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▪ Vol I Issue 4

▪ October 2020

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Anand Sinha
on the Changing
Role of a CIO



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ANAND SINHA SEES DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AS THE ANSWER TO DIGITAL DISRUPTION

Having worked in IT, ITes, Telecom, Media & Entertainment and presently in the Facility Management industry, for Anand Sinha, CIO & Director IT – OCS Group India, crafting an IT strategy has always meant contributing to business growth plan as well as building future capability to ensure and enhance better customer experience.

“In my career journey, the prime and the key focused IT Strategy were always built around “Customer” and “Customer Experience”, be it for providing IT Support to delivering the product, services

or insights,” reiterates Anand.

Taking cognizance of the fact that organizations are now opting for digital transformation, Anand believes in investing, leveraging, and using technologies that are proven to be effective and efficient for the processes.

“Technology has the power to bring you company, brand, and business closer to people. But finding the right digital technology is a must as it will pave the way for you to attract the attention of potential customers and clients who are willing to use your company’s

new platform and services. A structured approach to digital transformation will in turn help businesses respond swiftly and effectively to digital disruption,” explains Anand.

Anand is part of the OCS Group, an international facilities management company, based in the UK that offers a comprehensive range of solutions. The company is leveraging digital platforms to offer an integrated solution to clients while also additionally using technologies like access control systems, automated thermal cameras for temperature screening, face mask detection using AI, to ensure

safety and security at the workplace. These technologies have opened up a whole new way of working for OCS and are giving it a scope to create business cases based on strong, reliable data resulting in a measurable return on investment.

According to Anand the use of new technologies and digital solutions should be able to influence the business environment, change a businesses’ agility to react, and significantly modify its entire value proposition and overall operations. “These New Technologies are more likely to succeed when organizations focus on critical dimensions of business process,” he says. “At OCS, we

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ANAND SINHA
CIO & Director IT –
OCS Group India

CXO TALK

have innovated on IoT, AI, Robotics based technology solutions which is now getting used in daily operations as well for cross selling to clients.”

Challenges & Changing Role of a CIO

However challenges always form a part of a CIO’s profile. Anand cites changing company culture, cooperation between functions and team, resources & lack of data to justify transformation programs as some of the challenges that he has to overcome as a CIO.

“Culture is key and Executive support is critical for any transformation to start and success. On Technology side, challenges are Legacy IT architecture, cost, policies and processes, multiple systems & devices, to name a few. Ensuring Security is another key factor, while system consolidation, single sign-on and faster go to market delivery have always been prime challenge throughout my career. There is also a tremendous stress on the business and IT to digitally transform and deliver results,” observes

Anand.

The role of a CIO is gradually undergoing a transformation from a technology expert to business strategist. It is therefore no surprise that CIOs today collaborate with other C-level colleagues to develop business strategies and value. Technology initiative or transformation is all about business outcomes and creating business value.

“We all are devoting most of the time to business strategist activities to help drive innovation, create new business models,

and grow revenue opportunities. The expectation from the CIO is that you should look at Business and IT from a single vision. The challenge is about generating business outcome, in the absence of which there is no sense in adopting technology. Budget and profitability are major factors here,” concludes Anand.

The role of a CIO is thus going to be doubled in future. While earlier it was about Change, Innovation and Operation, Customer, Insight and Optimization will now be added to it.



E-Commerce in the wake of Turbulent Times: Scope and Significance

Ever since the outbreak of the global pandemic 'Coronavirus', there have been numerous speculations contemplating the different opportunities that can be utilized by commercial companies to increase sales and consumer response. As the traditional way of hand to hand selling came to a standstill after the announcement of the lockdown and subsequent unlock guidelines throughout the country, many businesses have started focusing their attention towards selling their products through the

online medium. The degree of internet usage and accessibility has become ever-increasing and with the current situation, even more so. Therefore, it only makes sense for retailers to seize this opportunity and convert it into an advantage to prevent further losses to self and country and change with the times!

