GITEX TECHNOLOGY WEEK
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Cloud Box Technologies: driving digital transformation with AI, IoT, and cybersecurity innovations

Veronica Martin spoke to Ranjith Kaippada Managing Director at Cloud Box Technologies, during GITEX 2024 about how their AI innovations have enhanced efficiency and decision-making.

How has Cloud Box Technologies leveraged emerging technologies like AI, edge computing, IoT, and blockchain to drive transformation across sectors such as banking, healthcare, and education?
At Cloud Box

Ranjith Kaippada, Cloud Box Technologies

AI to play a crucial role in shaping the future of productivity and cybersecurity

Microsoft is showcasing breakthrough technologies at GITEX while highlighting the importance of ethical and responsible AI deployment.

At this year's GITEX Global, Microsoft is putting the spotlight on the transformative power of AI. Tariq Halawani, Executive Director of Enterprise Solutions at Microsoft, shared how AI is reshaping industries, with a particular focus on productivity, cybersecurity, and the importance of

Tariq Halawani, Microsoft

Yasmina: how AI is transforming interactions and redefining our homes

Veronica Martin spoke to Rami Abu Arja, Senior Innovation Marketing Manager, Yasmina, Yango Middle East about how YangoGPT will impact the capabilities and performance of human-like AI assistant Yasmina.

At GITEX, Yango Group introduced its revolutionary new GPT model, called YangoGPT. Its first implementation can be seen in the human-like AI assistant Yasmina. How will YangoGPT impact Yasmina's capabilities and performance?

Rami Abu Arja, Yasmina

Almoayyed Computers Middle East leverages GenAI at GITEX 2024

Sean Grimes, Business Development Manager, Almoayyed Computers Middle East, spoke at length about their joint venture with Alghanim and the AI tools they are developing for their portfolio.

Can You Outline to Our Readers What Your Company's Focus and Theme Is at This Year's GITEX 2024 – And What Key Products and Solutions Are You Showing at Your Stand?
Alghanim and Almoayyed Computer Solution Company is a joint venture between Fouad Alghanim

Sean Grimes, Almoayyed Computers Middle East

Logitech: transforming hybrid workspaces with AI-Driven and seamless connectivity solutions

Veronica Martin caught up with Holly Zhou, Head of Product Marketing, Team Workspace Solutions at Logitech, during GITEX 2024 to discuss the solutions, services and products they are showcasing this year.

Can you outline to our viewers what solutions, services and products you're showcasing and demonstrating at this year's GITEX 2024?
This year marks Logitech's second major presence at

Holly Zhou, Logitech

LinkShadow reveals game-changing data security solution

The company's latest solution provides enhanced cloud data visibility and AI-powered protection.

At GITEX this year, LinkShadow made waves with the launch of its new Data Security Posture Management (DSPM) solution, a significant leap forward in safeguarding sensitive data across cloud environments. Known for its robust Network Detection and Response (NDR) capabilities, LinkShadow is now taking a proactive approach to address the evolving challenges of data security.
In an interview, Ahmad Fida Weldali, Regional Sales Director at LinkShadow, shared

Ahmad Fida Weldali, LinkShadow

Cloud Box Technologies...

Technology, we pride ourselves on being a comprehensive IT solutions provider. We partner with leading technology vendors to stay at the forefront of innovation, gaining exposure to the latest advancements like IoT and AI. Through extensive training and hands-on experience, we thoroughly understand these technologies and bring them to the market to address our customers' pain points.

Our approach focuses on leveraging cutting-edge solutions to help businesses reduce risk, improve efficiency, and increase profitability by integrating technology into their operations. At Cloud Box, innovation is in our DNA. We are dedicated to staying ahead in the tech landscape and ensuring our clients benefit from the most advanced solutions. By maintaining strategic partnerships with AI

providers and market leaders, we deliver top-tier solutions that drive success for our customers.

With cybersecurity threats becoming increasingly sophisticated, how does Cloud Box Technologies ensure resilience for businesses of all sizes, especially in terms of safeguarding financial, trust, and reputational assets?
With the widespread adoption of new technologies, there inevitably comes an associated risk— primarily in the form of cybersecurity threats. These risks, including cyberattacks, are increasingly unpredictable and are on the rise, especially in a tech-forward city like Dubai, where AI and other emerging technologies are embraced across various sectors.

As organisations

adopt these innovations, they also expose themselves to potential attacks that can result in financial loss, reputational damage, and diminished trust. That's where we, as a system integrator, come in. At Cloud Box Technology, we operate a 24/7 local Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Dubai, staffed with experts who are highly trained to assess risks, identify threats, and respond swiftly to any incidents.

Our goal is to offer continuous monitoring of our clients' entire IT infrastructure, ensuring that threats

are detected early and mitigated effectively. We focus on providing comprehensive risk management, allowing our clients to focus on their core business while we handle the complexities of cybersecurity. From monitoring to incident recovery, we ensure that our clients' IT systems are secure, resilient, and well-protected against ever-evolving cyber threats. That's our role as a trusted SOC provider and system integrator.

Can you share how Cloud Box Technologies' AI

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innovations have enhanced efficiency and decision-making across the industries you serve?
It's important to recognise that there is no one-size-fits-all AI solution for every customer. The right AI implementation depends on the specific industry and its unique needs. For example, the retail sector will have different requirements than the healthcare or hospitality industries. Each vertical has distinct goals for improving efficiency, reducing losses, and increasing profitability. While technology adoption can address these goals, determining the right approach is critical.

That's where we, at Cloud Box Technology, come in as consultants. We collaborate closely with leading AI technology providers, keeping our team trained and up-to-date on the latest

advancements. Our approach is to sit down with each customer, understand their pain points, and tailor a digital transformation journey that fits their specific needs. We help ensure a smooth transition to AI-powered solutions, addressing the areas where they can gain the most efficiency and return on investment.

Once we've identified the right AI technologies for their vertical, we offer a pilot phase where customers can test the solutions and see firsthand how they improve operations and boost ROI. So far, we've successfully implemented these strategies with a leading retail chain and a major hospital, providing real value through AI integration. Our goal is always to deliver meaningful results by customising solutions that align perfectly with our customers' business objectives. 60

Yasmina: how AI...

At GITEX, we launched our latest cutting-edge GPT model, YangoGPT, which now powers Yasmina. Since the launch of the Yasmina speakers a month ago, the assistant has been significantly enhanced by this advanced technology.

So, how was it enhanced? Yasmina now helps users simplify daily tasks and decision-making, offers personalised recommendations, and much more. In essence, it empowers people to be more creative and navigate life with greater ease.

This new technology also enables Yasmina to engage in longer, more contextual conversations. For example, you can ask: "How can I decorate my home for my son's birthday party?". The assistant will ask you follow-up questions about your son and guide you through the next steps. Or, if you're an avid reader and have just finished a book like The Psychology of Money, you can ask for a recommendation. Yasmina will suggest options, and if you've already read one of them, it'll adjust and provide alternatives.

It's like having a smart, AI-powered companion who understands

you better with each interaction, making your life easier and more intuitive.

Could you share some specific examples of how YangoGPT has improved Yasmina?
Let me share how YangoGPT and Yasmina can go beyond recommendations to actually help people create. These days, with so many people using social media, coming up with new content ideas can be a challenge. That's where Yasmina, powered by YangoGPT, steps in. Say you just got back from a trip to Italy and need help writing a post or caption—just ask Yasmina! It'll suggest ideas, and if you don't like them, you can ask for more options until you find the perfect one.

Another great example of Yasmina's creative abilities is crafting poetry in Arabic. Poetry holds a special place in the local culture, and you can ask Yasmina to write a poem for you in Arabic. It can be about the seasons, love, or anything else— the assistant will craft a beautiful piece in seconds.

YangoGPT also makes complicated topics easier to understand. For instance, if your child asks you to explain

quantum physics after a long day at work, Yasmina can break it down into simple terms that are easy for kids to grasp.

What makes Yasmina truly special is that it was created with the help of the local community, for the local community. Yasmina understands our culture, speaks both Arabic and English, and is accessible to everyone in the region. Whether it's helping with daily tasks, simplifying complex concepts, or supporting local traditions, Yasmina connects with people in a way that's both practical and culturally relevant.

What were the main challenges of developing Yasmina, the human-like AI assistant designed specifically for the Middle East?
When we set out to create Yasmina for the Middle East, our goal was to blend advanced global technology with deep local relevance. It was crucial for Yasmina to not only understand global culture but also be rooted in the customs, values, and traditions of our region. To achieve this, we collaborated with experts from the region to teach Yasmina about our culture—what's acceptable, what's off-limits, and how things are

done here. It's a challenge to build a model that reflects such a dynamic and family-oriented society, but it was essential for us.

Another challenge we faced was the need for vast amounts of content to train Yasmina. Arabic is a rich language, but very little content is available online. Despite that, we made sure to use what's available while supplementing it with additional resources to help Yasmina truly understand and respond in a culturally appropriate way.

What are the key features of Yasmina that can potentially improve users' lives? In what specific tasks can Yasmina be useful to people?
Yasmina is designed to be the hub of your smart home. Beyond basic tasks like setting reminders and managing daily routines, Yasmina integrates seamlessly with your smart devices. For example, I can control my smart lights and coffee machine with just my voice. I love being able to say, "Yasmina, get my cappuccino ready," and it'll start the coffee machine right away.

Another standout feature is its voice recognition capability.

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> ## Yasmina connects with people in a way that's both practical and culturally relevant.

Yasmina can differentiate between adults and children, which is crucial for providing a safe, tailored experience for families. When a child interacts with Yasmina, it only delivers age-appropriate content, ensuring a secure and enriching environment for kids.

How can Yasmina be integrated into the smart home ecosystem, and how could this integration help people improve their smart home usage experience?
Yasmina is designed to integrate seamlessly with various smart home brands. It supports Zigbee and Wi-Fi protocols, which means you can easily connect Yasmina with a wide range of devices, especially if they're Wi-Fi-enabled. So, if you have Yasmina and

smart devices on the same network, Yasmina can manage them all without worrying about the distance between the device and Yasmina. The integration is smooth and hassle-free.

Setup is also incredibly easy. Since Yasmina is powered by an advanced GPT model, it can guide you through the setup process, so there's no need to follow complex manuals or take additional steps. It's all about convenience and simplicity.

How does this AI assistant change the perception of AI from being a tool for providing information to becoming a valuable addition to our human experience?
I see this as a future innovation that is accessible to everyone right now. While AI has become a buzzword in recent years, Yasmina is now integrated into speakers in people's homes, making interaction with AI effortless through voice commands. This technology empowers individuals to access knowledge, make informed decisions, and validate their choices— all with the ease of a simple conversation with Yasmina. 60

AI to play a crucial...

regulatory frameworks for AI deployment.

"This year's GITEX is bigger and busier than ever," Halawani said. "The event's theme revolves around AI, and we're excited to showcase how customers globally, especially in our region, are leveraging Microsoft's emerging AI technologies to drive tangible business outcomes."

Microsoft's theme, "AI for Productivity," centers around the recent rollout of Wave 2 of Microsoft 365 Copilot. According to Halawani: "Productivity is the quickest win for businesses and individuals when it comes to generative AI. We're showing how Copilot is transforming the way we work every day across various industries."

Halawani shared the example of the healthcare industry that has seen significant change. He highlighted how AI is revolutionising the entire patient experience, from medical consultations to drug delivery, all through mobile apps. "Imagine an end-to-end healthcare management platform powered by AI, where patients can access medical advice, symptom checks, and even prescriptions, all without needing to visit a clinic," he said.

This shift in healthcare delivery reduces unnecessary visits to clinics and emergency rooms, which can help

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alleviate pressure on healthcare systems. He added that this transformation isn't limited to healthcare but is spreading across industries like education and financial services.

Focus on cybersecurity and regulatory frameworks

With the increasing sophistication of cyber threats, Halawani stressed the importance of AI in defending against malicious actors. "The scale and sophistication of cyberattacks are rising, especially as threat actors leverage AI themselves," he said. "To combat this, we're showcasing Microsoft Copilot for Security, an AI assistant that helps cybersecurity professionals harness the vast amounts of security data Microsoft collects to enhance cyber defence systems."

A crucial aspect of AI's adoption, Halawani emphasised, is the development of responsible and ethical frameworks. "In the UAE, we are ahead of the curve. The government is actively working on not only regulatory frameworks but also responsible adoption frameworks for AI across industries," he said.

