GITEX TECHNOLOGY WEEK

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■ In 2001, it would have taken over a day to download a full HD movie to your 3G phone. But in 2019, you can do it in under a minute using a 5G phone. As 5G networks spread in the UAE, we look at what they can deliver. And what the fine print is.

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Deepak karambelkar,
Special to #GNTECH

It has been hyped as a technology that will profoundly change the world and help usher in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Some have compared its potential impact to that of electricity and the automobile, transforming not only homes, but almost every industry out there. And oh, this tech will let you download movies in mere seconds. 5G is currently spreading across the UAE, with Etisalat and du announcing aggressive expansion plans. But is it really that big a deal? Or is it more like Hollywood superstars who appear uber-glamourous on the posters but, when you bump into them in real life, they tend to look just like the girls and guys next doors?

5G: FIRST, THE CAVEAT

A big claim to fame for 5G is the mind-bogglingly fast speed it can deliver, sans wires — forget about 4K, instead imagine streaming a futuristic 8K movie straight to your phone without even a hint of stuttering or buffering. Or playing a graphically-intensive game, straight from the cloud. Or immersing yourself in rich 360-degree virtual reality experiences.

But unfortunately, this is where real life intrudes and creates a wide gulf between what 5G can do in theory versus what it can actually deliver after dealing with all those pesky technological challenges and limitations. Indeed, someday in the future, you might be able to enjoy peak speeds in excess of 10Gbps, but for now, you will have to settle for speeds fluctuating from 100Mbps to 1Gbps, depending on your location and myriad other factors. Though on the flipside, even these speeds are super-impressive and 10 to 20 times faster than what you would get on 4G.

WHAT 5G CAN DO

According to Chris Sun Baigong, President of HONOR Middle East and Africa, 5G can open up a new world of experiences that will change how we live, work and play. "For example, downloads will be faster and video streams will start instantly. Other applications that previously couldn't run on smartphones due to large amounts of data transfer, such as Virtual Reality, will become more accessible," he says.

But what makes 5G so attractive is not just the speed, but also the promise of reliability and fast reaction times — perform an action in Dubai, and you could instantly see its outcome 140 kilometres away in Abu Dhabi. 5G promises a low latency of 1-10ms compared to 50-100ms of 4G, and this creates brand new opportunities for remotely managing — without any lag whatsoever — everything from assembly-line robots and connected cars to interactive classrooms and medical treatments. "One of the most astonishing applications will be vehicle-to-vehicle communication in self-driving cars — where cars exchange their location, speed, acceleration and direction, steering faster than we can blink. This could be a life-saving technology, and we see the UAE as a country that will pioneer this new world, having already begun the preparation for large scale roll out," says Baigong.

EVEN REMOTE SURGERIES ARE POSSIBLE

Jeroen Schlosser, Managing Director, Equinix MENA, points out that the world's first successful remote surgery was performed earlier this year in China, using 5G technology. That was possible because the data transmission time between the physician's control device and the robot in the operating room was just 0.1 seconds. Also, currently, professionals in healthcare use 4G to access tests and records, such as X-rays.

5G AND YOU

"But with the arrival of 5G, physicians will be able to remotely monitor patients and collect real-time data using IoT devices, improving personalised and preventive care," he says, while predicting that retail and industrial will be the first sectors to take advantage of 5G-powered IoT, followed by healthcare and financial services.

Similarly, Aji Ed, Chief Technology Officer, Nokia MEA, asserts that sectors such as energy, healthcare, education, transport and entertainment will immensely benefit from various IoT usage cases enabled by 5G. He also anticipates new applications and business opportunities emerging in virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

Specific examples include low-latency, connected cars that are expected to be developed in Dubai; 5G fully replacing fibre to the home (FTTH) with equal or better fixed wireless connectivity; digital top-quality education across the Middle East with interactive classroom experiences for remote schools; and fully automating, monitoring and controlling of shipping and container ports via high bandwidth, highly secure, low-latency 5G networks.

BUT STILL SOME WAY TO GO

Schlosser looks on 5G as the key to endless possibilities for digital transformation, especially in

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Jeroen Schlosser
Managing Director
Equinix MENA

Aji Ed
Chief Technology Officer
Nokia MENA

Chris Sung Baigong
President
Honor MEA

an IoT- and AI-connected world. "However, fibre-like speeds and the ability to handle very low-latency applications won't come easily. Enterprises and service providers alike will need to re-architect and rebuild existing mobile networks, which is a huge undertaking," he says.