The structure of business operations has changed drastically for several companies and most of them have adapted to the changes and have started to implement their business strategies accordingly

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business operations has changed drastically for several companies and most of them have adapted to the changes and have started to implement their business strategies accordingly.

Online selling during Pandemic

Everyone is more or less following the basic guidelines regarding the 'Stay at Home' and 'Work from home' prevention measures. "We have created a Work from Home kit for our employees, including a laptop, wireless keyboard and mouse, a screen, UPS for power backup and Wifi-Routers

respectively," says Pranav Shah, Director - Sale & Service - Mahavir Sys Power Pvt. Ltd. in support of this new normality.

He further reiterates the significance of the fact that people are now evaluating and considering to buy the majority of products that they require only through online sources to reduce the risk of catching the virus. To cater to this, the company has associated with Schneider Electric towards attaining increased traffic for people who are searching to buy APC UPS Systems. The company has been aggressively working towards improving their

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 is the future,
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 ”



PRANAV SHAH
 Director - Sale & Service -
 Mahavir Sys Power Pvt. Ltd.

portal by making all the models available to the consumer at just a single click and covering maximum locations across the country.

With a newly formed lifestyle, it also seems to be likely that the present trends of e-commerce and necessity shopping through online forums are here to stay. It is speculated that throughout the

upcoming period of festivities, people are more likely to shop online rather than visiting offline stores and showrooms.

“In the Festival season, major online bidding will happen for necessity commodities and the online platform will have more than 70% share in the current buying pattern” Pranav further explains.

Zakir Hussain

Rangwala, CEO - BD Software Distribution Pvt. Ltd. on the other hand says that his company has always maintained multiple sites for its solutions and software. “With the recent situation, we have been successfully selling our wares via our online stores. We have been aggressively pushing our webstores and have

been advertising in social media, Google ads etc. We have 3 different website where we sell our products. We have also got partners who sell our solutions on various e-commerce platforms in India.”

Online Sales vs Offline Sales

Day by day, an increasing number of people keep shifting



ZAKIR HUSSAIN RANGWALA
 CEO - BD Software
 Distribution Pvt. Ltd.

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towards the online shopping spectrum and retailers who choose to ignore this may notice a huge effect on their sales volume. One of the biggest challenges that are faced by consumer-focused companies is the absence of face to face interactions that help in the reasonable understanding of consumer needs and fulfilling them accordingly, which otherwise used to be an integral aspect of traditional selling. This problem-solving and contingent method of

servicing the needs of consumers has a very limited scope in the online forum as of now including customer service chat boxes and FAQs, which can be unsatisfactory for some people.

However not all businesses have found issues in selling online. Like Zakir says that all their sites are geared to do automatic business. "We have invested properly in making our webstores in such a way that it requires minimal human intervention," he says.

To sum up

As a retailer and businessman who is always looking for new opportunities to multiply and diversify business operations, online selling can prove to be of tremendous usefulness. With the current state of our country and the globe, most businesses are utilizing this field of selling to unlock maximum benefits as more and more people switch to online shopping. Still, this comparatively new age of trade poses certain challenges to businesses

across the country which are dealt with numerous innovative ways of providing room for further growth and development of the economy as a whole.

Additionally, Social Media has the power to affect the trends and choosing abilities of people. The right use of this power can help commercial companies gain maximum advantage through increased sales, all the while perfectly understanding and suitably catering to the needs of the consumers.



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THREE GADGETS THAT WILL SPICE UP LIFE FOR DIWALI

With the advent of Diwali-a festival that shepherds new beginnings and manifests the triumph of good over evil and the light over darkness, let us manifest our space with gadgets that shape our environment and bring light and happiness in our journey.

Diwali gift boxes usually comprise dry fruits or chocolates as a representation of goodness in its best

form, but, with the paradigm shift in health and wellbeing, the best Diwali gifts to galvanise people are tech-enabled gift packages.

Keeping in mind the budget and requirements of every

individual, here are the top three gadgets that will serve as a good Diwali gift package-

Amazon Echo Dot Price- ₹2,449

Amazon's most inexpensive gadget is

the Echo speaker in the market. Amazon Echo Dot is a smaller version of the original Speakers that holds similar functionalities and features like the Alexa-enabled speakers and benefits consumers in every tech advanced way. A few important features or functionalities that furnishes Amazon Echo Dot as a smart and budget-friendly gadget are-

- Briefs and updates you with the current



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happenings around the country and the world.

