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NEW WORLD ORDER

CNME EDITOR MARK FORKER TAKES A LOOK AT THE STARGATE PROJECT,
THE $500BN INVESTMENT ANNOUNCED BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION
THAT WILL BUILD AI INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OPENAI IN THE UNITED STATES
OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. HOWEVER, HIS 'FIRST-BUDDY' ELON MUSK
HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE PROJECT AND THOSE FRONTING IT.

| CEO AT GROUP14 | GENERAL MANAGER AT LIFERAY | VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AT WEBLIB |

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> **The launch of DeepSeek's LLMs caused shockwaves across the industry, and also led to NVIDIA's market capitalisation to collapse by $500bn."**

GUESS WHO'S BACK

Well, 2025 has certainly started with a bang!

We always knew that the return of 'The Donald' was never going to be a quiet ascension back to power.

However, the sheer scale and breadth of some of the announcements being made in the technology sector is truly staggering.

UAE-based luxury real-estate company DAMAC Properties got the ball rolling when its founder and CEO Hussain Sajwani announced an investment of $20bn in US datacentres, following a special news conference at Trump's residence in Mar-a-Lago.

The ink wasn't dry on that deal before Trump announced the gargantuan $500bn Stargate AI project just hours after his official inauguration in Washington D.C.

The project is being driven by OpenAI, SoftBank and Oracle, whilst the key technology partners in the new company are big hitters such as NVIDIA, Microsoft, and Arm.

Then if that wasn't quite enough, China decided it was time for them to stake their claim in the quest for global AI dominance.

The launch of DeepSeek's LLMs caused shockwaves across the industry, and also led to NVIDIA's market capitalisation to collapse by $500bn.

The fact that their models were made at a fraction of the cost, and consumes much less compute power, as left OpenAI CEO Sam Altman scratching his head, admitting that they may need to completely rethink their open-source strategy.

On reflection it's been a crazy month, but what a great time to be covering the technology industry.

My front cover looks at these announcements in more detail, and the decision by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg to abandon his third-party fact checking program.

There is a number of excellent interviews in January's edition of CNME, but I am biased of course, so I'll let you be the judge of that.

But I really enjoyed my conversation with Rick Luebbe, Co-Founder and CEO of Group14.

The US technology company is doing cool things in the energy sector, and is driving the silicon battery era, which Luebbe believes will be the fuel needed to really kick electrification into gear.

It's a fascinating read, and Luebbe also pointed out how silicon technology can be used as an enabler for AI technology, such as AI-powered datacentres.

Jens Monrad is the Head of Mandiant Intelligence for EMEA, and he spoke about what the next phase of AI in action is really going to entail in the cybersecurity sphere.

He was full of praise for the new NIS2 directive, which he believes gives recognition to the value digitalisation really brings to all our lives.

Again, it's a really good read, and Monrad cleverly articulates the key takeaways from Google Cloud's Cybersecurity Forecast for 2025.

Daniel Shepherd, Deputy Editor at CNME penned a brilliant column, which took a much closer look of what DeepSeek is, and what are the factors behind the Chinese start-up LLMs that has caused such a deep and seismic undercurrent across the entire global AI and tech community.

Sandhya D'Mello compiled a brilliant article on a new whitepaper produced by the UAE on remote working.

The whitepaper was compiled to create a set of guidelines and best practices to help organisations adapt to the challenges presented by hybrid work.

H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for AI, Digital Economy and Remote Work said that remote work is here to stay, so it's important that together we embrace it.

We also have some excellent interviews with IntelliSoft, Liferay and Weblib and an excellent thought leadership article from Veeam and Zebra Technologies.

CNME will be on the ground at LEAP 2025, which kicks off in Riyadh on February 9th.

We will have full coverage from all the action at LEAP, in February's edition of CNME, and also from our own KSA Executive Leadership Summit, which will take place at the VOCO Hotel in Riyadh on Thursday, February 13th.

I hope you enjoy January's edition of CNME, and I'm looking forward to seeing some of you at LEAP 2025. 😊

Mark Forker
Editor

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Microsoft to spend $80B on AI data centres in the fiscal year 2025

Microsoft Vice Chair and President Brad Smith revealed the company is on track to spend approximately $80 billion to build AI-enabled data centres in its current financial year (to end-June 2025), with more than 50% of that investment earmarked for the USA.

Smith explained the tech giant plans to use the data centres "to train AI models and deploy AI and cloud-based applications around the world".

While Smith welcomed President Donald Trump to his second term in office, he cautioned against "heavy-handed regulations" that could slow down the private sector.

"The most important American public-policy priority should be to ensure that the private sector can continue to advance with the wind at its back. The USA needs a pragmatic export control policy that balances strong security protection for AI components in trusted data centres with an ability for companies to expand rapidly and provide a reliable source of supply to the many countries that are American allies and friends".

Smith stated the USA is well-positioned to flourish in its development of AI due to solid technology development and an innovative private sector.

Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President, Microsoft.

DAMAC Properties announce investment of $20bn in US datacentres

The UAE-based property tycoon made the announcement during a news conference at the residence of incoming US President Donald Trump in Mar-a-Lago.

The announcement only serves to further indicate Trump's uncanny ability to secure megadeals with large entities.

Sajwani outlined that the data centre investment would focus on AI and cloud for hyperscalers, and Bloomberg reported that the first phase of the agreement would see datacentres be built in states such as Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana.

Trump's inauguration will take place on January 20th, and he stated that the deal with DAMAC was critical in keeping the US competitive across emerging technologies.

Hussain Sajwani has announced that DAMAC Properties are investing $20bn in datacentres across the United States.

The deal comes hot on the heels of the announcement by SoftBank Group CEO Masayoshi Son to invest $100bn in the United States over the next four years.

The AI arms race is very much in full swing and will only exacerbate further when Trump returns to power in Washington.

Alat and Lenovo announce formal completion of $2bn megadeal

The report dives into several important factors, including time spent online, social networking and the psychological impact of children using gadgets. It also addresses significant concerns related to online threats including privacy issues and cyberbullying.

Seifallah Jedidi, Head of Consumer Channel for META at Kaspersky, said "It is important for parents to be aware of the impact of the time their children may have spent online during the holiday. Given the fact that education is also becoming digitized in today's constantly evolving world, it is crucial to promote a healthy balance between the online and offline world. Children are often overly-accustomed to life online, largely using gadgets for entertainment purposes. However, just like adults, they are also prone to the dangers of the internet, like cyberbullying or sharing private information online. In order for parents to reduce the risk of digital addiction, technology must be implemented to manage the content consumed and the time that kids spend online, encouraging positive digital behaviour and habits."

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Quantum computing stocks take a hit after Nvidia CEO prediction

Quantum computing stocks sank on Wednesday, pausing a year-long upturn, after Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said the technology's practical use was likely two decades away during a CES 2025 keynote.

The long wait outlined by Huang for "very useful quantum computers" has hit the breaks on a sector that was already expected to spend millions more on the technology, which can only perform niche calculations so far. "If you kind of said 15 years... that'd probably be on the early side. If you said 30, it's probably on the late side. But if you picked 20, I think a whole bunch of us would believe it," he said.

Rigetti Computing, D-Wave Quantum, Quantum Computing and IonQ all fell more than 40%. The companies, in total, were set to lose more than $8 billion

Jensen Huang, CEO, Nvidia.

in market value. The four quantum computing stocks rose at least threefold in 2024 and outperformed a more than twofold rise in Nvidia shares, thanks to a high-profile breakthrough in the technology at Google in December 2024.

The technology is seen as a key national security undertaking, with countries counting on it to drive decryption for military purposes.

API supergroup unveils its first CEO and new name

A recently launched API supergroup involving Ericsson, Google Cloud and some of the world's largest operators named its first CEO and announced its official company name, Aduna.

Anthony Bartolo, formerly the COO of cloud company Vonage and executive at Tata Communications, is due to assume the CEO position of Aduna.

The standalone company including major operators Vodafone Group, AT&T, Deutsche Telekom and others, along with Ericsson and Google Cloud, will work to coordinate API efforts to reduce fragmentation in apps and services.

When the group launched in September 2024, the operators involved emphasised the company's work would be "in-keeping" with the mobile association's initiative.

Nokia sets their sights on Moon mobile mission

Nokia claims its mobile network is now ready for the Moon after completing the final steps for the upcoming IM-2 mission, with a launch potentially occurring in late February 2025.

The vendor and partner Intuitive Machines stated they had successfully integrated Nokia's Lunar Surface Communications System (LSCS) into the IM-2 mission lander, named Athena.

The Finnish vendor's R&D arm Nokia Bell Labs conducted months of testing and validation before Intuitive Machines engineers installed the LSCS system to one of Athena's upper carbon composite panels. Nokia revealed multiple precautions were taken during installation to ensure the network is able to safely make the 239,000-mile journey to the Moon, "survive the stresses of take-off and landing, and operate optimally on the lunar surface".

Nokia has also provided details on how it plans to keep the network insulated in low temperatures and the process involved to establish 4G connectivity upon landing on the Moon. A Mobile Autonomous Prospecting Platform rover developed by space robotics company Lunar Outpost will exit from a protective enclosure on Athena upon landing, extend its antennas and establish connection to Nokia's network.

Teknowledge appoint three industry veterans to drive their 'technological evolution'

Teknowledge have formally announced the appointments of three influential, respected, and revered technologists to their executive leadership team.

Ayman Majzoub has been tasked with the responsibility of driving sales across emerging markets, and has been appointed as the Vice President of Sales, Middle East, Türkiye, and Central Asia.

Majzoub is a former Avaya executive, and possesses extensive knowledge and expertise in enterprises sales and strategic management.

Mahmood Lockhat has been named as the company's new Chief Technology Officer.

He brings decades of experience to the role, and is perhaps best known for his association with British telecommunications behemoth BT.

He is also a former Avayan, and will oversee the large-scale transformations Teknowledge are going to drive in order for the company to solidify its position as a company that drives and fosters innovation.

Yaser Alzubaidi has been named as Senior Vice President and Chief Products and Solutions Officer at Teknowledge.

He established himself as one of the most respected business leaders in CX and EX during his long tenure at Avaya.

In his new role, Alzubaidi will reshape the product portfolio across Teknowledge in a bid to keep pace with evolving market needs.

He is acutely aware of the need for businesses to be agile in the current climate, and will aim to develop a product portfolio that boats solutions that are both innovative and scalable.

All three of them have their own unique set of capabilities and skills, but they all have phenomenal experience in consulting, TeKnowledge, in collaboration with Qatar's Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Microsoft, is spearheading the Qatar Digital Center of Excellence to drive the nation's digital transformation and bridge its tech divide.

Ayman Majzoub has been appointed as the new Vice President of Sales for the Middle East, Türkiye, and Central Asia at Teknowledge.

Mahmood Lockhat has been appointed as the new Chief Technology Officer at Teknowledge.

Yaser Alzubaidi has been named as Senior Vice President and Chief Products and Solutions Officer at Teknowledge.

Elon Musk calls on US lawmakers to force auction of OpenAI as long-running feud escalates

Elon Musk is calling on US lawmakers in two states to auction of large stakes in OpenAI, as the long-running row between the two parties took a fresh turn, according to a report from The Financial Times.

The Financial Times saw a letter from a lawyer representing Musk, in which he called on attorney-generals in both California and Delaware to force an auction of OpenAI.

Musk was one of the co-founder of OpenAI in 2015, alongside its current CEO Sam Altman and nine other people.

However, his relationship with Altman

deteriorated, and following a number of clashes, Musk decided to leave the board of OpenAI in 2018, and in the subsequent

Elon Musk is calling on US lawmakers to auction of stakes in OpenAI.

years that have passed, the SpaceX and Tesla owner has filed several lawsuits against the company he helped found.

Musk is calling for the company to hold an auction in order to determine a fair market value for OpenAI's assets, claiming that he was doing so to protect the public's best interests.

When contacted by *FT*, an OpenAI spokesperson declared the company has no intentions whatsoever to hold an auction, and said Musk's objective is to create chaos.