Microsoft, in collaboration with G42, a UAE-based company, is set to open two AI centres in Abu Dhabi. These will focus on developing technologies while ensuring they align with ethical standards and values. "This partnership is about more than technology; it's about ensuring AI is grounded in responsibility and ethics," he added.

The UAE is also at the forefront of AI skilling initiatives. "We're proud to announce that we'll be training 100,000 public sector employees in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah in AI over the next 12 months," he revealed. This initiative, in collaboration with the UAE government, highlights the importance of upskilling workers to meet the demands of an AI-driven future.

Looking ahead, Halawani predicted that AI will become even more mainstream by 2025. "We'll see new business models and possibilities that were once unimaginable. AI is reshaping every industry, and its influence is only set to grow. AI will not just be an industry tool but a part of our everyday reality," Halawani concluded. 🔟

Almoayyed Computers...

and Sons Group of Companies in Kuwait, and Almoayyed Computers Middle East based in Bahrain. Our aim is to make a positive difference in the Kuwait IT market, and to redefine what an IT Solution Provider can deliver to customers within Kuwait and beyond.

In order to deliver a Technical Solution, you must first understand what Business Problem you are trying to solve. We have Partnered with a strong set of industry leading Vendors and Manufacturers and are firmly focussed on delivering Business Outcomes to the Kuwait market. Traditional Partners who are firmly entrenched in the Product supply chain will find it difficult to make the move to selling Solutions.

I have been in the IT industry for over 40 years, spending the past 12 years in the Region, and have seen a lot of technologies come and go, but I have always been a firm believe that IT should be helping to drive a Company forward and to not just be seen as a supporting technology.

We are bringing to GITEX several Business Solutions including StaffDynamics and PayDynamics, and introducing the 'as-a-Service' portfolio to the Kuwait market. By doing things the same way as every other Partner in Kuwait will not allow us to be successful, we must be disruptive and to not be afraid to look at Solutions from a different perspective. Just because Product X is aimed at Market X does not mean that we cannot use it in Markets A, B or C, we just have to take a different approach.

Q2 – The Central Theme Of GITEX 2024 is AI. Can You Provide Our Readers With A Better Understanding Of How Your Company Is Leveraging AI To Enhance Your Own Product Portfolio That Is Ultimately Designed To Deliver Better Outcomes For Your Customers?

One thing that people need to understand is that AI is not new, it has been around in one form or another for years, what is new is how are using it to solve real-world problems. We are partnered with large Corporate Vendors such as Microsoft, and have a number of campaigns running with Office and Sales Co-Pilot, and have delivered multiple sessions to Kuwait Customers. Working with HPE, they have a number of AI tools aimed at different market segments – one size does not fit all, and we are looking to provide AI toolsets specifically aimed at solving issues relating to Oil and Gas, Finance etc.

We are also working on ChatGPT based Solutions to leverage GenAI.

Another focus area is to identify more niche GenAI Solutions, ones that are aimed at specific market segment vertical, whether within Healthcare, Finance, Oil and Gas etc. GenAI has considerably more potential than has currently been recognised, and 2025 will be a year where we will see a greater take-up in the adoption of the technology.

Education is also a key component in the success of GenAI, and we need to articulate in clear and easy to understand messages that AI is not something to be feared, and that used in the right way can become an essential component of our everyday lives.

Q3 – The Opportunities Of Generative AI Are Boundless. However, There Are Valid Ethical And Data Privacy Concerns In Relation To GenAI. How Important Is It For Robust Regulations And Frameworks To Be Established In Order To Safely Accelerate The Deployment Of Gen AI Across The Enterprise Space?

History has shown that whenever a new technology is developed and introduced, there are always people looking to see how they can take advantage of the technology for malicious purposes. For something like Gen AI which crosses all areas, there has to be some level of regulation that provides boundaries and limits. Nothing that is too restrictive to render the technology redundant, but regulations that protect the privacy of individuals and companies. It is easier for regulations to be set and agreed now, than to wait until the technology is in use more widespread and then try and enforce the regulations.

AACS is a truly ethical

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company, and we all undertake regular Ethics and Compliance Training, which is being constantly updated, to ensure that we understand what is and what isn't deemed compliant. We need to ensure that our Company Ethics and Compliance are taken forward in everything we do and everything we produce.

All data types – document, images, audio etc – should have the ability to be tagged as to whether or not they can be used by AI when performing searches and data capture. If I have spent months doing my own research into a subject, why should somebody be able to plagiarise my work and submit it as their own? The owners of the information need to be protected, and regulatory controls put in place to stop unauthorised use of someone else's work.

When AI lifts work from somewhere else it should flag where the data came from, alerting both the Creator and the User as to the potential for the work to be used. All Companies should be forced to sign up to the Regulations and be held accountable should these rules be broken. Some of these Regulations are already in place, but not enough people know of their presence, and it is the responsibility of everyone to flag discrepancies.

Where images are generated, or manipulated, by AI, warnings need to be given as to make the viewers aware that they are not genuine – hard to do, but is something that needs to be put in place. Some AI manipulated images are easy to spot, but it is getting harder and harder to identify where alterations have been made – unless you have the original image to compare alongside.

Every Company that uses AI, or creates AI tools, needs to be held accountable for the data, where it was sourced from and how it was sourced, and what checks were put in place to ensure its validity. It is not good enough to include a Disclaimer that says that it is the responsibility of the person doing the Search to ensure the accuracy and correctness of the data.

Q4 – Outside of AI, What Other Trends Do You See Emerging Across The Technology Landscape In 2025?

I recently read an article from the UN stating that 2025 will be the International Year Of Quantum Science And Technology, and whilst on its own this is not new, I believe that the next 12-18 months will see the significant reduction in the time taken to research and analyse large amounts of data, thereby giving more accurate results in a considerably shorter timescale. By using the 'Quantum Cloud' approach, you can harness the power of millions of devices to analyse the data, and then make it available to multiple organisations so they can make more accurate decisions.

With the ability to access, analyse and manipulate more data within a reduced timeframe, there needs to be new techniques in Cybersecurity and Monitoring to ensure that the data being analysed is accurate and has not been changed in order to obtain a specific result. If Financial, or Healthcare, data is manipulated, the resulting output could lead to a different set of actions being taken than is actually required, decisions could be made that are inaccurate, and without the human safeguards in place, technology could decide on a course of action that has far-reaching consequences.

I am not a person that buys into the theory that computers will control our everyday lives, I believe that there always has to be a level of common-sense applied to a situation and not just reacting to the data and numbers – that is what makes a human far more intelligent than a bunch of processors.

On a closer to home perspective, the Cloud Revolution/Evolution, depending on your viewpoint, is coming to Kuwait, and we have to embrace the technology and take advantage of what it can provide. There is a lot of Education required as to the advantages of implementing a Cloud environment, but we also need to be clear and honest as to the where Cloud is not the answer.

On a more personal note, I would like to see the continuation of bringing more diversity into the IT market, I have always believed that the individual doing the job should be the right person for the job irrespective of age, gender etc. We should also not be afraid of bringing in fresh talent into the Company, and encourage them to bring new ideas and innovation, give them the ability to express themselves and support them in their decision making. People should never be afraid to make a decision, and people should be encouraged to make a decision and move forward. You will never know if you have made the right or wrong decision because you will never 100% know what would have happened if you had chosen differently! Continue to encourage discussions and human expression, and challenge mediocrity!

Logitech: transforming...

GITEX, and our theme revolves around what we call "The New Logic of Work." So, what does that mean? In this post-COVID world, people are working from various locations—whether it's from home, on the go, or in offices and training rooms. The new logic of work is about enabling seamless collaboration for everyone, no matter where they are or what space they're in.

At GITEX, we're excited to showcase solutions that support this evolving work dynamic. We're not just focused on video-enabling large, premium spaces; we're also committed to empowering smaller office spaces where team meetings happen. One highlight is the MeetUp 2, the next-generation version of our bestselling conference camera, designed specifically for small huddle rooms. Another key product is Logitech Extend, which offers a single-cable BYOD connection, allowing users to bring any meeting platform into a room effortlessly.

Our goal is simplicity and ease—helping people stay connected and collaborate in all types of spaces. This is the essence of our approach to the New Logic of Work at GITEX this year.

Can you tell us how Logitech's MeetUp 2 caters to the needs of smaller meeting spaces, and what are the key features or MeetUp 2?
MeetUp 2 is the next generation of our bestselling MEETUP camera, and we've enhanced it with a strong focus on AI-driven, intelligent experiences. The future of video collaboration is all about creating more engaging and human-centred interactions, and that's what we've achieved with MeetUp 2. The camera now features AI that intelligently frames and focuses on people, ensuring clear visuals and highlighting what they say and their facial expressions, making meetings more interactive and engaging.

We also made it easier for IT managers

> **Veronica Martin caught up with Holly Zhou, Head of Product Marketing, Team Workspace Solutions at Logitech, during GITEX 2024 to discuss the solutions, services and products they are showcasing this year.**

by designing MeetUp 2 to be simple to install and manage. It features built-in cable management to keep setups clean and organised, and it includes a versatile mount that can easily be placed on top of TVs, bookshelves, or credenzas—making it ready to use right out of the box in any small meeting room.

Beyond installation, MeetUp 2 is built for long-term efficiency. With Logitech Sync, IT managers can effortlessly deploy updates and configure settings, ensuring the camera remains optimised and up-to-date. This makes managing small and huddle room setups simpler and more convenient over the years. In short, MeetUp 2 delivers smarter, easier-to-use solutions for smaller spaces.

Can you tell us about the AI technology in the MeetUp 2, particularly about the auto-framing and audio enhancement, and how does this feature improve the overall

meeting experience?
In small meeting rooms, typically designed for four to five people, we've grown used to the post-pandemic "Hollywood squares" experience, where everyone's face is clearly framed and positioned, making it easy for remote participants to see and hear everyone. We want to bring that same high-quality experience into these smaller spaces.

With the MeetUp 2 camera, we've introduced intelligent features that automatically focus and frame on the speaker or participants in the room, ensuring that remote attendees can see and engage with everyone clearly. We've also upgraded the audio system to deliver powerful, room-filling sound, so that even in smaller spaces, everyone can hear remote participants with clarity.

This enhanced audio quality also supports technologies like transcription and meeting summaries offered by our video platform partners.

By capturing voices more clearly, we help enable accurate, real-time transcripts and detailed meeting summaries, improving the overall collaboration experience.

How does the MeetUp 2 ensure compatibility with popular video conferencing tools such as zoom?
MeetUp 2, like the rest of our conference cameras and video solutions, is certified with all the major video platforms. It's certified for Microsoft Teams Rooms on Windows, Zoom Rooms, and Google Meet on Chromebooks. Additionally, it functions as a BYOD camera, meaning that if a company hasn't standardised on a single video platform, they can still use it in USB mode by simply connecting it to any computer. This flexibility allows businesses to deploy MeetUp 2 across various platforms while maintaining seamless compatibility with leading partner platforms on PC-based setups. 🔵

LinkShadow reveals...

insights into the company's new offering and how it's reshaping the cybersecurity landscape. Weldali explained that while LinkShadow's NDR solution has been instrumental in detecting and responding to network-based threats, the DSPM solution addresses a different pain point—one that has become increasingly pressing as more organisations migrate to the cloud.

"For a long time, people moving to the cloud couldn't find a solution that provided adequate visibility into their private and sensitive data. DSPM bridges that gap," Weldali said. The

new solution gives organisations deep insights into where their sensitive data resides in cloud environments, ensuring better control and security over data that was previously invisible.

Weldali shared that the response at GITEX has been overwhelmingly positive. "So far, the response has been wonderful because this was the missing part. Whenever personal data moves to the cloud, organisations often lose track of where it goes. With DSPM, we help customers locate and monitor their sensitive data, ensuring compliance with privacy regulations."

When asked how LinkShadow is

> **With DSPM, we help customers locate and monitor their sensitive data, ensuring compliance with privacy regulations".**

leveraging AI, Weldali said that the company's AI engine has been developed in-house, offering advanced capabilities such as detection, prioritisation, and correlation of network data. "Our AI engine processes information from the customer's network, consolidating it in a way that allows for faster and more accurate detection and response," he explained.

This AI functionality extends to the DSPM solution, where it plays a crucial role in data analysis. By correlating sensitive data across various sources, AI prioritises the data, identifies vulnerabilities, and maps out its movement within the

cloud.

In the era of heightened data privacy concerns, the importance of keeping sensitive information secure cannot be overstated. LinkShadow's DSPM solution is designed with compliance in mind, ensuring that no sensitive data leaves the customer's environment.

