TechSmart Business

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Isuzu Truck SA

Streamlines business with 4most solution

A Revival in Storage Innovation 16

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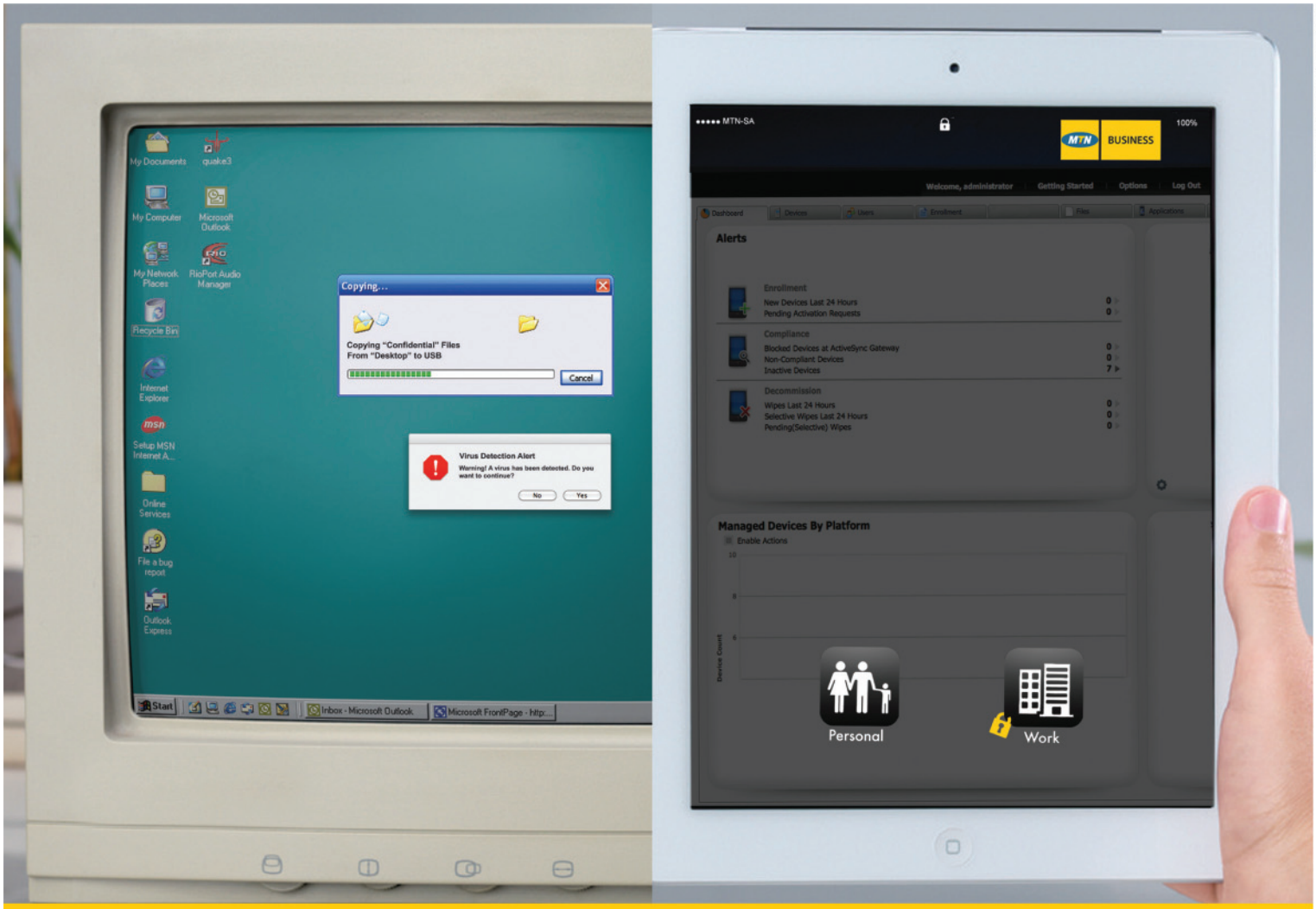

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The Quest for Zero Defect

I was always impressed by Panasonic's old slogan of "The quest for zero defect." It's quite a statement to make about your company, implying not just constant improvement towards something perfect, but also a particular state of mind for all employees. Personally I experienced this when, as a teenager, I received a Panasonic CD player and tape deck. Oh how gently, yet purposefully, that cassette deck opened when pushing the eject button, and when closing, it gave a reassuring 'click', much like shutting the door of a Mercedes. Arguably the best fly-half of all time, Jonny Wilkinson, lives by the Japanese philosophy of *Kaizen*. It seems slightly more forgiving than Panasonic's "quest", asking for continuous change for the better. Wilkinson once described it as having a video camera on you 24/7 to "help you get better each day". In the same interview he notes that his obsession to win turned his life into hell, so I suppose it's good to keep a balance.

While *Kaizen* does sound like a lot of sweat and toil somewhere down the line, it is actually about eliminating too much hard work, minimising wastage, and, importantly, it humanises the workplace. That idea strikes a chord, since with such a lot wrong in South Africa, why can't your place of business be used as the starting point of positive change? If your company is reaping the benefits of philosophies such as *Kaizen*, we would like to hear from you, and feature what you do. Mail me at **mike@techsmart.co.za** to get the ball rolling.

Enjoy the issue,
Mike Joubert

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4most

4most is the leading supplier and implementer of SAP Business One ERP business software and technology solutions. With offices in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi as well as a growing economic footprint in Tanzania, the company has a strong base provided by considerable experience and skills accumulated over 30 years. 4most facilitates an in-house client care centre and with a proven, established methodology, has implemented over 3000 SAP Business One users across numerous industries.
Services include the implementation, support, maintenance, customised software development and application modifications of SAP Business One accounting and ERP software systems, providing tailor-made and innovative solutions that give competitive advantage to businesses in Southern Africa. As an SAP Gold Partner the consistency of their expertise has earned them an award-winning reputation.

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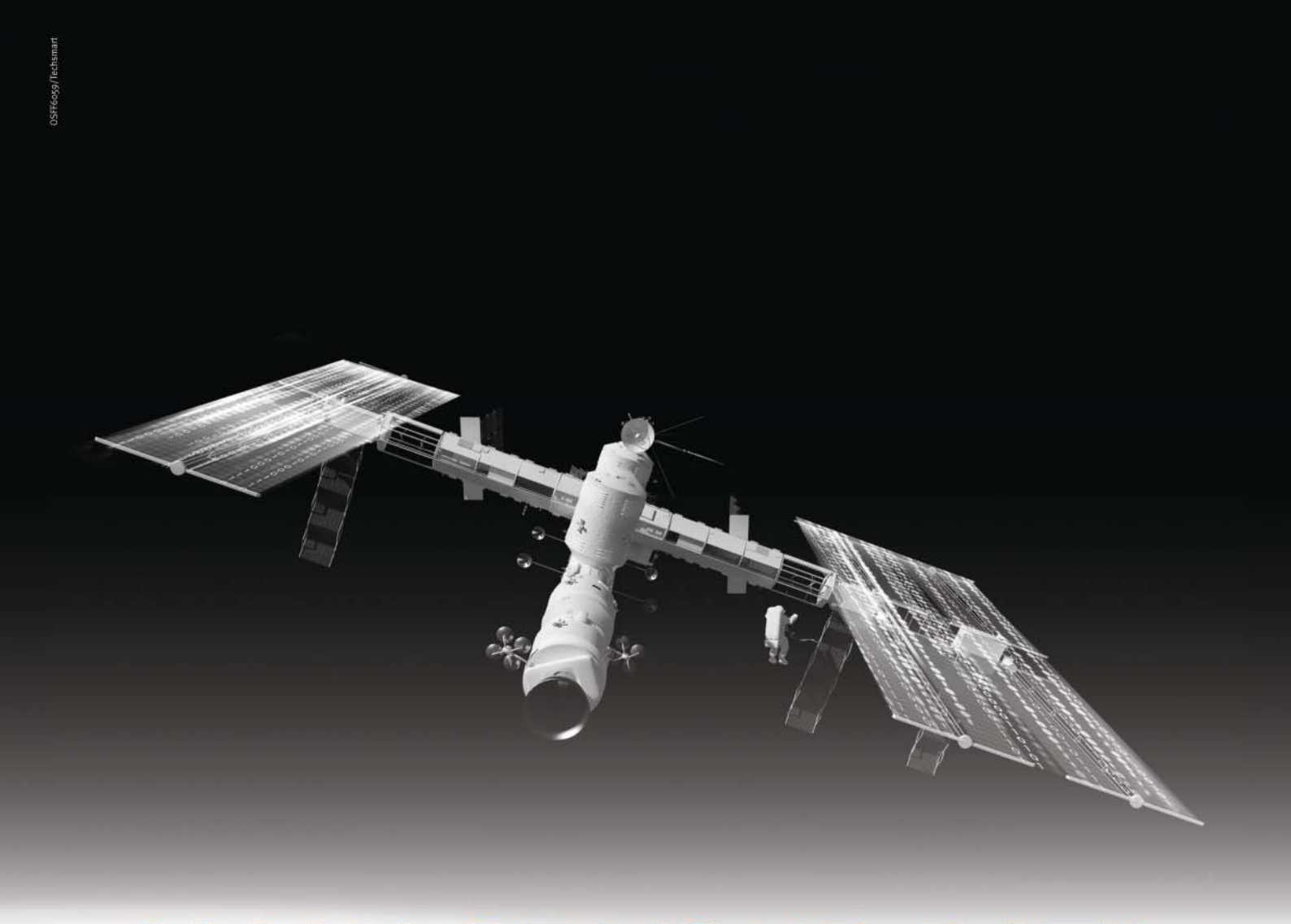

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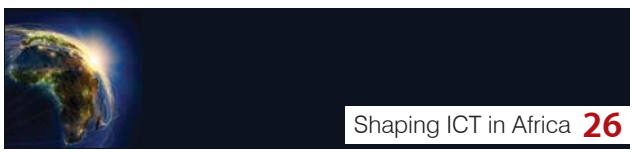

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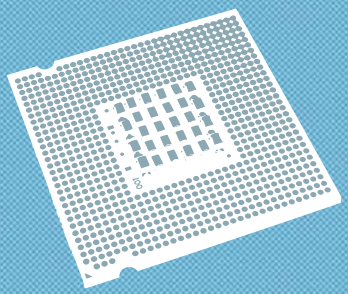
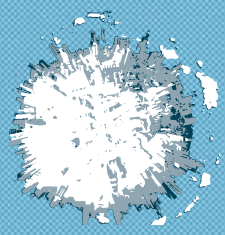
SAY WHAT?

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE TECH FRONT.



"In the next ten years computing hardware systems will be fundamentally different as our scientists and engineers push the limits of semiconductor innovations to explore the post-silicon future."

Tom Rosamilia, senior vice president, IBM Systems and Technology Group on a recent $3 billion research initiative. (see p8)



"The rise and ultimate success of the Internet of Things depends on the ability for devices and systems to securely and reliably interconnect and share information"

Doug Fisher, Intel corporate vice president and general manager of the Software and Services Group, after six companies, including Intel, Samsung and Dell, established a consortium focused on improving interoperability and connectivity requirements for the Internet of Things.

"Connected cars can open the door to threats that have long existed in the PC and smartphone world. For example, the owners of connected cars could find their passwords are stolen. This would identify the location of the vehicle, and enable the doors to be unlocked remotely."

Vicente Diaz,

Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab.

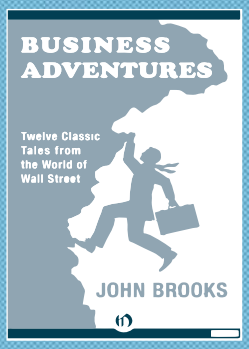
5 KEY BEHAVIOURS FOR A HIGH DIGITAL IQ IN COMPANIES

1. CEO actively champions digital
2. Strong CIO – CMO relationship
3. Outside-in approach to digital innovation
4. Significant new IT platform investments
5. View digital as an enterprise capability

Source: PWC 6th Annual Digital IQ Survey

"Our dream is to use the latest technology in the miniaturization of electronics to help improve the quality of life for millions of people."

Sergey Brin, co-founder, Google, on their deal with Novartis to help develop a smart contact lens that can track the wearer's blood sugar level.



Business Adventures by John Brooks

The out-of-print collection of essays from 1969 shot up the best-seller list after Bill Gates praised it as "the best business book I've ever read".

Find it here: bit.ly/busadvent

2.4 billion units. Worldwide combined shipments of devices (PCs, tablets, ultramobiles and mobile phones) predicted for 2014, a 4.2% increase from 2013.

Source: Gartner.

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IBM announces $3 Billion research initiative

IBM has announced that it will be investing close to $3 billion on two distinct research initiatives over the next five years. The first will focus on the physical challenges facing scaling techniques for semiconductors, with the second directed at developing new alternatives to post-era chips. This seems a fairly apt move, considering that if the theory of Moore's Law is believed to be true, it would inherently stand to reason that companies will soon have to focus on new alternatives to standard chip forms.

IDC report details PC market rebound despite decline

The International Data Corporation (IDC) has detailed 2014's second quarter results for worldwide PC shipments, totalling 74.4 million. The total reflects a year-on-year decline of -1.7%, but is also the smallest margin of decline since the second quarter of 2012. Topping the vendor shipment list were Lenovo, registering a 19.6% market share and 15.1% growth from 2Q 2013. Following Lenovo are HP, Dell, Acer and Asus, with Acer being the only top five vendor with negative growth of -2.5% from 2013.

Microsoft SA names Zoaib Hoosen as new MD

Microsoft South Africa announced a change to its top leadership position, with Zoaib Hoosen assuming the role of managing director from outgoing MD Mteto Nyati. Hoosen joined Microsoft in 2010 as the enterprise and partner group director, before being promoted to CEO in 2013. Nyati will now be moving into the position of Microsoft's general manager for the Middle East and African emerging markets region, while Hoosen will continue to focus on Microsoft's local business.

MTN unveils new African cooling system

In an effort to reduce its own carbon footprint, MTN has unveiled Africa's first concentrating solar cooling system designed to power a select range of datacentres. The cooling system was conceived by Reach renewable and AOS consulting engineers, and makes use of Linear Fresnel Concentrating Solar Power (CSP) technology that harnesses heat generated from the sun, with a maximum cooling capacity of 330 kW. The CSP system adds to MTN's current green initiative, having been awarded with South Africa's first silver certified green building.

MasterCard launches MasterPass locally

MasterCard marked its first foray into the Middle East and Africa (MEA) by launching MasterPass in South Africa. The digital wallet, which was launched internationally last year, is aimed at offering users a quicker and secure checkout when shopping online, by accessing their preferred digital wallet and authenticating a payment with a secure PIN. Standard Bank is the first local bank to offer a digital wallet with its iOS, Android and BlackBerry MasterPass app, other local partners include SAA, Takealot.com and Plankton.mobi.