Ed agrees, noting that 5G is still maturing as a technology and the ecosystem is also under development. Currently, the availability and affordability of 5G devices are major issues and he expects this to be resolved over the next couple of years.

"If we see from an operators' point of view, the immediate challenge for 5G deployment is the availability of spectrum. However, there have been a lot of initiatives by various regulatory authorities of GCC countries to allocate the 5G spectrum in time," he says, adding that most operators in the Middle East who have been early adopters now have sufficient spectrum for 5G, which has helped them get a head start for pioneering 5G deployments in 2019.

5G: FUTURE PERFECT?

The *Ericsson Mobility Report June 2019* edition estimates there will be 10 million 5G subscriptions worldwide, by the end of 2019. More substantial volumes of 5G devices are expected to be available from 2020 onwards and, by the end of 2024, 5G subscriptions would have zipped to 1.9 billion worldwide — covering 65 per cent of the global population.

Meanwhile, the GSM Association (GSMA), in a report on 5G in MENA, observes that 15 countries plan to launch 5G mobile services in the region, by 2025. This will result in around 50 million 5G connections, with around 20 million of those coming from the GCC. No doubt the UAE, which currently has the region's highest mobile subscriber penetration of 84 per cent, will lead the upcoming 5G charge. Moreover, according to Ericsson, telecom operators in the UAE could realise incremental revenue of $3.3 billion by 2026 from the digitisation of industries through 5G.

Ed asserts that 5G in the UAE will be a long cycle spanning over the next 10–12 years, with growth likely to peak by 2025. The industry's immediate focus, though, will predominantly be on network infrastructure for early 5G use cases such as enhanced broadband and fixed wireless access. Beyond that, the focus will shift to advanced use cases for various sectors and industry which, in turn, will bring about the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

But, in the meantime, we could always sit back and stream a boatload of 4K movies to our shiny new 5G phones.

ITA and the most promising Italian unicorns at Gitex

In conversation with **Giuseppe Merenda**, FDI Desk Director, Italian Trade Agency Dubai Office

GN Focus Report

1. What is the Italian Trade Agency's main aim?

The Italian Trade Agency (ITA) is a government agency that promotes the globalisation of Italian firms and attracts foreign direct investment under the aegis of the Ministry of Economic Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ITA helps to develop, facilitate and promote Italian economic and trade relations with foreign countries, focusing on the needs of SMEs, their associations and partnerships.

The Foreign Investments Attraction Department (FDI), a dedicated unit of ITA, facilitates the establishment and development of foreign companies in Italy, promoting business opportunities, helping foreign investors to establish or expand their operations, supporting investors throughout the investment life cycle and offering high-level tutoring services for existing strategic investments.

ITA works closely with the Italian Regions, the network of Italian Chambers of Commerce, business organisations and other public and private entities.

2. What is the ITA's role at GITEX Future Stars?

The Italian economy is developing a strong and diversified technology sector, fostering start-ups and supporting young innovators who are developing highly specialised solutions to address the world's major challenges.

The UAE Ministry of Economy recently signed an MoU with the Italian Government to promote start-up ecosystems in both countries through cross fertilisation and networking.

We are inviting investors in the UAE and the Middle East to check out our range of brilliant opportunities and realise how valuable and smooth investing in Italy could be (the world's 9th largest economy), taking advantage of disruptive technology, the top-class high-tech environment and profiting from the numerous financial incentives offered for R&D and innovation.

At GITEX, ITA is representing 20 pioneering start-ups to present their solutions and meet with investors and clients, nine of which are supported by Apulia Regional Development Agency.

3. Which are the Italian start-ups attending the Technology Week this year?

The Italian start-ups at the Italian Trade Agency's Pavilion (Stand A20, Zabeel Hall 4), during the five-day event include **ShareMyBag**, the Airbnb for fashion where users can rent and borrow fashion items and make money; **Chimpa**, a technology for fast and easy-to-learn tools for pupils; **Airgloss**, an energy-saving smart air-quality-control device manufacturer; **ValidActor**, provider of tools and services to fight counterfeiting, protecting products and brands and profile customers' spending habits; **NTP Nano Tech**

Giuseppe Merenda, FDI Desk Director, Italian Trade Agency Dubai Office / UAE, Oman and Pakistan

Projects, providing solutions for optical detection in the biomedical field, reducing costs in Molecular Diagnostics applications; **Impossible.bot**, a fast and innovative technology to create a chatbot; **LittleSea**, transforming data and insights into highly dynamic and communicative videos; **Modefinance**, the first Fintech Credit Rating Agency in Europe, developing solutions for the assessment and management of credit risk; **Orwell VR**, a VR/AR production company developing video games such as virtual reality soccer games for fan engagement and retailtainment; **Nemesis**, a blockchain-based platform, set to change the world of gaming and entertainment, and **weAR**, an augmented and mixed-reality platform for training on maintenance and repair operations.