Weldali emphasised: "We developed our AI engine to operate within the customer's virtual machine or hardware, so nothing ever leaves the customer's control. This guarantees that data remains secure and compliant with privacy laws. Without visibility into your data, you can't protect it."

As digital transformation accelerates and cloud adoption becomes the norm, cybersecurity challenges are becoming more complex. However, LinkShadow is staying ahead of the curve with DSPM, offering a solution that integrates seamlessly with its existing NDR capabilities to provide a comprehensive data security strategy.

"Everything in IT security ultimately comes down to securing the data," Weldali concluded. "With DSPM, we're not just securing the network—we're securing users and their data, delivering the visibility and protection they need today." 🔵

Delivering extraordinary outcomes

CNME Editor Mark Forker managed to secure an exclusive interview with the dynamic executive leadership team at 3M Data, in an effort to better understand the company's vision, strategy for future growth – and how its ability to deliver 'extraordinary outcomes' is what differentiates 3M Data from its market rivals.

Earlier this month, CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to Mohamad Hejazi, General Manager of 3M Data, Mohamad Jamous, Sales Director at 3M Data, and Musa Kazim, Director of Services at 3M Data, for a broader overview on the Saudi-based IT services and consulting leader.

3M Data has described itself as an entity that is 'powering the digital revolution' across the Kingdom.

Despite being a new entity, 3M Data already has a broad portfolio, with an array of technological solutions from next-gen cloud architecture, managed services, and cybersecurity that makes the company the perfect fit for enterprises looking for tangible business outcomes amidst a backdrop of rapid digital transformation.

The company has declared that it is in the business of delivering 'extraordinary outcomes' across major industry verticals.

Mohamad Hejazi is a hugely respected IT leader, not only in the KSA, but across the Middle East.

He came to prominence in the IT landscape across the KSA over the last 15 years, but earlier this year, Hejazi decided alongside two of his industry peers to establish 3M Data.

He kickstarted our conversation by highlighting the factors that led to him to form 3M Data.

"The journey of 3M Data began with three industry leaders who have been in the market for over 15 years, particularly in the Saudi Arabian and Middle Eastern markets. We worked closely together in our previous roles, achieving significant success and delivering exciting projects. After years of collaborating and understanding the market's needs, we decided to come together and take on a new challenge. Our goal was to create a company that could exceed client expectations and provide even more comprehensive solutions than we had in the past," said Hejazi.

Hejazi added that 3M Data has lofty aspirations and ambitions, and stated that they want to bring 'bold' ideas to fruition.

"Our vision is to embody the boldest ideas and bring them to life. We're dedicated to building the technological foundations for some of the most visionary projects in the Middle East. Our purpose is to create and deploy digital transformation of the highest standard, enhancing the way we live and work. We focus on synergizing expertise in next-generation cloud architecture, AI and automation, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and managed services. This vision drives our strategic initiatives and innovation efforts," said Hejazi.

Hejazi also said that in terms of some of the guiding fundamental principles that are at the core of what 3M Data stands for, establishing trust was high on their agenda.

"Our values are centered around focus, flexibility, and trust. We strive to be a trusted partner for our clients, ensuring that we are perfectly positioned to take on their challenges and deliver outcomes that exceed expectations. These values guide every aspect of our work, from strategic planning to execution," said Hejazi.

CNME then spoke to the man responsible for overseeing the sales operations of 3M Data.

Mohamed Jamous, is the Sales Director at 3M Data and he believes the company's ability to incorporate AI, automation, and advanced technologies into its solutions is a key market differentiator.

He discussed their sales strategy, and outlined how it was closely aligned with the goals and objectives of the KSA's Vision 2030 economic reformation program.

"Our sales strategy is deeply aligned with the digital transformation initiatives outlined in Vision 2030 for Saudi Arabia. This includes a strong focus on cloud computing and cybersecurity. We see significant investment in these areas, and our strategy is to position ourselves as a leading partner for organizations undergoing these transformations. Our approach is to align with these national objectives, ensuring that we meet the technological needs of our customers while supporting the broader vision for the region," said Jamous.

Echoing the sentiments expressed by his General Manager, Jamous reiterated how the company is inspired to be 'bold'.

"The idea of being the boldest is about leading the market with cutting-edge technology and innovative solutions. Our strategy is not

> ## "
> ## Our goal was to create a company that could exceed client expectations and provide even more comprehensive solutions than we had in the past".

just about providing traditional services; it's about bringing the right technical aspects to empower the next generation of products in the region. We're focused on being ahead of the curve, offering solutions that are not only current but also future-proof," said Jamous.

Jamous highlighted how the demand for cloud services across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has seen the company pivot their solutions towards that market vertical in particular.

"We are focusing to provide our clients a unique and advance approach, where we aim to differentiate ourselves by incorporating the advanced technologies into our offerings. On the cloud side, we're targeting the rapidly growing demand for cloud services in the Middle East. The cloud journey in this region is just beginning, and we see enormous potential to help organizations transition to the cloud efficiently and securely," said Jamous.

AI is everywhere, and when asked how does he see the cloud market evolving over the next few years, Jamous believes the implementation of AI will drastically change the landscape.

"We anticipate massive demand for cloud, AI and cybersecurity in the next five to seven years in the middle East. As organizations expand and adopt more AI and cloud-based solutions, the need for robust security measures will grow. We plan to be at the forefront of this transformation, providing the expertise and technology needed to support these developments," said Jamous.

The final person on the executive leadership team that I spoke to was Musa Kazim, Director of Services at 3M Data.

He highlighted the two major pillars on which its product portfolio is designed, and again believes that this is another market differentiator for the company.

"Our portfolio is built around two major pillars. The first is system integration, where we focus on network security, workplace collaboration, and other core technologies. However, we don't approach this like a traditional system integrator. We're heavily focused on incorporating Cloud services, AI, automation, and advanced tools into our solutions, which sets us apart in the market," said Kazim.

Musa added that cloud and cybersecurity are key areas of focus for 3M Data, and said they were wholly committed to helping their customers yield the transformative benefits of cloud technologies and services.

"The cloud is a critical part of our strategy. We're focusing on the full spectrum of cloud services, including on-premise data centers, private clouds, public clouds, and multi-cloud environments. In the Middle East, the cloud journey is still in its early stages, which presents a huge opportunity for us to lead. We aim to help organizations navigate this journey from start to finish, ensuring they get the most out of their cloud investments," said Kazim.

The cybersecurity landscape is complex to say the least, and its imperative for companies to be agile and adaptable, as new threat actors continue to emerge.

Musa believes that AI technology can empower companies, enhancing their ability to defend against potential threats effectively.

"Cybersecurity is a paramount priority for us. We are focusing on key areas such as consulting services, with a strong emphasis on cloud security, governance, risk, and compliance (GRC), as well as securing operational technologies (OT) and implementing advanced cybersecurity solutions, whether in on-premises, cloud, or multi-cloud environments. As threats continue to evolve, so do our strategies. We are committed to staying ahead of the curve by integrating the latest AI and automation technologies into our cybersecurity offerings. This proactive approach ensures that our clients remain protected at all times," said Kazim.

Musa concluded a wonderful insight into the vision of 3M Data by reiterating that its focus is primarily to be a trusted partner for its customers, and believes the company is well-positioned to meet the market demands of the KSA.

"The Middle East is in a phase of cloud readiness, where many organizations are looking for trusted advisors to guide them through their cloud journeys. At the same time, as cloud adoption increases, so does the need for robust cybersecurity. We're seeing a massive demand for these services, and we believe this demand will only grow in the coming years. 3M Data is perfectly positioned to meet these needs, helping clients navigate the complexities of cloud adoption while ensuring their data remains secure. Just to reiterate, our focus is on being a trusted partner for our clients. We're committed to delivering high-quality, innovative solutions that meet their needs and help them achieve their goals. Whether it's cloud, cybersecurity, or system integration, we're here to lead the way," said Kazim.

QUOTES:
Our purpose is to create and deploy digital transformation of the highest standard, enhancing the way we live and work."

Our strategy is not just about providing traditional services; it's about bringing the right technical aspects to empower the next generation of technology in the region."

Whether it's cloud, cybersecurity or system integration, we're here to lead the way." 60

Our success is no coincidence

CNME Editor Mark Forker, sat down with Toufic Derbass, Managing Director, Middle East, Turkey, and Africa at Kaspersky, to learn more about how the global cybersecurity leader was equipping their customers with the products required to bolster cyber immunity, why he feels their holistic approach to cybersecurity is the most effective method needed in the fight against cybercrime – and what government and organisations across the MENA region need to do to quell attacks on critical infrastructure.

TOP3, 2023
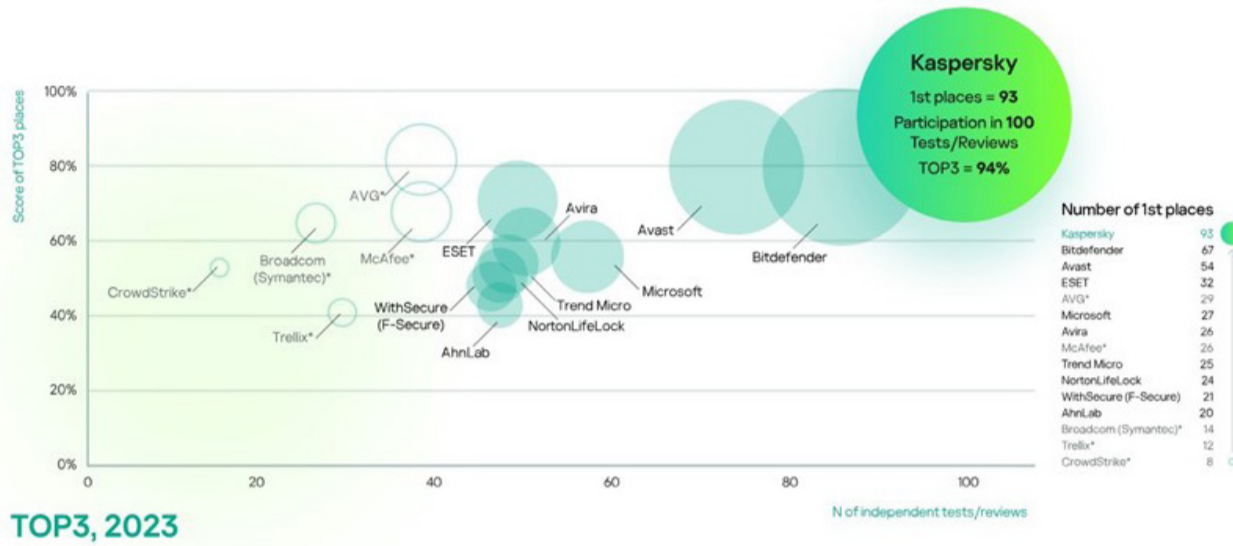
Toufic Derbass is regarded by many of his industry peers to be one of the most effective sales leaders in the global multinational software business.

In a stellar career thus far, Derbass made his name at HP, where he spent 14 years, and he has also worked for technology giants such as HPE, SAP, and Nortel Networks.

He also worked for Micro Focus and was the company's Managing Director for the Middle East & Africa before it was acquired by OpenText in 2023.

In January of this year, Derbass was appointed the Managing Director for the Middle East, Turkey & Africa at global cybersecurity leader Kaspersky.

In a candid discussion with CNME, Derbass brilliantly articulated his vision for the cybersecurity practitioner across the META region.

He kickstarted the conversation by outlining why he believes a holistic approach to tackling cybersecurity is 'essential' in our increasingly connected world.

"Now that the world is more connected than ever, a holistic approach to cybersecurity is no longer optional – it's essential. A holistic approach importantly ensures every part of an organization's infrastructure is secure, leaving no vulnerability exposed to cybercriminals. The best way to explain this approach is to think of an organization as a house, where all entry points need to be secured – consider the doors, windows, the gate and even the chimney. This is no different to an organization's IT infrastructure, while it changes from one company to another, they need to protect endpoints, mobile devices, cloud services,

servers and your network, as well as your virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and any other entry point viable," said Derbass.

Derbass also stressed that within that holistic approach employee training and threat intelligence must take precedence.