The news caps what has been a difficult few days for embattled OpenAI boss Altman, who was hit with a lawsuit from his sister over allegations of abuse. Altman released a statement denying any wrongdoing.

KKR & Co. invests $5B in Dubai's Gulf Data Hub as city launches universal blueprint for AI leadership

H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai Future Foundation (DFF).

H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai Future Foundation (DFF) posted on his Linkedin about the KKR & Co.'s $5 billion investment in Gulf Data Hub, a Dubai-founded company driving technology innovation since 2012.

Sheikh Hamdan, said: "In April 2024, we launched the Dubai Universal Blueprint for Artificial Intelligence, a future-facing initiative to accelerate AI adoption, strengthen Dubai's position as a global leader in emerging technologies, and build the infrastructure for this vital sector's growth."

He further added: "Today, we celebrate another historic milestone: global private equity firm KKR & Co.'s $5 billion investment in Gulf Data Hub, a Dubai-founded company driving technology innovation since 2012. This landmark investment, the first of its kind in the region, will expand data centre capacity in the UAE and the Middle East. We look forward to welcoming more partners as we advance Dubai's digital capabilities and drive AI innovation. Dubai is the future, and the future is Dubai."

Apple's Siri upholds privacy in digital assistant era

In today's tech-savvy world, digital privacy remains a paramount concern for users everywhere. Amid growing skepticism about digital assistants and data security, Apple has reaffirmed its commitment to user privacy with recent advancements in its voice-activated assistant, Siri. These enhancements not only highlight Apple's dedication to privacy but also set a new standard in the fiercely competitive tech industry.

A SHIFT TO ON-DEVICE INTELLIGENCE

Unlike other digital assistants that rely heavily on cloud-based processing, Siri handles a vast majority of tasks directly on the device. This method significantly limits the amount of user data transmitted to servers, ensuring that sensitive information such as message contents and personal requests stays private. Moreover, for those devices equipped with Apple's Neural Engine, audio requests are processed entirely on-device, offering users an added layer of privacy. Apple's strategy

also involves minimizing the data collected during interactions with Siri.

LEGAL CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Despite these privacy measures, Apple recently settled a class action lawsuit for $95 million over allegations that its "Hey Siri" feature had unintentionally activated and recorded private conversations without user consent. The lawsuit, which stretched back to 2014, claimed that these recordings led to privacy breaches, including the sharing of sensitive health information. Apple responded to these allegations by pausing its Siri grading system, which involved human reviewers, and later reintroducing it with stronger privacy safeguards and an opt-out option. While Apple denied the accusations, the settlement included compensations for affected users, signaling Apple's willingness to address privacy concerns proactively.

FUTURE OF SIRI AND PRIVACY

With the launch of Private Cloud Compute, Apple is entering a new era for Siri. This technology extends the security of iOS devices into the cloud, enabling more advanced processing without compromising user privacy. Data processed via Private Cloud Compute is not stored or accessible to Apple, aligning with the company's privacy-first approach. As digital assistants continue to permeate everyday life, Apple's ongoing improvements to Siri demonstrate a clear commitment to user privacy. This commitment is vital not only for maintaining consumer trust but also for setting industry standards that others may follow.
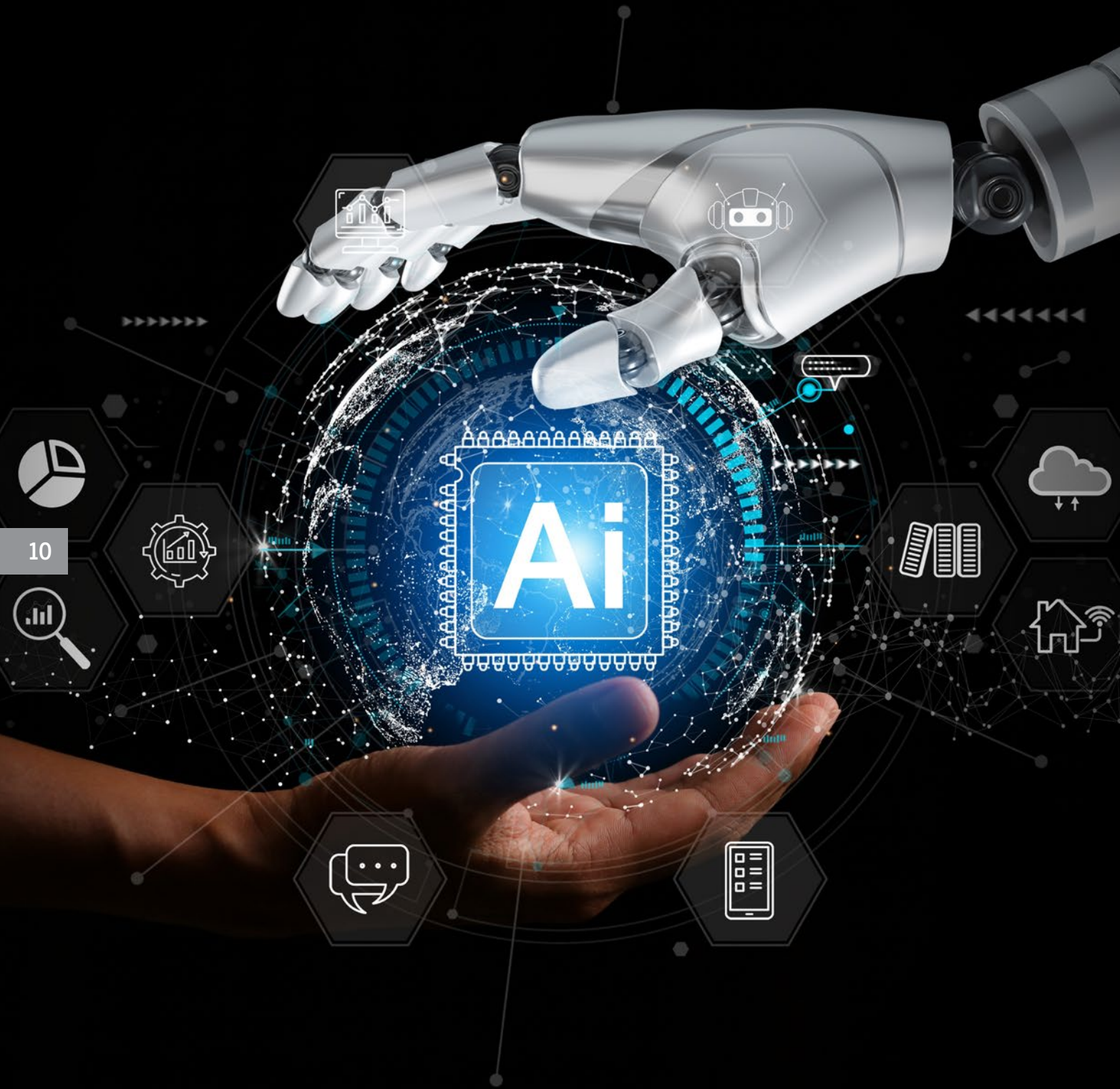
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ENTERING THE NEXT PHASE OF ACTION

CNME Editor Mark Forker managed to secure an exclusive interview with cybersecurity expert **Jens Monrad**, Head of Mandiant Intelligence for EMEA, in an effort to dig a little deeper into some of the key findings that emerged from its comprehensive Cybersecurity Forecast 2025, as we enter the 'second phase' of AI in action in the global cybersecurity landscape.

Jens Monrad has spent almost 30 years in the cybersecurity industry, and has enjoyed a decorated and distinguished career to date.

Monrad is the Head of Mandiant Intelligence for the EMEA region after joining the company in 2021.

Monrad has held a number of notable executive positions during his career, and has worked with cybersecurity leaders such as FireEye and Cisco Systems.

In September 2022, Mandiant was acquired by Google Cloud for $5.4bn – and the cybersecurity company had established itself as a real leader when it came to deep threat intelligence.

Despite the acquisition Mandiant was allowed to maintain its brand and now operates under the umbrella of Google Cloud.

CNME was afforded the opportunity to sit down with Monrad before the end of 2024, to take a deep dive into Google Cloud's Cybersecurity Forecast 2025.

Sunil Potti, General Manager of Google Cloud Security said that 2025 would be the first year where we would see the second phase of AI in action when it comes to security.

That's where our conversation began, and as Monrad pointed out the challenge now is how security leaders use the progress that has been made in relation to summarisation and start applying that into automated rulesets.

"In order to go into detail on what the second phase of AI is going to entail, I think it's a good idea to look at the first phase of AI. Essentially, the first phase of AI was all about summarisation and finding ways of really utilising these LLMs to transform the way we work. For example, a threat report containing 500 pages can now be summarised into 1-page using AI tools and LLMs. When we examine the second phase of AI, there's the realisation that we can use it to summarise things, but how can we use AI to actually apply what is contained in these reports in a more automated fashion? In the current climate, when analysts read reports, they

take the technical parts of it and translate it into a ruleset, and they then build that ruleset and test it within their respective security controls. However, imagine you could say give me all the rules that are compatible with my security controls, and apply them in my environment immediately based on the report. That is a gamechanger, and what this ultimately empowers enterprises to do is build that link between summarisation capabilities into automation and orchestration," said Monrad.

Monrad pointed out that the report robustly stresses the benefits this will yield for the cybersecurity ecosystem, although he did acknowledge that initially it will be highly likely that there will be a lot of false positives.

"We also mentioned in the report that we believe there will be so many benefits from this process, even though there may initially be a lot of false positives. We also stress in the report that we are still a firm believer that all of this does require human oversight in what we do with AI, and how we apply it. That being said, when you weigh in the time efficiency of building out these rules and applying automation where you can using AI then it's a no-brainer in all reality. We often talk about how we can reduce toil and remove some of the repetitive and mundane tasks

that we have to do anyway, and we can do this by using AI," said Monrad.

Analysts are know to be quite anal (pardon the pun) when it comes to the way they extract knowledge from reports, and have their own unique way of working.

Will AI help or hinder them?

"Look, there is a learning curve with all of this, and there's no doubt about that, but we have to embrace change. If you speak to Tier 1 analysts then they'll tell you that a lot of what they do in the Security Operations Centre involves a lot of repetitive tasks, and in these types of scenarios you can actually give them time back by using AI. It's evident that by leveraging AI it is going to be more valuable for both the organisation and the analyst to address security challenges that are not repetitive, and not have to perform the same mundane task that needs to be completed every single day. It is going to empower cybersecurity professionals to do more," said Monrad.

Google Cloud's Cybersecurity Forecast 2025 doesn't pull any punches, and doesn't sugar coat the fact that malicious actors will continue to adopt AI-based tools for attacks.

The following quote from the report paints a stark picture.

> **We also see a problem when we respond to incidents in terms of a real lack of processes and procedures from organisations, which inevitably causes major delays in terms of responding to cyberattacks."**

"As AI capabilities become more widely available throughout 2025, enterprises will increasingly struggle to defend themselves against these more frequent and effective compromises."

When asked what advice Monrad would give enterprises looking to bolster their cyber hygiene, is answer was simple, establish best practices in terms of how you respond to an attack and do it now.

"I honestly do think that organisations need to foster a culture where they engage in a lot of practices, or for a want of a better word fire drills to ensure there is a level of preparedness from top to bottom. It's not something that we have overemphasised, or covered very deeply in our forecast report, but when it comes to compromises that we do see, especially in the cloud, a lot of the issues arise from misconfigurations. We also see a problem when we respond to incidents in terms of a real lack of processes and procedures from organisations, which inevitably causes major delays in terms of responding to cyberattacks. It is so important that organisations establish best practices in order to be able to effectively respond to a breach," said Monrad.

Monrad also advocated for enterprises to implement SIEM solutions to help them scale and centralise their information.