Gartner believes physical location of data will soon be irrelevant

According to a recent report from market research company Gartner, the physical location of data will slowly become irrelevant, making way for a hybrid combination of legal, political and logical location which will be favoured by most organisations by 2020. Gartner asserts that this change will largely be fuelled by Edward Snowden's revelations regarding the NSA surveillance scandal. The report added that organisations will be using multiple location types and service delivery models to address data residency and sovereignty issues in future.

Samsung cites Chinese competitors for quarterly sales dip

Samsung has been the leading smartphone manufacturer for the past few years, but the South Korean manufacturer has lost some ground in mobile sales for 2014's second quarter, dropping by nearly 24% and posting a total $7.1 billion operating profits. Samsung cited competition from its Chinese rivals with low-cost alternatives as one of the main contributors to this drop. Analysts state the manner in which Samsung addresses these cost issues could ultimately shape the way forward for the industry. It could be good news for consumers, who might see cheaper price tags on premium devices over the next few years.

Amazon seeks freedom from FAA's drone restrictions

The ability to deliver purchased items from Amazon via its Prime Air drones is still a contentious issue, with the US' Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standing firm on the flight of commercial drones within American airspace. As a countermeasure, Amazon has submitted a petition to the FAA with two main objectives in mind. Firstly, to use their Prime Air drones in a commercial capacity, and secondly, to freely test their various drone prototypes within their own research facilities.

Lenovo Financial Services lands in SA

Lenovo Financial Services

Lenovo has launched their new Financial Services (LFS) offering in South Africa, with the PC manufacturer now turning its attention to providing cost-effective solutions for local SMEs and enterprises. According to Lenovo, businesses often neglect the implications of start-up costs, with 80% of costs being incurred during the initial purchase. To that end, LFS offers a subsidy of up to 20% on equipment expenses along with asset tracking, excess-free insurance and a dedicated online portal.

Apple and IBM partner to target new business customers

Apple and IBM have announced a product sales partnership where the two giants will target new business customers by utilising shared solutions. In the past Apple adopted a strategy of targeting everyday users, which resulted in their devices slowly infiltrating corporates as many companies adopted a BYOD policy. Now Apple is enhancing its pervasive solutions, with newly packaged iOS device offerings from IBM, and iOS tailored IBM cloud services.

HTC launches One (M8) in SA with new fulfillment partner, Brightstar

HTC has officially launched its flagship Android smartphone, the One (M8) in South Africa. The launch also coincides with HTC's new local fulfilment partnership with Brightstar. The Taiwanese manufacturer's presence in SA has been rather hit and miss in recent years, but Brightstar is hoping to change all that with a dedicated PR, marketing, sales and logistics team. HTC has also partnered heavily with local service providers, Vodacom and MTN, both of which have already begun selling the One (M8). **TSB**

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Ericsson demonstrates 5G network capabilities

Ericsson recently performed a live, over-the-air demonstration of its 5G wireless network technology, which is capable of achieving speeds of up to 5 Gbps on the 15 GHz frequency band. As part of Ericsson's 5G network development, the Swedish telecoms manufacturer is integrating new antenna technologies with higher bandwidths and shorter transmission intervals.

This live demo followed a Mobility Report published by Ericsson, which forecasted that mobile data growth in Africa is expected to double in 2015, to 147 000 TB per month. With such a high rate of LTE penetration expected over the next five years, Ericsson believes users will soon require even faster mobile network speeds, with its 5G network being the answer.

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KPMG says digitisation will drive development within Africa

According to report released by KPMG, the current state of internet penetration within Africa sits at 15.6 %, which is half that of the global average. KPMG believes that this figure will change as a result of increased levels of digitisation across the continent. Digitisation, the migration from analogue to digital technology, is viewed as having a direct link to both the telecoms and broadcasting sectors. More importantly, it is set to decrease the cost of mobile carrier fees.

KPMG's analysis revealed that an increase of 10% in a country's digitisation can lead to a 0.75% growth in GDP per capita. In fact, increased levels of digitisation are believed to have a positive impact on other sectors, as it leads to the reshaping of business models due to increased levels of connectivity.

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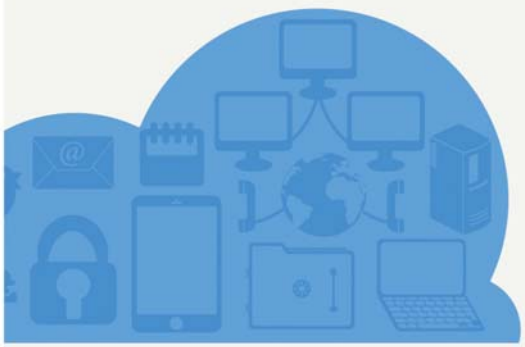

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Alcatel-Lucent sets 10 Gbps broadband speed world record

Bell Labs, the research division of Alcatel-Lucent, has set a new broadband speed record of 10 Gbps using traditional copper telephone lines and a prototype technology called XG-FAST. The demonstration aimed to show how existing copper access networks can be used to deliver 1Gbps symmetrical ultra-broadband access services.

Furthermore, Bell Labs' XG-FAST technology is an extension of its existing G.Fast offering, with the latter scheduled to become commercially available in 2015. G.Fast is capable of producing broadband speeds of up to 500 Mbps over a distance of 100 metres, while using a frequency range of 105 MHz for data transmission. XG-FAST on the other hand, operated on a much higher 500 MHz frequency and produced the aforementioned 10 Gbps over a distance of 30 metres.

GSMA announces inter-industry health partnership across Africa

The Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA) recently announced its mHealth initiative aimed at offering health services to women and children. This initiative is set to increase mobile connectivity and access to health information, with a specific focus on nutrition and hygiene. The GSMA has partnered with a variety of companies, including Samsung, which will provide handsets and tablets to health workers, and MTN which will give free mobile data access to health-related services and content.

According to research conducted by the GSMA, the mHealth service has the potential to reach 15.5 million pregnant women and mothers. Along with South Africa, the initial phase of the mHealth service will have launched in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia by the end of September 2014.

Internet Solutions adds three new PoPs to African network

IT service provider, Internet Solutions has strengthened its existing African network, with the addition of three new Points of Presence (PoPs) in Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi. These new PoPs are designed to further enhance the network-based business services that IS can offer, with specific access to IS's high capacity network. These three countries form part of a further 14 African nations, with South Africa and Nigeria leading all others at 16 and 15 PoPs respectively.

IS's chief operating officer, Julian Sunker, has stated that the company is committed to increasing its African infrastructure footprint, with connectivity and value-added services at an affordable rate its primary concern. All three of the new PoPs are up and running, with more set to join in coming years.

GSA confirms 100% increase in LTE user devices in past year

The Global mobile Suppliers Association (GSA) has confirmed that the number of global LTE user devices released in the past 12 months has increased by 100% from the previous year. The organisation completed a recent report detailing the status of the LTE ecosystem, with 168 mobile device manufacturers announcing an estimated 1899 LTE-enabled devices in total. This is a substantial increase from the 68% increase recorded for LTE-enabled devices in the previous year.

The analysis pulled from this report is two-fold, with manufacturers showing an awareness that LTE bandwidths are deemed as the new standard favoured by consumers in developed markets. Conversely it shows that consumers have a desire for faster bandwidth connections, and ultimately supports the belief that a 5G network will soon become the new benchmark for manufacturers to meet.

Entries open for AfricaCom Awards 2014

Entries for the 2014 AfricaCom Awards have been opened, while the deadline for submission has been confirmed as being the 5th of September. The awards, which are recognised as the premier accolade for anyone operating in Africa's digital market, are open to any operator, vendor and regulator of any size who offer solutions, products and/or services to customers from anywhere on the African continent.

Categories include best mobile money service, breakthrough LTE development, best app for Africa and the changing lives award, amongst others, while it has been indicated that the judges expect to see entries that show advancements in LTE and improved mobile phone experiences as well as compelling and inspiring marketing campaigns. For more information and to enter, visit **www.africomawards.com.** **TSB**

4most EMA : Enabling SMEs to compete on the global stage

SMEs can anticipate being better equipped to compete against larger and global players, thanks to a home-grown enterprise management solution from 4most.

Years ago, it may well have been true that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) would have been significantly disadvantaged as compared with their larger, global counterparts. However, in recent years technology has disrupted, and in some cases actually levelled the playing field to the point where smaller, leaner, more agile businesses could have the advantage.

Marius Fabian, MD of Centurion-based 4most, which supplies and implements SAP ERP business management solution software and technology solutions, explained that in the automotive industry, for example, a company's business process remains the same regardless of the size of the enterprise. This holds true wherever it might be operating, as well as whether it is entering the market or already dominant. For SMEs, the benefits associated with being able to manage that process efficiently by having the right enterprise management system in place, can enable them to compete more vigorously with their larger global counterparts.

Marius Fabian, MD, 4most

Having the right enterprise management system in place can enable SMEs to compete more vigorously with their larger global counterparts.

The change imperative

Fabian pointed out that not only has the world changed thanks to the ubiquitous predominance of technology, but so too have general users and business customers, who "want what they want when they want it." This means that businesses also need to change accordingly and those that fail to do so, simply fall by the wayside or worse, become obsolete. "If you look at the Fortune 500 companies of 2000, 52% aren't in existence today. I'm not saying it is only IT related, but a lot of them couldn't adapt to the change that the customer was demanding," added Eugene Olivier, the business development director of 4most. Two of the more visible examples of this are Kodak, and more recently, BlackBerry's fall from grace. "What concerns me is that many businesses don't realise that we are now part of the global world, whether we like it or not, and they are still in the mindset that as long as they are making money they are fine. However, just doing as well as last year is going backwards," he stressed.

As with the axiom that behind every great man there is a great woman, behind every business opportunity there is invariably new, ground-breaking or simply excellent technology. From 4most's side, this comes in the form of EMA, a home-grown, locally developed enterprise management solution built on the core of SAP Business One.

Streamlining essentials

Fabian explained that typically, and particularly in developing countries, SMEs have resorted to addressing their enterprise management needs manually, accruing four to six

Eugene Olivier, Business Development Director, 4most

different applications, all with their own individual licensing fees and upgrades paths. Along with obviating this costly and time consuming hassle, EMA's strength lies in its ability to automate business processes and deliver a reliable, unified picture of operations based on up-to-the-minute information, all from one single environment.Furthermore, the application can be deployed in an intranet, as an onsite solution, in a data centre or on a cloud (both public and private).

Fabian notes that along with boasting a high degree of customisation according to the end user's needs and preferences, EMA's look, feel and functionality can essentially accompany business owners or managers wherever they go and from any device they might log in. This enables them to respond to the 24/7 nature of competing globally, without being tethered to their bricks and mortar office location just to use a familiar enterprise management solution.

Even so, while mid- and in some cases even senior management, tend towards becoming younger, and thus more tech savvy, this flexibility also takes into consideration those companies that are in different stages of cloud adoption, and older, more conservative managers who are still more comfortable with their information being in a datacentre rather than entirely on a cloud.

Counting costs and reaping benefits

While EMA was specifically developed, tried and tested for the automotive sector, and can benefit everyone in that entire value chain, from the OEMs to the dealers, Fabian elaborated that their solution can also be used in a further ten other industries. These include normal retail business, wholesale business, for the OEM supplier, as well as OEM

"The biggest thing that I enjoy about the rest of the world is that they underestimate us, which for me, is a competitive advantage."

sales and services. Furthermore, EMA can be utilised by a sales dealer, service dealer or combination thereof, and in the near future, the transportation and logistics sector as well.

Addressing the ever-present concern of cost, Fabian explained that businesses don't buy the product but rather rent it, and a portion of their rental fee goes into a development pot. Then, on a yearly basis, 4most hosts a feedback session as to what its users require, and that determines what new features or functionality is brought to bear. Additionally, this strategy enables SME companies to access top-tier functionality, but at a pricing structure they can afford, which in turn can have a significant and beneficial impact on their competitiveness. Beyond that, EMA's deployment brings what has quickly become an essential to surviving in the new world of business, namely the ability and agility to respond to the urgency with which business decisions often need to be made.

The world awaits

"The business environment is changing so quickly, you can't wait for two or three weeks for information anymore, you need to have the information immediately to be able to make a decision right now. If a decision maker had to wait three weeks for their business information to make a decision, the risk that it will be the wrong one is extremely likely," he explained. Additionally, for businesses where customer service can mean the difference between a successful deal and a lost sale, having speedy access to its information is paramount. In the automotive industry, for example, a dealer that promises to provide a product to their customer by Monday at 12 o'clock needs to deliver on his promise, or else risks losing that customer.

However, 4most is not just banging the drum for SMEs competing on a global scale without walking the talk itself. The 50 strong employee company, which Fabian asserts will remain tight-knit and strongly focused, is in the process of launching EMA globally. "Can we take on the world? I don't see why not. We have the people, we have the commitment, and then of course the biggest thing that I enjoy about the rest of the world is that they underestimate us, which for me, is a competitive advantage," he concluded.

For more information visit **www.4most.co.za**, email info@4most.co.za or call 012-345-2505. **TSB**

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Isuzu Truck SA

streamlines business with 4most solution

When Isuzu Truck South Africa was in need of a catered enterprise management solution to govern its unique business, it was 4most's EMA that it turned to, to help drive its business forward.

In a neatly congruent marriage of minds, specialised truck provider, Isuzu Truck South Africa, has turned to another specialised business to meet its enterprise management needs, 4most, and deployed its enterprise management solution, EMA. More importantly, the reliance on 4most and its offering appears to have had a largely advantageous impact on the company, enabling it to more easily manage its business processes.

Craig Uren, the director and chief operating officer of Isuzu Truck South Africa, explained that the company began as a joint venture that broke away from General Motors in 2007. While the latter serves the mainstream automotive customer with its cars and bakkies, Isuzu Truck offers its customers trucks between two and 60 tonne. Whereas mainstream vehicles tend to be an emotional purchase, Uren elaborated that its high value trucks are a business concern with a commercial impact, aimed at generating revenue for their owners.

Making it work

Uren explained that its trucks come off the production line incomplete, requiring the company to put a body on them and then to add further customisation. "Thus, our need with a business system is not just catering to production and the initial wholesaling and shipping to a dealer, it has to cater for the entirety of the supply chain, right to the endpoint where the customer actually gets it in his hands," he elaborated.

This degree of specialisation though, meant that the previous legacy system historically used by General Motors and Isuzu Truck South Africa, was inadequate and limiting. It was not always able to accommodate the company's more distinctive process management requirements as it was geared towards typical vehicle sales businesses. For a more specialised and flexible solution to its needs, the company thus decided on 4most's EMA, which is powered by SAP Business One.

"Your enterprise management system cannot be a distraction and needs to help you address the fundamentals of your business."