"We can proudly say that Kaspersky's portfolio of solutions offers a holistic approach to protecting all potential entry points – but organizations must not stop there – the security approach must also include Threat Intelligence and employee training; which Kaspersky offers in different bandwidths for employees and IT specialists alike. Having a wide-ranging portfolio of products and services allows us to efficiently mirror the needs of the company. By covering the entire digital ecosystem with a proactive defense, companies can have rigid protection that

also maximizes IT security investments. This allows businesses to not only safeguard their most critical assets but also scale security in a way that supports long-term growth and resilience," said Derbass.

There has been an exponential increase in attacks on critical infrastructure across the MENA region over the last 12 months.

When pressed on why there has been such a spike in attacks on critical infrastructure, Derbass pointed to what he described as a 'rapid digitalisation' across multiple industry verticals across the MENA region.

"The sharp rise in attacks on critical infrastructure is a direct consequence of the rapid digitization that the industry is witnessing, ranging from automation to the adoption of IoT. While digital transformation

brings significant operational improvements, it also introduces new vulnerabilities. Cybercriminals have been quick to exploit this, especially given the lack of communication between Information Technology (IT) and Operational Technology (OT). Such disconnect worsens the gap between the practical and technical, making critical infrastructure even more susceptible to cyberattacks. In fact, our telemetry shows that over 30% of all industrial computers in the Middle East were targeted with malware in the first half of this year," said Derbass.

In terms of how Kaspersky is helping governments and enterprises across the GCC region, Derbass highlighted how they were using cyber immunity products and their IoT Security Gateway 3.0 solutions.

In addition to this, he shed light on pioneering ICS research and their specialised training programs for OT professionals.

"We aim to help governments and organizations best protect their critical infrastructure by leveraging our sector-focused products and services, from intelligence services and security assessments, to training programs and Cyber Immunity products, such as Kaspersky IoT Security Gateway 3.0 (KISG). In short, this is a Cyber Immune gateway to protect industrial internet of things (IIoT). This is why Kaspersky has been pioneering ICS research and has a dedicated ICS CERT team, an industry-first, which is focused on

identifying vulnerabilities and securing industrial environments. Through our ICS Security Assessment service, governments and organizations are provided with actionable intelligence and insights into potential threats, like identifying indicators of compromise. We also offer specialized training programs for IT and OT professionals, designed to bridge the skills gap and equip them with the necessary expertise. Through such solutions, Kaspersky ensures that as industries modernize, their security evolves in tandem, protecting vital assets from the growing number of cyberthreats as the world continues its digitization," said Derbass.

Critical infrastructure encompasses systems, facilities and assets that are absolutely vital in order for a society and economy to function properly, so it is almost goes without saying how imperative it is that they are protected.

When asked for what he believed were the best steps, measures and practices that organizations needed to adopt in order to avoid becoming unstuck by a cyberattack on their critical infrastructure, Derbass was unequivocal in declaring that the approach needed to be wholly comprehensive.

"You need to start with regular audits and security assessments of IT infrastructure. Security teams must also ensure timely updates of the enterprise's OT network. Additionally, reliable protection of industrial networks and automation systems must be enabled, using specialized solutions such as Kaspersky Industrial CyberSecurity.

GITEX GLOBAL puts 5G and AI at the forefront of discussions to connect and empower tomorrow's world

The one-day 'Intelligent Connectivity' conference was a key highlight with the future of 5G and autonomous vehicles explored at the at the world's largest and best-rated tech event.
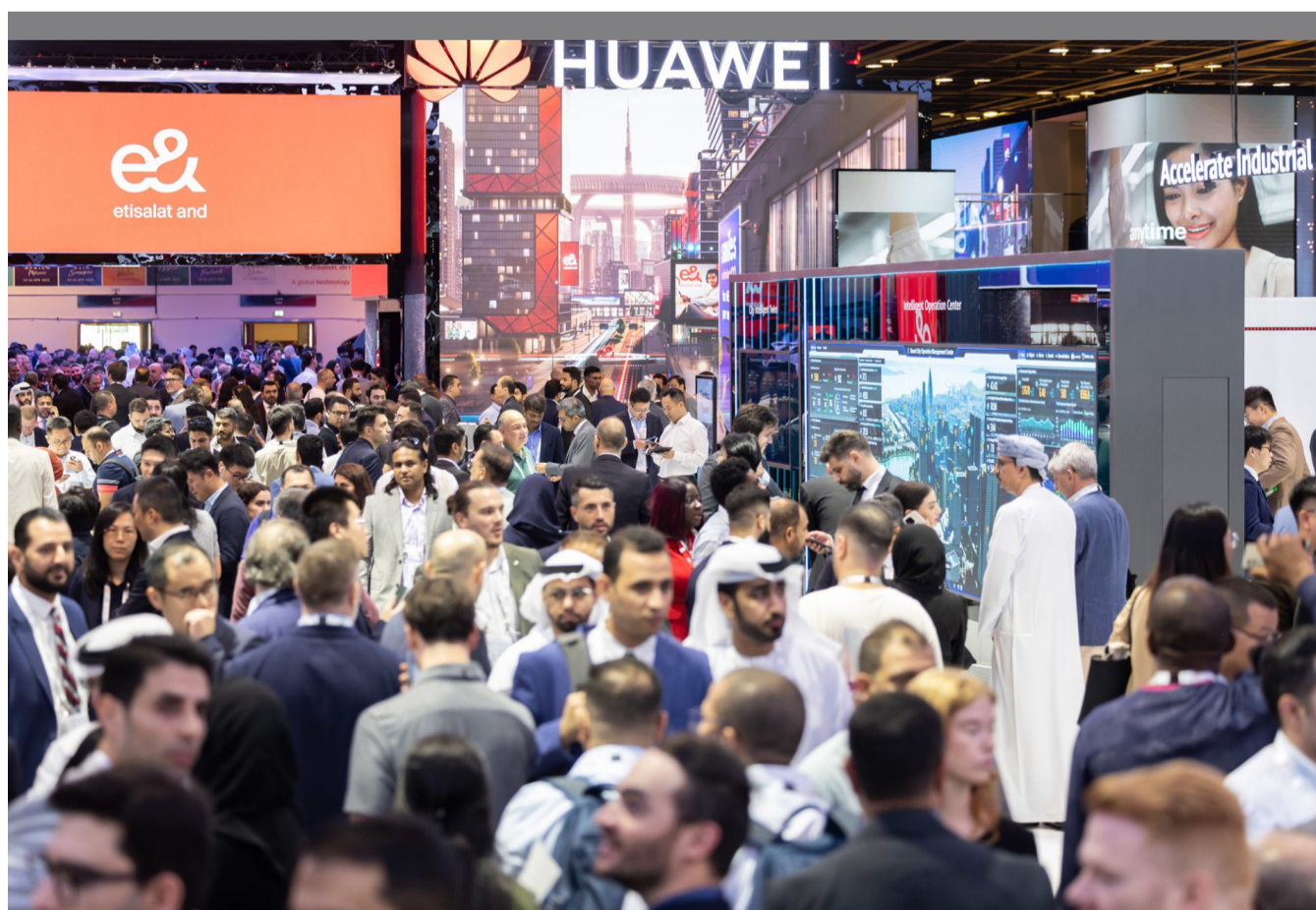
5G emerged as a focal point at GITEX GLOBAL 2024, the world largest tech and startup event, with visitors getting a glimpse of the possibilities of the wireless technology with AI and its role to powering a hyperconnected future through groundbreaking innovations and insightful discussions.

The 'Intelligent Connectivity' event saw a combination of thought-provoking conversations and exhibitors displaying their powerful products and services that will revolutionise the world in the coming years. It comes at a time where GSMA projects a seismic shift in connectivity with 1.4 billion devices set to be linked with

5G by 2025, further fueling a USD $1.1 trillion IoT market within a USD $3.9 trillion mobile economy.

The expertly curated programme brought together some of the most influential voices from global enterprises and organisations including Khalid Murshed, Chief Technology & Information Officer at e&, Wang Hui, President, NCE Data Communication Domain at Huawei China and Thomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary General at ITU Switzerland. They were also joined by Roque Lozano, SVP, Network Infrastructure MEA at Nokia, Kazuhiro Gomi, President and CEO of NTT Research and SG Chung, Chief AI Global Officer at SK Telecom.

Away from the stage, the showcase featured a diverse range of impressive technologies from leading exhibitors, Huawei, e&, Nokia, China Telecom, Ericsson, Cisco, and

This is an operational technology XDR platform that offers scalability and IT-OT Convergence with Kaspersky ecosystem. Training is another important aspect that needs to be organized, specifically designed for those employees who work with industrial control systems and those directly responsible for IT/OT Security. Finally, teams need to be provided with up-to-date threat intelligence on the industrial control systems they protect – a service which our ICS Threat Intelligence reporting provides, offering updates into attack vectors and other OT vulnerabilities, as well as ways to mitigate them," said Derbass.

Critical infrastructure has been a key focus in developing Kaspersky's Cyber Immunity approach. Derbass revealed that one of their first products was designed for this industry, given it is highly susceptible to attacks and extremely essential for global economies.

CNME asked Derbass on the changes and enhancements that have been made to their cyber immunity portfolio.

"Our Cyber Immunity portfolio is evolving to meet the growing automation of critical processes and technologies. Our approach is reshaping the future of cybersecurity by moving away from traditional methods toward secure-by-design IT systems. The latest addition, Kaspersky IoT Security Gateway 3.0 (KISG), is a Cyber Immune gateway that we'll be showcasing at GITEX, designed to secure communication between technological and corporate data networks,

providing robust protection for the industrial Internet of Things (IIoT). At GITEX, we are also going to be launching our Kaspersky Appicenter, which is a digital application distribution platform for KasperskyOS-based devices. It connects end-users, developers, and vendors, facilitating the discovery of new applications and offering developers tools and support to build secure-by-design solutions," said Derbass.

Derbass claimed that their strategy was gaining 'global momentum'.

"These innovations help to strengthen an organization's security posture by embedding protection into the core of IT infrastructure. Our Cyber Immunity strategy is gaining global momentum, underscoring the need for cybersecurity to be a fundamental, integrated part of critical systems. This is the future of secure operations across industries," said Derbass.

The dial of the conversation then switched to Kaspersky's detailed and comprehensive Dark Web Threats Report, which detailed some of the biggest threats facing organisations in the Middle East.

According to Derbass, the report only served to reinforce the ongoing threat of 'hacktivism'.

"At Kaspersky, we have a dedicated Digital Footprint Intelligence team that help customers to monitor their digital assets and detect threats from the Deep and Dark web. In fact, Kaspersky is the only vendor that offers this service and it's fully available in the region. In our latest report covering the first half of 2024, the

Digital Footprint Intelligence team revealed some of the most prominent Dark web threats targeting organizations across the region. In particular, they found that ransomware groups were most pervasive in the UAE and Saudi Arabia – 19 of which are operating across the Middle East. The report also highlights the ongoing threat of hacktivism, which is another distinct pain point due to the geopolitical turbulence that the region is currently facing," said Derbass.

Other threat actors that emerged from the dark web report was the ongoing problem with stolen user

> "A holistic approach to cybersecurity is no longer optional – it's essential. A holistic approach importantly ensures every part of an organization's infrastructure is secure, leaving no vulnerability exposed to cybercriminals."

accounts across the KSA, UAE and Egypt.

"Other threats, such as info stealers and data leaks, were also stressed in this report – especially given the fact that almost 10 million records of stolen user accounts were identified by our team, with info stealers being most widespread in Egypt, KSA and the UAE. Such figures provide further reason for our customers to monitor their assets on the Dark web, where they can receive these types of valuable intelligence through our

Threat Intelligence Portal, which has recently been updated. The portal provides customers with real-time alerts to respond quickly and effectively to potential threats, mitigating against the dangers of the Deep and Dark web," said Derbass.

The threat landscape is constantly evolving, but it appears to be heightened even more following the advent of ChatGPT by Open AI, which has triggered the Generative AI revolution.

Derbass explained how Kaspersky is using AI to detect cyberthreats.

"The cybersecurity landscape is constantly evolving in line with

emerging technologies, like AI. At Kaspersky, we've been using AI for nearly two decades – it has been crucial when analyzing our vast amounts of data and malware, detecting rapid developments in cyberthreats. However, cybercriminals are also leveraging AI to launch more sophisticated attacks, such as deepfakes and AI-generated phishing schemes. In addition to this, the issue of data privacy must be addressed, especially since AI tools are becoming ever more

prevalent in our day-to-day. In fact, a recent Kaspersky survey found that 95% of C-suite respondents knew that GenAI tools were being used in their organization and more than half were worried about the possibility of their employees leaking sensitive information as a result," said Derbass.