"Enterprises need to look at solutions that they can adopt, or implement that enhance their ability to respond to incidents. Can we implement SIEM solutions that will help us understand and scale our operations in a way in which we can actually centralise information? Can we improve on security orchestration? Can we automate on certain things when it comes to a response scenario? These are the types of questions that organisations have to ask themselves in order to really become cyber resilient. We also really have to do a better job when it comes to handling who has access to our information, how do we validate and authenticate users, do we still rely on username and passwords? Businesses need to move to a passkey, security key, or multifactor authentication to make their organisations more secure," said Monrad.

There has been a lot written about how these new open-source AI models can be used as a new form of cyberattack, but as Monrad points out, nobody has the advantage in that regard, citing that everyone was on the same 'learning curve'.

"When it comes to AI from an adversary perspective, we need to be cognisant of the fact that both the good guys and the bad guys are on the same learning curve, nobody has the upper hand at this point in time. Let's be frank, these adversaries are still being successful in compromising victims through phishing emails using stolen credentials, so the appetite from them in terms of learning more about AI from an adversary perspective is still very much in its infancy. There is a high cost in terms of learning it, and given the fact that they can still monetise unauthorised access via phishing emails, then they may opt against investing the time and money needed to learn about AI, but it will come at some stage, there is no doubt about that," said Monrad.

The new NIS2 directive has been designed to significantly reshape cybersecurity practices across EMEA in 2025.

Many independent analysts believe that many enterprises across the EMEA region may find difficulty in complying with this new directive.

However, Monrad believes the fact that the NIS2 has more scope is a good thing and thinks the fact that enterprises are being compelled to comply will accelerate better practices across the board.

"NIS2 obviously has a much wider scope than the initial NIS directive, and whilst it is covering more industries and organisations, I also think it is a much more

We also stress in the report that we are still a firm believer that all of this does require human oversight in what we do with AI, and how we apply it."

mature recognition of the value of digitalisation in our day-to-day life. A good example of that is the fact that NIS2 is also looking into what is critical for society and the economy, energy, transport, healthcare and public infrastructure are all areas that NIS2 is focusing heavily on. I think due to the expanded scope of the NIS2 directive, then there is that added layer of complexity with much stricter requirements for organisations. It is evident that organisations need to invest in people, processes and technologies to achieve a certain degree of compliance and naturally that is going to put stress on some organisations," said Monrad.

Monrad firmly believes that the new directive will deliver an uplift in terms of cybersecurity posture across the EMEA region.

"Some organisations will be asking how they can find these people, how can they retain them, and how can they provide education for them to ensure they are well trained and informed on new things emerging within the cybersecurity ecosystem? However, I do think that there is a major upside in the fact that it will enhance resilience, it undoubtedly drives an uplift in cybersecurity posture across the EMEA region because it will force organisations to get into line and mature themselves," said Monrad.

The Cybersecurity Forecast 2025 also regretfully highlighted that geopolitical tensions in Ukraine and the Middle East, which look unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, are going to 'drive' threat activity in 2025.

CNME asked Monrad what governments and large organizations need to do to in order to mitigate or prevent these types of cyberattacks?

"In 2016, NATO made an announcement that back then didn't really resonate very loudly if truth be told, when they said they were recognising cybercrime as a theatre for potential war and conflict. I think everything that we see in the cyberspace does contain some sort of geopolitical flavour to it. I think you have to look at it from an adversary perspective because there are certain benefits from attacking countries and organisations in the cyberspace domain as opposed to sending in troops on the ground. There is less risk and there is also a cost saving element attached to it also. Organisations today really do need to have a better grasp on what is happening geopolitically because we do see that it comes in different flavours within the cyber domain. You see countless examples in the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, when EU countries, or NATO members lend their support to one side of the conflict there is a response in the cyber domain, either through DDos attacks and so on, or something else," said Monrad.

Monrad concluded a brilliant interview by stressing the need for organisations to really invest time and energy into being more well versed and informed on geopolitical issues globally.

"The geopolitical agenda in today's climate will have a very big focus in cybersecurity, because we are so dependent on digital solutions, and as a society we are now so digitalised, so when these attacks happen then they can cause so much disruption. If you want to send a message, or really disrupt a country then there is a very cheap entry way to do it via cyberattacks. We are still trying to determine what the appropriate response is from a defence perspective to cyberattacks. As a cybersecurity community we are still trying to figure that out and navigate that challenge, so this is something that we will unfortunately will continue to see and it will require organisations to be much more informed on geopolitical affairs on a global scale," said Monrad. **cnme**

> **NIS2 obviously has a much wider scope than the initial NIS directive, and whilst it is covering more industries and organisations, I also think it is a much more mature recognition of the value of digitalisation in our day-to-day life."**

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ELECTRIFY EVERYTHING

CNME Editor Mark Forker sat down with **Rick Luebbe**, CEO and Co-Founder of Group14, to hear how his company is ushering in a new era of silicon batteries, and how the technology can power both the electrification movement globally, and be an enabler for AI technology.

Rick Luebbe is a US entrepreneur that has spent the last 20 years developing solutions and products that are designed to transform the energy sector.

In a decorated and distinguished career, Luebbe has established himself as a prominent business leader in the renewable energy space.

Prior to carving out a successful career as an entrepreneur, Luebbe served in the US military.

Nowadays, he is currently the CEO and Co-Founder of Group14, which is on a mission to 'electrify everything'.

Luebbe is a firm believer that silicon batteries will be the key cog in that electrification effort.

However, Luebbe began our conversation by giving a broader overview on his two decades in the energy industry, and the factors that led to the creation of Group14 in 2015.

"The parent company of Group 14 was called EnerG2. We founded EnerG2 back in 2003, and at the time my co-founders and I looked at a whole bunch of different business opportunities, and we recognised that being entrepreneurs consumes a lot of life energy, so we decided that we wanted to pour our life energy into something which we would feel really good about, win, lose, or draw. We just wanted to feel that we were pushing the ball in the right direction. This led us down the path of renewable energy, which in 2003, was well before the clean tech initiative kicked into gear. We looked at a number of different opportunities, but the first project that we really started to get excited about was hydrogen storage, which 20 years later is becoming popular again. In 2003, that was the next big thing and the prediction was that we were all going to be driving in hydrogen-powered vehicles by 2010," said Luebbe.

As Luebbe explained the science behind it was of a paper-based nature, which as it turned out was not going to work, but their technology platform was still able to be incredibly intuitive and innovative, which ultimately led them down the path towards silicon batteries.

"We were really excited about using synthetic nano carbons for storing hydrogen based on a paper nature. It turned out that the paper was debunked and wrong, but we didn't know that at the time. However, the technology platform was really interesting, and we did a lot with it. We made carbons for ultra-capacitors, and we made carbons for additives for elastic batteries to make them work better. Through that path we became very interested in improving the performance of lithium-ion batteries, and using our

The performance differential that you get with a silicon-based storage system over a traditional system is a gamechanger."

platform to make silicon work in batteries using this carbon platform. Once we realised just how effectively we could improve silicon performance, we took all our key resources and spun that out of EnerG2 and then sold EnerG2 to German chemical company BASF in 2016. That acquisition then led us down this concentrated path on silicon batteries, which has been brilliant for us," said Luebbe.

Luebbe conceded that when it comes to the electrification movement across the United States, there is rather inevitably some resistance to change, it is human nature after all for us to not like change.

However, as Luebbe explained, the fact that silicon batteries can generate up to 50% more energy than a traditional high-performance lithium-ion, means that in all reality it is a gamechanger for a lot of key industry verticals.

"Silicon battery technology became so compelling to us, and our mission, which is to electrify everything, became real. It's great to have support from governments and subsidies that are designed to accelerate electrification, but change is hard as we know. I believe the fact that silicon batteries are so compelling that it is going to happen anyway. The performance differential that you get with a silicon-based storage system over a traditional system is a gamechanger. Silicon batteries originally focused on providing more energy, and our technology can provide 50% more energy than traditional state-of-the-art high-performance lithium-ion batteries–that's really exciting for consumer electronic products, and for the aviation industry because range and weight really matters," said Luebbe.

Luebbe also added that in the last couple of years they have discovered that silicon batteries fundamentally charge fast.

"We have one customer that can go from 0-100% state of charge in 90 seconds, and that's unbelievable. In Dubai, Joby is establishing two Vertiports, and Joby will manage the charging system. If it's not a silicon-based charging system then those aircrafts may have to sit there for 5-6 hours to become fully charged, but if you can charge those planes in 5-6 minutes then it really enables the commercialisation of electric aviation. The energy benefits are awesome, but where I believe the fundamentally transformational element with silicon batteries will come is in their ability to enable fast charging," said Luebbe.

A major barrier in the mass adoption of electric vehicles, not only in the US, but across most key markets globally is the issue of 'charge anxiety.

Again, as Luebbe points out, a solution to all these issues are silicon-based charging systems.

"The major stumbling block in the EV adoption marketplace is charging. I drive an EV, and I love it, and it's a big robust vehicle that can do 0-100 in 3 seconds, but if I want to charge it, then it takes around 45 minutes. This is far too long for the average consumer. The average fuel stop in the United States is 8 minutes. Charge anxiety is the primary inhibitor in the electrification of transportation, but if we can get that charge time down to less than the current stop time for internal combustion then that anxiety goes away completely. In addition to this, if you can get a car in and out of a charging system in 5 minutes then you don't need as many chargers, and a reduction in infrastructure also translates to a reduction in overall investment costs.

Considering everything Luebbe has outlined about silicon batteries, it begs the question as to why there hasn't been mass adoption of silicon batteries. As Luebbe explains, there is a constraint when it comes to silicon materials, but that will soon change when their purpose-built factories kick into full operation.

"The only constraint in why there hasn't been a mass adoption of silicon batteries is the availability of silicon battery materials. We're the most advanced when it comes to other companies operating in the silicon battery space, and we're building a factory in Moses Lake in Washington State, which we expect to come online in Q1. That factory's initial annual capacity will be about 2,000 tons or 10 GWh of silicon battery material, which translates into around 100,000-200,000 EVs per-year. We have a commercial facility for consumer electronics, but it can only make about 2% of what the factory in Moses Lake is going to deliver. Our material is already in millions of cell phones because obviously they don't require as much material or as big a battery as an EV does. The factory we're building is really what is required to drive the transformation that is needed. In the meantime, we have a joint-venture factory with SK in South Korea which is similar to the one we are constructing in Moses Lake. That joint venture factory began shipping in August 2024. The silicon battery era is just beginning with these facilities that are capable of providing enough material for those who want to move to a silicon strategy," said Luebbe.

Luebbe said that the silicon battery era only really began in September 2024, but he can see a demand for the technology from the huge volume of customers they have already acquired.

"We have over 110 customers currently in qualification, so virtually everyone in the industry, and that is for two reasons. One, the material works, and it really does improve battery performance significantly. And we are the only ones that can produce at the kind of scale needed to get to that breadth of customer base. Our technology is a complete drop-in for current battery manufacturers, so it is very easy to switch from traditional to lithium-ion, and it processes the same that graphite does today. For example, let's say Tesla has a 30-hour gigawatt factory in Nevada, they could theoretically switch to a silicon-based anode overnight and get a 50% improvement in energy density in those cells. If we can improve the cell by 50% then we have increased the capacity of that factory from a 30 gigawatt-hour to a 45 gigawatt-hour factory, with no CAPEX. There are also huge benefits from a cost perspective, so all-in-all it's a gamechanger and a no-brainer to pursue a silicon-

Charge anxiety is the primary inhibitor in the electrification of transportation, but if we can get that charge time down to less than the current stop time for internal combustion then that anxiety goes away completely."

based battery approach," said Luebbe.

AI is the name of the game, and feels like in many ways is the only currency in town.

It is dominating the tech landscape, but Luebbe believes that silicon batteries can also be an enabler in the AI era.

"Silicon could be an enabling technology for AI. We know that the new AI models consume a lot of energy. At the consumer device level, our material is now powering AI-enabled smartphones made by Honor in China. These AI-enabled chips consume a lot more power, and the dilemma is that you don't want to trade one feature for another, so there's no point having these AI-powered chips if you can only run your phone for 10 hours as opposed to 18 hours, consumers don't want that.