What does digital transformation really mean?

■ UAE-based tech gurus discuss how AI, blockchain and hybrid cloud services are fundamentally changing the customer journey

BY RIAZ NAQVI
Staff Writer

Going digital. It's a term most mid-level employees and managers are familiar with, and one that's been bandied about for years now. At last week's IBM Think Summit, the people responsible for driving this change at some of the UAE's most influential companies came together to explain how and where the transformation will take place in their industries — and what it means for customers.

From left: Jyoti Lalchandani, Group Vice-President and Regional MD, IDC MEA; Takhliq Hanif, Chief Architect and Head of Group Enterprise Architecture at Etihad Aviation Group – Technology and Digital Innovation; Zeina El Kaissi, Chief Digital Director, Smart Dubai; Saeed Al Mulla, Executive Director – Government Affairs and Partnership Management, ADDA; and Andre Melo, Director, IT – Shopping Malls, Majid Al Futtaim

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

"We want to build a global model for Government 2.0," says Zeina Al Kaissi, Chief Digital Director at Smart Dubai. She's referring to services for UAE residents being offered on a one-stop shop paperless digital platform. "It's about time. The 2019 user of today gets their food options in one place (UberEats), flight bookings in one place (Expedia) and hotels in one place (Booking.com). How many apps do they have for government services? More than 120."

Smart Dubai's Dubai Now app is already playing a role in the organisation's ambition for Government 2.0, which Al Kaissi believes should be "invisible and seamless" to UAE residents. The iOS and Android app lets you sign rental agreements, issue your Ejari, activate electricity and water services, digitally sign a sales agreement for a vehicle, get car insurance and more.

Blockchain plays a role in Dubai Now, with the technology powering the instant reconciliation of payments made through the app — something Al Kaissi says used to take 40 days when done manually. Meanwhile, the AI-driven Rashid City Concierge service, based on IBM Watson, uses natural language processing and cognitive computing to provide information to Expo 2020 visitors.

In the capital, the Abu Dhabi Digital Authority (ADDA) has a transformation strategy supported by four main pillars: data management, cybersecurity, government solutions and government services, the last of which is led by Saeed Al Mulla, Executive Director — Government Affairs and Partnership Management at ADDA.

"We are trying to solve customer pain points, understanding their journey and they steps they need to go through to deliver them a seamless service." For Al Mulla, technology is a means, not an end — "It's the customer that matters".

"We don't want to make customer journeys [someone's entire, end-to-end experience with a company or brand] for the sake of it. It's our role and mandate to make the public's life easier."

RETAIL

One of the most heavily disrupted sectors over the past decade, in the UAE and worldwide, is retail. That's what makes digital transformation a little more urgent for shopping mall operators. At the Majid Al Futtaim (MAF) Group, which owns and operates 25 malls across the region, there are three core customer journeys: the asset (the physical mall), customer (the shops, or tenants, renting space there) and the consumer (shopper visiting the mall). "All things intertwine between these three," explains Andre Melo, Director, IT — Shopping Malls at MAF. Melo likens a shopping mall to a grandparent. "Grandparents love their children, love their grandkids and know what they're doing. However, the final product is controlled by the parents. Similarly, a shopping mall needs to cater amazing experiences for shoppers, but their final product is delivered by the retailer."

Real-time data allowed Mall of the Emirates (MoE), a MAF property, to dramatically reduce entry and exit times for mall visitors — adding up to significant amount when you consider five million cars enter and exit the mall every year.

Melo is also aware that the increased flow of data available to retailers has meant a reworking of KPIs — "Now, we are able to expose [problems], improve and optimise with a new set of KPIs we run every day."

AVIATION

From the moment you Google flight tickets to checking in online and arranging hotel accommodation, the aviation industry has been impacted by technological change at a faster pace than most industries. "We wanted to ensure the digital journey matches the experience you have when you step into one of our planes anywhere in the world," says Takhliq Hanif, Chief Architect and Head of Group Enterprise Architecture at Etihad Aviation Group — Technology and Digital Innovation.

One of the ways Etihad is striving to transform its flyers' digital journey is hyper-personalisation. "Can we tell the difference when you're flying with your family, visiting to play golf or to watch the F1? I think data plays a big role in understanding who your customer is, in a positive way."