When asked did he think that AI is a major threat to cybersecurity, or is it more complex attacks such as APTs that pose a greater threat, Derbass conceded that AI-powered threats do present significant challenges to cybersecurity practitioners.

"While AI-powered threats pose significant challenges, Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs) remain among the most dangerous, especially in today's geopolitical climate. APTs are often state-sponsored, highly complex, and costly, designed for espionage or sabotage. They target both the private and public sectors, with industries like government, diplomacy, telecom, healthcare, manufacturing, and aviation being prime targets. Kaspersky is currently monitoring 20 APT groups operating in the Middle East, reflecting the growing threat to critical sectors. Given these threats, it's vital for organizations to have robust threat intelligence solutions that not only detect but anticipate cybercriminal tactics. Kaspersky's Threat Intelligence provides critical visibility, helping organizations to stay one step ahead," said Derbass.

When you think of cybersecurity one of the first names you think of is undoubtedly Kaspersky.

When asked what ultimately differentiates Kaspersky from their market rivals, and how they have been able to sustain huge success over such a long period of time, Derbass pointed to their relentless commitment to innovation and pushing boundaries.

However, he did once again stress that a real market differentiator for them was their cyber immunity approach.

"Throughout the years, our innovative products have been regularly tested by independent vendors for performance, and I'm proud to say that Kaspersky is the most tested and awarded brand in the industry. We received 1st place in 93 out of a 100 independent tests and reviews in 2023. This is a real success and a testament to our pioneering efforts in creating reliable cybersecurity solutions for our valued customers.

Given this, what truly sets Kaspersky apart is our Cyber Immunity approach. We've redefined industry standards by delivering secure-by-design IT systems, shifting away from traditional cybersecurity models. This strategy is gaining significant global momentum as more organizations recognize the need for inherently secure technologies. In the coming years, we expect this shift to continue accelerating. By continuously expanding our Cyber Immune product lineup, we stay at the forefront of cybersecurity excellence, meeting growing demands for the security that is embedded into the very fabric of IT systems. This forward-thinking approach keeps us ahead of market trends and sustains our leadership in the industry," said Derbass. 🔟

Beyon among them. These industry giants presented cutting-edge solutions, highlighting next generation 5G applications with their participation underscoring GITEX GLOBAL's role as a key platform for exploring the future of connectivity and digital transformation.

A glimpse into a 5G-advanced powered AI future

With 5G and AI on a verge to catalyse a paradigm shift in the telecommunications landscape, Khalid Murshed Chief Technology & Information Officer of e&, one of the largest telecommunications operators in the Middle East and North Africa region, explained the transformative impact of network capabilities.

He said: "5G and 5G advanced serve as a platform for everyone to come in to innovate with applications that can drive demand for the network to be enhanced further and

further."

"We have to build a network with the capabilities and then fit in the AI applications and this is what we're doing hand-in-hand. We're not just building a network for the sake of technology leadership. It's a bilateral game by all means and we are building them to enable new cases while today we have live networks and private 5G."

Another leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, Huawei identifies several key technologies as the backbone of its solutions towards facilitating an intelligent future. 5G-Advanced (5G-A) remains vital to supporting rapid and low-latency communication - critical for building advanced applications, in addition to big, unified data, AI, and cloud computing. **AI and 5G fuelling the**

> "5G and 5G advanced serve as a platform for everyone to come in to innovate with applications that can drive demand for the network to be enhanced further and further".

future of autonomous vehicles

The future of mobility and how autonomous vehicles can benefit from 5G was another highlight. Speaking in a panel, Siyuan Liu,

Head of IoT Partnership & Strategy, Greater China, at China Unicom Global, said the company is accelerating its efforts into the AI and vehicle connectivity industries with 5G playing a central role.

She highlighted that 5G is vital for the growth of autonomous vehicles, reshaping society and helping make accurate decisions – all of which can enhance the efficiency of transportation and safety.

Large Language Models (LLMs) are disrupting industries all over the world and the telecommunications sector is no different. Wang Hui, President of Huawei NCE Data Communication Domain, highlighted that AI applications are being leveraged extensively in China's autonomous vehicles and in AI health services.

Unleashing powerful innovations – superpower agent and

all-electric supercar

Thousands of visitors were introduced to the most disruptive products and services powered by 5G in the most anticipated exhibition which attracted the leading tech enterprises and solution providers in telecoms, networks, and infrastructure. Attendees were not short of innovation options with game-changing partnerships and launches unveiled during the event.

e& announced a collaboration with Vodafone Business IoT to use the company's Global SIM+ eSIM solution to provide in-vehicle connectivity and enhanced digital services for Mercedes-Benz AG drivers in the UAE. The service will be commercially available in the first half of 2025.

The company also displayed the Nissan Hyper-Force, an all-electric high-performance supercar, connected through e& UAE 5G SIM cards delivering

the ultimate in-driving experience, and launched their new human-digital advisors, combining hologram technology and AI to cater to the diverse cultural nuances of Telecom customers in the UAE.

At Avaya's stand, visitors saw how the company is creating superpower agents, powered by AI, showcasing new capabilities which can assist individuals to make scalable decisions that help businesses grow.

GITEX GLOBAL is seamlessly connecting the world's largest network of tech events with GITEX EUROPE Berlin, GITEX ASIA Singapore, GITEX AFRICA Morocco, and GITEX Nigeria, all part of its portfolio. These events are fostering collaboration and driving innovation to shape the tech landscape of tomorrow.

More information on GITEX GLOBAL, please visit www.gitex.com 🔟

Redefining virtual collaboration

Loubna Imenchal, Head of Enterprise Business for AMETCA at Logitech, tells Anita Joseph all about the company's participation at GITEX 2024 and the strides taken in reshaping virtual collaboration and communication.

Loubna Imenchal, Logitech

What's the theme of your participation at GITEX this year? What are the key aspects that you're highlighting at the show? (Please give an overview of any announcements or launches that can be expected.)

In line with the theme of GITEX Global this year - "Global Collaboration to Forge a Future AI Economy", Logitech will showcase solutions that address AI and Sustainability. By leveraging AI in our products, such as MeetUp2, the AI-driven USB conference camera, Logitech is enhancing virtual collaboration by improving meeting equity and productivity.

AI enables our solutions to detect, frame, and optimise interactions, making remote work more immersive and efficient.

Logitech is dedicated to sustainability and constantly innovating to reduce the environmental impact of the materials used in our products. Currently, two out of three Logitech products, as well as all products powered by the CollabOS operating system, use post-consumer recycled plastic, which lowers carbon and environmental impact across the portfolio. For instance, the Zone 305 headset is made from 55% post-consumer recycled plastic, and the MeetUp 2 integrates 62% recycled plastic. These innovations lower carbon emissions and promote a circular economy, helping companies reduce their environmental footprint while advancing their tech capabilities.

Our entire product range, from personal work desks to flex desks and meeting rooms, is designed with sustainability in mind. At Logitech, we envision a sustainable and environmentally responsible tech landscape.

> **At Logitech, we envision a sustainable and environmentally responsible tech landscape.**

What differentiates your participation this year as compared to previous years?

This year, our participation at GITEX will highlight an expanded range of Logitech for Business solutions, software, and services designed to support the rapid development of the hybrid workplace. We are showcasing solutions for video conferencing, meeting rooms, office workspaces, and shared desking for enterprise, small-to-medium businesses, and public sector customers.

Our featured products include the MeetUp 2, which leverages AI-powered auto-framing and crystal-clear audio to enhance video conferencing in small to medium meeting rooms. The Zone 305 headset, equipped with dual noise-canceling microphones, ensures clear communication in any environment. Additionally, the Brio 705 webcam provides high-definition video with AI-driven auto-light correction, making it ideal for professionals on the go.

We are also introducing Sight, a key addition that further enhances hybrid meeting experiences, and Logitech Sync, a platform that empowers IT managers to efficiently manage conferencing devices remotely, improving overall efficiency and reducing downtime.

How does Logitech support organisations in their transformation journey?

Logitech empowers organisations by enabling collaboration in the everywhere workplace. We provide customised solutions for video conferencing, meeting rooms, office workspaces, and shared desking, catering to the diverse needs of enterprises, SMBs, and public sector clients.

Our AI-powered innovations, such as the MeetUp 2 conference camera, Sight, and the Zone 305 headset, are designed to transform virtual meetings, improve meeting equity, and enhance productivity. These tools help organisations boost hybrid and remote work environments, fostering inclusivity and collaboration.

With a focus on human-first, software-powered experiences, Logitech products are easy to deploy and scale while prioritising sustainable practices throughout our product design and lifecycle management. 60

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Tencent Cloud's Middle East Growth Supported by Expanded Tech Ecosystem and New Service Additions

Tencent Cloud announces partnership with Balance to transform e-wallet payment experience during its third consecutive year at GITEX 2024.

> **Looking ahead, we see tremendous potential in the gaming sector, where our proven capabilities will serve as a key enabler to foster growth and cultivate a thriving ecosystem of developers and players".**

Tencent Cloud, the cloud business of global technology company Tencent, continued to strengthen its presence in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) with its third consecutive showcase at GITEX GLOBAL 2024, underscoring the company's commitment to growing alongside the region's digital economy ambitions.

Tencent Cloud has consistently achieved strong double-digit business growth in the region, driven by strong interest from both public and private sectors for digital transformation and cloud-based innovations. At GITEX GLOBAL 2024, Tencent Cloud announced two significant milestone projects that demonstrate its capabilities in driving local digital transformation.

Tencent Cloud Expands to Support Middle Eastern Digital Ecosystem

This year, Tencent Cloud is entering a new partnership with Balance, a leading e-wallet provider in Dubai, to revolutionise the Middle East payment landscape. Balance will adopt the Tencent Cloud technologies into its payment system, enabling compliant, secure and seamless identity authentication for payment. Over the longer term, Balance will explore the adoption of the TCMPP platform as part of its app, providing users access to a host of essential daily services and products through a single interface.

"Looking ahead, we see tremendous potential in the gaming sector, where our proven capabilities will serve as a key enabler to foster growth and cultivate a thriving ecosystem of developers and players. Leveraging our track record of supporting the Weixin/WeChat ecosystem with over 1.3 billion monthly active users, Tencent Cloud envisions a dedicated 'MiniGame Platform' to attract a new demographic of mobile gamers."

With the UAE's electronic gaming market expected to reach nearly US$500 million in revenue by 2027, the MiniGame Platform will play a critical role in driving new revenue streams for gaming businesses and supporting the local game development ecosystem.

As an example, Tencent Cloud's recent partnership with PlaysOut – a UAE-based, global game technology company – marks an early success story for the company in the UAE's gaming sector. Through this collaboration, PlaysOut will leverage TCMPP to develop a high-quality, modular and open digital platform that will serve as a global digital content ecosystem in which developers can build and host their own mini programs and mini games.

Big Strides in Regional Business Expansion Efforts

The Middle East continues to be a bright spot for Tencent Cloud's international business aspirations, with multiple recent additions to Tencent Cloud's global partner ecosystem in the region. In addition to the Middle East, Tencent Cloud enjoys a strong presence in Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Asia Pacific. Growth is driven by the more than 10,000 businesses across 30 industries in over 80 markets and regions that the company presently serves.

Tencent Cloud's regional presence is driven by its global partner ecosystem, having created an innovative and dynamic tech ecosystem for Abu Dhabi's private and public sectors, with applications cutting across Mini Programs, Tencent Real-Time Communication (TRTC), Live-streaming and Media Solutions.

GITEX Global 2024, now in its 44th iteration, remains one of the world's most iconic tech events. This year, the event hosted over 200,000 trade buyers, 65,000 C-level executives, and 6,600 global tech firms from 180 countries. 🔲

Positive Technologies study: cyberattacks in the Middle East tripled

Nearly all studied APT groups targeted the government sector, with 69% of them focusing on energy companies.

Irina Zinovkina, Positive Technologies

> **The surge in hacktivist attacks in the Middle East indicates a shift in modern conflict strategies, with cyberattacks becoming an inherent component".**

Positive Technologies, a leader in result-driven cybersecurity, announced the findings of its latest study on cyber threats in the Middle East during its participation at GITEX 2024. In this study, they noted a significant increase in hacktivist[1] attacks amidst the escalation of geopolitical conflicts. Moreover, the Middle East was a frequent target of APT groups. As of Q2 2024, every second successful attack against organisations resulted in a data breach—the most frequent consequence of cyberattacks in the region

during the studied period.

Experts note that in Q4 2023, the number of successful cyberattacks in the Middle East doubled compared to the same period the previous year, and in Q1 2024, it tripled.