Silicon batteries give more energy density in the cell and they don't have to make the battery bigger as a result, and now they can balance that run time with this new AI capability, and deliver the same user experience for the consumer. That's one of the really attractive aspects of a silicon battery in consumer electronics," said Luebbe.

In addition to this, he concluded a brilliant exchange by outlining how silicon can be a remedy to the issues facing AI-powered datacentres globally.

"AI-powered datacentres require huge peaks of power when they are going through a specific processing surge. In order to accommodate these

peaks, datacentres have to leave a whole bunch of excess power effectively on standby in order to absorb those peaks. What that essentially means is that they can't put as many servers in that datacentre as they would like, and as a result almost every single datacentre is power constrained. One of the advantages of silicon batteries is that they charge fast as we talked about, but they also discharge fast too. So now you can put in at the rack level silicon batteries to absorb those power peaks, and that will enable your datacentre to have more capacity and get more utility out of that infrastructure," concluded Luebbe.

The only constraint in why there hasn't been a mass adoption of silicon batteries is the availability of silicon battery materials."

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Streamlined
Road Operation

ENABLING SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

CNME Editor Mark Forker sat down with **Moussalam Dalati**, General Manager of Middle East, Africa and France at Liferay, in a bid to better understand the mission statement of the company and how its Digital Experience Platform was empowering its clients to deliver seamless and frictionless customer experiences.

Moussalam Dalati has been a major force in the success of Liferay across the Middle East and Africa marketplace over the last number of years.

Dalati has spent the last 20 years in the technology sector, and has developed a reputation for being an astute business leader with a candid ability to help organisations leverage the capabilities of disruptive technologies to transform the way their business operates.

In a world that is completely digitalised, the only currency in circulation is that of customer experience.

Many commentators have said we now live in an 'experience economy' – and due to our dependence on all things digital, our tolerance for poor interactions with

an application, or a service is extremely low, so if companies want to stay relevant and competitive then customer experience is the only show in town.

Liferay has positioned itself as a real leader when it comes to delivering digital transformation for their customers across the Middle East region.

The jewel in their crown is the Digital Experience Platform (DXP) that has been credited with being a huge catalyst in your success.

Dalati kickstarted the conversation by elaborating on what the unique capabilities of the DXP are.

"Liferay DXP is an all-in-one platform, encompassing content management, digital experience management, portal, B2B commerce and integration capabilities. This eliminates the need for multiple point solutions. DXP is built on a robust open-source foundation, and offers flexibility, customization, and a large and active community for support and innovation. Liferay DXP prioritizes customer experiences by providing tools for personalized interactions, omnichannel engagement, and data-driven decision making. It seamlessly integrates with various enterprise systems and technologies, enabling businesses to leverage existing investments," said Dalati.

Dalati added that the company believes in continuous innovation, and that it is simply not in their nature to stand still and rest on their laurels. He also stressed that their mission statement as an organization was to deliver what he described as 'exceptional' digital experiences.

"Liferay consistently invests in research and development, introducing

Liferay DXP prioritizes customer experiences by providing tools for personalized interactions, omnichannel engagement, and data-driven decision making."
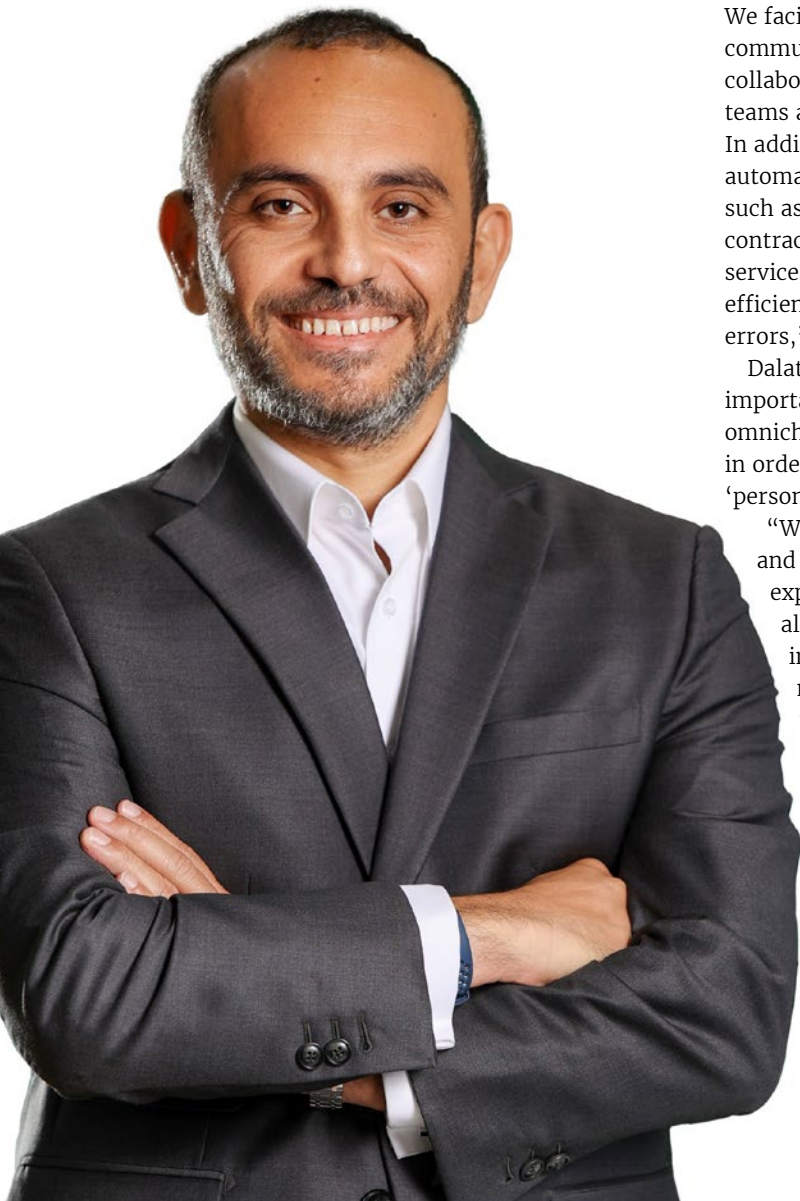
new features and capabilities to address evolving customer needs and market trends. Our mission is to empower organizations to create exceptional digital experiences that connect with their customers, drive business growth, and transform their operations. We want to build strong customer relationships by delivering personalized and engaging digital experiences. We want to drive business growth by leveraging digital channels to reach new markets and increase revenue," said Dalati.

Liferay has drawn acclaim from independent analysts for its ability to deliver 'seamless digital experiences'.

Dalati explained how Liferay harnesses technology to remove the friction that traditionally exists from a B2B, or B2C perspective.

"We create tailored experiences for different customer segments, partners, and employees, offering relevant information and streamlined workflows. We facilitate seamless communication and collaboration among internal teams and external partners. In addition to this, we automate routine tasks, such as order processing, contract management, and service requests, improving efficiency and reducing errors," said Dalati.

Dalati highlighted the importance of fostering that omnichannel engagement in order to deliver that 'personalized' experience.

"We deliver consistent and personalized experiences across all touchpoints, including websites, mobile apps, social media, and physical stores. We leverage data to provide relevant product recommendations and personalized offers, enhancing customer satisfaction and driving conversions. We guide customers through every stage of their journey, from initial discovery to purchase and beyond, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience," said Dalati.

One other feature of Liferay's product portfolio that has garnered significant praise is their low-code development capabilities.

Dalati explained how Liferay DXP empowers and enables teams to build and tailor solutions rapidly without compromising on quality, or scalability.

"Liferay DXP's low-code capabilities empower teams to build and tailor solutions rapidly without compromising on quality or scalability by allowing them to do more with less coding. Imagine building applications without writing a single line of code! Liferay lets you do just that. You can configure and customize many aspects of your digital experiences through simple point-and-click interfaces. This means less reliance on IT and faster time to market for your projects. From collecting data to automating approvals, Liferay simplifies complex workflows. You can easily create forms, track progress, and ensure tasks are completed efficiently. This boosts productivity and improves operational efficiency. Liferay seamlessly connects with other systems you already use. This eliminates the need for separate systems and ensures data consistency across your organization. In essence, Liferay's low-code approach

empowers your teams to be more agile and innovative. You can quickly adapt to changing business needs and deliver solutions that meet your specific requirements without the complexities of traditional development," said Dalati.

At CNME, we have highlighted the ongoing issue of legacy infrastructure for many established players.

Dalati explained how Liferay ensures that integration is both a seamless and painless process, by documenting the steps they take to remove the complexity that is

traditionally involved in these types of integrations.

"Liferay focuses on making integrations with existing systems as smooth as possible by using industry-standard technologies. We support common integration methods like APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and web services. This means it can easily connect to most existing systems, regardless of their age or specific technology.

For many popular systems, Liferay offers ready-to-use connectors. This significantly reduces the time and effort required to establish a connection. Liferay provides tools that allow businesses to integrate systems with minimal coding. This empowers business users to be more involved in the integration process and accelerates the overall timeline. We design its integrations to minimize

Liferay empowers organizations to leverage the power of AI by seamlessly integrating with existing AI/ML models and services."

disruption to end-users. This means a consistent and familiar user experience across all integrated systems. By focusing on these key areas, Liferay aims to simplify the integration process and minimize the complexity often associated with connecting to legacy systems. This allows businesses to leverage their existing investments while modernizing their digital experiences," said Dalati.

Liferay DXP is now fully available on the Google Cloud Marketplace, Dalati outlined the significance of this in terms of their expansion across the Middle East region.

"In alignment with Saudi Arabia's Cloud First Policy, which prioritizes cloud computing for accelerated digital transformation, Liferay's DXP is available on Google Cloud Marketplace as the only DXP fully available with all its functionalities in the Kingdom. It facilitates a convenient deployment option, leveraging the robust infrastructure of Google Cloud Platform (GCP) in Saudi Arabia, in line with Liferay's commitment to scale digital experiences and accelerate digital transformation efforts. This of course also applies to Qatar and Kuwait where Google Cloud is also present," said Dalati.

Dalati highlighted some of the benefits that Liferay DXP on Google Cloud Marketplace offers to businesses.

"The streamlined setup and automated deployments for quicker time-to-market.

We can also leverage Google Cloud's scalable infrastructure for optimal performance and we can benefit from Google Cloud's advanced security features. We can optimize costs with flexible pricing models and reduced infrastructure needs and easily integrate with other Google Cloud services. The ability to offer our DXP solution through the partnership with Google Cloud is a natural consequence of our decision to use Google Cloud's world-class infrastructure and technology. Our joint customers will be able to build digital experience solutions that meet the unique needs of their entire business on one platform, backed by the most reliable and innovative cloud provider," said Dalati.

AI is everywhere, and the momentum behind things like Generative AI shows no signs of slowing down, especially with Wall Street now betting big on it.

Dalati concluded a wonderful exchange by explaining to our readers the approach Liferay takes to AI, and how businesses can adopt the technology and infuse it into their own products in a seamless fashion using Liferay DXP.

"Liferay empowers organizations to leverage the power of AI by seamlessly integrating with existing AI/ML models and services. This "bring your own AI" approach allows businesses to harness the latest advancements in artificial intelligence without being constrained by vendor lock-in or the need for in-house AI expertise. Liferay's robust integration capabilities enable organizations to connect their existing AI models (developed in-house or by third-party providers) with their digital experiences, unlocking new levels of personalization, automation, and insights. Liferay DXP also has a number of AI capabilities that can be used to accelerate content creation, streamline operations, and deliver context-intelligent assistance. These AI capabilities include AI-powered content creation, AI-assisted tools, and AI insights. We utilize AI and machine learning to analyze data and predict customer behavior, enabling proactive decision-making and improved business outcomes. Liferay actively explores and integrates emerging AI technologies, such as generative AI, into its platform to provide cutting-edge capabilities to its customers," concluded Dalati.