Risks and rewards

For Isuzu Truck South Africa, a back office system that didn't hinder or distract was imperative, as it runs a high value and low transactional order business. Exacerbating matters, Uren explained that the automotive business does not have high margins; but rather has to contend with the risk of having too much inventory on hand, as well as very long lead times and extensive supply chains from source. An advantage of having a flexible and customisable enterprise management system in place, such as EMA, is that the company can reduce these risks by offering far shorter lead times. He pointed out that its previous system didn't allow the company to order value added material that went with the chassis until the vehicle was in stock. By the time the vehicle came into stock, the company still had to contend with a further six months delay.

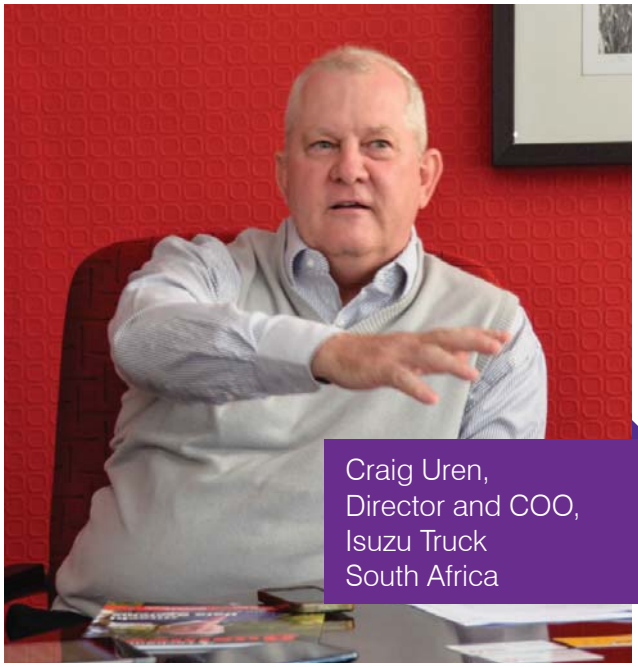
"Previously , if I ordered a chassis in Japan in month one and I needed a specialised crane which had the same lead time in Europe or the United States, or a particular automotive transmission from abroad, I would need to have ordered all that material six months prior," explained Uren. "Now we can order all the ancillary equipment to get to the completed good, so when we put that vehicle to stock, any other material that we needed to complete the vehicle would become available in the next thirty days; we can order it all up the system, and marry it together. Previously it was impossible to do that," he elaborated.

In practical terms this translates into an increased response time to the marketplace. More specifically, it enabled Isuzu Truck to provide its customers with their order in thirty days instead of 180 days, while simultaneously mitigating against inventory values, holding costs, and other downstream inefficiencies.

Bumps in the road

While in a perfect world, upgrading one's IT system would be without any intricacies or learning curves, the process of taking full advantage of SAP Business One and EMA was not quite so simple. Rekha Chetty, the finance manager for Isuzu Truck South Africa, explained that change management was a challenge which could only have been improved by investing more time in user training.

"Because we were new as an organisation, a lot of our people were new, they learnt their job functions off the legacy of the previous system, which was not necessarily the correct business flow, so they naturally moved into the new system where we had designed the correct business flow." added Uren. "The new system actually drove the process that they had to conform to. 4most's system helped us create very specific disciplines and the workflow had to be followed, it couldn't just be ad hoc. They had an individual struggle to conform when they previously had free reign," he notes. "With new users the learning curve wasn't steep, it was quick, but with employees that were on the previous system it took more time," Chetty acknowledged. On tips for other businesses who are considering moving to SAP Business One and a solution such as EMA, Uren stressed that they need to invest the time upfront in scoping the system, and then ensure they do plenty of planning and testing.



Craig Uren, Director and COO, Isuzu Truck South Africa

The road ahead

However, the move appears to have been well worth it. Uren explained that the company is now able to pay its dealers and suppliers more quickly, and are also in a position for the banks to pay them faster as well. Additionally, the fact that EMA is a cloud solution means that Isuzu Truck South Africa is able to get its dealers onto the system with a minimum of fuss, as all they require is a username, password and internet connection. For this reason and more, they are spending a tenth of what they used to on systems.

As to what lies ahead now that Isuzu Truck SA has reached its goal of becoming local market leaders, Uren revealed that the company is looking at the rest of sub-Saharan Africa as part of their business focus. "Business is about change and you need to be able to adapt and move with change quickly because we rely on customers; without customers we can't develop or sell and generate revenue. However, to stay in touch with the real marketplace, a business must remain up to date. Part of this means that your enterprise management system cannot be a distraction and needs to help you address the fundamentals of your business," he concluded. **TSB**

Big Data, Cloud spark revival in Storage Innovation

The storage segment of the IT industry used to be a tad, well, boring, but big data and cloud computing are spurring innovation. Lance Harris investigates.

Storage is once again taking centre stage in enterprise technology strategies. The demand for new ways of storing and managing information comes from the growing data volumes generated in a world where there are billions of connected devices. Organisations are drowning in data such as machine data from sensors in plants and factories, geolocation data, social media posts, climate information, financial transactions, voice logs, surveillance video, and more.

The rise of cloud computing and an explosion in big data are helping to drive demand for storage software and hardware as well as spur innovation in this market segment. Market researcher IDC says that the market for big data solutions will be worth $16.1 billion in 2014, growing six times faster than the overall IT market. Infrastructure – including servers and storage – will account for 45% of this market. Against this backdrop, the industry is seeing a range of new technologies emerge, such as in-memory computing, big data appliances, and flash arrays, to help organisations manage the demands of storing and managing reams of data created at a rapid speed.

The cloud is also changing the landscape by offering end-user companies new ways of buying storage capacity and by creating new storage needs for service providers that offer cloud services and enterprises that run hybrid and private cloud architectures. Increasingly, legacy IT architectures are unable to keep up the capacity and flexibility this new world demands.

New solutions on the table

Big data is not a challenge merely because of the amount of data, but also because of the need to provide information to the business in real time, says Wayne Dick, business development manager, Hitachi Data Systems. “From an infrastructure perspective, big data demands more throughput than you get from most solutions today,” he adds. Business users don’t want to wait a week to get analytics data, he adds. There are a range of solutions on the market that make it easier to get data to end users without needing to go through a range of complex IT processes. But the challenge is that many of these solutions – flash arrays and in-memory computing, for example – are expensive to implement. “You could sit with all of your information on a costly infrastructure,” says Dick.

> The industry is seeing a range of new technologies such as in-memory computing, big data appliances, and flash arrays emerge.

Wayne Dick,
Business Developement Manager,
Hitachi Data Systems

Flash arrays use flash memory drives instead of hard disk drives to store data, with the benefit that data can be accessed and transferred at a faster speed. Even through costs per gigabyte have fallen dramatically, flash remains an expensive option for mainstream storage uses. But some organisations are finding it beneficial for some applications where performance and rapid access to data are important.

“In-memory and flash array storage is already appearing in data appliances, fast replacing disk spindle storage,” says Mervyn Mooi, director at Knowledge Integration Dynamics. Flash storage is a key component of in-memory computing solutions, which store data in the main RAM of dedicated servers rather than in databases on disk drives. In-memory computing allows companies to analyse huge data volumes on the fly. Though some local retailers are looking at

in-memory computing, its complexity means that adoption is likely to be relatively slow, says Dick. "As you move from traditional database structures to technologies like SAP's HANA, you need different skills," he says. "You won't see people jumping into this quickly."

One way that businesses can manage the challenges of providing real-time access to business data while keeping costs down is to use tiered storage solutions that allow them to assign their most valuable, most often-accessed data to higher cost disc or flash solutions while storing archival data on cheap media like tape. Some vendors provide software that automates the process of moving data between different tiers.

Converged infrastructure and cloud

There is also a move towards converged infrastructure as companies look to simplify their IT infrastructure, says Dick. Also known as engineered systems, converged infrastructure solutions draw together servers, storage, software, networking and other data centre elements into prepackaged pretested solutions designed to meet a particular business requirement. The cloud is emerging as another option. Many large companies in South Africa want to keep their data under their own control and continue to invest in the infrastructure to store and manage their information in-house, says Mooi. But small businesses are increasingly looking to the cloud for their computing and data storage needs. Storage-as-a-service has already surpassed enterprise storage investments and volumes, says Mooi. Social big data generates more data volume than ERP and other business systems, which means that many data centres will want to consume storage as a cloud service in the future.

But the cloud still has some challenges in the South African market, according to Dick. "Cloud adoption is being driven by the fact that it offers businesses more flexibility and lower costs," he adds. "But here, bandwidth is still costly and not as readily available as in the rest of the world. There is also still a lot of caution among companies about allowing their data to leave our borders." Many companies still rely on proprietary and legacy applications they cannot easily move to the cloud, says Dick. Where the cloud is currently most useful is for SMEs who use services such as Amazon and Azure for data protection, he believes. **TSB**

Mervyn Mooi,
Director, Knowledge Integration Dynamics

The 4 Vs of Big Data

Big data isn't just about the amount of information that companies need to store and manage. Vendors and analysts define a number of characteristics that make big data so challenging for enterprises:

Volume: According to IBM, we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data each, which means that some 90% of the data in the world today has been created in just the last two years alone. The result is that companies need to store massive quantities of data from a range of sources.

Velocity: This refers to the sheer speed at which businesses and consumers create new data—consider, for example, how much text and media people post to social networking sites every second of the day, or how many financial transactions a stock market crunches through in a minute.

Variety: This is about the different types of data we need to manage in today's world—not just data in traditional structured databases, but also unstructured data like photos, videos, machine sensor data, emails, social media posts and more.

Value: Big data is valuable because it allows companies to make better decisions at a faster pace. Not only is it invaluable for business analytics, data is also starting to become a tradable commodity in some industries.

Last week's news is history

By Shaun Barendsen, HDS General Manager for Sub-Saharan Africa

As the pace of data growth and market change picks up, information solutions systems need to stay a step ahead – because what happened last week is old news, says HDS' Shaun Barendsen.

Until relatively recently, data was a static, reliable store of information that told us who our customers were and what transactions had been carried out. A report compiled last week was a fairly accurate assessment of the enterprise's position today. This is no longer the case.

Now, amid vast and exponentially growing volumes of data, we are presented with the enticing possibility that everything we need to know to improve our business resides in the information within and outside our business. This presents a very compelling case for solutions that enable enterprises to consolidate all the relevant structured and unstructured data, search and analyse it in real time, and present insights that deliver real business value.

Not good enough anymore

At HDS, we are seeing growing numbers of customers seeking the transformation of data into information that enables them to become more effective and more competitive. It is not just about data warehousing – they are looking to benefit from real-time analytics. In a market where new trends emerge daily, customers are aware that a week-old report is just not good enough anymore. There is also a growing demand for reduced cost and complexity in IT, as well as solutions that support innovation in business and society as a whole. At HDS, we believe next-generation information solutions and analytics does exactly that.

Virtualised, optimised data storage facilitates better public service and healthcare delivery as well as public safety. Our new ability to intelligently analyse staggeringly vast volumes of data is already changing lives, saving enterprises billions, and enabling more efficient everything. And this is just the beginning. Consider the benefits to humanity possible as a result of the statistical analysis of genomic data. Already, pioneering health research and lifesaving drug development is taking place on the back of our new ability to determine patterns from huge amounts of data, where previously no patterns were evident.

"Growing numbers of customers are seeking the transformation of data into information that enables them to become more effective and more competitive."

Shaun Barendsen,
GM, HDS
Sub-Saharan Africa

The work being done in facial recognition tools is another example. Increasingly, law enforcement authorities around the world will be able to collaborate to share data, match features and identify threats and suspects. Our ability to consolidate and interpret vast amounts of data from dispersed sources in a variety of formats is already making life safer and better – and the potential is endless.

The possible business uses for intelligently-analysed data are equally impressive. They extend far beyond the data analysis serving the CRM, research and marketing departments. Now, there is the potential to use real-time analysis to constantly monitor and assess the state of heavy machinery, manufacturing, or transport and utility networks through masses of sensors, allowing for additional safety checks to be built in and cost-saving proactive maintenance to be carried out.

Progress underpinned by technology

As enterprises and public service move to maximise the value of this wealth of available data, they risk an increase in the cost and complexity of managing the data, and, in a price-sensitive market, this is where innovation could be stonewalled. Therefore, the evolution to a society that is able to effectively use its big data will be underpinned by technology advances such as the converged stack, cloud solutions and advanced real-time analytics. **TSB**

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Navigating the Server Hosting Environment

Locally the market towards hosted servers is becoming more accessible to SMEs. But what are the pros and cons of going this route, and what should SMEs look for in their service providers? Iwan Pienaar looks closer.

With small to medium enterprises (SMEs) under increasing pressure to operate as cost effectively as possible, business owners are looking at the cloud to provide an alternative to on-premise hardware and software solutions. Even in South Africa the past 12 months have seen marked interest in going with a hosted server solution versus having a dedicated server in-house, with especially smaller companies that stand to benefit the most. “Colocation, or server hosting, has become increasingly affordable over the years. Connectivity prices have been on a downward trajectory for some years and now hosting costs are starting to come down too,” notes Debbie Pretorius, GM at MWEB Business. She says the interest in hosted servers is further helped along by companies’ concern about both the cost and reliability of the local electricity supply.

For Richard Vester, the director of EOH Cloud Services, it has become very much a capital expense versus an operational expense issue. “Many organisations do not have huge amounts of cash to invest in infrastructure. The majority of SMEs also do not have the right type of data centres or server rooms. So for them to facilitate their own hosting and build the right environment becomes too expensive,” he says. Unlike larger organisations with IT departments that have to comply with a host of regulatory and security policies, SMEs are significantly more agile and can easily adopt a hosted strategy. “SMEs are also able to leverage the skills of the service provider and do not have to be concerned about getting additional staff on board to manage the infrastructure,” he says.

Not just a silver lining

For all the advantages that server hosting provides companies, there are pitfalls to be mindful of. Muggie van Staden, MD of open source technology solutions provider Obsidian Systems, says Edward Snowden is probably the best sales person to highlight the risks of the cloud. “Thanks to Snowden and his leaking of sensitive information, people are now asking whether their data is safe on these massive public cloud providers. Companies of all sizes need to understand the implications of the cloud and what it means for their data. Corporate governance like the Protection of Personal Information Act is further contributing to this awareness and are raising many questions around cloud and the services associated to it,” says van Staden.

Another concern is what would happen if the hosting provider goes down? How would you access your corporate data and what impact would it have on customer services and revenue? “There is still a lot of education to be done when it comes to these and other issues in the hosted environment. For example, when you take your data out of the country by going with someone like Amazon, you are relying on reputation and have no sight of where they keep their servers and whether they are secure,” says Vester. Locally, he says, the service providers want to work more closely with their customers and show them not only the facilities being used for hosting but also that the necessary security standards are in place.

What to look for

Crispin Russell, CEO of Cape Town-based ArcAqua, says the company experienced a few issues when migrating their email to an exchange in Johannesburg where people lost some messages and they could not access the server for a few days. “Despite this, now that all the teething issues have been resolved I would not hesitate to do it again.”