Irina Zinovkina, Head of Information Security Analytics Research at Positive Technologies, commented: "The surge in hacktivist attacks in the Middle East indicates a shift in modern conflict strategies, with cyberattacks becoming an inherent component. Our forecasts suggest that rising tensions in the region can lead to more DDoS attacks on media and government institutions. Additionally, if groups form alliances, they could execute large-scale cyberattacks with greater destructive potential."

APT groups in the region conducted complex and prolonged cyberattacks to steal data, gather information, or disrupt organisational operations. Nearly every cybercriminal group studied targeted government institutions at least once. Additionally, 69% of these groups focused on the energy sector, indicating their intent to disrupt critical infrastructure.

The public sector was the most targeted industry, making up 24% of all cyberattacks on organisations. Government institutions store and process vast amounts of confidential data, which can be a goldmine for cybercriminals. In the first half of 2024, 16% of dark web listings for information from government companies were related to Middle Eastern countries.

The manufacturing sector comes in second among the most targeted sectors (17%) and also faces cyberthreats involving wipers. Wipers erase data on compromised ICS devices, causing major disruptions to critical infrastructure. In attacks on Israeli companies, the BiBi wiper was used, rendering the data of targeted systems inaccessible or unusable. Overall, malware remained the most popular tool for attacking organisations in the region.

Cybercriminals also targeted institutions using social engineering tactics (54%), even leveraging AI technologies. With the advancement of generative AI systems, the amount of malicious content surged, and email phishing attacks skyrocketed by 222% in H2 2023 compared to H2 2022.

Experts at Positive Technologies found that the primary consequence of successful cyberattacks on organisations in the Middle East was data breaches. In Q3 2023, these accounted for 35%, and by H2 2024, they surged to 49%. The average damage from cyberattacks on organisations in the region is almost double the global average.

Given the heightened activity of cybercriminals in the region, experts recommend that companies adopt result-driven cybersecurity, a proactive approach to building cyber resilience. Result-driven cybersecurity helps build a comprehensive automated defence system against non-tolerable events—consequences of cyberattacks that could prevent an organisation from achieving its operational or strategic goals. The approach based on result-driven cybersecurity leverages cutting-edge security tools, including:

• SIEM systems (security information and event management) for continuous monitoring of cybersecurity events and rapid detection of cyberattacks

• Specialised solutions for traffic analysis and detection of suspicious activity in industrial control systems—essential for manufacturing companies

• EDR systems (endpoint detection and response), designed to protect your endpoints from sophisticated and targeted attacks

• Advanced sandboxes for detecting complex and unknown malware

• NTA products (network traffic analysis) for proactive cyberthreat hunting in your network

• VM systems (vulnerability management) for automated IT asset management, as well as rapid detection and elimination of current vulnerabilities

Moreover, result-driven cybersecurity involves continuous security assessment of infrastructure, including through bug bounty programs and employee training initiatives.

[1] Hacktivists are criminals who carry out cyberattacks to draw attention to social or political causes. 🔲

Born to lead

CNME Editor Mark Forker sat down for a candid exchange with Sakkeer Hussain, Director – Sales and Marketing at D-Link, to reflect on his 25-year professional career, what he believes defines an effective leader, his views on Generative AI – and how D-Link has sustained its success over such a long period of time.

Sakkeer Hussain, D-Link

Sakkeer Hussain has established himself as one of the respected sales leaders in the IT industry across the Middle East over the last 25 years.

Hussain began his career with Aptec Gulf in 1998.

After a decade with Aptec Gulf, he made the move to D-Link in 2008, to take on the role of Regional Channel Manager.

In 2014, he was appointed as Director – Sales and Marketing, and has spent the last 10 years helping solidify D-Link's position as a market leader in innovative networking solutions.

During his quarter of a century in the IT industry, Hussain has seen drastic changes to the landscape, both regionally and globally.

Hussain has been described by his industry peers as a leader with a visionary mindset, and the strategic direction he has charted for D-Link has yielded great results for the company.

However, the sheer scale of digital transformation over the last number of years across the Middle East has been unprecedented globally – but Hussain has demonstrated strong leadership, and has played a key role in diversifying D-Link's product offering.

As someone who always has to look forward in his day-to-day role at D-Link, we began the conversation by taking a look back to when he began his career in 1998.

When asked what has been the most valuable thing he has learned in his 25 years in the industry, and what he would tell his younger self now, Hussain said it would be to not shy away from challenges, and to never underestimate the power of genuine connections.

"Interesting question, I would tell my younger self to not shy away from challenges. When I think about it today – taking calculated risks have led me to significant rewards and personal growth. And one of the most valuable lessons I've learned throughout my career is the power of building genuine connections. Networking isn't just about exchanging business cards; it's about forming authentic relationships that can open doors to unexpected opportunities and lasting friendships. Remember, the people you encounter on your journey can become your most trusted mentors, supporters, and collaborators," said Hussain.

Leadership comes in many different forms.

When asked about his own leadership style, and the characteristics required to be an effective leader in the current digital economy, Hussain declared that it was critical to have a flexible mindset amidst the backdrop of rapid technological development and innovation.

"To lead effectively in today's digital age, you need a solid grasp of technology, a data-driven mindset, and the flexibility to adapt to rapid change. As you know change is the only constant. It is also important to have core values like integrity, resilience, curiosity, and collaboration. I believe these values have been instrumental in my own success and in leading my team to achieve our goals," said Hussain.

In my capacity as a technology journalist I have covered AI extensively, but never to same extent as the last 18 months, since the advent of ChatGPT by OpenAI.

AI is everywhere, and businesses are scrambling

> ## To lead effectively in today's digital age, you need a solid grasp of technology, a data-driven mindset, and the flexibility to adapt to rapid change."

to harness the capabilities of the technology in an effort to gain a market advantage and stay relevant to their customers.

Hussain has seen first-hand how the UAE, and in particular Dubai has been transformed due to the visionary leadership of the UAE Government.

The announcement of the Universal Blueprint for AI has only served to further illustrate Dubai's aspirations to become a global hub for AI.

Hussain believes Dubai's ability to foster an environment that allows innovation and creativity to flourish, is what makes it such a unique place to do business.

"Dubai's got that visionary leadership, a great location, and a business-friendly vibe that attracts top companies. The UAE is investing in research in AI, partnering with the best, and even creating a supportive environment for AI development. it's got what it takes to be a major player in the AI game. With continued investment and focus, Dubai could really make a name for itself as a global AI leader. It's also important to acknowledge ad recognise that the World's first Minister for Artificial Intelligence was appointed in the UAE," said Hussain.

Remaining on the topic of AI, the advent of ChatGPT by OpenAI has democratised Generative AI and made it more accessible to millions of people.

It represents huge opportunities, but there are valid ethical concerns with hallucinations, bias, and data privacy when it comes to Generative AI.

Hussain described Gen AI as a 'double-edged' sword, and said robust regulations and frameworks need to be established around the technology.

"Like most technologies, Gen AI too is a double-edged sword – it can do amazing things, but it can also be used to spread fake news and create deep fakes. We need to be careful about how we use it. We need rules to protect people's privacy, make sure AI is fair, and stop people from stealing ideas. It's like any powerful tool – we need to use it wisely. It will be helpful to have more regulations around it," said Hussain.

Hussain has spent 16 years at D-Link, and has witnessed the company go from strength-to-strength, when asked what differentiates them from their market rivals, Hussain said he believes that their products genuinely improve people's lives.

"There is a reason why D-Link is a market leader for more than 2 decades – we care about our customers and create products that genuinely improve people's lives. We enable and empower our channel partners. We have distinguished ourselves by focusing on the SMB market, offering competitive pricing, user-friendly products, a diverse product range, global reach, strong channel partnerships, a commitment to innovation, and exceptional customer service," said Hussain.

Hussain concluded a brilliant discussion by expressing his excitement at this year's GITEX 2024, which he described as an opportunity to explore potential collaborations.

"While we do not have a physical stand at GITEX, our entire team will be on the ground networking and seeking out new opportunities. It's the perfect chance to connect with existing partners and customers and explore potential collaborations. At the show, our conversations will revolve around our latest innovations in networking, security, and cloud technologies. It's always a phenomenal event, and this year's edition promises to the biggest ever," said Hussain.

Codebase Technologies and Abhi Join Forces to Combat Global Financial Exclusion

This collaboration signifies a major milestone in advancing global financial inclusion, offering businesses cutting-edge tools to support their employees' financial well-being.

Codebase Technologies is proud to announce its strategic partnership with Abhi, a leading financial wellness platform in the MENAP region, to introduce innovative Earned Wage Access (EWA) solutions across multiple geographies through Codebase Technologies' Digibanc platform. This collaboration signifies a major milestone in advancing global financial inclusion, offering businesses cutting-edge tools to support their employees' financial well-being.

Recent reports indicate that approximately 76% of workers live paycheck to paycheck, and over 60% of employees experience financial stress that directly impacts productivity and job satisfaction. Furthermore, with 1.7 billion people worldwide lacking access to formal financial services, the need for accessible financial solutions is more critical than ever. The collaboration between Codebase Technologies and Abhi addresses these pressing issues, providing an alternative to high-interest loans and costly credit options.

Raheel Iqbal, Managing Partner of Codebase Technologies, stated: "We are thrilled to partner with Abhi to offer an innovative solution that addresses the financial well-being of employees on a global scale. With Digibanc's robust platform and Abhi's cutting-edge EWA technology, we are making a significant stride in driving financial inclusion and enabling businesses to support their employees in a meaningful way."

Abhi's Co-Founder & COO, Ali Ladhubhai added: "Partnering with Codebase Technologies represents a transformative opportunity for Abhi to accelerate our mission of democratising access to financial services. By leveraging the power of Digibanc's platform, we are extending these benefits across multiple geographies, giving people instant access to their earnings when they need them most. At the same time, we are enabling businesses to adopt smarter, more efficient ways to manage cash flow, creating a win-win for both employers and employees."

Founded in 2021, Abhi is promoting financial inclusion across the region, serving Pakistan, UAE, and KSA with its innovative credit-bridging products. These offerings, which include Earned Wage Access, Payroll Solutions, and SME Financing, are designed to empower businesses and their employees financially. Abhi has earned recognition as one of the Future 100 companies in the UAE and is also the first to receive the Technology Pioneer 2023 Award from the World Economic Forum, making fintech history in the MENAP region.

Digibanc, Codebase Technologies' award-winning platform, plays a crucial role in making this integration process smooth and efficient. With its flexible, scalable, and fast-to-market approach to creating and launching digital financial products, Digibanc allows for seamless API-based integrations. By integrating Abhi's solution into Digibanc, Codebase Technologies offers businesses a unique opportunity to support their workforce, reduce financial stress, and enhance overall productivity. Abhi allows employees to access up to 50% of their accrued salaries instantly, providing a reliable safety net for unexpected expenses or emergencies.

Codebase Technologies has a proven track record of helping key banking clients launch advance salary and early wage access programs in the MENA region, promoting employee wellness and financial inclusion. The simplicity and effectiveness of Digibanc's integration process not only reduces the workload on HR and finance departments but also empowers businesses to retain talent and maintain employee satisfaction by providing an innovative financial wellness benefit.

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AI-powered smart homes

Rami Abu Arja, Senior Innovation Marketing Manager Yasmina, at Yango Middle East, has penned an exclusive op-ed for October's edition of CNME, where he explains how AI-powered smart homes are now becoming the norm in an increasingly interconnected world.

Rami Abu Arja, Yasmina

AI-powered smart homes: where technology meets comfort

In the highly technological world of today, our smart homes are becoming increasingly intelligent, intuitive, and interconnected. With a growing number of smart devices available on the market, we can control nearly every aspect of our household life. Gone are the days of questions we asked ourselves so often as we left the house. "Did I forget to lock the door?" — just check your smart door lock through an app. "Is the stove off?" — turn off the smart plug remotely.

What used to be merely a sci-fi movie plot, has become reality — and quite tangible reality indeed.

With an array of smart devices, from smart thermostats to coffee machines, your home can now adapt to your needs and make your routines easier and more enjoyable. But as more and more devices enter the market, managing them can be challenging without a centralised control system.

Smart home in an era of AI assistants

With an AI assistant, such as Yasmina by Yango Group, you can control all your connected devices from one convenient hub. Here are some key interesting ways AI assistants are transforming smart home management:

Centralised control: AI assistants provide a unified platform to control various smart devices. You can easily adjust settings, monitor device status, and automate routines from a single mobile app.

