Trellix Advanced Research Center



MANIKANDAN THANGARAJ,
VP, Program Management, Zoho Corporation

Over 55% of MSMEs Harness Mobile Hotspots for Business Connectivity: PayNearby Study



In a revealing study, PayNearby disclosed that more than 71% of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the retail sector employ digital technology for their daily business activities. Furthermore, the study highlighted that over 80 percent of MSMEs acknowledged the positive impact of digital technology on both their businesses and personal lives.

The study, titled “MSME Digital Index 2023,” is based on a nationwide survey conducted among 5,000+ MSMEs in the retail space, including kirana stores, mobile recharge stores, medical stores, customer service points (CSPs), and travel agents, provides insights into their technology consumption patterns and awareness levels.

According to the survey findings, small business

owners in the age group of 18-30 displayed the highest proficiency in utilizing digital tools, with over 75 percent of them owning smartphones for their day-to-day business operations and accessing digital content. The 31-40 age group closely followed, with 32 percent of them reporting a monthly income exceeding ₹15,000. This surge in smartphone adoption underscores the internet’s vital role in bridging infrastructure gaps and promoting tech inclusion among MSMEs at the grassroots level.

Among various digital devices, smartphones emerged as the preferred choice, cited by 68 percent of users. The survey revealed that 66 percent of MSMEs utilize smartphones for business activities, consuming 2GB-5GB of internet data

daily. Remarkably, more than 52 percent of these businesses spend less than ₹500 per month on internet usage. Thanks to initiatives such as Digital India and the Government’s BharatNet program, internet penetration has accelerated across Bharat, making it affordable and accessible to citizens, thereby narrowing the digital divide. In terms of internet connectivity, approximately 55 percent of respondents relied on mobile hotspots at their workplaces, followed by Wi-Fi routers at 30 percent. The usage of ethernet cables and dongles constituted a mere 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively. Furthermore, 73 percent of MSMEs connected to the internet at their homes using mobile data.

The survey findings highlight that digital devices primarily serve work-

related purposes, with 32 percent of business owners spending 4-6 hours on their smartphones. However, for leisure activities such as social media and online entertainment, the report revealed that 60 percent of MSMEs spend less than 3 hours. Facebook emerged as the most popular social media app, with 27 percent usage, while YouTube claimed the top spot as the preferred entertainment app, with 47 percent usage. Interestingly, 57 percent of respondents reported not having any gaming apps installed on their phones.

Furthermore, the report indicated that among tech-savvy MSMEs, accounting software was the most widely used tool, with 25 percent of businesses leveraging it. This was followed by point-of-sale (POS) software at 20 percent and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software at 17 percent for managing their operations. When asked about the purpose of digital device usage, 25 percent of businesses utilized them for accounting and payment acceptance, while 20 percent employed technology for transaction processing. These findings emphasize the importance of establishing a robust tech ecosystem that offers affordable and user-friendly solutions, while addressing the skill gaps and apprehensions of MSMEs. By doing so, we can empower MSMEs and facilitate their growth, contributing to a stronger India.

Top tech CEOs to meet with Vice President Harris to discuss AI regulation and safety



The CEOs of some of the world's most influential tech companies are set to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris and other senior administration officials to discuss significant issues relating to artificial intelligence (AI).

The invite-only meeting includes the CEOs of Google, Microsoft, OpenAI, and Anthropic and is expected to focus on concerns around privacy violations, bias, and the spread of scams and misinformation related to AI technology. The meeting comes as the Biden administration continues to prioritize the regulation of AI and its impact on society. President Biden has made

it clear that he expects tech companies to ensure that their products are safe before they are made available to the public. This is particularly relevant in light of growing concerns about the potential dangers of AI, including the risks it poses to national security and education.

The administration has been soliciting public feedback on proposed accountability measures for AI systems, and the meeting on Thursday is expected to help inform the government's approach to regulating the technology. The CEOs attending the meeting were reminded of President Biden's expectations and the

need for accountability and transparency in the development and deployment of AI systems.

The meeting will be attended by several high-ranking officials, including Biden's Chief of Staff and the Secretary of Commerce, among others. The companies invited to the meeting have yet to respond publicly, but it is expected that they will be keen to engage with the administration on these important issues.

One example of the type of AI technology that is raising concerns is ChatGPT, an AI program that can answer a wide range of queries quickly. The program

has caught the attention of U.S. lawmakers, who are concerned about the potential for misinformation and bias in the responses given by the program. Overall, the meeting on Thursday is an important step in the ongoing efforts to regulate AI and ensure that it is developed and deployed in a safe, responsible, and transparent way. The involvement of top administration officials and the CEOs of some of the world's most influential tech companies reflects the seriousness of the issue and the need for collaboration between government and industry to address the challenges posed by AI.

Channel Point



IT Security Channel Partners in India: Crucial in Helping Businesses Build Strong Cybersecurity Strategies.

In today's digital age, cybersecurity has become more critical than ever before with the ever-evolving threat landscape. As businesses become more dependent on technology, cybersecurity leaders must constantly adapt and improve their strategies to ensure their organizations are resilient against cyber-attacks. However, building an effective and sustainable cybersecurity strategy can be a challenge for organizations of all sizes, especially as we look towards 2023. This is where IT Security Channel Partners in India come into play. They play a crucial role in helping businesses build a strong cybersecurity strategy. These partners are experts in the field of cybersecurity and can provide valuable insights and advice on the latest threats and best practices. They can also help organizations implement the latest technologies and tools that can help prevent and detect cyber-attacks.

Looking towards 2023, IT Security Channel Partners will have new opportunities to help businesses build a more resilient cybersecurity strategy. With the increasing adoption of cloud computing and the Internet of Things (IoT), cybersecurity will become even more critical. IT Security Channel Partners can help businesses navigate these new technologies and ensure that they are secure and compliant with regulations.

For IT Security Channel Partners in India, 2023 presents both challenges and opportunities. While there will be a growing demand for cybersecurity services as more businesses move towards digital transformation, channel partners must also stay ahead of the game and adapt to the changing threat landscape. This means investing in the right technologies and tools, as well as developing their skills and expertise in cybersecurity.

In conclusion, building an effective and sustainable cybersecurity strategy is essential for businesses in today's digital age. Cybersecurity leaders need to be prepared to face new and evolving threats, and IT Security Channel Partners can provide valuable support and guidance. By working together, organizations can build a strong cybersecurity defense that can withstand even the most sophisticated cyber-attacks.

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