- Provides fitness guidance and feedback, FitBit stats, Nutrition information, and times Workout
- Entertain kids with games, stories, and timed music
- Control Television through voice-enabled modulation

JBL LIVE 650BTNC

Price- ₹10,499

The must-have gadget for all is noise-cancelling headphones that act as a portal for one to escape from reality. The JBL LIVE 650BTNC is a signature budget-friendly option that will drown you out of chaotic sound. The JBL headphones provide comfort-fit fabric headband and soft ear cushions to provide a perfect

grip. A few important features of JBL LIVE 650BTNC headphones are-

- Provides Thirty-hours Battery life with Active Noise Cancellation (ANC) on off-mode
- You can personalise

sound preferences using the JBL Headphone App

- Provides Multi-point connection, enabling consumers to switch between two Bluetooth devices
- You can activate Alexa other Voice-Assistants with a tap on the Earcup

APPLE iPad 2019

Price- The price point starts at ₹29,900

APPLE iPad 2019 is an essential gadget that holds good for personal and business purposes, due to beneficial features such as Internet connectivity, Bluetooth, a Multi-touch facility, etc.

The new APPLE

iPad 2019 combines immense capability with unmatched ease of use and versatility and is noted as one of the best productivity tools out there. A few essential features that augment APPLE iPad 2019 characteristics are-

- Provides lighting connector to amp accessories and charging
- Supports Apple Pencil and a Smart Keyboard
- Battery-life that lasts for almost ten hours
- Comprises Stereo speakers, Apple Pay, and Touch ID Fingerprint Sensor

There's no better way to make someone feel loved or special than providing them with smart and useful products. Gadgets are devices that improve engagement, encourage individual learning and collaboration, and teach skills through technology. Gadgets are thoughtful gifts that manifest practical and valuable tags with life longevity. To show some love and boost the feeling of fellowship, let's celebrate this Diwali with thoughtful and smart gifts.





Cloud vs On Premises: UAE enterprises experience the best of both the worlds

According to IDC, the regional demand for datacenters is growing rapidly, with investment in data storage in Saudi Arabia and the UAE –the two biggest Arab economies – set to rise to more than Dh1.5 billion in 2022. According to another recent study, the Middle East Datacenter market would grow to USD 3.7 Billion by 2025.

This spells huge scope for the region in terms of growth of datacenters and is allowing both new as well as existing datacenter providers to scan for opportunities to invest here. Equinix, Etisalat, DataMena, Khazna, eHostingDatafort, Pacific Controls are some of the datacenter providers who focus on Multi-City Datacenters, Hyperscale Datacenters or Retail Colo Datacenters.

Besides a lot of other big names are

contemplating to set up their datacenter regions in the country. While last year Microsoft launched its first datacenter regions in the Middle East (with locations in Dubai and Abu Dhabi) by offering Azure's cloud

“A hybrid cloud setup provides the best of both the worlds – enterprises can store/process their critical data on their on premise setup also while they burst on the cloud platform for their unexpected workloads.”

computing services and Office 365, a month later it was Amazon Web Services that launched three availability zones in Bahrain.

Oracle has also set up its first regional data center in Abu Dhabi while Alibaba has been providing cloud services since 2016.

On premise Datacenters vs Cloud services

Together with the coming up of multiple hyperscale cloud data centers in the Middle East, cloud services have also been seen ramping

up. As a matter of fact, an IDC report states that the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region will be worth US\$5 billion to cloud vendors by 2022.

“With growth taking place in the Cloud Computing space, datacenter players have also started investing in the region by building their own presence

or partnering with existing datacenter providers,” says Sachin R. Waingankar, Vice President & Head – Cloud, Web Werks India Pvt Ltd.