Voice activation: One of the most appealing features of AI assistants is voice control. This hands-free interaction allows you to perform tasks effortlessly, whether it's dimming the lights, setting the thermostat, or playing music.

Seamless device integration: Certain AI assistants can integrate with a wide range of devices from multiple global smart home brands. The mobile app for managing your smart home will allow you to check the status of devices, such as whether windows and doors are closed, if the bedroom socket is turned off, or how hot it is in the living room. Alternatively, simply ask the AI assistant, and it will provide you with all the information you need.

Perfect climate: AI assistants maintain the perfect home temperature by automatically adjusting devices like humidifiers and air conditioning to achieve ideal temperature and humidity levels.

Enhanced security: AI assistants can significantly enhance home security by integrating with smart locks and turning off your devices when you leave your house. If you are at home, you can ask your AI assistant to check the doors, sockets, and other devices. While away, you'll receive push notifications from the smart home mobile app, notifying you if there are any issues at home, such as if a door opens unexpectedly or there is a leak.

However, Yasmina goes beyond this range of functions and transforms your home into a truly intelligent and personalised space.

One of the features that distinguishes Yasmina is the ability to create personalised scenarios and schedules, whether it's dimming the lights for a cosy movie night or scheduling the coffee maker to start brewing before you're even out of bed. Once you set up a morning scenario, you can just say, "Yasmina, start my day."

Yasmina has another impressive feature: it understands you even if you don't say things perfectly. You can use simple, customised commands like "Yasmina, I'm off" to turn off all your devices and secure your home, ensuring energy savings and safety.

The AI assistant that makes your smart home smarter

Yasmina is a human-like AI assistant powered by a large language model (LLM) that can maintain engaging and fun conversations in both English and Khaleeji Arabic, offer personalised entertainment experience, and act as a smart home hub.

With its deep cultural understanding, Yasmina is designed to be a true companion for users in the UAE. For instance, you can integrate the assistant with other smart home devices, such as smart light bulbs, and enable a scenario specifically designed for prayer time. This way, you can use a single command, such as "Yasmina, it's time for Maghrib," or "Yasmina, set the mood for Fajr" to dim the lights, creating a serene atmosphere for your prayer. Please note that the prayer time reminders and mood setting are separate features that you can customise and set up independently.

Conclusion

Smart homes are rapidly becoming the new standard of living, where advanced technology caters to our every need. With an AI assistant at the helm, our homes can offer more than mere functionality and become our true companions, reflecting our spiritual beliefs, maintaining a comfortable climate and atmosphere, and ensuring maximum safety. 🔵

> **"Smart homes are rapidly becoming the new standard of living, where advanced technology caters to our every need."**

Kerno Enterprises FZE Enters Market with Original-Design Products at GITEX

Kerno Enterprises FZE signs deal with NMTronics to establish advanced manufacturing facility and produce 'Made in UAE' enterprise-class solutions.

Kerno, a UAE-based manufacturer of robust enterprise-class server, storage and network solutions, is showcasing a series of original-design products at GITEX Technology Week in Hall 20, Booth H20-09. At the event, Kerno has also signed a milestone deal with cutting-edge technologies provider NMTronics to enable production of its 'Made in UAE' line of secure, scalable enterprise infrastructure solutions.

"We have observed a significant increase in the demand for high-quality business solutions in the UAE and the broader Middle East. This growth is driven by the region's rapid shift towards a digital-first economy. As a result, there is a need for a local manufacturer of core technologies. We are dedicated to addressing this gap and enabling enterprises in the region to remain at the forefront of technological advancements," says Demetrio Russo, CEO of Kerno.

Revenue across the UAE's server market is expected to grow at an annual rate of 10.89%, resulting in a market volume of over USD 421 million by 2029[1]. Meanwhile, revenue across the UAE's storage market is expected to grow at 10.07%, resulting in a market volume of over USD 206 million by 2029[2].

This growth is mirrored across the GCC as a whole. Revenue across the region's server market will spike at a similar rate, resulting in a market volume of USD 1.05 billion by 2029[3]. And revenue across the GCC's storage market will grow to a market volume of USD 0.52 billion by 2029[4].

Kerno's presence at this year's GITEX also signifies their official entry into the market. Earlier this year, the company partnered with the UAE Ministry of Economy's NEXTGEN FDI initiative to establish the region's first-ever manufacturing facility for enterprise-class servers and storage systems. In addition to the NEXTGEN FDI initiative, the UAE is also signing Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs) with countries around the world to strengthen its position as a global trade and logistics hub. UAE-based companies can further benefit from such strategic bilateral trade agreements.

At GITEX, Kerno also signed a deal with NMTronics to establish an advanced hardware manufacturing factory using best-in-class equipment to produce enterprise-class servers and data storage systems in Dubai Silicon Oasis. Using cutting-edge surface mount technology and a fully automated unit assembly line supplied by NMTronics, Kerno aims to become a leading manufacturer of enterprise-class IT solutions to support growing demand in the Middle East.

"NMTronics India is committed to continuous innovation and collaboration. As 'Partners in Technology' to our customers, we equally share Kerno's commitment to advancing electronics manufacturing in the region. We are equally dedicated to fostering growth through specialised training programs, skills development and creating strong industry ties," says Soni Saran Singh, Founder, MD and CEO of NMTronics India.

The manufacturing line and devices used will feature the latest technology available in the global market, which has yet to be utilised on this scale and complexity in the Middle East. It will be a high-tech, fully automated electronics production facility capable of producing IT servers and storage systems, IoT devices and telco products.

"Our goal is to create and deliver top-quality solutions in the UAE. Additionally, we aim to utilise our strategic position to access regional and global markets. GITEX provides the ideal opportunity for us to exhibit our product line and demonstrate the advantages of partnering with a local company," adds Russo.

Russo will also participate in the session on AI urbanism at GITEX's Digital Cities conference track. The panel will go beyond AI hype to explore the potential and pitfalls of AI in urban development. Kerno has also developed its own AI acceleration server for video analytics and other smart city use cases. 🔵

> **We are introducing these solutions to the market to bolster data security frameworks for organisations."**

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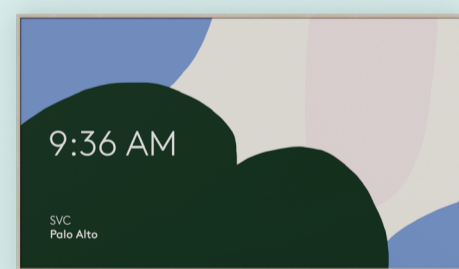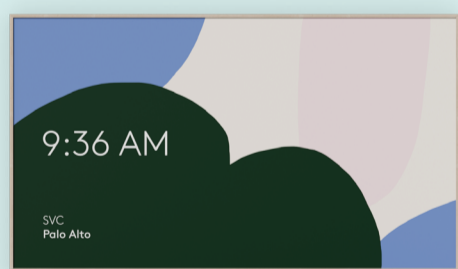RightSight 2

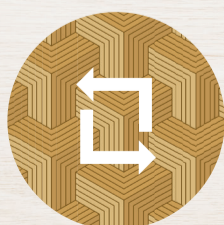RightSound 2

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HP Wolf Security Uncovers Evidence of Attackers Using AI to Generate Malware

Latest report points to AI use in creating malware scripts, threat actors relying on malvertising to spread rogue PDF tools, and malware embedded in image files.

HP Inc. issued its latest Threat Insights Report revealing how attackers are using generative AI to help write malicious code. HP's threat research team found a large and refined ChromeLoader campaign spread through malvertising that leads to professional-looking rogue PDF tools and identified cybercriminals embedding malicious code in SVG images.

The report provides an analysis of real-world cyberattacks, helping organisations to keep up with the latest techniques cybercriminals are using to evade detection and breach PCs in the fast-changing cybercrime landscape. Based on data from millions of endpoints running HP Wolf Security, notable campaigns identified by HP threat researchers include:

• Generative AI assisting malware development in the wild: Cybercriminals are already using GenAI to create convincing phishing lures but to date there has been limited evidence of threat actors using GenAI tools to write code. The team identified a campaign targeting French-speakers using VBScript and JavaScript believed to have been written with the help of GenAI. The structure of the scripts, comments explaining each line of code, and the choice of native language function names and variables are strong indications that the threat actor used GenAI to create the malware. The attack infects users with the freely available AsyncRAT malware, an easy-to-obtain infostealer which can record victim's screens and keystrokes. The activity shows how GenAI is lowering the bar for cybercriminals to infect endpoints.

Slick malvertising campaigns leading to rogue-but-functional PDF tools: ChromeLoader campaigns are becoming bigger and increasingly polished, relying on malvertising around popular search keywords to direct victims to well-designed websites offering functional tools like PDF readers and converters. These working applications hide malicious code in a MSI file, while valid code-signing certificates bypass Windows security policies and user warnings, increasing the chance of infection. Installing these fake applications allows attackers to take over the victim's browsers and redirect searches to attacker-controlled sites.

This logo is a no-go – hiding malware in Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) images:

> **"**
> **Typically, attackers like to obscure their intentions to avoid revealing their methods, so this behaviour indicates an AI assistant was used to help write their code".**

some cybercriminals are bucking the trend by shifting from HTML files to vector images for smuggling malware. Vector images, widely used in graphic design, commonly use the XML-based SVG format. As SVGs open automatically in browsers, any embedded JavaScript code is executed as the image is viewed. While victims think they're viewing an image, they are interacting with a complex file format that leads to multiple types of infostealer malware being installed.

Patrick Schläpfer, Principal Threat Researcher in the HP Security Lab, comments:

"Speculation about AI being used by attackers is rife, but evidence has been scarce, so this finding is significant. Typically, attackers like to obscure their intentions to avoid revealing their methods, so this behaviour indicates an AI assistant was used to help write their code. Such capabilities further lower the barrier to entry for threat actors, allowing novices without coding skills to write scripts, develop infection chains, and launch more damaging attacks."

By isolating threats that have evaded detection tools on PCs – but still allowing malware to detonate safely – HP Wolf Security has specific insight into the latest techniques used by cybercriminals. To date, HP Wolf Security customers have clicked on over 40 billion email attachments, web pages, and downloaded files with no reported breaches.

The report, which examines data from calendar Q2 2024, details how cybercriminals continue to diversify attack methods to bypass security policies and detection tools, such as:

At least 12% of email threats identified by HP Sure Click bypassed one or more email gateway scanners, the same as the previous quarter.

The top threat vectors were email attachments (61%), downloads from browsers (18%) and other infection vectors, such as removable storage – like USB thumb drives and file shares (21%).

Archives were the most popular malware delivery type (39%), 26% of which were ZIP files.

Dr. Ian Pratt, Global Head of Security for Personal Systems at HP Inc., comments:

"Threat actors are constantly updating their methods, whether it's using AI to enhance attacks, or creating functioning-but-malicious tools to bypass detection. So, businesses must build resilience, closing off as many common attack routes possible. Adopting a defence-in-depth strategy — including isolating high-risk activities like opening email attachments or web downloads — helps to minimise the attack surface and neutralise the risk of infection."

HP Wolf Security[i] runs risky tasks in isolated, hardware-enforced virtual machines running on the endpoint to protect users, without impacting their productivity. It also captures detailed traces of attempted infections. HP's application isolation technology mitigates threats that can slip past other security tools and provides unique insights into intrusion techniques and threat actor behaviour.