> **"SMEs are also able to leverage the skills of the service provider and do not have to be concerned about getting additional staff on board."**

Debbie Pretorius, MD, MWEB Business

"The service provider should give the SME the opportunity to move when they want to and not lock them into a long-term contract."

"Smaller companies looking at the cloud need to make sure that the provider has serious security and redundancy in place should the worst happen. If their server topples over, you do not want to feel it," says Russell. He adds that start-ups and smaller companies need to shop around for hosting providers that best meet their needs. Some charge an absolute fortune while others expect a long-term commitment. "You should also look at how easy it is to get your data back from the cloud should you cancel your contract. Some suppliers might want you to settle the outstanding contract amount before you export the information so be mindful of the policies that are in place," he notes.

Vester believes that the second-tier service providers have click-and-play solutions that are very SME-focused. "This means that there is no touch between the customer and the service provider. An SME will buy a virtual machine online and deploy it as needed with support offered via email or online. No relationship is needed." However, Vester says, SMEs should remain cautious when purchasing something off the internet as there is normally very little offered in terms of customisability. "A larger service provider gives customers the ability to not only have a more tailored service offering but is also able to leverage computing resources within its environment and give the SME more flexibility around what is offered." Ultimately the cloud, irrespective of service offered, is all about flexibility. "The service provider should give the SME the opportunity to move when they want to and not lock them into a long-term contract. If an SME wants to move to a different provider, it should be able to do so," adds Vester.

Given the penchant for SMEs to be fast-moving and able to adapt to change quicker than their larger brethren, this freedom and ability to choose the best solution for their hosting needs cannot be over-valued. Once more SMEs start adopting the cloud-based approach, the benefits will continue to outweigh the concerns that some might still have on not having their servers sitting in their office back-room. **TSB**

Richard Vester, Director of Cloud Services, EOH

CLOUD HOSTING BY THE NUMBERS

The worldwide market for public cloud services has reached a total size of $45.7 billion. This is according to the Worldwide Semi-annual Public Cloud Services Tracker (published on 7 July) of the International Data Corporation (IDC). Furthermore, the expectation is that the market will show a compound annual growth rate of 23% until 2018.

Of the various cloud services, the IDC has found that the Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) market (comprising server and basic storage) drove $3.6 billion in 2013 spending. But while the spending sounds significant, it is still small when compared to the overall global technology spending of $2.04 trillion in 2013 (IDC Worldwide Black Book). However, expectations are that there will be significant growth in the IaaS sector over the coming years.

Voice To Bytes: Does Your Company Need VoIP?

Taking your voice operations into your digital infrastructure seems like a natural step as your business becomes more digital. But is the jump to VoIP necessary and what can you hope to gain? James Francis investigates.

Arnold van Huyssteen, Acting Managing Executive, Telkom Product House

Digital communication is a bygone revolution - practically all voice communications today follow this path. Yet for a long time it was mainly a way for communication firms to lower their own costs. The paradigm only expanded when Skype consumerised Voice-over-IP (VoIP), sounding the death knell for analogue communications. Once the sluice gates opened, VoIP offerings became very prominent in the market - at least abroad. High bandwidth costs dulled most South African companies' appetite for adoption. But falling bandwidth prices are changing the landscape, so is this a good time to look at moving to a VoIP service?

VoIP: The Fibre Gateway

Arnold van Huyssteen, acting managing executive at Telkom's Product House, believes so. "Even if a company is not considering a voice/data strategy, they should be aware of an inevitability here - everything is moving onto an IP base as data merges with other functions. So this is a conversation companies should have, even if they have no immediate designs on VoIP."

Fuelled by better pricing models and cheaper bandwidth, the cloud and subscription services are transforming companies' IT infrastructure from separated silos to a single pool. You might differentiate between a CRM and a PABX, but they use the same hosted infrastructure. Thus VoIP is a cost-effective way to test the impact of IP-fication on your business. Copper links such as ADSL or Diginet lines are limited in exploiting this, but fibre and LTE are not encumbered.

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follows from p22

A key part of deciding on your company's VoIP strategy (and if you even need one) relies on grasping the different facets of UC.

Many people, including XDSL's director of Broadband, Martin van Dyk, agree that VoIP can help understand new business broadband paradigms. "Look at VoIP as a consolidation/outsourcing strategy - a way to get more kit out of the office," says Van Dyk. "Hosted services give you a lot more flexibility and a sense of future-proofing. If you use a hosted solution, you have access to all the functionality and features of an Enterprise PABX at a much reduced cost and it makes it easier to switch from one provider to another."

All for one? Maybe with UC.

PABX is just one of the VoIP bouquet's rich pickings. The popular theme at this moment is Unified Communications (UC), a catch-all phrase for a broad collection of communication and collaboration technologies. "There are a lot of integration capabilities that exist within UC, which will allow you to use your collaboration tools more efficiently," says Dean Young, senior consultant for Telecommunications/UC at T-Systems SA. "At the entry-level you have telephony, basic video and messaging, but it can scale up to integration with other services such as Sharepoint or Outlook. You can even have customers collaborate with each other if they are on the same platform."

A key part of deciding on your company's VoIP strategy (and if you even need one) relies on grasping the different facets of UC. You may not require a change in telephony, but does your workforce use messaging clients to tackle their tasks? Do you see any potential in mining recorded calls for leads and other data? A UC implementation can be entirely software-based and through apps can harness mobile ecosystems with ease. Young advises starting small, using a UC as a service model to migrate selected company functions to an online model.

To VOIP or Not To VOIP?

Still, do you actually need a VoIP solution? While the rise of a new era in broadband – driven by affordable, low-latency and high-capacity connections - makes adoption almost inevitable, there is a threshold. For example, XDSL declines dealing with companies whose telephony bills sit below R10 000 as they won't save money. T-Systems, which offers demo deployments to explore UC in your business, notes that there is economy of scale to consider: the more users, the cheaper it gets, but that works in reverse as well. It also warns against whole hog deployments. "Often if a company buys a full UC implementation, it is not utilised," says Young. "The people using the tech don't know the functionalities and others just don't want to use it - they are happy with what they have."

It is key to audit your workplace and get a sense of its demands: what do your workers use to collaborate? Are your customers asking for more ways to liaise with you? What is the combined cost of your telephony and internet? Can some company functions (like CRM) be migrated to hosted services? "In terms of VoIP, I wouldn't gamble voice interactions with my customers just to save a little money," says Chetty. "But if I look at the potential of UC for a SME, there is a lot more to consider and it can open new markets and new growth for a small company." **TSB**

Dean Young, Senior Consultant, T-Systems SA.

What about Copper?

Is VOIP or UC an option if you are still using copper broadband through ADSL or Diginet? It depends on what you want: copper still performs well, but its higher latency is not always suited for high-end video or some hosted services. Fibre brings more than capacity to the table, such as prioritising bandwidth and managing consumption on an as-you-need-it basis. But copper is not out of the picture and companies continue to squeeze more capacity from the technology.

Telkom expects that as fibre use grows, hybrid solutions will appear that use both platforms. If you plan to use copper for longer, you should talk to your ISP and discuss solutions around prioritising performance for specific services. Still, be prepared for a fibre option soon - Telkom is anticipated to complete its fibre network next year, with a bevy of competitors in tow. It has also revealed that high-performance copper Diginet lines will be discontinued in 2016 and being absorbed by fibre offerings.

It's All or Nothing

Deon Scheepers from Interactive Intelligence Africa believes one of the first areas that companies need to examine before moving into the cloud is how much of the IT infrastructure they should actually transfer.

Deon Scheepers, Strategic Consultant EMEA, Interactive Intelligence Africa

Some might think basing all their telephony systems in the cloud would save money, with services being accessed through a public network or a VoIP, meaning there is no carrier relationship onsite. This would eliminate capital expenditure costs for the phone system, requiring only a monthly rental or per-use payment.

Downtime losses

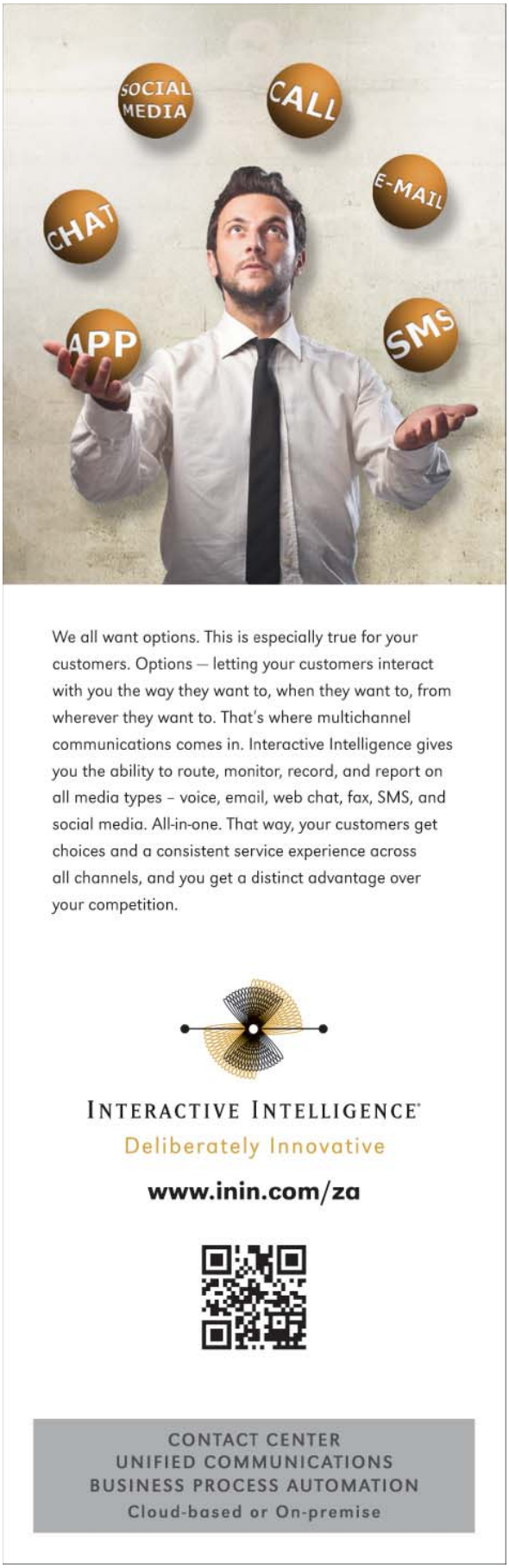
While this appears to offer better long-term budgeting, it is worth noting that if the VoIP connection is lost, then so is all access to data or calls, which can be very costly indeed. This is particularly true for those businesses that rely on telephony for purchases or financial transactions, such as a retailer or a bank. Every minute a customer can't be contacted is time lost for selling. Research from CA Technologies estimates the global amount of revenue lost to IT downtime is $26.5 billion, and among those departments most affected are sales and finance.

> If the VoIP connection is lost, then so is all access to data or calls, which can be very costly indeed.

The safest option is to create a private cloud by purchasing and installing an infrastructure on the premises. However, this can be very costly both in terms of installation and continuing maintenance, making it only suitable for the largest organisations. The most cost-effective option is a hosted hybrid model that offers the best of both public and private cloud networks. In this scenario, infrastructure operated by the vendor is deployed on a company's local network, with voice and data kept on the premises, ensuring continued access and security, while the logic and routing is in the public cloud and offers the public cloud price model.

Check your options

An important thing companies need to look out for is the onsite equipment – who owns it and what does it cost? Some vendors might just rent out the equipment for a monthly tariff, which could be supplementary to the service charge, while others will offer the opportunity to buy the equipment for a lump sum or a payment plan spread out over a certain period. Again, it is worth checking how these are priced. **TSB**



What's shaping IT in Africa

African leaders are actively promoting ICT infrastructure development, affordable access technologies and localised ICT sector growth, in partnership with global ICT vendors who see Africa as the next big frontier. Tracy Burrows delves deeper.

With a population of over a billion, supported by rapid ICT growth across Africa, global vendors are fast moving into the continent. Mteto Nyati, Microsoft's new general manager: MEA Emerging Regions, believes Africa is poised for massive growth in the ICT space. "Across Africa, we are seeing the emergence of new political leaders who are largely younger and more inclined to create the right kind of environment for ICT and knowledge economy development. Look at ICT developments in Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria for example," he says.

Mteto Nyati, General Manager: MEA Emerging Regions, Microsoft

> **"The emergence of passionate, innovative young people with a free market economy mindset is very encouraging."**

Nyati believes one of the biggest trends shaping ICT in Africa is the emergence of innovation hubs across the continent. "To me, this is a very interesting development, where people are grouping themselves by country and as communities to drive innovations that are relevant to the local context. In the past, we in Africa have tended to be consumers of other people's technology. The emergence of passionate, innovative young people with a free market economy mindset is very encouraging. Governments need to harness this energy and support these youths."

The technology sector leader for KPMG in South Africa, Frank Rizzo, adds: "KPMG research has found that fostering innovation depends on the availability of talent, access to technology, the ability to drive customer adoption and access to capital. In Africa, we believe that innovation incentives and access to disruptive technologies such as cloud and mobile, will drive ICT forward."

Mobile Africa

Nyati also believes that Africa's move to mobility is a key determining factor. "You can't talk about Africa without looking at mobility. This trend is not new, but it remains important because smartphones and tablets are becoming more affordable, which means serious computing is within reach of ordinary people." Rizzo notes that sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest-growing mobile market in the world, topping 650 million subscribers, with smartphone penetration of up to 19%. This demand is also sparking the growth of local manufacturing and assembly firms. Among them are Nigeria's Zinox technologies, which is seeing strong growth as a local computer hardware manufacturer. In Ghana, Nigeria and Gambia, Rlg Communications is rapidly expanding its

The cost of connectivity across the continent is dropping – but not fast enough.

manufacturing facilities across borders in the region, producing lower-cost phones, tablets, notebooks and PCs for local conditions. In launching its assembly plant in Nigeria's Osun state this year, Rlg Communications said the new plant would assemble at least 5 000 mobile phones and 2 500 notebooks per day.

Nyati notes that the massive swing to mobility is underpinning the growth of e-commerce, mobile money and other mobile value added solutions across the continent. Youths across the continent are upskilling themselves to become mobile application developers, with assistance from global ICT firms helping them monetise their developments through app stores, while major ICT players are embarking on new mobile-based business models on the back of these new levels of mobile penetration. Dimension Data, for example, recently launched Enterprise Mobility-as-a-Service (EMaaS), offering enterprise software via mobile on the back of this widespread mobile adoption, while existing and new players are offering growing ranges of mobile productivity and security solutions.

Affordable internet

The cost of connectivity across the continent is dropping – but not fast enough, say key stakeholders such as the International Telecommunication Union, regional governments and local enterprises. To counter this, a wave of new initiatives have been launched to reduce the cost of internet access using TV white spaces technology, among others. One such initiative, the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), estimates that broadband still costs more than half of the monthly income of millions of people around the world. The UN Broadband Commission's target for entry-level broadband service prices is less than 5% of average monthly income. A4AI says only around 20% of Africans are online today, with cost seen as the greatest barrier to access.