Liferay DXP's low-code capabilities empower teams to build and tailor solutions rapidly without compromising on quality or scalability by allowing them to do more with less coding."

STARGATE ENTERPRISE

CNME Editor Mark Forker examines all the major tech announcements that were made in January, as 2025 started with a bang! Meta, Musk and Trump have been making the headlines, and then just when the sea had started to settle somewhat, along came China's DeepSeek, which caused a tsunami in the AI world.

Phew! It has been quite the whirlwind start to 2025 across the global technology landscape.

At times it has been hard to keep track of everything that has happened in January!

First up to the oche was Meta, who ended third-party fact checking on its platform, newly-elected US President Donald Trump then announced a gargantuan AI project in the form of a new company called Stargate, with some of the biggest tech leaders from the technology industry.

Then if that wasn't enough, China then showed their hand in the AI arms race with Hangzhou-based start-up DeepSeek releasing versions of their Open AI Large Language Models, built at a fraction of the cost of ChatGPT, which caused shockwaves within the industry, and financially on Wall Street.

For this month's front cover feature, CNME Editor Mark Forker takes a closer look at the announcements that got the tech world into a frenzied state.

WHAT'S THE META WITH YOU?

The year was only a week old when Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg controversially announced that it was ending its third-party fact checking program.

Zuckerberg claimed the motivating factors behind his decision was a desire for the platform to get back to its 'roots around free expression'.

Many seen it as a play to curry favour to the incoming US President Donald Trump.

Those in the conservative movement seen it as a victory for 'free speech'.

Zuckerberg said that the third-party fact checking program it had in operation was politically biased, and as a result, was censoring too many people.

Zuckerberg said, "The intention of the program was to have these independent experts give people more information about the things they see online, particularly viral hoaxes, so they were able to judge for themselves what they saw and read. That's not the way things played out, especially in the United States. Experts, like everyone else, have their own biases and perspectives. This showed up in the choices some made about what to fact check and how. Over time we ended up with too much content being fact checked that people would understand to be legitimate political speech and debate. Our system then attached real consequences in the form of intrusive labels and reduced distribution. A program intended to inform too often became a tool to censor," said Zuckerberg.

Meta have opted to adopt the Community Notes model used by X, formerly known as Twitter, which is now owned and operated by Elon Musk.

Zuckerberg said he was encouraged by how the Community Notes model on X empowered communities to decide which posts were misleading and needed more context, and give users more autonomy.

Whilst conservatives activists seen it as victory, many including members of Meta's Oversight Board expressed their concerns about how the decision to abandon the third-party fact checking program would impact minorities.

Former Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, who is a member of Meta's oversight board, told the BBC she welcomed aspects of the shake-up, which will see users decide about the accuracy of posts as aforementioned above via X-style Community Notes.

However, she also said there were "huge problems" with what had been announced, including the potential impact on the LGBTQ+ community, as well as gender and trans rights.

"We are seeing many instances where hate speech can lead to real-life harm, so we will be watching that space very carefully," said Thorning-Schmidt.

For now, the removal of the third-party fact checking program is being rolled out exclusively in the US, but if the Community Notes model is a success on the Meta platform, then a global removal of the fact checking program will be imminent.

Many commentators believe the removal of such checks and balances around information has triggered a race to the bottom.

THE STARGATE ENTERPRISE

Donald Trump was officially inaugurated as US President for a 2nd time on January 20th, and he wasted no time in setting out his bold and ambitious plans as part of his efforts to deliver on his campaign message of 'make America great again'.

Central to Trump's geopolitical and economic aspirations is AI.

The first notable announcement made by Trump, a few weeks shy of his official inauguration was the news that UAE-based Damac Properties was investing $20bn in US datacentres.

The investment will primarily focus on building new datacentres across several states, including Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, Ohio, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, and Indiana.

This $20 billion investment by DAMAC Properties is expected to transform the datacentre landscape in the United States.

The datacentres will support artificial intelligence and cloud services, providing a significant boost to the U.S. data infrastructure. Trump emphasized that this investment was inspired by his election victory, highlighting the positive impact of his administration's policies on attracting foreign investment.

In terms of who the main players are, SoftBank is funding it, OpenAI is leading it, and Oracle, NVIDIA and Microsoft are powering the technology behind all of it."

Then just a day after his inauguration in Washington, Trump announced a new $500 billion AI initiative, Stargate.

The primary objective of Stargate is to position the United States at the very forefront of AI development and give them the upper hand in its AI arms race with China.

Trump made the announcement alongside Softbank CEO Masayoshi Son, Oracle Co-Founder and CTO Larry Ellison, and OpenAI's Sam Altman.

It's a staggering investment, and key technology partners in the new US company include NVIDIA, Microsoft and Arm, which is owned by SoftBank.

A key figure in Trump's re-election campaign was tech tycoon and serial entrepreneur Elon Musk.

He has been labelled as

Trump's 'first buddy' and has been tasked with the responsibility of leading the Department of Government Efficiency.

However, Musk took to his social media platform to express his scepticism on Project Stargate, which sparked a war of words with his former friend and now foe Sam Altman.

Musk questioned the legitimacy of the funding behind Stargate, saying that he had information from reliable sources that SoftBank had well under $10 billion in secured funds.

Altman hit back on X saying Musk was wrong, and that just because the investment announced may not be the most optimal thing for Musk and his companies, he declared that it was great news for the United States.

Altman said, "Wrong, as you surely know. Want to come and visit the first site already under way? This is great for the country. I realise what is great for the country isn't always what's optimal for your companies, but in your new role, I hope you'll mostly put (America) first," tweeted Altman.

Musk co-founded OpenAI with Altman in 2015, however, he walked away from the company in 2018, after a big fallout with Altman over the direction of the company and he has also filed a lawsuit against OpenAI.

It is interesting considering Musk is such an ally of Trump, that the US President would make Altman front and centre of his bid for global AI dominance.

There has been a huge amount of commentary on Project Stargate, and all the subplots being played out behind the scenes, but in a nutshell, here is what you need to know.

What is Project Stargate – and what is its main objective?

The primary objective of Stargate is to build state-of-the-art AI data centres that are 10x faster, and will be run on renewable energy.

Who are the major players in the project?

In terms of who the main players are, SoftBank is funding it, OpenAI is leading it, and Oracle, NVIDIA and Microsoft are powering the technology behind all of it.

Why is it important?

AI is the future.

The project hopes to create over 100,000 new jobs, fuel innovation in industries such as healthcare, and tackle head on the issue of compute power in AI.

DEEPSEEKING MISSILE

Then if that wasn't quite enough, before January ended, there were more shockwaves in the tech ecosystem following the launch of Chinese start-up DeepSeek's AI models.

It saw some tech stocks take

notable nosedives on Wall Street.

US chipmaker Nvidia saw its market capitalisation drop by over $500 billion on January 27.

The new AI models took many by surprise, and whilst there was praise in abundance from many, there were also many commentators who expressed security concerns over DeepSeek.

Again, here's what we know.

Why is DeepSeek causing a stir?

The release of OpenAI's ChatGPT in late 2022 caused a scramble among Chinese tech firms, who rushed to create their own chatbots powered by artificial intelligence.

The two models that have been showered with praise by Silicon Valley executives and U.S. tech company engineers alike, DeepSeek-V3 and DeepSeek-R1, are on par with OpenAI and Meta's most advanced models, the Chinese start-up has said.

They are also cheaper to use. The DeepSeek-R1, released last week, is 20 to 50 times cheaper to use than OpenAI o1 model, depending on the task, according to a post on DeepSeek's official WeChat account.

But some have publicly expressed scepticism about DeepSeek's success story.

> **The primary objective of Stargate is to position the United States at the very forefront of AI development and give them the upper hand in its AI arms race with China."**

What are the major players saying?

Elon Musk is not convinced at all with China's AI chatbot DeepSeek that rattled the US tech market and wiped-out billions from them. The Tesla CEO remains skeptical about DeepSeek. Musk doubts DeepSeek's claims of using only 10,000 GPUs, agreeing with concerns expressed by Scale AI CEO Alexandr Wang about US export controls, and dismissing the start-up's success as overstated.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman praised DeepSeek's AI models on the X platform.

"It's a very good model. We will produce better models, but we will maintain less of a lead than we did in previous years."

Altman also declared his plans to fast-track product releases and DeepSeek somewhat undermined the presumed dominance and lead that Silicon Valley had in the global AI arms race.

In addition to this, Altman also tweeted on X that DeepSeek's model was impressive, particularly around what they're able to deliver for the price.

"We will obviously deliver much better models, and also it's legitimately invigorating to have a new competitor," said Altman.

Since those tweets Altman has said that OpenAI is on the 'wrong side of history' and needs a new open-source strategy following the release by DeepSeek.

Altman made the comments during an Ask me Anything session on Reddit, but he also acknowledged that not everyone at OpenAI shares his view.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg conceded that DeepSeek had provided him with some new 'novel' ideas that he'd like to emulate, but the releases haven't deterred him from his plans to invest billions into Meta's AI infrastructure.

During a Q4 earnings call, Zuckerberg said the fact that DeepSeek's model is open-source is proof that Meta's decision to make its Llama AI technology open-source was the right move.

"There's going to be an open-source standard globally, and I think that for our own national advantage it's important that it's an American standard. The recent news has only strengthened our conviction that this is the right thing to be focused on," said Zuckerberg.

These are interesting times to say the least.

A day doesn't seem to go by without another influential tech player, an administration, or a powerful individual making another power play in the world of AI.

All the evidence would suggest this race has only just begun, and in the famous words of Bachman Turner-Overdrive – 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet'.

There's going to be an open-source standard globally, and I think that for our own national advantage it's important that it's an American standard."

Veeam Software

SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE

Dave Russell, Senior Vice President, Head of Strategy at Veeam Software, discusses the challenges of keeping data both safe and easily accessible in an exclusive expert op-ed for January's edition of CNME.

Keeping data both safe and easily accessible has been a challenge for organisations since, well, since the first paper file was stored away. Admittedly, over the last couple of decades, this has become much trickier to navigate – digitisation means the sheer amount of data collected, stored, and used has grown exponentially. And now, we're seeing another data growth spurt due to widespread AI adoption.

Meanwhile, governments worldwide are doing their best to keep up, introducing growing levels of data regulations seemingly every year. This puts organisations under increased pressure to ensure data resilience as they get to grips with this new age of AI. They've been left to walk a tightrope between ensuring that data is usable for business use while also keeping it secure and resilient, in line with evolving regulations.

DUDE, WHERE'S MY DATA?

With the widely acclaimed promise of AI, the demands on enterprise data have never been greater – requiring it to be accurate, accessible, and usable at all times. While the initial excitement around generative AI has quietened, organisations are now adopting the technology in earnest to unlock increased business value from all that existing data. According to the latest McKinsey Global Survey on AI, 65% of respondents worldwide reported that their organisations are regularly using AI. But what does this mean for data resilience?

Well, it's no secret that AI relies on data. Some would say the more data the better, but the wiser approach is the more accurate and relevant data, the better. While some AI applications might only need to be trained once, most require live access to a data pool to analyse and react to changes in real time. Any inaccuracies or inconsistencies in data across an organisation can quickly render AI's output useless. As the adage goes: garbage in, garbage out. Of course, it's important to be careful about what data you feed the beast, namely any sensitive, mission-critical or customer data. There's very much still a balance to be figured out as more and more organisations embrace AI.

What should help organisations strike this balance is the wave of regulations demanding greater data resilience and responsibility both in AI and more broadly. These regulations, including NIS2 and the EU AI Act, have all placed increased responsibility on organisations to ensure data security, and rightly so. The new wave of data regulation focuses largely on extending the line of custody that organisations have on their data, requiring them to

" NIS2 and the EU AI Act, have all placed increased responsibility on organisations to ensure data security, and rightly so."

consider how it will be secured when plugged into AI and other new technologies. When data was originally collected and stored, organisations likely didn't have AI on their radar, let alone consider how their data might be used in such technologies. While these new considerations fall primarily under the responsibility of chief information governance teams, achieving compliance with AI-related regulations will require effort across the entire organisation. And this is all while ensuring that relevant teams have access to the data they need to innovate and grow.