One of the reasons digital transformation may be a trickier proposition in aviation is because airlines have both legacy systems, such as GDS, working alongside modern ones. Hanif feels that a hybrid cloud solution may help for building a consolidated data platform that plays well with both types of system.

HEALTHCARE

A number of underlying technologies are also changing the customer journey for medical patients. "Cloud and AI are key enablers transforming the way the massive volumes of patient data through medical research and electronic medical records are captured, stored and analysed, thereby making new forms of medical research possible and improving patient outcomes," explains Yasser Zeineldin, CEO of eHosting DataFort. He adds that the cloud has simplified the sharing of patient data between doctors and other staff from any of their branches.

"Also, data from large files such as those from X-rays and MRIs can be saved easily on the cloud. With patients taking active interest in their healthcare data, they can also access their electronic medical records stored in the cloud, which helps streamline the information between the doctors and their patients." ■

Yasser Zeineldin, CEO, eHosting DataFort

For Focus Softnet AI is the biggest change for its customers

Krita Coelho talks to Ali Hyder, CEO of Focus Softnet, on how the AI platform is making day-to-day tasks for various business segments easier

What made Focus Softnet jump onto the AI bandwagon?

Focus Softnet has been providing business applications for more than 25 years. With the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) we are offering our customers AI-enabled applications. Not only for our applications, but for other business applications as well. When we look at AI as a platform, we take into consideration different elements such as speech recognition, face recognition, and optical recognition or OCR technology, which allows Robotic Process Automation (RPA).

Can you give us some used cases for this?

The whole platform and the different elements of AI are used in various business segments. AI was first implemented in the banking sector to respond to customer calls automatically. Now most of the banking calls are answered by automated voice systems. Similarly in the retail industry, face recognition will let you know how often you get customers returning to your store, how many turn back without buying anything, and the reason for their behaviour.

The third aspect of AI is completing routine tasks such as opening an application and entering data manually, or sending an SMS, printout or fax. Routine tasks can be automated using RPA.

We are trying to come up with a few new things for business segments such as an HR attendance system, which records attendance based on face recognition. We are also into creating voice assistants for people on the move, so even if you're driving you can command and get a task done.

If you have to compare them to other similar platforms, what sets these apart?

Focus Softnet is known for being providers of good quality, reliable, mid-range enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This hasn't been in this market for so long, and we are the first and foremost in providing this.

Do you have any new products and services that you have launched? And any significant achievements?

The platform of AI is our biggest launch for this year. We are looking to double our revenues for AI-enabled applications in the last quarter of this year compared to previous years because everyone using some sort of business application would want to add on the AI component.

What are your plans for the future?

We are looking at creating plug-ins for a lot of standard products, so that people can just plug in to our AI platform with whatever application they are using without having to change it. We are planning to release this in the coming months. ■

Ali Hyder, CEO, Focus Softnet

GROWING WITH GITEX TECH WEEK

Participants tell us why GITEX Technology Week is important to their businesses as well as to industry growth in the UAE

"GITEX is one of the most important IT events in the Middle East that focuses on the ever changing tech landscape and emerging trends. It has helped us connect with decision makers and industry experts in Middle East and look forward to meeting newer customers and educating visitors about the need for digital transformation. We will be addressing a range of topics such as cyber security and 5G among other technology trends."

Maged Eid,
Area Vice President- META, Nexthink

"The Gitex Tech week is the time when Focus uses the platform to launch its newer additions to the suite of solutions offered by the house of Focus. The GITEX tech week is not just an opportunity to showcase the newer solutions but also interact with industry players in knowing more about where the solutions world is heading to."

Ali Hyder,
CEO, Focus Softnet

"GITEX Technology Week is really important for companies like Ring in developing markets as it allows us to meet with key decision makers and to inform the market on the areas we focus on. As always, safety and security are vitally important to everyone. In recent years, in the Middle East, and like elsewhere in the world, people are no longer depending on just others to provide safety to their homes, families, and neighbourhoods. They are taking home security into their own hands to help protect and secure their family and property. Homeowners have also realised the convenience that home security always provides by being able to communicate and monitor their family's well-being, from anywhere in the world. GITEX offers an opportunity for Ring to conduct live demos and offer customers the opportunity to touch and feel the product and understand how effective and easy-to-use Ring's solutions for home security are."

Mohammad Meraj Hoda,
Vice President of Business Development – Middle East and Africa at Ring

"Finesse is exhibiting at GITEX now for the 8th consecutive year. GITEX gives us an opportunity to present the most innovative technologies & solutions from around the world to our clients and partners. In addition, we are also able to share our successful customer stories with innovation and ROI."