Access is not the only factor, says Reshaad Sha, chief strategy officer at Dark Fibre Africa. The speed and quality of the access is what matters. "We need to be delivering the kind of connectivity that allows users to run the popular applications of the day. Five years from now, we can expect to need a minimum of 100 Mbps connectivity."

Continental cloud

Another major trend is cloud computing – the move to take data out of the server room and into a hosted environment,

Frank Rizzo, Technology Sector Leader, KPMG South Africa

and to offer it on a subscription basis. "Among other things, cloud significantly reduces the barrier to entry to small business," says Nyati. Microsoft's new Cloud Startup Academy aims to equip young Africans with tens of millions of intelligent devices, put one million African SMEs online, improve the skills of 100 000 young people and help place 75% of these graduates in jobs by 2016.

The cloud is also supporting the roll-out of converged ICT services – another growing trend. Late last year, in buying a majority stake in AccessKenya, Dimension Data expressed its aim of becoming the leading provider of converged services across Africa. Cloud technologies are also underpinning the business process outsourcing hopes of many African countries. Contact centre specialists Interactive Intelligence's manager of Sales Operations for Africa, Deon Scheepers, says enterprises in fast-growing regions across Africa, including Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Ethiopia, are rapidly moving their contact centres to the cloud, or simply building their new contact centres directly in the cloud.

Out of Africa…

The disruptive forces of mobile, cloud and – to some extent – big data and analytics, combined with a new willingness on the part of governments to focus their energies on ICT development, look set to increase the momentum of Africa's digital revolution. It's all moving from hype to reality, says Gartner. **TSB**

African ICT in numbers

Source: ITU - The World in 2014

- Africa and Asia and the Pacific, are the regions with the world's strongest mobile cellular growth and the lowest penetration rates.
- In Africa, almost 20% of the population will be online by end 2014, up from 10% in 2010.
- Mobile-broadband penetration in Africa is close to 20% in 2014, up from 2% in 2010.
- Mobile penetration in Africa will reach 69% by end 2014.

Focus on SA's ICT sector carries challenges, but also great opportunity

With the African ICT sector viewed as a vehicle for economic growth, TechSmart Business spoke to Dimension Data's Basha Pillay about the challenges and opportunities facing enterprises in coming years.

It should come as no surprise that a strong and stable ICT sector is one of the key drivers in ensuring that South Africa, and Africa, develops and matures economically. Compared to their global counterparts, Africa as a whole has been less aggressive in creating ICT-focused strategies. With a renewed focus in this area, it's important for enterprises to negotiate their respective country's obstacles in order to avoid stifled growth. To gain a better insight into what these issues may be, TechSmart Business spoke to Basha Pillay, head of technology for end-user computing at Dimension Data. Part of Pillay's role lies in working closely with enterprises and pulling together all the aspects of end-user computing from the device to connectivity.

The influence of connectivity

When looking at the current climate within South Africa's ICT sector in relation to the rest of Africa, Pillay was quick to point out that our country, along with a number of tier one nations, stands at a relatively mature state and has shown a "healthy rate" of growth. Pillay believes that this level of maturity is a result of technology being so heavily entrenched into businesses in these regions today that from a strategic perspective, "essentially every business is a digital business." As connectivity becomes increasingly more pervasive and affordable, other African nations will also reap the benefits, with Pillay noting that exponential growth tied directly to the adoption of cloud and mobility-based technologies will only intensify. "Part of this growth is due to pure necessity and we are already seeing countries leap-frogging each other on the adoption of more recent technologies purely due to the lack of traditional infrastructure," he said.

Pillay added that as a result countries like Nigeria, Morocco and Angola, do have pockets of ICT maturity in the financial services and telco sectors, but that they are still well behind others. He went on to state that this is mainly due to legislative issues that hamper accelerated progress for the ICT sector.

Key drivers

While identifying the key drivers pushing the focus of the ICT sector, Pillay asserted that cloud services along with mobility will both play "major roles" in accelerating the development of ICT growth. However, he also warned that there remain issues surrounding the dependency of enterprises on more inclusive regulatory laws, which could still stifle sector growth if handled incorrectly. It is at this stage that enterprises and government bodies have to work more cohesively. "This can be effectively managed by creating a standards and compliance approach across Africa to ensure that we are able to service this market properly," he said.

> "Part of this growth is due to pure necessity and we are already seeing countries leap-frogging each other on the adoption of more recent technologies."

As far as the main challenge facing ICT sector growth goes, Pillay believes it centres around a somewhat limited infrastructure. An example of this, is the laying of undersea cables within the African region, which often only serves the cities they have landed in, with the required infrastructure for technologies like cloud-based services not having worked its way inland as yet. Another hindrance according to Pillay is the restrictive in-country ICT policies and the large cost of ownership for ICT infrastructures.

ICT growth

Dimension Data is one such service provider aiming to ensure ICT growth both locally and across the continent, with Pillay highlighting three key areas of the company's focus. The first is affordable access to bandwidth, something its subsidiary, Internet Solutions, is hoping to address through new innovative products to offer low-cost to free internet connectivity across South Africa. An example of this is the recent announcement of 500 Gbps super-channels to provide ethernet services to its clients across the country. Next is limiting the high cost of ownership, which Dimension Data is able to negate with its major investment in cloud, mobility and virtualisation. Lastly is the development of skills and experience, with Dimension Data partnering with a number of NGOs and tertiary institutions to provide an ICT-focused graduate programme.

As development of the ICT sector gains momentum through increased cloud and mobility solutions, there are still some growing pains to negotiate. If these are well handled by enterprises and governments alike, the potential growth down the line can provide a great deal of sustainability for the continent. [RLC] **TSB**

Basha Pillay, Head of Technology for End-User Computing, Dimension Data

AfriGIS shows value in validating **the Power of your Address**

TechSmart Business spoke to Magnus Rademeyer, managing director of AfriGIS, a technology innovation company focused on unlocking the power of addresses. The potential application of which has benefits for both large corporates and everyday users alike.

Chances are that you've probably made use of Geocoding while filling out an online form (to sign up for, or apply for services), and haven't even realised it. Geocoding is also the reason why you may have used technology from AfriGIS, a Pretoria-based solution provider with a specific focus on unlocking the power of addresses. According to Rademeyer, the effective use of this technology enables large corporates, service providers and end-users the ability to "pin information to the surface of the Earth" in a meaningful way.

Big Data with co-ordinates

This is best illustrated through the value of location, and more specifically the information intrinsically tied to where an individual is located. Any given location is naturally linked to sets of data that can be applied to businesses decision-making. AfriGIS's goal is to ensure that this location-based information can be accessed simply, intuitively, securely and most importantly quickly. The reason why speed is of utmost importance in Rademeyer's eyes, lies in the fact that information nowadays is captured at the speed of speech or type. The ability to efficiently capture this information is the true engine behind one of AfriGIS's key mobility solutions, AfriGIS Search, which is powered by the company's uniquely designed IntiendoLS API tool.

IntiendoLS tool is driven by a combination of geocoding and address validation, all of which is aimed at supporting a database that's constantly being updated and refined. This ensures that AfriGIS Search is continually evolving into a more complete tool, as close to 100 000 new addresses and locations are added to it every quarter. This database is supported by a range of government data- and partner institutions, which makes the AfriGIS dataset not only comprehensive in terms of its scope, but also accurate and relevant in the types of information it can pull. Furthermore, this tool can integrate new types of metadata, which allows it to cater for a range customer-driven service industries.

Location, location, location

Rademeyer went on to stress that the importance of an address extends far further than the physical borders of any given piece of land, but also carries with it a deeper layer in which economic, social and political data is attached. The ability to access these deeper layers of information forms the backbone of AfriGIS's location-based solutions, and offers companies a more detailed level of customer interaction and territory decision-making. Added to this, Rademeyer noted that "the quality of customer data is inherently linked to the quality of address-based information and being able to find it on a map."

> AfriGIS's goal is to ensure that this location-based information can be accessed simply, intuitively, securely and most importantly quickly.

As levels of connectedness from a technological data perspective begin to increase, the ability to access and identify this information in an efficient manner becomes all the more important. It has particular importance for those looking to unlock their economic potential, as banks often use addresses to set benchmarks in terms of validating an applicant's loan. The address one has is now linked to how a financial institution views you. Through AfriGIS's geocoding-based tools, enterprises have access to more information on any given address. This enriched level of knowledge can drastically change the quality of their decision making, and ultimately reaps benefits for both themselves and everyday individuals.

For more info on the untapped power of addresses, call 087-310-6400 or head to **www.afrigis.co.za** to view their comprehensive range of innovative solutions. [RLC] **TSB**

SA IT sector at a crossroads, finds Citrix

A recent local study by Citrix reveals that South Africa's IT sector is at a crossroads, one complicated by skills and integration conundrums, and compounded by the constantly changing role of IT.

As part of its survey into what keeps chief information officers (CIO) and chief technology officers (CTO) awake at night, Citrix conducted a series of face-to-face interviews with some of the country's top business leaders in nine different industry sectors.

One of the major concerns that emerged as a result was the lack of IT skills across the country – in particular the skills required to support and maintain emerging technologies such as virtualisation, networking and cloud services. This, stressed Citrix, is a pressing issue that has to be addressed quickly. Citrix warned that failing to do so could hamper growth, innovation and competitiveness and would effectively jeopardise the country's ability to emerge as a flourishing centre of business.

According to the report, the worrying lack of skills could jeopardise the industry as a whole, with South African IT professionals running the risk of being superseded unless they "skill up" fast.

Transformation and training

Furthermore, the majority of respondents felt current IT professionals could potentially end up without jobs if they don't strengthen their skillset. "The way IT is evolving, there will be a requirement for a smaller workforce, with fewer, more highly skilled people in specific areas," was the view of one CTO, whilst another commented, "It's make or break. IT specialists need to be trained up."

As to who was responsible for this upskilling, views differed, from it being the responsibility of the CIO to the government, to ensure the training of a new generation of IT professionals. Yet others believed the onus rests with service providers who ought to ensure that their employees are skilled up adequately to support and maintain their solutions.

Beyond that, respondents confirmed that consumerisation is transforming IT, with many organisations apparently moving quickly to allow and embrace bring-your-own-device (BYOD) programmes and adopt mobility strategies. All CTOs and CIOs agreed that enterprise mobility will have a big impact on their business and will continue to grow in prominence.

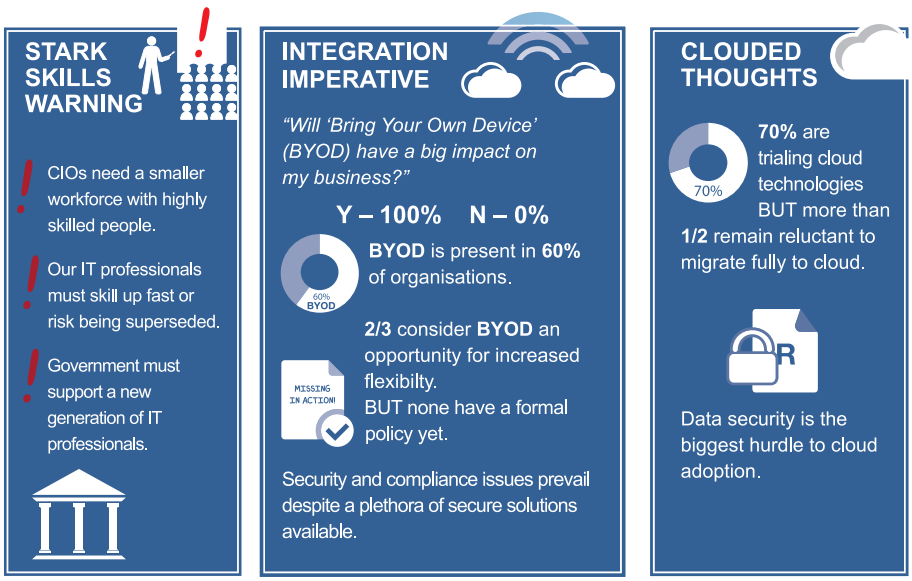
Interestingly, while 60% of the interviewees reported having BYOD programmes within their organisations at present, none of them as yet have a formal policy for managing or driving its adoption. The overarching reason for non-adoption appears to be concerns over security and compliance – which can be addressed, with the correct solution. "For BYOD to be effective, you need a secure connection to the corporate network. Once the security issues are resolved, BYOD will be an opportunity," said one respondent.

One of the major concerns that emerged as a result was the lack of IT skills across the country.

Concerns and advice

Although the research highlighted some conundrums within the South African business IT landscape, there is still a positive outlook. In a nutshell, the survey found that businesses are ready and willing to adopt new technologies should their main areas of concern be adequately addressed. When asked what advice they would give to vendors in order to encourage faster adoption of key technologies, interviewees offered some practical tips, such as including technical people and not just sales people in the discussions regarding new technologies, and encouraging more transparency around data storage.

However, skills aside, most respondents felt that, above all else, the security of their data (whether impacted by BYOD or cloud adoption) is the biggest issue right now – and to alleviate those concerns would enable South African businesses to choose the right path at the crossroads. **TSB**



NetApp introduces new storage products locally

In a bid to consolidate its offerings moving forward, NetApp has just launched new storage products into the market.

While over the last year, storage and data management solutions provider, NetApp, has turned its attentions to development and alliances, its ability to release new, innovative products into the market has certainly not diminished. As evidence of this, the company announced its new storage products, the entry level FAS2500 and the high-end, extreme performance FAS8080 EX. Andre Swanepoel, head of channels and alliances for Africa at NetApp, explained that the new storage system platforms are intended to enable customers to have a smoother transition, should they start small and wish to move to the high end of the product range.

Products with a purpose

As for the two products themselves, their features, and more importantly, their benefits to businesses, are significant. According to the company, the entry-level FAS2500 offers expanded flash support to accelerate workloads by up to 46% and increases usable capacity by 48%. Additionally, its hybrid arrays can simplify operations, extend system life and minimise future costs. With the FAS8080 EX, growing organisations and service providers would be further able to drive the performance-intensive SAN (storage area network) and NAS (network attached storage) workloads at the largest scale.

> **It's not just about storing information on hardware, but rather how quickly a business can access and analyse its information in order to make itself more competitive.**

More particularly, the product scales to four million IOPS (Input/Output Operations Per Second) and can be configured either as an all-flash array with 4.6 PB (petabytes) of flash storage, or as a hybrid array with flash cache of nearly half a petabyte. Additionally, the company elaborated that the FAS8080 EX dynamically responds to growing data requirements with seamless scaling to nearly 70 PB of capacity and more than 600 I/O connections, factors which are critical for service providers and large organisations that are consolidating workloads.

Business first

The new products though, are not a whim purchase, but rather could potentially enhance a business' competitiveness. Swanepoel elaborated that it's not just about storing information on hardware, but rather how quickly a business can access and analyse its information in order to make itself more competitive.