NO NEED TO THROW AWAY THE KEY

So, at the moment, organisations are starting to walk the tightrope between ensuring a suitable speed of access to data while also maintaining data resilience in line with evolving regulations. While this might seem like a herculean task, it is the same problem that organisations have been tackling for years, just with a new set of systems and circumstances.

This challenge never ends, it just evolves. The principles stay the same, but the technology, the environments, and the scale keep changing. According to the Veeam Data Protection Trends Report 2024, 76% of organisations recognise a 'Protection Gap' between how much data they can afford to lose and how often their data is protected. That sounds like a big gap, but it's been getting smaller in recent years. With AI creating and needing exponentially more data as it evolves, however, this gap could start to widen unless action is taken.

Collaboration between teams, from data governance to security IT and production has always been, and continues to be, essential to staying on top of data resilience. Working together to create a new set of business risk assessments will lead the way forward for organisations working with data in AI models.

Despite the additional work it brings for organisations, these regulations are perfectly timed to coincide with this AI boom as they demand a re-evaluation of data security practices. But, organisations shouldn't be reliant on new regulations to prompt this. Monitoring and adjusting risk levels should be a regular, ongoing process, especially when a new technology such as AI comes into the picture.

TWO BIRDS, ONE BACKUP

Ultimately, as in so many cases, it comes back to data backups. Already a key aspect of modern data regulation in its own right, they will play a larger role in AI-specific regulation in the future. It will provide those teams developing AI and LLMs a much-needed anchor in a constantly changing environment.

Not only do they ensure that data remains accurate, secure, and usable at all times but they can also provide a comprehensive record for organisations to prove their adherence to regulations. An invaluable source of truth when dealing with AI as its very nature makes it difficult to account for how exactly it has used the data it's been fed or trained on. But, by using data backups, organisations can account for the security of their data at any given time, no matter where it's being used.

Of course, total security can never be fully achieved when dealing with data and there will always be a weighing up of risk and reward for organisations. But, with quality data backups, you can be assured that you've got a safety net to, well, fall back on.

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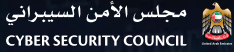
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IntelliSoft

REAL-TIME INSIGHTS

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Shashank Pincha**, CTIO at IntelliSoft, to learn more about its SAP partner solution – autoX on RISE with SAP S/4HANA, the benefits it provides to automotive and commercial equipment dealers and OEM's who adopt the technology, the success of its projects in Dubai and Oman – and the feedback they have received from clients that have implemented the autoX solution.

Can you give our readers a broader overview of the capabilities provided by IntelliSoft's autoX on RISE with SAP S/4HANA, and explain how this next–generation automotive and commercial equipment application enhances operational efficiency?

IntelliSoft's autoX on RISE with SAP S/4HANA is a comprehensive solution designed to streamline operations for Automotive Dealers and OEMs across Vehicle Sales, Parts Sales, and After-Sales. Our solution empowers dealers and OEMs to implement best practices, covering all aspects from procurement to billing. This includes marketing, vehicle procurement with yard management, vehicle inventory, and sales with in–house financing. Our solution enhances after-sales services, enabling dealers and OEMs to provide exceptional customer experience. It offers efficient business processes throughout the customer journey, including workshop loading. Furthermore, autoX offers end-to-end processes for Leasing and Rental operations.

autoX assists automotive dealers in their digital transformation journey through digital sales channels and paperless operations. Automotive dealers can cater to tech-savvy consumers by offering vehicle sales through their website, digital showrooms, and mobile apps. The solution also improves the experience for corporate customers by providing a dedicated parts dealer portal. Our solution integrates a high level of automation in daily operations, which minimizes manual data entry and improves overall operational efficiency.

Can you explain the architecture of autoX and how it is designed to be intuitive and efficient for users with varying levels of technical expertise?

autoX, available on the SAP Store, is built on the robust SAP S/4HANA digital platform, offering real-time insights and simplified business process management. At its core, the SAP HANA in-memory database enables rapid data processing and surpasses traditional ERP systems. autoX eliminates the need for multiple applications as it offers end-to-end processes required for Automotive dealerships and OEMs.

The user interface is based on SAP's intuitive browser-based Fiori UI, ensuring ease of use for users with varied technical expertise. Leveraging the SAP S/4HANA digital platform, autoX enables automotive dealers and OEMs to benchmark on SAP's technology innovations across Artificial Intelligence
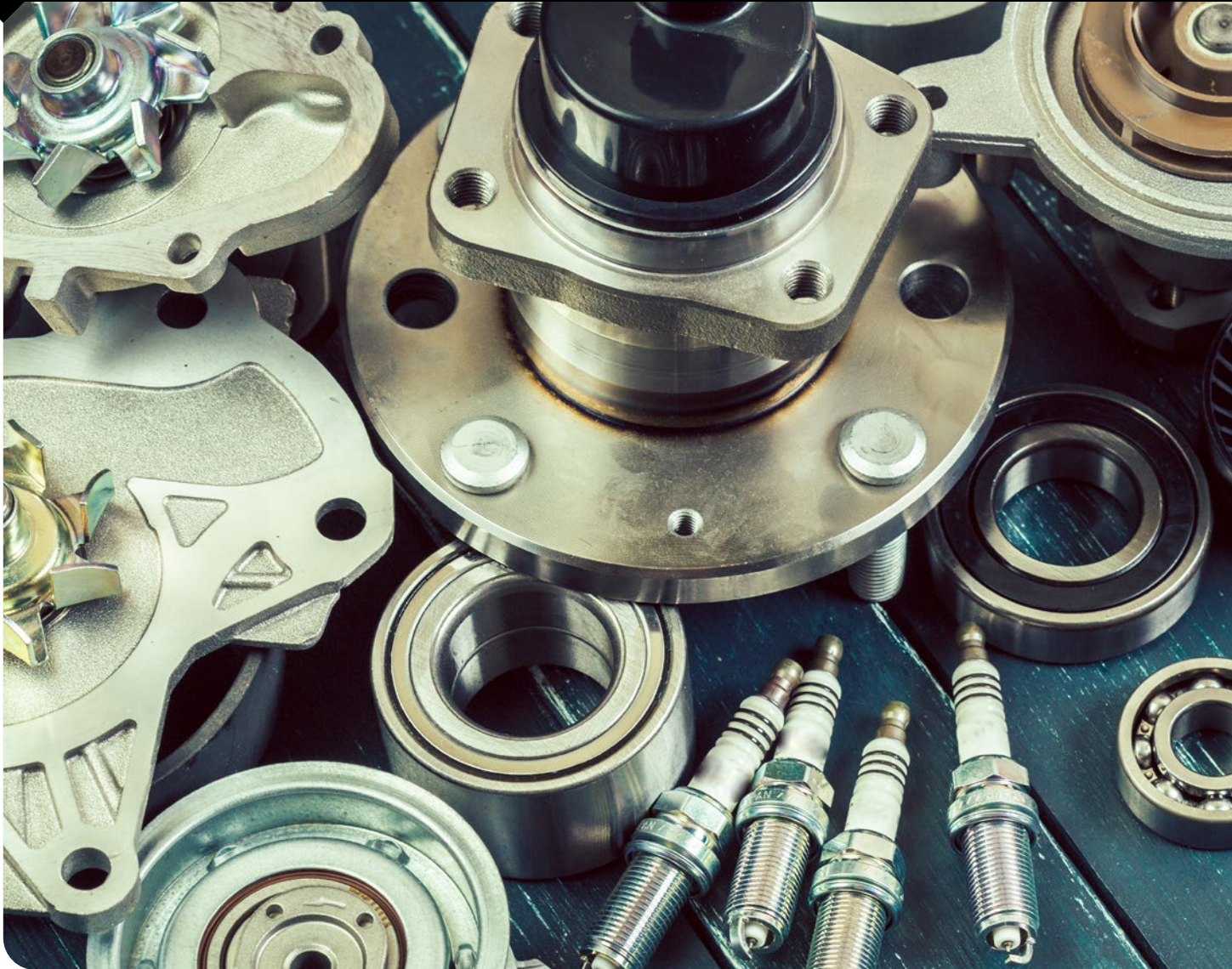
& Machine Learning, which are embedded and integrated through the SAP Business Technology Platform. Further, autoX is packaged with matured mobility, commerce, & embedded analytics, enhancing the end-user experience and self-service capabilities through an omnichannel interface.

What are the major benefits and impact of implementing autoX in Automotive dealers and OEMs for those who seek greater autonomy, flexibility, and customer experience?

autoX empowers automotive organizations to engage prospects effectively, expand revenue streams, achieve operational excellence, and maximize customer satisfaction. The solution streamlines workflows and facilitates informed decision-making, enabling dealers and OEMs to capitalize

S/4HANA Private Cloud Edition provides exceptional flexibility to adapt to the changing business needs of dealers and OEMs on a digital platform.

The solution connects consumers more effectively to the digital platform through multiple communication channels,

autoX stands out by offering an integrated application that addresses end-to-end needs of Automotive Dealers & OEMs, enhancing agility and efficiency while establishing a strong foundation for business growth."

including Email, SMS, Chatbot, WhatsApp, and Push Notifications. These channels facilitate closer customer interaction, resulting in shorter sales cycles and an enhanced customer experience, ultimately leading to improved retention.

What is your opinion about automotive dealership landscape in the region?
The automotive landscape is undergoing a transformative shift, driven by changing customer expectations and the influx of new players in the market. Today, the focus has moved beyond merely the brands that dealerships offer; the key differentiator is the overall customer experience. With an ever-expanding list of options available to customers, dealerships that invest in digital platforms are better positioned to deliver exceptional service, fostering customer loyalty and retention.

Conversely, dealerships that continue to rely on outdated legacy systems face significant challenges. These systems can hinder responsiveness, limit personalization, and lead to customer dissatisfaction. As a result, we are likely to see a wave of consolidation in the dealership sector, as those unable to adapt will struggle to keep pace with more technologically savvy competitors. There is also a growing trend of OEMs pursuing direct sales strategies when dealers fail to adopt digitalization.

Looking ahead to the next five years, the landscape will be shaped by the dealers who embrace innovative technologies. The dealers must ensure the selection of the right technology and partner in line with the long-term goals of the organization.

Can you tell our readers about the incredible success of your recent Go-Lives?
We recently supported Al Habtoor Motors, UAE, and Oman Trading Establishments, Oman, with the adoption of autoX on the RISE with SAP S/4HANA digital platform. Both organizations are already reaping the benefits of their transition into the digital era. Building on these successes, Towell Auto Center, Oman, has selected autoX for its own digital transformation journey. Our pipeline remains exceptionally strong, and we anticipate announcing several new deals in the near future.

What sort of response and feedback has there been regarding the impact following the implementation of the solution from clients?

The feedback after implementing autoX has been overwhelmingly positive. Our clients, empowered by SAP S/4HANA, report significant improvements in engaging prospects across multiple channels and providing timely information. Internal processes have become much simpler, as many manual tasks have been eliminated thanks to the automation provided by autoX.

The customer journey, from initial engagement to closure, is significantly faster, resulting in higher customer satisfaction. With the existing infrastructure, workshops can service and repair a greater number of vehicles. The introduction of both B2B and B2C channels has driven revenue growth, positively affecting the top line. Improved operational control has also reduced revenue leakages, benefiting the bottom line.

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Weblib

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

CNME Editor Mark Forker spoke to **Sebastien Bloch**, Vice President of Sales at Weblib, to learn how the connectivity solutions provider is leveraging their broad portfolio of solutions and services to accelerate the digital transformation objectives of their partners in a bid for them to meet the heightened expectations of customers in the current experience economy.

Sebastien Bloch is an experienced sales leader in the technology industry, and he has been credited with the rapid growth of Weblib across the Middle East region.

Bloch is the Vice President of Sales at Weblib, a company he joined in 2014.