The adoption of Cloud services and its growth depend on essential components like Internet connectivity coverage, latency & cost and policies pertaining to data storage on Cloud. “It is generally seen that countries providing fast internet at cheaper cost with better geographical area coverage has seen faster cloud storage adoption and growth,” observes Sachin.

He further points out that the rollout of 5G internet across the Middle East region would be another big driver for cloud adoption. As 5G's ability to provide latencies is less than 10 milliseconds, it will soon allow organizations to deploy low latency 5G applications like IoT. This

would also open newer avenues like Cloud Gaming, Industrial IoT and onsite augmented reality guidance.

Moreover some organizations have experienced a lot of issues during Covid lockdown. This will also drive many organizations to partially use Cloud computing services for addressing their business continuity needs.

"Overall storage consumption would increase on cloud and datacenter/ onpremise setup as newer solutions like IoT would start receiving lot of information at a faster pace," contends Sachin. "This data needs to be collected faster and processed further to make it meaningful and so organizations need to have a holistic approach while moving towards the cloud computing platform. They need to classify data, its objective, comply with policies and design an IT architecture that could utilise Cloud storage and onpremise datacenter."

Companies like VMware, Dell EMC, IBM, and Oracle have been providing cloud computing services in the Middle East for over a decade and have been catering to industries like the banking and construction industries, and also for government organizations.

Shift to Hybrid Cloud
However in recent years the concept of Hybrid cloud is slowly coming up as an answer to increasing workloads which is a combination of cloud services and on premises datacenter. As the UAE market has already adopted cloud services for their mainstream data processing, this has also resulted in enterprise customers exploring

country (in Abu Dhabi and Dubai), it is helping enterprises slowly shift to a hybrid cloud model. In fact a hybrid cloud setup provides the best of both the worlds -enterprises can store/ process their critical data on their onpremise setup also while they burst on the cloud platform for their unexpected workloads.

"An organization could also prefer to

cloud platform would seem the viable option. Moreover multi-city solution deployments like IoT would require enterprises to rely on Edge Clouds to relay data to their core setups. So these scenarios would drive organizations to adopt more and more Hybrid setups," he further explains.

Additionally with the Middle East government developing data protection laws, many enterprises are adopting or are on the verge of developing hybrid cloud strategies to keep certain customer information on premise in order to ensure regulatory compliance.

And so...

It is understood that every business is different and hence demand different priorities and strategies. The growth of datacenters as well as adoption of cloud storage services in the UAE are indicative of the fact that both the models are going to co-exist. With businesses facing issues like data regulations, legacy software, infrastructure maintenance cost, security and so on, the best option is often to deploy both a cloud platform and keep an on premise server and essentially making the two work in unison.



SACHIN R. WAINGANKAR
Vice President & Head - Cloud,
Web Werks India Pvt. Ltd.

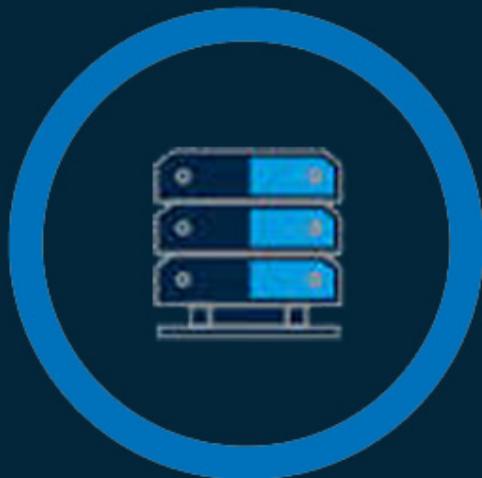
Cloud computing platforms beyond a typical onpremise setup.

"In a couple of years the hybrid cloud market would grow as more enterprises start exploring Cloud computing world without disturbing their on premise setup," Sachin says.

Also with companies like IBM setting up datacenters in the

move towards the cloud platform as they would like to keep unknown users or roaming users away from their core on premise setups," cites Sachin.

"There could be a scenario where a user needs to deploy an IT architecture or project for a short period of time or require this setup for a short duration. Under such circumstances a



Traditional Data Centers

VS



Cloud Service

Cloud Data Service Vs Traditional Data Centers-Which is the Right Way Forward!