Furthermore, Swanepoel stressed that NetApp placed considerable importance on enabling its customers to benefit from a non-disruptive environment. "If a business has the 8050 or 8020 and after three years wants to migrate to the high-end 8080, they can do so with zero downtime," he reassured.

The past and the future

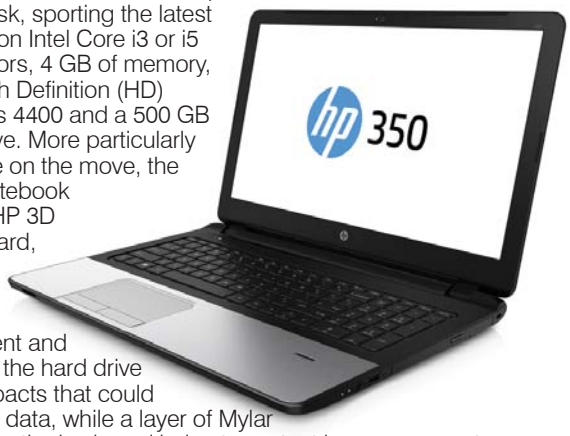
Beyond the products themselves though, Swanepoel had much of interest to say of the African market itself, at which these products are aimed. He stressed that South Africa and Africa as a whole differ from each other, and from developed markets as well. He elaborated that in South Africa there are a lot of legacy systems, with the opposite being true for the rest of Africa. Furthermore, he noted that in South Africa there tends to be under-spend from a technology perspective, but overspend from a capacity perspective. This means that NetApp's storage solutions have to take these environments into account, as products that were primarily designed for developed countries may not necessarily be the best solution for the South African industry and its current IT landscape.

"Our philosophy and go-to-market strategy is to deliver a solution that the customer wants instead of what they have been convinced they should want. At the end of the day, this enables them to spend less money on a more effective solution rather than under-spend because they broke the budget at the urgings of another vendor," he concluded. For more information visit **www.netapp.com.** [RN] **TSB**

The FAS808 EX

HP launches affordable 350 notebook

HP's new notebook is aimed at a particular niche – those businesses seeking a durable performer that can also lay claim to being affordable. The Windows 8.1 notebook may carry a budget friendly pricetag that is well under the R10k mark, but the company has assured that it is more than up to the task, sporting the latest generation Intel Core i3 or i5 processors, 4 GB of memory, Intel High Definition (HD) Graphics 4400 and a 500 GB hard drive. More particularly for those on the move, the 15.6" notebook boasts HP 3D DriveGuard, which senses sudden movement and protects the hard drive from impacts that could damage data, while a layer of Mylar film under the keyboard helps to protect key components from minor spills. RRP: R7 700 from Drive Control Corporation at **www.drivecon.net**.



WD My Book Duo coming

The latest desktop storage solution from WD is its My Book Duo might look strange but for some might just be the next best thing to sliced bread. The My Book Duo boasts massive capacities, (4 TB, 6 TB and 8 TB) and impressive transfer speeds up to 290 MB/s. Furthermore, as well as using two drives, the My Book Duo has been optimised for small RAID (Redundant Array of Independent Disks) environments and offers Bluetooth 3.0. Users can further take advantage of mirror mode (RAID 1) for ultimate data protection in which the drives continuously maintains a second copy of all digital files for real-time data backup. The My Book Duo is available this month at R4 100, R5 100 and R6 900 for the 4 TB, 6 TB and 8 TB versions respectively.

Huawei unveils Ascend P7 in SA

Huawei's latest smartphone offering, the Ascend P7, is one smartphone that should not be overlooked. The company has confided that the Ascend P7 is being largely aimed at young professionals who want a premium device without a too weighty pricetag. The slim and metallic body LTE phone delivers on a number of fronts – offering up a spacious and large 5" screen, with full HD (1920x1080) resolution (445ppi); a very capable processor in the form of a Hisilicon Kirin 910T quad-core 1.8 GHz CPU, along with 2 GB of memory and 16 GB of storage (expandable via microSD).

Additionally, the onboard cameras were apparently a high priority for the company as well, as it has seen fit to include a 13 megapixel back camera, and, betraying its youth-friendly inclination, caters to selfie-snappers with an 8 megapixel front facer. While the phone may be competing with the S4/S5, its pricing is a more affordable R6 700 off contract.

Sinetech introduces Power Trolley 6 portable power

With the power grid during winter being as finicky as the stock market in a recession, sometimes a power boost can save the day. Enter the Power Trolley 6. The device, which is a fully portable power hub for a home or office, is able to provide up to ten hours of emergency power on the internal battery (load and battery size dependant). Furthermore, it can power a range of appliances, from notebook, computers, printers, cash registers, and security systems to lights, alarm systems and TVs. Unlike a generator, the Power Trolley boasts silent operation, does not require petrol or diesel and can easily moved from place to place thanks to its handle and wheels.

One power socket and two USB ports are onboard, while a connection plug caters for an additional external battery to further expand one's back-up time. RRP: R6 230, visit **www.sinetech.co.za**. **TSB**

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Computex 2014: Business gets ready for the future

Asia's biggest technology show of the year, Computex in Taipei, Taiwan offered a glimpse into where the future, and thus the business of technology, is likely heading. Ryan Noik was on hand.

To start with, there is good news for an industry which took its fair share of body blows in the wake of the recession, with all indications being that the technology sector is well on its way to making a healthy recovery. The first hint that business is on an upswing came from the scale of the expo itself, which, this year spanned four massive halls (as compared with last year's three) and boasted in excess of 5 000 stalls. No less impressive was the number of attendees – and thus proof of the attraction that this year's Computex held for its 135 000 visitors.

However, perhaps the clearest sign of Computex 2014's relevance to the industry, came from the fact that by the show's end, Walter Yeh, the executive vice president of the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), reported that it had organised in excess of 1800 procurement meetings over the five day period (360 a day on average and the same as last year's event). He added that an estimated $25-billion in business opportunities had been created for all the countries attending.

Down to business

Moreover, while there was much to gape at on the general consumer side of technology, behind closed doors, the future of technology, and its expected predominant trends, were being vigorously discussed at a number of forum sessions. Yeh explained that while Computex in previous years had been primarily hardware focussed, this year, mirroring the industry, the event embraced integration between hardware and software. Considering that in recent years we have seen major IT players the likes of Dell, for example, transform themselves from being mostly hardware-centric companies into IT service and software providers as well, this was a clear indication that this is the way the industry is moving.

Yeh continued that along with mobile and smart devices, two particularly strong trends at this year's show revolved around wearables and the Internet of Things (IoT). Indeed, smart devices and the IoT formed a strong talking point at the Summit Forum, arguably the biggest of the forum sessions. It was here that Ming-Kai Tsai, the chairman and CEO of semiconductor company MediaTek, explained why exactly businesses should count on IoT becoming the technology sector's next major trend and business enabler moving forward.

The rise of the machines

Tsai said that while the 2000s was a device centric age, the world at large has moved into a more cloud-orientated time. What this means is that the internet – and thus connectivity – has become a prime factor, with connectivity reaching beyond being a feature of smart devices, to just about every device, every sensor, and every appliance being connected in some way to some kind of network, and thus able to transmit and receive information. It is the ubiquitous connectivity of the internet that has ushered in IoT, with it now being feasible and advantageous to consider connecting a range of electronics and machines and making them a part of the internet as well.

COMPUTEX
TAIPEI

Along with mobile and smart devices, two particularly strong trends at Computex revolved around wearables and the Internet of Things.

With data expanding exponentially, it has begun prompting businesses to consider how machine-related data can be better utilised and brought into the information superhighway fold.

One device to rule them

It came as little surprise that the mobile device appeared to be a key means of people interacting with a world in which the IoT could well dominate. Furthermore, the advanced nature of processors, the evolution of computing devices and smartphones that become both more affordable and more powerful, along with the cloud, could come together to offer some very interesting possibilities as well as new business models. As an example of what this could mean on a daily level, Tsai posed what might as yet sound like a scenario straight out of science fiction. "In the future, if you want to buy clothing you would be able to touch and feel the texture of the material, or if planning on going to a restaurant, you could potentially smell the dish off your smart device," he elaborated.

Tsai further hinted that the users of the future may well have devices that both recognise who is using them and then provide a more personalised functionality accordingly. One example given was a home that could 'sense' the person entering the room and adjust the temperature accordingly, or a car and smart device, which together, would be able to offer up the best traffic route for individual users. This personalisation of technology, according to Simon Segars, the CEO of microprocessor company ARM, was a particularly exciting trend, both for general users and for suppliers. He pointed out that the introduction of new products, form factors and features, were all a clear indication of this personalisation coming to the fore.

A new world waits

Tsai pointed out that technology advances in IoT, smartphones, and connectivity could further converge to influence areas such as agriculture, education, health care and services in developing nations. This in turn could have a positive effect on economic development in poorer countries; and contrary to the worrying concerns about a decline in the middle class in the developed world, could instead spur a global middle class, which in turn could facilitate new business models.

At the end of the day, IoT, the growth of mobile and other rising trends (cloud, wearables) weren't just about where technology itself is heading, or even just about what business opportunities lie ahead. Rather, it provided a glimpse into a world where technology had truly lived up to its promise of enhancing the lives of everyone it touched. [RN] **TSB**

Procurement meetings are part and parcel of Computex

Walter Yeh, Executive Vice President, Taiwan External Trade Development Council

4most to launch
SAP powered automotive management solution

A new enterprise management solution from 4most, called EMA, is being launched to cater to the automotive industry.

The solution, which is being brought to the market by the leading supplier and implementer of SAP and ERP software and technology powered by SAP Business One, 4most, will be officially unveiled at 2.30 pm on the 26th of August at SAP Business Park in Woodmead. 4most's Enterprise Manager (EMA) primary aim is to drive collaboration, cost and operational efficiencies, by providing a dealer and vehicle management system for large Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and vehicle dealerships (Sales and Service).

According to 4most, its integrated management solution EMA provides a single system that automates processes and delivers a reliable, unified picture of operations based on up-to-the-minute information. The official launch of 4most's EMA will provide an opportunity to demonstrate its ability to ease industry challenges, capture opportunities and manage complex processes – all in one simplified, user friendly and intuitive system. "It's an event tailored to the automotive industry, and will include a forum for the discussion of pertinent issues relevant to industry players" explained Marius Fabian, the MD of 4most.

Brace yourself

The company pointed out that South Africa's automotive industry is not without challenges. Volatile changes, driven by changing consumer behaviour, has seen the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA) consistently record lower sales compared to 2013. "The need to evolve is key," stressed Fabian. "Players need to manage their roles in emerging and mature markets, with a focus on competitive differentiation." This includes cost reduction and the improvement of operational efficiencies. "Collaboration is essential. All stakeholders, across the automotive value chain, need to look at a restructuring and integration of business to provide flexibility in this new operating environment," he concluded.

Whilst there isn't a cost for attendance of the event, registration is required. Interested parties can either email info@4most.co.za, visit **www.4most.co.za,** or read our interview on page 12. **TSB**

Automotive Week:

SA must learn from Australia's auto industry implosion

South Africa's automotive manufacturing industry believes it must learn from the dramatic collapse of the Australian auto sector.

National Association of Automotive Components and Allied Manufacturers of South Africa (NAACAM) executive director, Robert Houdet, said the Australian industry's collapse, which could trigger the loss of over 30 000 jobs, would provide valuable insight for South African auto companies. Economic modelling by the Productivity Commission of Australia has predicted that up to 39 000 jobs, mostly in Victoria and South Australia, could be lost after the end of production by Ford, GM Holden and Toyota in the period 2016-17.

Lessons to be learned

Houdet said learning from the Australian and EU crisis would be unpacked to the industry at South African Automotive Week, by global manufacturing doyen and advisor to Australia's shattered automotive industry, Goran Roos, whom Houdet says is "arguably the most capable of sharing these lessons." Roos would be a keynote speaker at the two day conference, which forms part of the South African Automotive Week Tradeshow at Gallagher Convention Centre on October 14 and 15.

"There are many learnings that the South African industry has to contemplate and implement to ensure the sustainability of our own industry,'' Houdet said. "The Australian scenario and the EU crisis which has virtually overnight decimated component manufacturers' traditional markets, hold telling messages and learnings for African manufacturers relating to competitiveness, input costs, strategic positioning and the importance of diversification," says Houdet. The conference would further feature other top speakers including the CEO's of Toyota SA, Nissan SA, NAACAM and SAACI, among others.

Automotive Week in Gauteng

The decision to host the 4th edition of South African Automotive Week in Gauteng was facilitated by the Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC). AIDC CEO, Barlow Manilal said: "The Week will not only position the Gauteng province as the automotive investment destination of choice, but also showcase South Africa's manufacturing capability globally. Gauteng's automotive value proposition will be a key theme of the event.

Information or registration to participate in the Trade Show, the match-making meetings programme, site tours, conferences and networking functions is available online at **www.saaw.co.za** or email sales@saaw.co.za, or phone 0861-101-475. **TSB**

Using Social Media in a Crisis: 7 Best Practices

Crises in companies do occur, usually when they are least expected. Cindy Bodenstein from ContinuitySA provides hints on how to use social media effectively in these situations.

When the world's eyes are on you in real time, thanks to social media, there is very little leeway to sit back and figure what to do next. The fundamental principle underlying good crisis management is to have a well-rehearsed and simple plan already set up, with protocols that spell out what each role-player has to do… and how.

"A key part of any company's crisis management plan must be communication—regularly keeping customers and all other stakeholders, including internal ones, updated on developments may be the single difference between success and failure during a crisis," says Cindy Bodenstein, marketing manager at ContinuitySA, provider of Business Continuity Management solutions.

Based on international best practice and on its experience in helping leading companies develop crisis management protocols, ContinuitySA has identified the following best practices for using social media effectively in a crisis situation:

1. Make sure you have a plan in place before the crisis occurs.
Put a full crisis communications media plan in place from traditional media right through to your social media. In particular, understand which audiences you want to reach and which social media tactics are most appropriate; for example, LinkedIn is effective for a business audience, whereas Twitter or Facebook might be more suited for reaching consumers in general.

2. Develop strategic relationships with key audiences before a crisis hits. Your stakeholders are part of your strategic relationships - see where they can be beneficial through a crisis when it comes to communications. Build relationships with traditional media as they can be quite effective during your crisis phases. Know who you must communicate with when a crisis hits.

3. Listen and then respond to the concerns of the public in general or your audience in particular. Always listen to what your audience has to say even during times where there is no crisis, since this can help in the times of a crisis. If you communicate regularly and appropriately on a specific social media channel, people will be more likely to continue to use that particular channel rather than others where you may not be present.

4. Be honest and transparent when you communicate. Social media platforms are supposed to be authentic, so

Cindy Bodenstein,
Marketing Manager,
ContinuitySA

"corporate speak" is usually not appropriate. By the same token, responsibility for posting on social media channels should not be delegated to junior employees or outsourced to communications service providers that may not know the company culture and communication protocols well enough.