Weblib is an innovation powerhouse that prides itself on its ability to 'connect spaces.

Their expertise ranges from Wi-Fi marketing to mobile device management and their mission statement is to empower international brands to engage with their customers and stay relevant in the digital age.

Over the past decade Bloch has earned a reputation for being an astute sales professional with expertise in developing an agile distribution model that is designed to maximise their channel partners.

This has been evidenced by their success over the last number of years across the EMEA region.

Weblib operate in a saturated marketplace, but according to Bloch what differentiates the company is the flexibility and scalability that their cloud-based platform can provide.

"At Weblib, we help businesses stay ahead by leveraging the latest in cloud technologies, data analytics, and secure authentication solutions. Our cloud-based platforms offer scalability and flexibility, while advanced analytics help businesses extract actionable insights. In addition to this, we prioritise security with robust authentication mechanisms, ensuring safe and seamless access to systems and data. This approach enables our customers to protect sensitive information while staying competitive in an ever-evolving digital landscape," said Bloch.

It has been well documented that one of the biggest challenges facing any technology company in today's digital world is to meet ever-evolving consumer expectations.

Bloch detailed some of

Our partnership with Westcon-Comstor is central to our channel-first sales philosophy, and we're confident that it will play a crucial role in expanding our presence across the Middle East."

the measures and practices adopted by Weblib in an effort to ensure that they stay close to their customers and partners.

"At Weblib, we understand that consumer expectations are constantly evolving, and staying close to our customers and partners is essential to meeting these demands. Our dedicated R&D and product teams work tirelessly to develop new features and innovations, ensuring our solutions remain at the forefront of technology. For example, over the past year, we've rolled out more than 1,000 new features across our product portfolio. Through regular feedback loops and close collaboration with customers, we continuously adapt and refine our offerings to meet their changing needs. By staying agile and responsive, we ensure our products evolve in line with market demands and help our customers maintain a competitive edge. Weblib emphasizes on personalized partner onboarding and

enablement along with dedicated customer support, ensuring customers feel supported at every stage of their journey," said Bloch.

Weblib has garnered widespread acclaim from a whole host of independent analysts and technology commentators for their Smart Wi-Fi solution.

Bloch outlined in detail what makes their Smart Wi-Fi solutions so unique.

"Weblib's Smart Wi-Fi solution stands out by combining high-performance connectivity with intelligent management tools to offer seamless, reliable Wi-Fi experiences. What makes our solution unique is its ability to automatically optimise network performance based on real-time data, ensuring users always have fast and

uninterrupted access. Beyond connectivity, our Smart Wi-Fi includes powerful marketing tools that enable businesses to engage customers directly. These tools allow for customised splash pages, targeted promotions, and real-time analytics, helping businesses not only improve the user experience but also drive customer engagement and loyalty," said Bloch.

Another key capability of Weblib's Smart Wi-Fi solution is in relation to its compatibility with most of the leading Wi-Fi vendors, and highlighted how its Ucopia Apps Connect solution is really resonating with customers.

"Our Smart Wi-Fi is compatible with most Wi-Fi vendors, offering seamless integration into existing infrastructures. On top of that, we've developed Ucopia Apps Connect, which allows customers to connect directly

to the network through their own application, further enhancing ease of use and personalisation. Scalable and adaptable, Weblib's Smart Wi-Fi provides businesses with a future-proof solution that grows with their needs," said Bloch.

There is a swathe of opportunities emerging across the Middle East region, especially in the KSA, UAE and Qatar.

Weblib have made progress

At Weblib, we help businesses stay ahead by leveraging the latest in cloud technologies, data analytics, and secure authentication solutions."

in terms of market share, but when asked about his strategic plans for the next 12 months, Bloch pulled no punches that their objective is to replicate the success they have enjoyed domestically in France, and across Europe, in the Middle East marketplace.

"In 2025, Weblib's strategic priorities will focus on innovation, growth, and regional expansion. As a French company and a European leader, our goal is to build on our success and expand our footprint in the Middle East, where we see significant potential to raise our profile as a leading software publisher. To support this growth, we will be rolling out a new partner program that will provide additional expertise and strengthen our product offerings across regions. We're also committed to developing our local resources to better serve our customers and partners, ensuring we continue to deliver tailored solutions

that meet evolving market needs. With these initiatives, we aim to maintain our leadership position and achieve strong, sustainable growth in 2025 and beyond. Our solution is not only technically, but also commercially viable, having multiple flavours catering to different needs of customers," said Bloch.

As aforementioned the Middle East is rapidly evolving into a global hub for technological innovation, with 2025 set to be a pivotal year in the region's digital landscape.

Bloch touched on some of Weblib's channel development initiatives and highlighted theit key partnership with Westcon-Comstor.

"At Weblib, we're excited to build on our already

successful partnership with Westcon-Comstor, a key partner in Europe, to drive channel development in this dynamic region. Our partnership with Westcon-Comstor is central to our channel-first sales philosophy, and we're confident that it will play a crucial role in expanding our presence across the Middle East. In 2025, we plan to implement joint marketing initiatives aimed at strengthening and growing our partner network. These initiatives will focus on providing partners with the support, expertise, and tools they need to effectively promote and integrate Weblib's solutions," said Bloch.

Bloch concluded a brilliant exchange by reemphasizing their focus on continued training for their partners in their efforts to corner the market in the Middle East with their unique cloud-based platform offering.

"By empowering our partners with comprehensive training, co-branded marketing materials, and tailored support, we'll ensure they have everything necessary to fuel our growth in the region. This approach will not only enhance the partner ecosystem but also solidify Weblib's position as a trusted software publisher in the Middle East," said Bloch. cnme

Beyond connectivity, our Smart Wi-Fi includes powerful marketing tools that enable businesses to engage customers directly."

UAE

REMOTE CONTROL

Sandhya D'Mello, Editor of Security Advisor Middle East, takes an in-depth look at a new whitepaper entitled '**Remote Working in the UAE'** – which has been ultimately designed by the UAE Government to enhance remote work systems through the establishment of best practices and future policies that can be implemented as remote working continues to evolve.

The decision last month by JP Morgan Chase to mandate all of their global workforce to return to the office shocked many, but they weren't the first US multinational to impose such an order.

However, whilst the US continues to grapple with remote working, the UAE is adamant that it is here to stay, and we need to embrace it.

Those were the words ushered by H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama, UAE Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications, following the release of the comprehensive whitepaper.

The UAE has consistently demonstrated leadership in innovation and possesses the ability to anticipate future trends impacting sustainable economic development.

With the beginning of 2025, the nation, recognized for its supportive employment environment, is poised to adopt remote working as a practical approach to increase workforce productivity.

The UAE's Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications Office, released a whitepaper

on the best practices and future policies developed and implemented by the UAE government in activating the remote work system.

The paper, created in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), aims to enhance remote work systems by leveraging global trends and the expertise developed by the

UAE government during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to design a future of flexible and hybrid work that relies on emerging technologies to shape advanced remote work systems.

Omar Sultan Al Olama, UAE Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications emphasised the importance of focusing on scientific research to drive sustainable development efforts in the government work system in general, and remote work in particular.

He pointed out that the UAE government utilises research and studies to shape the future of work supported by technology and digital transformation, reflecting the vision of the leadership to enhance the UAE's position in various future fields globally.

Further, Al Olama stated

Remote work systems is increasing overall productivity by 4.6% after the pandemic, due to the reduction in commuting to and from work, as well as other positive rates and impacts of implementing remote work systems across various sectors, including skills, work environment, and more."

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that the UAE seeks the sustainability of development and the advancement of future infrastructure, enhanced by artificial intelligence and digital technology solutions.

This aims to improve the readiness of government work to anticipate and keep up with the rapid global changes and developments in the digital field, requiring the intensification of studies and the expansion of scientific research aimed at developing the best digital practices.

The whitepaper titled "Remote Working in the UAE" addressed the comprehensive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UAE, primarily focusing on the increased emphasis on collecting and analysing data related to non-traditional work methods. It also covered approaches to improving productivity and enhancing

the community's wellbeing, along with the remote work experience based on practical practices.

Additionally, it discussed the outcomes of the remote

The trend towards remote working is largely influenced by a global skills shortage, with many workers and companies favouring flexible work arrangements."

work forum organised by the Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy, and Remote Work Applications Office last year, which included proactive policies, methods adopted by the UAE, global policies, best practices, key challenges, and recommendations for developing policies in this field.

New Regulation
Various media outlets today widely quoted that the Registration Authority of ADGM, Abu Dhabi's

international financial centre, recently published the new Employment Regulations 2024 which reflect global changes in workplace practices.

"We are pleased to announce the publication of the New Employment Regulations, which reflect our strong commitment to enhancing our ecosystem and ensuring the best regulatory frameworks and favorable conditions for both companies and employees alike," stated Hamad Sayah Al Mazrouei, CEO of ADGM Registration Authority.

Repealing the existing Employment Regulations 2019, the new employment

regulations will become effective on April 1, 2025, granting employers sufficient time to align their internal policies, employment contracts and other employment-related matters with the requirements provided under the new regulations.

Some of the key amendments ADGM made in the new employment regulations include amending the definition of 'employee' to enable employers to hire remote employees and allow for more flexible working arrangements.

The new regulations also clarify ambiguities related to employee entitlements, including part-time employees, and certain requirements regarding obtaining and canceling an employee's work permit and visa.

The trend towards remote working is largely influenced by a global skills shortage, with many workers and companies favouring flexible work arrangements. The UAE government, recognizing the long-term value of remote work, has actively developed policies to support this modern work arrangement. However, as remote work eliminates geographical barriers, it also introduces significant cybersecurity challenges.

Cybersecurity Imperative as UAE Embraces Remote Work

With the transition to remote working, the vulnerability to cyber threats increases substantially. Research indicates that the Middle East faces higher cybersecurity breach costs compared to other regions, with averages reaching US$6.9 million per incident.

This elevated risk underscores the importance of stringent cybersecurity measures to safeguard sensitive information and maintain business operations. In response to these challenges, the UAE has proactively established a robust digital infrastructure, supported by comprehensive cybersecurity policies and practices.

To fortify its remote work framework against cyber threats, the UAE has implemented a series of cybersecurity measures.

These include stringent protocols for home internet security, comprehensive bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policies, formal cybersecurity training for all employees, and the use of encrypted communication tools. Such measures are crucial for preventing unauthorized access and ensuring the privacy and integrity of corporate data.

Remote working introduces significant cybersecurity risks, particularly relevant in the Middle East where data breach costs are notably high.

According to Proxyrack, the average cost of a data breach in this region is US$6.9 million, surpassed only by the US. As remote work increases, so does the potential financial impact of these breaches.

Accordingly, many national security agencies and cybersecurity specialists have evolved specific cybersecurity and privacy recommendations for organisations with employees who work remotely.

For example, the cybersecurity specialist Kaspersky has issued a list of key security requirements for organisations using any form of remote working.

They include developing a documented home security policy for securing home internet access and Wi-Fi, having a documented bring-your-own-device policy, providing formal cybersecurity training to employees, only using video-conferencing services with end-to-end encryption, updating password policies and using two-factor identification, and preferring centralised data storage.

The UAE is already rated highly against global peers for cybersecurity policy, ranked as fifth in the world for cybersecurity infrastructure in the latest Global Cybersecurity Index40 prepared by the International Telecommunications Union. In 2022, the UAE implemented an overarching legal framework41 designed to regulate online technologies including those used in remote working contexts.

The UAE has also created a number of cybersecurity resources designed to provide practical assistance and advice for organisations and individuals using any technologies that may have cybersecurity or personal safety and privacy dimensions. ⬚

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SCAN TO GET INVOLVED

Zebra Technologies

SUSTAINABLE AND SECURE

Lorna Hopkin, Healthcare Specialist, for EMEA at Zebra Technologies, has penned a thought-leadership article in which she discusses how mobile devices can meet the demand for both sustainability and security criteria in data-sensitive operations.