[i] HP Wolf Security for Business requires Windows 10 or 11 Pro and higher, includes various HP security features and is available on HP Pro, Elite, RPOS and Workstation products. See product details for included security features. 60

STANDS TO WATCH
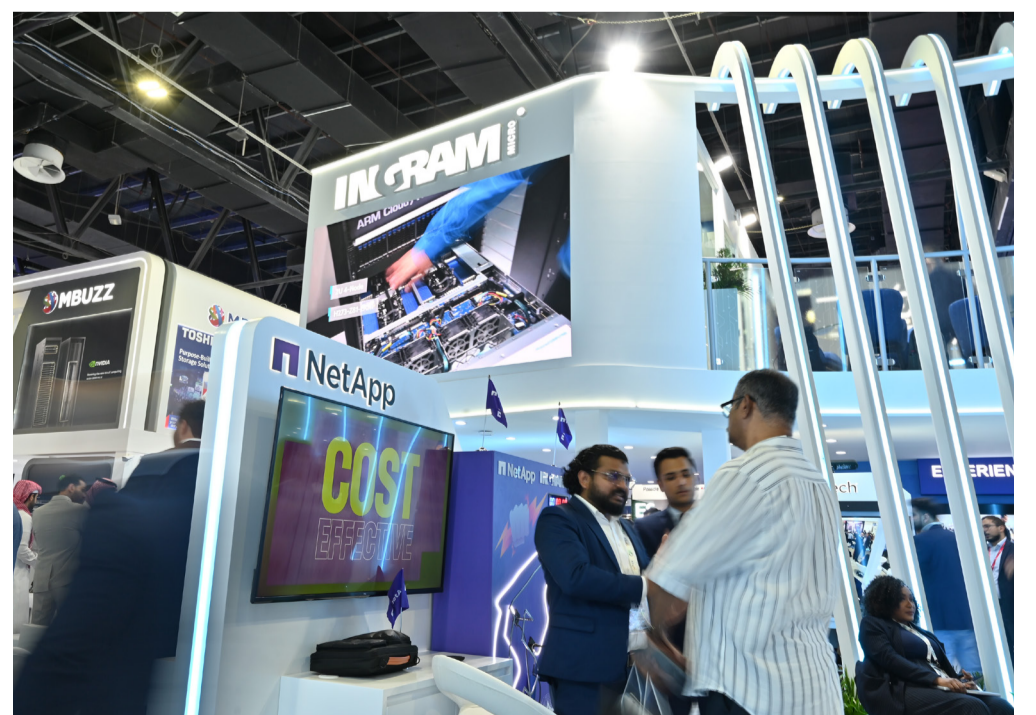
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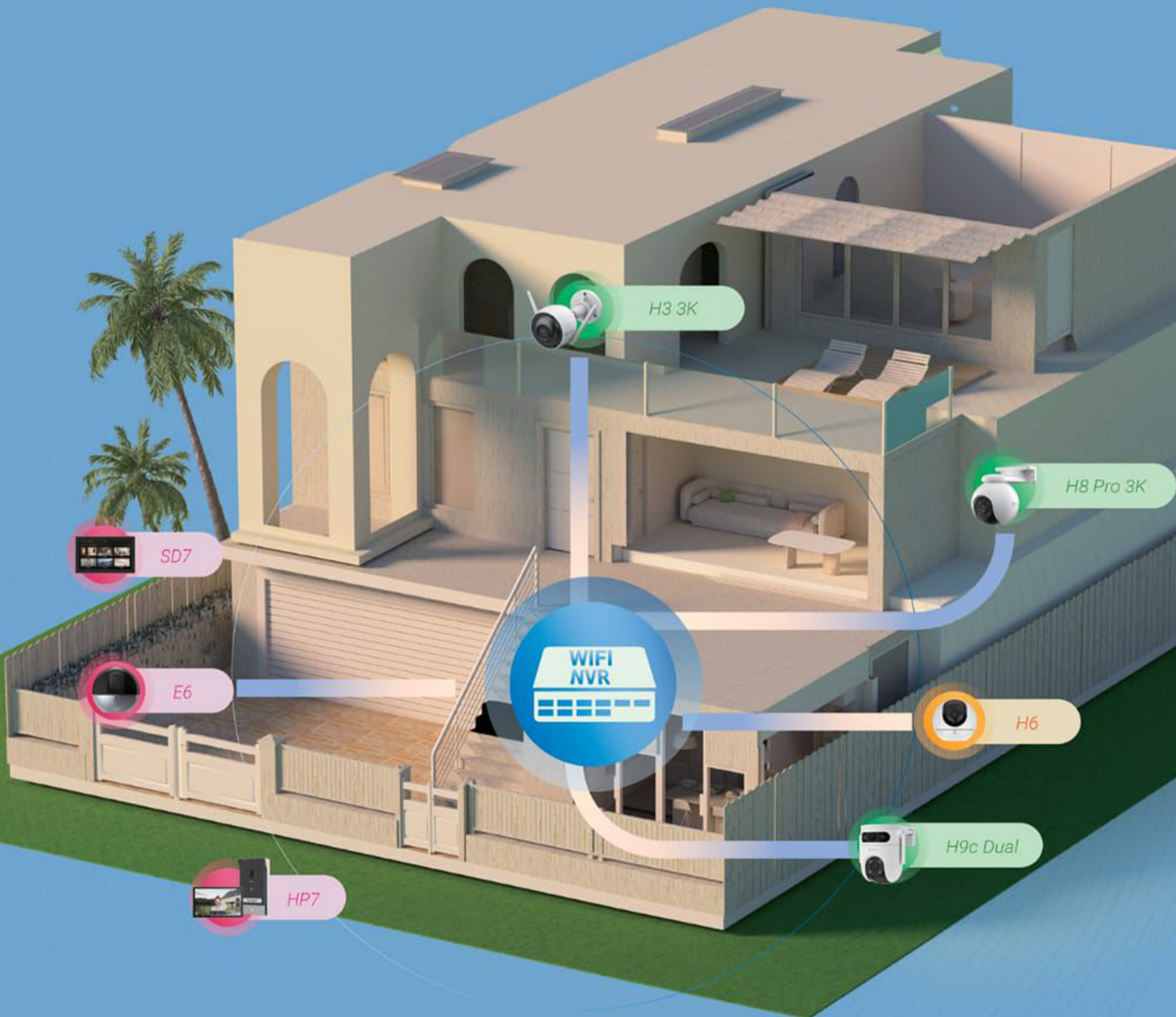**Reduce your ransomware risk to zero.**

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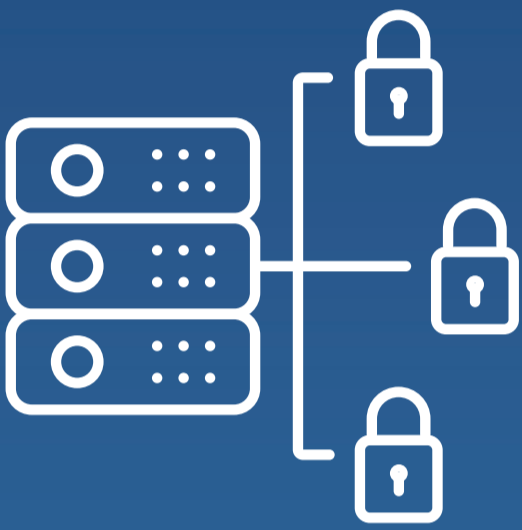
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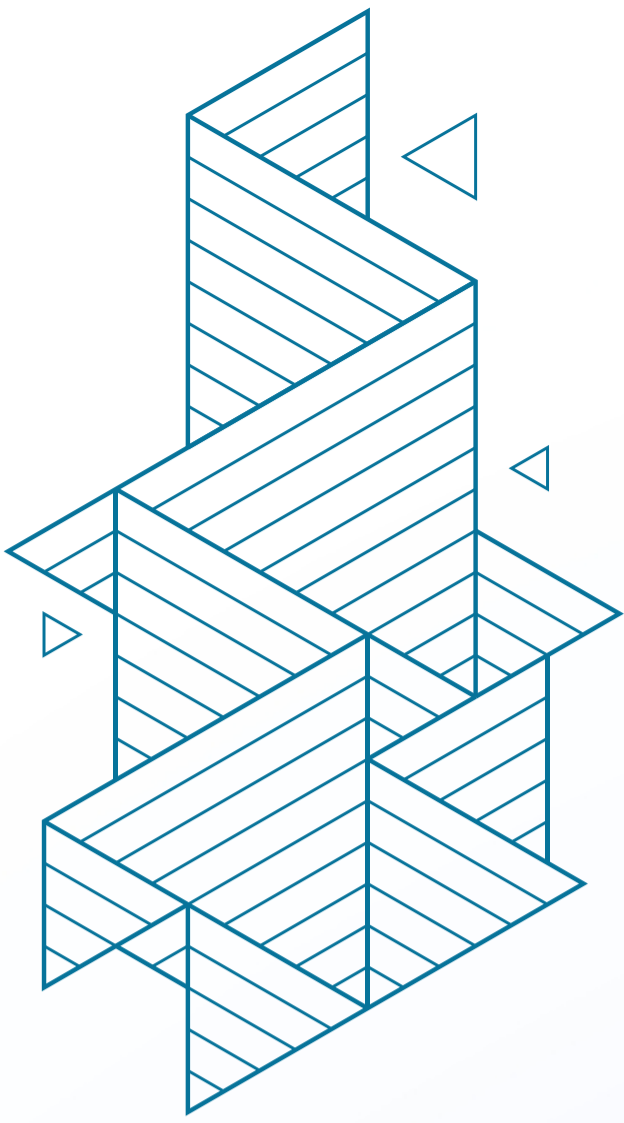
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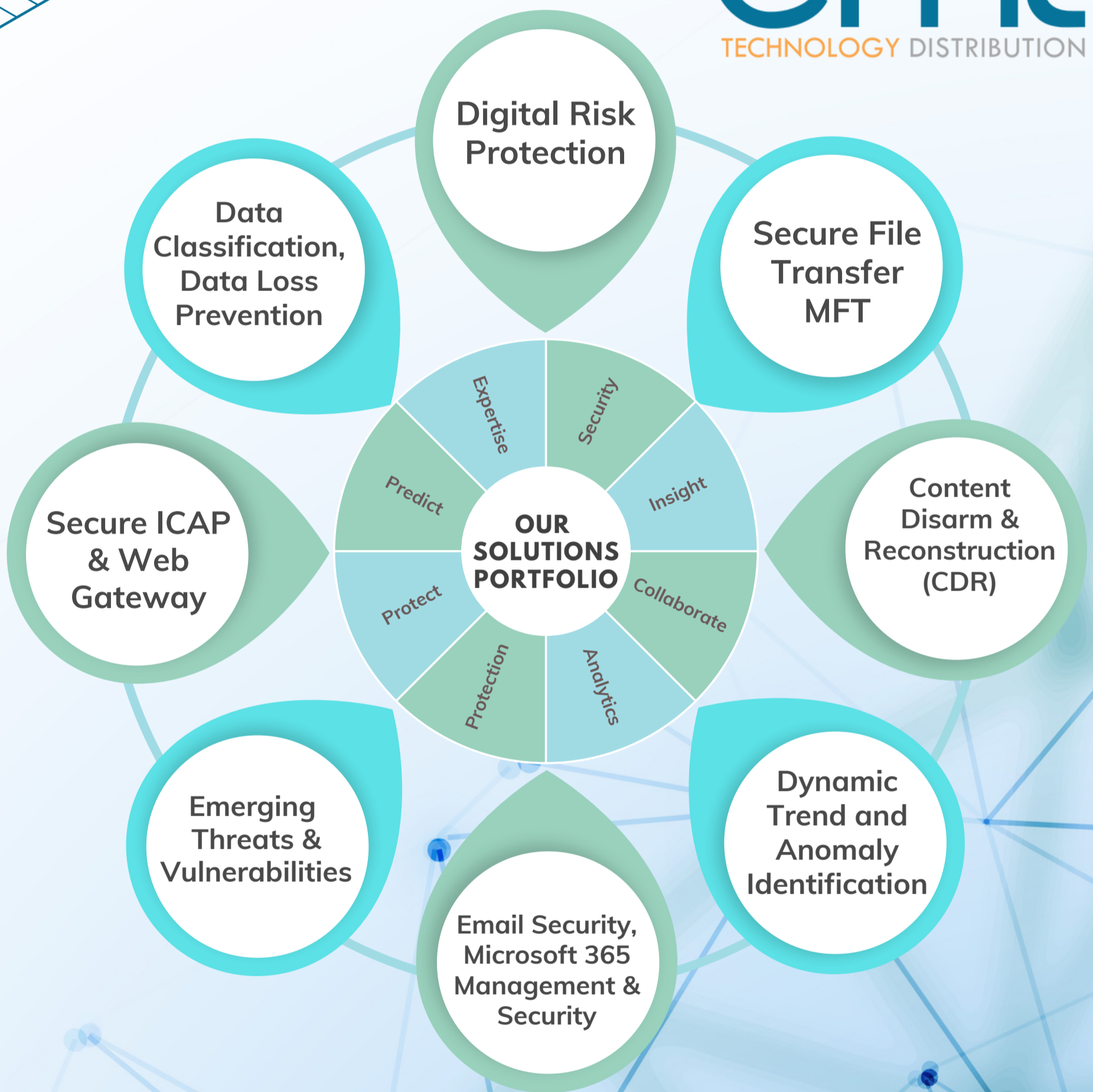# Cybersecurity Solutions
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