5. Be available to the news media. The media represent an important audience as well as a channel, and media companies and journalists are using social media extensively themselves.

6. Communicate with sympathy and understanding. Crisis communication typically takes place in an environment in which the audience is full of uncertainty and sometimes fear. The first rule should be to empathise with those who have concerns.

7. Provide guidance to members of the public on avoiding risk or harm in the wake of a crisis. In instances where the crisis could have implications for the wider community—a product recall or a fire, for example—then the company should make every effort to limit the damage by providing pertinent information to the appropriate stakeholders. Have answers to frequently asked questions posted on your website, blog or even under Q&A on Facebook, look for a place where you feel it can be best housed and updated and direct all public concerns to one place and share this on all platforms. **TSB**

Business Lessons from Woody and Buzz

It's not very often that you come across a virtual goldmine of inspiration, but *Creativity, Inc.* along with being an entertaining read, is also a rich reservoir of business insight.

Creativity, Inc.
R315, Random House Struik

While *Creativity, Inc*., written by Ed Catmull, the president of Pixar Animation and Disney Animation, tells the story of the rise of Pixar in an entertaining and engrossing way, it does much more. The book offers business leaders, managers, and creatives alike valuable insight into what makes and breaks companies, what keeps creativity and inspiration flowing, and most importantly, the principles creative businesses need to be aware of to succeed.

One business mistake debunked early on is the concept of hierarchies, as Catmull relates how something as simple as the shape of a table, and assigning degrees of importance to employees seated at that table, actually impedes some of the most valuable innovations and ideas coming to the fore. For example, once the company got rid of a long, narrow table around which meetings were held, in favour of a more inclusive square one, this fostered greater inclusiveness – and new ideas were able to emerge.

Truthfully speaking

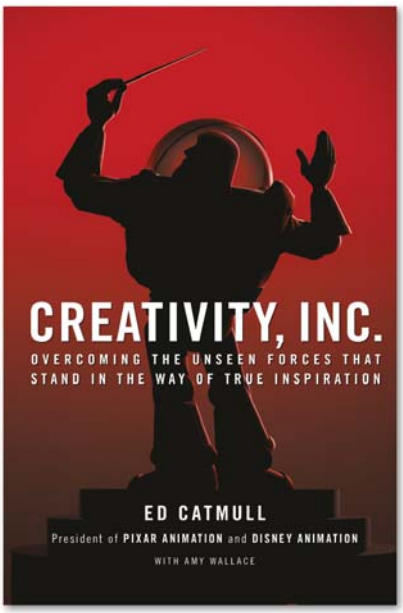
Another of the key principles touted at Pixar is that of honesty, and even more, candour, with Pixar encouraging the latter in particular. Catmull also noted that "a hallmark of a healthy creative culture is that its people feel free to share ideas, opinions and criticisms." What's more, he also asserted that a lack of openness ultimately leads to dysfunctional environments. This is contrary to many hierarchical organisations, where speaking your mind, especially to someone higher up in the organisation, is a no-no.

In Pixar's case, it implemented this principle of candour with its Braintrust meetings, a tradition in which it would "put smart, passionate people in a room together and charge them with identifying and solving problems."

Risk change

As one reads the book, one thing becomes abundantly clear – Pixar had its ups and downs and its fair share of changes and uncertainties. However, and possibly our favourite takeaway given the current economic climate and growth of uncertainty facing all businesses, is Pixar's approach to risk. Rather than being risk averse, its culture revolves around making it safe to take risks, where even failure is seen and valued as being part of the process.

If you are in business, a manager or just working in a creative industry, get *Creativity, Inc*. and read it slowly. You won't be sorry. [RN] **TSB**



Top 3 Management Tips*

1. Managers should protect new ideas from those who don't understand that in order for greatness to emerge, there must be phases of not-so-greatness. Protect the future, not the past.
2. When looking to hire people, give their potential to grow more weight than their current skill level. What they will be capable of tomorrow is more important than what they can do today.
3. Change and uncertainty are part of life. Our job is not to resist them but to build the capability to recover when unexpected events occur. If you don't always try to uncover what is unseen and understand its nature, you will be ill-prepared to lead.

Top 5 Creative Tips*

1. The desire for everything to run smoothly is a false goal – it leads to measuring people by the mistakes they make rather than by their ability to solve problems.
2. Failure isn't evil, it is a necessary consequence of doing something new.
3. There is nothing quite as effective when it comes to shutting down alternative view points, as being convinced you are right.
4. Don't wait for things to be perfect before you share them with others. Show early and show often.
5. Give a good idea to a mediocre team and they will screw it up. Give a mediocre idea to a great team, and they will either fix it or come up with something better. If you get the team right, chances are that they'll get the ideas right.

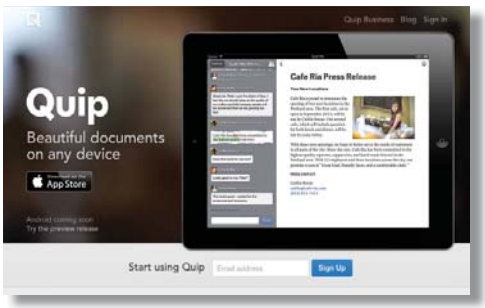
Excerpted from *Creativity, Inc.

TOP Productivity Apps

There only so many hours in the day, and you often need a helping hand to get the most out of them. Here's our roundup of the best Apps that help you do just that.

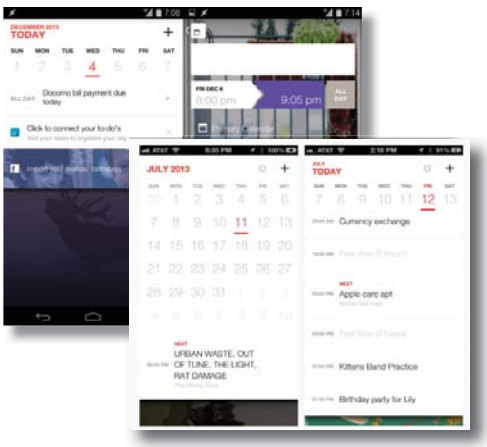
Todoist is by far the best looking app on this list, but the beauty of its appeal lies beneath the surface thanks to its real-time syncing and multiple OS iterations. If you're the kind of individual who works best with lists, Todoist is hard to beat, boasting the ability to colour-code tasks according to their importance and break up larger projects into smaller sub-tasks.

Todoist has the added benefit of sharing tasks or projects with fellow collaborators, as specific tasks can be assigned to certain team members. Available on 13 different OS' across multiple form factors, Todoist can be accessed and updated both on and offline. The garden variety version of Todoist is free to download, with the premium option setting you back R312 per year.



Quip is a collaborative document editing tool that offers users the ability to work with content on a variety of devices including smartphones, tablets and PCs. It was founded by Bret Taylor and Kevin Gibbs, both of whom worked together at Google, as well as individually on Google Maps and Facebook respectively.

That experience has resulted in a slick looking app that performs equally as smoothly on iOS and Android. The aforementioned collaboration is facilitated via a comment thread that allows for an efficient editing process. Added to this, users can also import content from MS Word, Dropbox, Google Drive and Evernote. Constantly undergoing updates to improve performance, Quip is free to download for iOS and Android users.



Cal is one of the newer calendar apps around, and is free to download on both iOS and Android devices. From a design perspective, Cal looks terrific and offers a seamless interface that's easy to pick up and quick to navigate. What makes Cal different to other calendar apps, is the multitasking power of its companion app, Any.DO.

This affords Cal the ability to check the progress of specific tasks, as well as sync them in accordance to your daily schedule. Cal also has the added feature of integrating your contacts, to call or message them in-app, as well as information on local landmarks. If you're looking for a calendar app with a bit more power, Cal is the way to go.

Evernote may seem like an easy choice here, but very few apps feature the same level of cross platform interactivity it can. This further lends it to being a great productivity tool for users whose job necessitates staying online for the majority of the day. One of Evernote's best functions is the Web Clipper, which allows one to copy text or images and paste into your Evernote profile. Another fantastic asset in Evernote's arsenal, is the ability to manage tabs and folders intuitively, a lot of which is due to the ability to add multiple tags to content. The standard version of Evernote is free to download on iOS, Android, PC and Mac, with the premium version retailing for R54 per month. **TSB**

WIN
with DCC and Targus!

For those that are 'always on the go', protecting your notebook and ensuring you have space for all your documents and files is essential. However, you won't want to compromise on style, and now Targus and DCC have you covered with the Targus Toploading Atmosphere notebook case, worth R700.

The notebook bag with a difference

Providing the ultimate protection for your notebook, the Toploading Atmosphere notebook case comes complete with a fully padded notebook compartment as well as an expanding universal section for a projector, stationary or overnight clothing if the trip is longer than a day. If in a hurry, the easy to access pocket for items such as passports, ID's or flight tickets is ideal. Ever gone into a meeting and left your phone on? Worry no more with the first of its kind – the Reception Blocker Pocket. Place your phone in this pocket and the pocket removes service from your phone and re-establishes it when removed from the pocket. This is the ideal bag for anyone carrying a notebook day in and out! **TSB**

DRIVE CONTROL CORPORATION (PTY) LTD

HOW TO WIN

In order to win a Targus Toploading Atmosphere notebook case, answer the following easy question.

QUESTION

1. What is the first of its kind feature with this bag?

Send your response, name, and email address to **competition@techsmart.co.za.**
Competition closes **31 August 2014**.
Winner to be announced in TechSmart Business November 2014.
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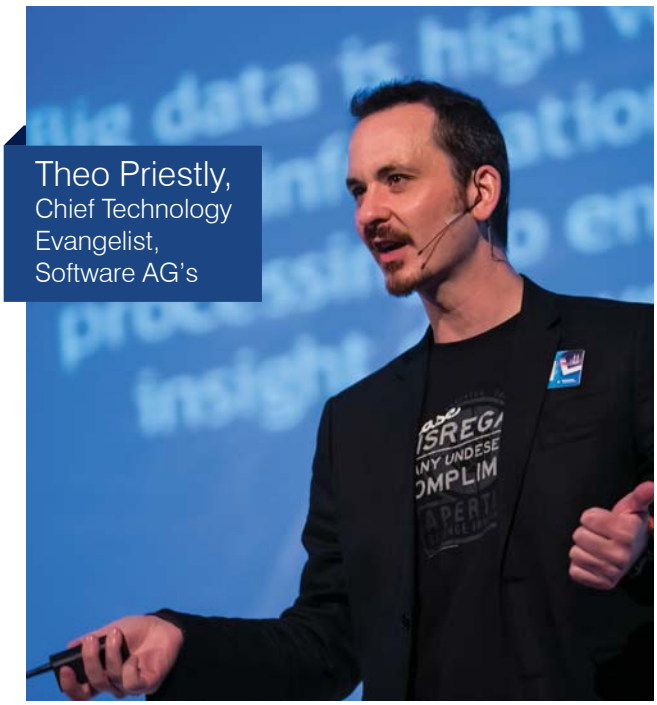
WE DELIVER

IN FLIGHT WITH:
Theo Priestley, Software AG

A good pair of headphones, the luxury of not being a seat number, and cursed business trips – we talk travel with Theo Priestley, Software AG's chief technology evangelist and VP for marketing & social media.



Theo Priestly, Chief Technology Evangelist, Software AG's

TSB: How often do you go on business trips, and where do you travel to most often?

TP: I'm constantly on the road, as Software AG's evangelist it's part of my role to be as visible across the globe as possible. I've been to our US and German offices a fair bit but I've been as far afield as Sydney and Cape Town recently.

TSB: Do you make use of any apps while travelling?

TP: All the time. I'm constantly using Twitter and LinkedIn apps for example, checking into places with Foursquare and Swarm, I take notes via the iPhone app when I'm on the move and I'm tracking my movements and what I eat using the Jawbone UP app too.

TSB: According to you, which airline is the best and why?

TP: To me, the best airline is the one that provides an individual experience for every traveller every time they fly, not just treat you as a seat number. Consistently I use British Airways and Virgin, and I make use of their reward programmes and that provides a lot of value.

TSB: Do you have any tips on how to survive those long-haul flights overseas?

TP: Pack a Kindle, an iPad with films, and slouchy clothes. Nobody cares if you look glam on a long haul flight. Drink plenty of bottled water, and try a sleep pattern in such a way that it won't upset your system if you're flying into a completely different time zone, that's what will wipe you out the most.

TSB: Are there any special hotels you can recommend?

TP: Again, it's much like the airline experience, you can have favourite hotel chains purely because you want to take advantage of their reward offers but I like to explore and experience difference places. As a Scotsman, if anyone is ever travelling to Scotland I can highly recommend the Old Course Hotel in St Andrews for that special treat.

TSB: Passport and airplane tickets excluded, what are the items that you do not travel without?

TP: My iPhone and a pair of good headphones, a book, and a change of clothes. You never, ever want to be in the situation of losing your luggage.

TSB: Do you have a travel horror story you won't mind sharing?

TP: I flew to Sydney once via a two day stop at the office in Dubai. My luggage went to Sydney and I was left with nothing, so I had to go to one of the biggest shopping malls to buy some basics while my bag was being located and returned. It took three hours just to walk around the mall to get my bearings. I wasn't reunited with my luggage until I landed in Sydney and I was only staying there for a couple of days. On the return home, Heathrow air-traffic control went down so I couldn't catch my final flight to Edinburgh. I had to take a four hour train ride in the end on top of the 24-hour flight I'd just endured. That whole trip was cursed!

TSB: Is there an interesting place/shop/museum/restaurant that you've found that you just have to visit on your travels?

TP: Café de Klos in Amsterdam. It has the best steaks I've ever tasted. And the banter from the bar staff is second to none. If you're ever there, ask for Mark! **TSB**

Outside The Boardroom - The Most Interesting Event Activities

When it comes to corporate events, the regulars can become quite predictable and a little boring. So we've decided to detail some of the most interesting event activities to shake things up a bit.

The Cooking School
www.thecookingschool.co.za.

Cooking Class. With the ongoing popularity of shows such as MasterChef, it seems like sprucing up your culinary skills is now, at least for some, just as important as perfecting that golf swing. The Cooking School, located in Bryanston, offers classes where attendees can try their hand at making their own meals. What makes a cooking class better than conventional corporate events, is the collaboration it requires, with attendees being split up into groups responsible for specific courses under the guidance of professional chefs. Although some people might find the idea of making your own food superfluous, it certainly beats a pig in the blanket. For more info on the cooking classes, check out **www.thecookingschool.co.za**.

Advanced Driving. For many, the commute to and from work is probably the most stressful part of the day, and that's before the boss needed those overdue reports. Advanced Driving courses are a way to not only get behind the wheel of a powerful vehicle, but also to hone one's driving skills (or follow in the footsteps of Sebastian Vettel). Not only do you get the chance to learn techniques a K53 instructor isn't able to show you, but it provides the opportunity to drive a sports car without the fear of metro cops pulling you over. If you're the next Stig, visit **www.adventurebookings.co.za** to book sessions on the Audi and VW Advanced Driving courses in partcular.