Some say it's difficult to find technology that meets both sustainability and security criteria in data-sensitive operations. Yet such technology has been right under our noses for over two decades.

We know healthcare systems and other bodies serving the public are increasingly under siege from cyberattacks.

Spyware is completely evading traditional detection methods, through coding designed to leave no trace of its upload. Seemingly harmless actions, such as watching a video or visiting a website, can be all it takes for devices (and connected systems) to become infected.

While a spy or hacker listening through an ordinary person's smartphone might glean trivial information, malware in a hospital environment poses significantly higher risks and impacts. Leaked data could be used to blackmail patients, hospitals could face fines, and

compromised devices might be removed from circulation. The financial implications are enormous, leading to reduced efficiency and poorer outcomes.

Knowing all this, such attacks can appear unstoppable. But grim as it may sound, there is hope. An unlikely ally in the fight against cyberattacks is

sustainability monitoring specific to tech decisions.

The goal of 'zero overall carbon emissions' has become a benchmark of best practice, with the UK aiming to be the world's first net zero national health service. With 18% of NHS emissions stemming from devices, trusts are devising plans to reduce this number. Achieving a carbon neutral organisation involves a myriad of changes.

Many small changes across numerous facilities and systems can also be transformative, especially when healthcare technology leaders consider how much a single technology choice can move the needle one way or the other.

Consider the multitude of handheld mobile computers, wearables, tablets, label printers, barcode scanners, and radio frequency identification (RFID) readers currently dispersed across healthcare sites. These devices, like all appliances, impact carbon emissions.

Understanding the small changes made in their design and utilisation can help healthcare providers achieve their sustainability objectives.

Where security and sustainability align

On paper, the perceived mismatch between the software lifecycle and hardware lifecycle of many mobile devices has led to some business leaders feeling they have to choose either security or sustainability. But the reality is that there are mobile devices in the market right now built for longevity, circularity, and security. First responders, utility technicians, factory workers, store associates, delivery drivers, and nurses all around the world are using them.

There are several clinical mobile devices and other rugged handhelds, wearables, printers, and tablets that can

be secured for longer than the typical two-year churn of devices we use as consumers. Their standard lifespan is five to seven years, if not longer. From an environmental impact perspective, this reduces the manufacturing footprint and the volume of non-recyclable components ending up in landfill.

The benefits extend further, though. Devices that enable IT teams to automate monthly security patching, offer features like kiosk-mode lockdown home screens, and remote performance enhancements all contribute to keeping devices operational for as long as possible, thus reducing demand on production lines, recycling operations, and waste disposal sites.

Security breaches are

the power to act upon any unexpected behaviour. This simple dashboard interface allows monitoring of performance to devise mechanisms to keep malware out and drive efficiencies to achieve net zero goals.

Meanwhile patient safety remains uncompromised and hospital security intact. For example, there is device monitoring software featuring machine learning that can mine over 250 data points related to device, application, and battery health to report on the current status of devices and predict forthcoming issues based on device usage, health and history.

The alignment of sustainability and security makes perfect business, environmental, and security

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The alignment of sustainability and security makes perfect business, environmental, and security sense, and it also makes financial sense."

often so subtle that users are unaware they are compromised. However, changes in battery or memory usage patterns can indicate unexpected activity. These changes, known as symptomatic changes, are crucial for identifying and securing against attacks. This performance sensing capability is where security and sustainability overlap.

Tools that pull device and app-level data through data services agents installed on each device provide visibility into unusual activity and

sense. It also makes financial sense. The device physically lasts for years. Automatic security updates and patches keep software locked down and data secured for years. Healthcare leaders aren't having to pay penalties for a breach. They aren't having to pay extra in marketing spend to repair a tarnished reputation because a hacker breached a non-secure device or because someone finds out an organisation is constantly replacing devices – which is wasteful on many levels.

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JANUARY 2025

DeepSeek

DEEP IMPACT

CNME Deputy Editor Daniel Shepherd takes a closer look at Chinese start-up DeepSeek, following the launch of its latest AI models, which has caused shockwaves across the technology industry and on Wall Street. **Chuck Herrin**, Field CISO at F5, also expresses his concerns regarding the security and safety of the DeepSeek AI releases.

Chinese startup DeepSeek's launch of its latest AI models, which it says are on a par or better than industry-leading models in the United States at a fraction of the cost, is threatening to upset the technology world order.

The company has attracted attention in global AI circles after writing that the training of DeepSeek-V3 required less than $6 million worth of computing power from Nvidia H800 chips.

DeepSeek's AI Assistant, powered by DeepSeek-V3, has overtaken rival ChatGPT to become the top-rated free application available on Apple's App Store in the United States.

This has raised doubts about the reasoning behind some U.S. tech companies' decision to pledge billions of dollars in AI investment and shares of several big tech players, including Nvidia, have been hit.

Below are some facts about the company shaking up the AI sector worldwide.

WHY IS DEEPSEEK CAUSING A STIR?

The release of OpenAI's

ChatGPT in late 2022 caused a scramble among Chinese tech firms, who rushed to create their own chatbots powered by artificial intelligence.

The two models that have been showered with praise by Silicon Valley executives and U.S. tech company engineers alike, DeepSeek-V3 and DeepSeek-R1, are on par with OpenAI and Meta's most advanced models, the Chinese startup has said.

They are also cheaper to use. The DeepSeek-R1, released last week, is 20 to 50 times cheaper to use than OpenAI o1 model, depending on the task, according to a post on DeepSeek's official WeChat account.

But some have publicly expressed scepticism about DeepSeek's success story.

Scale AI CEO Alexandr Wang said during an interview with CNBC, without providing evidence, that DeepSeek has

50,000 Nvidia H100 chips, which he claimed would not be disclosed because that would violate Washington's export controls that ban such advanced AI chips from being sold to Chinese companies. DeepSeek did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the allegation.

Bernstein analysts highlighted in a research note that DeepSeek's total training costs for its V3 model were unknown but were much higher than the $5.58 million the start-up said was used for computing power. The analysts also said the training costs of the equally-acclaimed R1 model were not disclosed.

WHO IS BEHIND DEEPSEEK?

DeepSeek is a Hangzhou-based start-up whose controlling shareholder is Liang Wenfeng, co-founder of quantitative hedge fund

One of the most concerning aspects about the DeepSeek releases, which will likely carry into new model releases, is how lax the alignment controls are and how easy the models are to jailbreak and use for malicious/destructive purposes."

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define AGI as autonomous systems that surpass humans in most economically valuable tasks.

It is unclear how much High-Flyer has invested in DeepSeek. High-Flyer has an office located in the same building as DeepSeek, and it also owns patents related to chip clusters used to train AI models, according to Chinese corporate records.
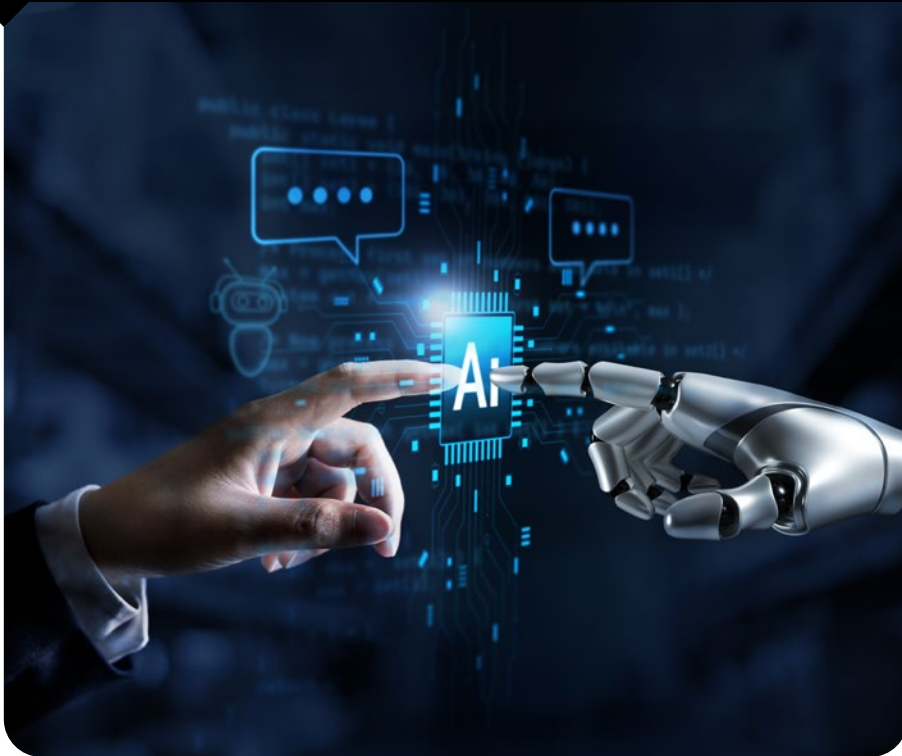
HOW DOES BEIJING VIEW DEEPSEEK?

DeepSeek's success has already been noticed in China's top political circles. On January 20, the day DeepSeek-R1 was released to the public, founder Liang attended a closed-door symposium for businessman and experts hosted by Chinese premier Li Qiang, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Liang's presence at the gathering is potentially a sign that DeepSeek's success could be important to Beijing's policy goal of overcoming Washington's export controls and achieving self-sufficiency in strategic industries like AI.

Chuck Herrin, Field CISO, F5, also spoke to CNME, in which he discussed the impact of DeekSeek, and his concerns around its lax the alignment controls and potential use to create malware

When asked what does the global AI map now look like with the emergence of these new Chinese models, Herrin stated that the world was still attempting to digest the impact DeepSeek has had.

"I think the world is still digesting the impact, and

High-Flyer, based on Chinese corporate records.

Liang's fund announced in March 2023 on its official WeChat account that it was "starting again", going beyond trading to concentrate resources on creating a "new and independent research group, to explore the essence of AGI" (Artificial General Intelligence). DeepSeek was created later that year.

ChatGPT makers OpenAI

more models are being released and updated still. This will continue. Proliferation overall will continue to accelerate, particularly as performance gets better on smaller and cheaper models. The lower the cost, the more use cases come into relevance. It does dramatically impact the investment areas of AI, and definitely underscores the lack of any real moats as open source continues to catch on. We need to try and prepare for unlimited free intelligence and all of the associated implications," said Herrin.

One of the most surprising aspects of the announcement by DeepSeek is their admission of the small budget that they needed compared to other large AI projects.

"Perhaps, though the number as usually stated is a bit misleading, and you really don't know what's true. But, from what I've seen from other researchers, the efficiency and cost gains are very substantial, regardless of how many millions it cost. It's not like someone could cash a check for $6m today and replicate what they did; that's a little like citing how much it costs to build a car after you've invested in a factory. There's a lot of infrastructure not included in that figure," said Herrin.

Herrin has called for the industry to be cautious, and reiterated the geopolitical forces at play in the global AI arms race.

"I think we need to be wary of what's happening and understand the geopolitical aspects of the global AI race condition we're in. Everyone is in a race condition to adopt AI, from small businesses to large enterprises, governments of every nation, and the global nuclear powers. Everyone feels that 'if we don't do it, 'they' will, and everyone has at least one 'they' to worry about.' This pressure on speed always puts risk management second, as slowing down can lead to losing the race, which is potentially existential. People and organizations don't always act wisely or rationally under that kind of pressure," said Herrin.

Herrin concluded his observations on DeepSeek, by stressing his grave concerns over how lax the alignment controls are in DeepSeek's new releases.

"One of the most concerning aspects about the DeepSeek releases, which will likely carry into new model releases, is how lax the alignment controls are and how easy the models are to jailbreak and use for malicious/destructive purposes. Very quickly after we all started downloading these new models, red teams and criminals were immediately learning how to leverage them to create new malware, design ransomware and info stealer systems, and who knows what else DeepSeek could be abused to help create. Right now, I think we spend way too little time worrying about malicious actors abusing it," said Herrin.

"
We need to try and prepare for unlimited free intelligence and all of the associated implications."

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