Raju Ramesh,
Co-Founder, Finesse

Finesse will be showcasing our digital portfolio of solutions including AI based Chatbots, Blockchain, BI & Analytics, CRM / CEM, Robotic Process Automation among others. Qlik, the global leader in the BI & Analytics domain will also be with Finesse, presenting their Data Analytics Solutions with their theme 'Lead with Data'."

Sunil Paul,
Co-Founder, Finesse

FINESSE

Enabling Digital Transformation

Finesse, a global digital transformation company and one of the most trusted software system integrators in the region, is participating at GITEX Technology Week for the eighth consecutive year.

Finesse assists more than 250 enterprise clients in the region, including 80% of the banks in UAE with their digital transformation journey. Established in 2010, it has over 400 people representing 18+ nationalities.

The company has won around 40 international awards and accolades under its name and has established its lead over the years.

Their referenceable clientele spreads across Banking, Finance & Insurance, Education, Energy, Healthcare, Telco, Transportation & Logistics, Public Sector and Enterprises. More than 70% of their business comes from the existing clients, reinstating their name as trusted advisors and strategic partners.

Finesse' digital solution portfolio includes for AI based Chatbots, BI & Analytics, Blockchain, CRM/CEM, Robotic Process Automation, and many more.

• Finesse' AI based Chatbot solution is a software that can simulate a real human conversation with real-time responses to users based on reinforced learning.

• BI and Analytics are data management solutions implemented to collect data whilst using statistics and software for analysis and quality insights.

• CEM/CRM solutions use an approach to enhance company's interaction with existing and potential customers which helps improve customer engagement and increase sales.

• Robotic Process Automation uses specialized computer programs, known as software robots, to automate and standardize repetitive and mundane tasks.

• Infra Management services include implementation, control, and management of facilities. It also includes cloud migration to support an organization's digital transformation journey.

Finesse' team of evangelists look forward to meet curious minds to discuss more about emerging technologies at GITEX 2019.

Meet them at Booth no. 09 in Hall no. 07 to get insights on how businesses can leverage technology innovation.

RING

Home security solution perfect for apartments, flats, townhouses and rentals launched

Home Security! Everyone is looking for it. But what about for those living in apartments, flats, townhouses and rentals? Ring's fifth smart doorbell is designed to take advantage of a feature every home probably already has: a peephole in the door.

Ring, whose mission is to make neighborhoods safer, just launched the innovative Ring Door View Cam, in the UAE which is easily installed in place of an existing peephole and does not require drilling or permanent modifications to your home or door – transforming a traditional door viewer into a smart security device.

Ring Door View Cam features motion detection, two-way talk, 1080p HD video, a removable, rechargeable battery, knock detection, privacy zones, and night vision, making it perfect for any home with a door viewer - especially apartments and rentals. To use, simply install the Door View Cam in place of the existing peephole on each side of the door, then pop in the rechargeable battery and removable cover. With that, you will have transformed your old door viewer into a smart security camera.

Designed by the same team who reinvented the traditional doorbell, Door View Cam enhances the features of a door viewer we all are familiar with to deliver affordable and effective home security. Taking the learnings from the original Ring Video Doorbell, Ring built Door View Cam from the ground up while taking into ac-

count the fact that people interact with doors and doorbells at apartment buildings and rentals differently than they do at single-family homes. The result is a one-of-a-kind security device that enables apartment dwellers to easily add desired security features to their homes in a way they were not able to before.

Now you never need to miss a visitor with Ring Door View Cam, which enables users to monitor, secure, and answer their doors from anywhere.

• Easy Installation – Ring Door View Cam easily installs in place of a door viewer, without the need for drilling or permanent modifications.

• HD Video – Customers can view live video and recordings of their front door with the same experience and video quality as Ring's other video doorbells.

• Knock Detection – If visitors don't press the doorbell button, Door View Cam features a sensor that lets you know when visitors interact with your door, such as if they knock.

• Battery Powered – Door View Cam uses a removable, rechargeable battery located on the inside of the door, so you don't have to run wires.

• Traditional Door Viewer Functionality – Door View Cam includes a glass viewer, so the functionality of a traditional door viewer is not lost.

• Privacy Zones -- Allows you to block recording of certain zones in front of the doorbell, as well as turn off audio recording, to ensure you only receive the notifications that matter to you.

Pricing and Availability

Ring Door View Cam is available in the UAE for AED 699 at Amazon.ae, Dubai Duty Free, Jumbo, Sharaf DG, and Virgin Megastore.

Come check out the Ring Door View Cam at Zabeel Hall Z3-C12.