Advanced Driving
www.adventurebookings.co.za

Madame Zingara
www.madamezingara.com

Madame Zingara. Madame Zingara takes the concept of 'dinner and a show' and takes it to a whole new level, with a Cirque du Soleil-styled theatre full of drama, eye-catching performances and delicious food. It has become a staple in local entertainment over the past decade, with new shows debuting every few months. Added to this, Madame Zingara is housed in one of the last remaining mirror tents in the world. Given the fact that most corporate functions nowadays involve some sort of food and drinks, with a networking session afterwards, Madame Zingara certainly steps things up and offers an experience that will not be forgotten soon - trust us. For a not to be forgotten experience, head to **www.madamezingara.com** for ticket enquiries.

Sky Dining. With top notch catering now part and parcel of any corporate event, fine dining restaurants are now seen as the best choice to wine and dine clients, customers or partners. If you're really looking to make a lasting impression, take to the skies for a culinary experience in the form of Sky Dining. As the name would imply, a group of ten to 22 people are treated to a multiple course menu, which is eaten while the entire party is suspended 200 metres in the air. Sky Dining is also not exclusively limited to the epicurious, but also lends itself well to innovative presentations, although those suffering from vertigo should steer clear. Should you have no fear of heights, check out **www.sky-events.co.za.** **TSB**

Sky Dining
www.sky-events.co.za

Go Speed Racers, Go!

There is more to a sporty two-door coupé than simply fitting it with a large, powerful engine. They also have to be able to turn heads for the right reasons, as well as reflect a certain level of quality and evoke envy in onlookers. All this is present in the Jaguar F-Type Coupé and 2014 Audi TT.

Jaguar F-Type Coupé

The Jaguar F-Type should be all too familiar to the South African public, having debuted to much fanfare in the latter part of last year. The newly released Coupé variant is aiming to create an equally significant impression, not only in the looks department, but performance as well.

Thoroughbred pedigree

Based on initial inspection, it's clear that creating a visually appealing car was placed high on the Jaguar design team's list, as the F-Type Coupé draws inspiration from the C-X16 sports concept (which first debuted at the 2011 Frankfurt Motor Show) and F-Type convertible to create a vehicle that will be highly coveted for its looks. Key indications of this soon-to-be iconic design are the F-Type Coupé's long, sloping bonnet, low roofline and tapered cabin shape, creating eye catching silhouette for both the showroom floor and tarmac.

The F-Type Coupé also presents a new benchmark for Jaguar, as the company has stated that this new vehicle features an all-aluminium body construction, set to make it the most dynamic and performance-focused sports car that Jaguar has ever produced.

Premium performance

Within the Coupé range, there are three different model specifications for drivers to choose from, namely the standard F-Type, the sportier F-Type S and racing tuned F-Type R. The first two models feature the same 3.0 litre V6 engine which produce 250 kW and 280 kW of power respectively. The F-Type R Coupé on the other hand is fitted with a massive 5.0 litre V8 engine capable of generating an immense 405 kW of raw power. These elements culminate in a 0-100 km/h time of 4.0 seconds and top speed 300 km/h (electronically limited) for the Jaguar F-Type R Coupé, which should drop to 280 km/h when it arrives in South Africa. The R Coupé in particular is staggeringly powerful and should prove extremely difficult for any non-supercar to beat on the road.

> The R Coupé in particular is staggeringly powerful and should prove extremely difficult for any non-supercar to beat on the road.

Staying with the F-Type R Coupé, Jaguar incorporated a range of enhancements to ensure that it remains finely poised within an ever competitive sports car market. These include an eight-speed close ratio quickshift transmission, with full manual sequential control to provide a higher gear speed change and level of throttle responsiveness, thanks to its centrally mounted sportshift selector system. Behind its 20" gyrodyne wheels, Jaguar has opted for a carbon ceramic matrix (CCM) brake setup, which is designed to offer a more consistent braking performance as well as greater fade resistance, with the added benefit of 21 kg less weight compared to the standard F-Type Coupé.

The price of style

So how much will all this cost? The entry level F-Type Coupé is set to cost potential buyers an estimated R840 000, which is fairly large chunk of change considering the value added extras have not been factored in yet. Should the high performance F-Type R Coupé catch your fancy be prepared to fork out at least R1.5 million.

Quick Specs (Jaguar F-Type Coupé)

Price	4.0 sec	Engine	Top Speed
R1.5 MILLION	0 – 100 km/h	5.0 litre V8 supercharged	300 km/h electronically limited

2014 Audi TT

The Audi TT has become a bit of a modern classic in the sports car world, and is undoubtedly one of the more popular car models to roam South African roads in past years. For the 2014 edition, the Stuttgart-based automotive manufacturer has given a slight refresh to the Audi TT's all too familiar shape, which is set to make its debut on a showroom floor in Q3 of this year.

Old faithful

The 2014 Audi TT has not gone for any radical resculpting, but rather features a range of minor enhancements and updates, to place it on a level footing with the plethora of sports cars hitting the market at the moment. Audi has still retained that iconic TT shape, this time favouring an updated front grille, in keeping with the rest of Audi's models. Other evident changes are the switch to a Xenon plus headlight setup and LED daytime running lights, with the addition of an adaptive rear spoiler that automatically deploys and retracts based on vehicle speed, ensuring your new German toy stays fixed to the road.

Sibling rivalry

Audi has also seen fit to add another model to the TT stable, in the form of the limited edition Audi TTS, a highly tuned version of its sibling. Both models will be available for customisation in the form of Audi's S Line package, to add a few sporty flourishes to an already mean silhouette.

Both the TT and TTS models have been fitted with Audi's 2.0 litre 4-cylinder TFSI turbocharged engine, with the former tuned to produce 157 kW of power and 250 Nm of torque. This results in a 0-100 km/h time of 5.6 seconds, which is respectable, but will not strike fear into the heart of a rowdy hot hatch driver. If speed is what you're looking, you should probably turn to the TTS, which may feature the same engine as the TT, but produces a far more substantial 197 kW. As expected, this means the Audi TTS clocks a faster 0-100 km/h time of 4.9 seconds.

> The 2014 Audi TT has not gone for any radical resculpting, but rather features a range of minor enhancements and updates.

The exterior and engine are not the only areas to receive a bit of help, as Audi has also given the interior cabin an overhaul as well. Drivers will experience this as soon as they place their hands on the steering wheel, which is a new flat bottom, multi-function one, resulting in greater control and responsiveness according to Audi. Furthermore, Audi has incorporated new 12-way power seats, with heated front seats now standard. They have also teamed-up with Bose, to offer the value-added option of a 12-speaker in-car setup. Another extra is the 6.5" LCD display for driver interface and in-vehicle controls.

Cheque please

What will all this Vorsprung technology set you back? The 2014 edition Audi TT is estimated to retail in the region of R600 000, before factoring in all of the value-added extras. There is however no official pricing on the faster and more powerful TTS however, but we expect it very close to the R1 million mark. That may sound quite hefty, but looks well worth it, if you value speed along with quality. [RLC] **TSB**

Quick Specs (Audi TT)

Price	4.9 sec	Engine	Top Speed
R1 MILLION	0 – 100 km/h	2.0 litre TFSI turbocharged	250 km/h electronically limited

The Business Guide to: BICYCLING

If you haven't yet heard the rumours around the water cooler, let us confirm it beyond a shadow of a doubt. It is true - cycling is indeed the new golf. And not only is it the new golf, it is also very swiftly becoming the new watering hole, the new family weekend retreat, and your new gadget obsession. Mynhardt van Pletsen finds the fast stuff.

As any true veloist will tell you, there's only one thing better than grinding up a seemingly unsurmountable mountain pass, defying all laws of nature and mechanics; and that is sweeping down the hairpin bends on the other side, fearing for your life, and for not living it fully, all at the same time. Herewith then, the basic [and not so basic] essentials for channeling your inner Chris Froome.

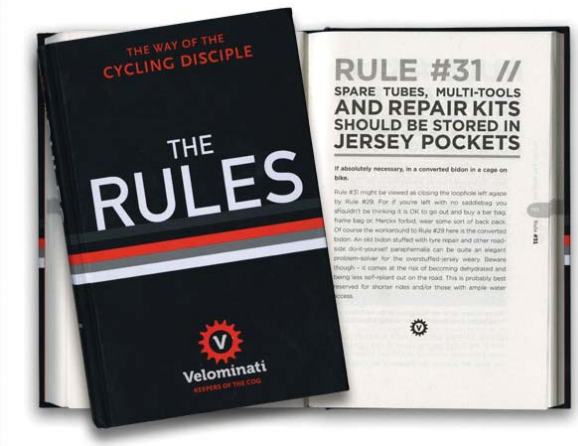
1. Depending on your terrain of choice, you're going to choose the whip that best suits your riding style. Going straight to the top, there is pretty much nothing better on the market than Specialized's S-Works Epic [POA, Lynnwood Cyclery] for the trailies, the Tour winning Pinarello Dogma [POA, Bruce Reyneke Cycles] for the roadies, and local brand Simple Sam's minimalist commuter for the breakfast riders [R5 500, **www.simplesam.co.za**].

2. As far as outer layers goes, apparel maker Craft [R950 jerseys, R1 690 bib shorts, HotSpot Cycles] has been supplying the grueling ABSA Cape Epic with all their official gear, and that should say all there is to say. Add to that the all-resistant and packable Helium jacket from Capestorm [R600, Sportsmans Warehouse], and you're ready to tackle anything from Stellenbosch coffee stops to Belgium cobble stages. Remembering that the socks doth maketh the kit, add some colour to your ride via De Feet, with excellent insulation and general toastyness [R195, HotSpot Cycles].

3. Covering other points of first contact, whether with the bike or with the road, must always remain a priority. Specialized's Body Geometry and S-Works range is not only demanded by the pros, it looks the business too. [S-Works Prevail helmet, R2 900, S-Works Pro Road shoes, R4 000, Body Geometry Road gloves, R500, Lynnwood Cyclery]

4. Getting to the peripherals, these are the things you don't know how you've lived without, when you've gotten a couple of miles under the belt. So spare yourself the suffering, and just get them already. [Oakley Radar Path sunglasses, R2 100, Garmin Edge 800 Performance Bundle, R5 800, Cycle Lab]

5. No real cyclist can credibly sit in the peloton without what is affectionately referred to as 'the knowledge'. These are the unspoken rules and regulations of true velominati subculture. Ignore it at your own pedal [pun intended]. [*Velominati - The way of the cycling disciple*, R176, kalahari.com] **TSB**



The Q+A Sessions

This month's question is:
What is the best piece of advice you've received in the ICT industry?

Pierre Spies, CEO, AxizWorkgroup

I have been given excellent advice over the years but herewith a few pointers that stuck:

- Lead by example and people will follow
- People buy from people
- Business is not about ideas but how they are implemented
- It is imperative to ensure that people fit the role – square pegs in square holes.

Henry Ferreira, Head of Distribution, Pinnacle Holdings

A few bits of advice that I have received and tried to subscribe to over the years:

- The "RIGHT" people are your greatest asset
- Your reputation is your best CV
- You can't lead if you do not know how to follow
- You have TWO ears and ONE mouth – Try to use in that ratio.

Robert Sussman, Joint CEO, Integr8

When we first started our business, we had all the ingredients for growth – a solid offering, passion and a market. The best advice came from those closest to me and it was ''stick to what you are good at, your core focus. Do not become distracted and get carried away with too much too soon.''

Lance Fanaroff, Joint CEO, Integr8

The best advice I received in the industry was to never rest on one's laurels, no matter how well you do or how much you achieve, this industry changes and changes quickly. One has to keep learning and never get complacent since competition is just too fierce.

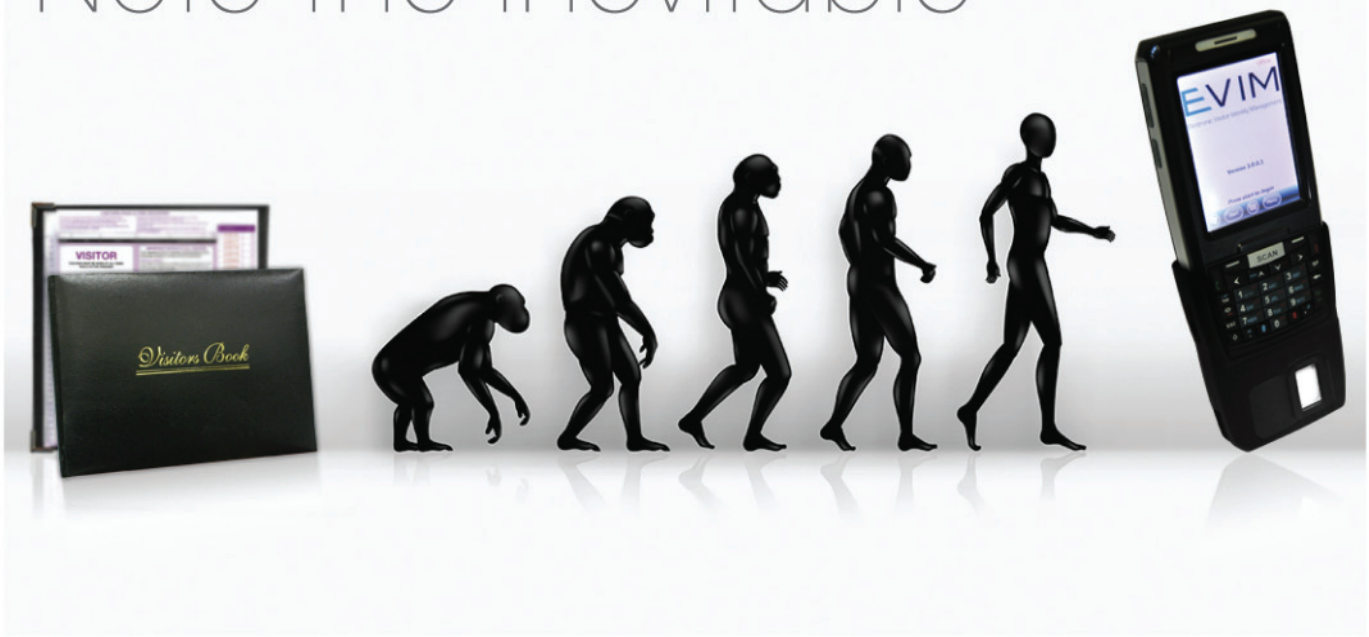
Yossi Hasson, CEO, SYNAQ

A mentor first pointed out that when a community of people develop software in an open and collaborative way, they will almost always outperform a closed group. That's why open source runs the internet and why SYNAQ follows these principles.

Peter Drube, Country MD, Avanade South Africa

The best advice I received was on a recent trip to Seattle to attend the Avanade Tech Summit. With all the rapid changes and new developments in our industry the advice given was, "you must be prepared to unlearn everything that you have learnt." **TSB**

Note the inevitable



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