Every organization, irrespective of its industry or size, needs a data center to function optimally. While, traditional data centers are physical facilities that firms use for storing their information and applications required for day to day functioning, the cloud service or cloud data centers are much different. Cloud data centers aren't physically located in any specific location. When an organization stores its data on the cloud, it is automatically duplicated and fragmented across multiple locations for security reasons.

So, how exactly are these two storage modes different from each other? Also, which of the two is better in terms of accessibility, cost, scalability, and security? Read on to find out more.

Cloud Service vs Traditional Data Center-What Makes a Better Option?

"If one were to choose between the traditional data center and cloud service, it would depend upon the firm's requirements and resources. Cloud makes an excellent choice for firms who don't wish to invest in capital expenditure for designing, building as well as operating an on-premise data center, and would rather want it to be managed by professionals," says Venkatraman

Swaminathan, Vice President & Country GM, Secure Power Division, Schneider Electric India.

But, cloud services bring along with it many complexities like data sovereignty and security, latency, etc. that can be addressed via the on-premise data center. Hence, the best solution is to opt for a hybrid data center that combines the best of both cloud and traditional data centers.

and Compliance Policies. Any organization should subscribe to cloud services or traditional datacenter only after completing their due diligence of IT Study.”

However, Dr. Rajeev Papneja, Chief Growth Officer, ESDS Software Solution Pvt. Ltd. believes that the choice between the two forms of a data center depends on the client. In fact, there is a third choice available in the form

ESDS software solutions believe that many factors influence the choice of customers including cost, real estate, time, governance & compliance, maintenance & management, and scalability & agility.

“There are use cases where it is better to have a traditional Data center running mission-critical workloads while using cloud services for ancillary needs, such

etc, they can always opt for a private cloud setup in commercial Data center,” elaborates Papneja.

Solutions Provided by Data Center Providers

As far as Schneider Electric India is concerned, the company offers an end-to-end solution for Physical Critical IT Infrastructure through its range of products such as Power Management, Cooling,

“Any organization should subscribe to cloud services or traditional datacenter only after completing their due diligence of IT Study.”



SACHIN R. WAINGANKAR
Vice President & Head - Cloud,
Web Werks India Pvt. Ltd.

On the other hand, Sachin R. Waingankar of Vice President & Head - Cloud, Web Werks India Pvt Ltd. opines, “Choosing between the two data centers would depend on your IT architecture, Application demands

of a hybrid approach, and a fourth option wherein the firms can set up their data center within a commercial data center. But, not leveraging cloud services is no longer an option for organizations, according to him.

as CRM, HRM, etc. For Small & Medium Businesses, they should consume as much cloud services as possible for a better ROI and agility. If organizations are concerned about shared network load, latency, shared storage,

Racks, and Enclosures, Physical Security, Data Center Infrastructure Management, Services.

Schneider Electric is uniquely positioned to offer a solution for Power Grid, Building, Data Center as well as at the Rack Level. The

TRENDING STORY

company is not only a leader in providing the solution with Connected Hardware Product but also has industry-leading Software & Services solution called EcoStruxure.

Web Werks India provides the best of both worlds for its customers. All its data centers are designed to offer Tier IV design compliant facilities, Uptime Institute Tier III certified present across 7 locations in India, UAE and the USA with all the requisite certifications delivering Colo and Cloud Services. The company is ranked no. 1 in India for Maximum Network Density with more than 160 ISPs and 5 Internet Exchanges hosted within Datacenter with direct

connectivity to NIXI, apart connected to all major telcos.

“Our Cloud Services cover the complete spectrum of IAAS and PAAS services. Customers can choose to host their data on our Public Cloud, Private Cloud, Enterprise Cloud, Hybrid Cloud, SAP-certified Cloud, or Govt Community Cloud,” explains Waingankar.

Web Werks differentiates itself by offering the best-connected data centers which provide lower network latency connectivity to our Colo and Cloud customers. Apart from this, Web Werks also provides a flat pricing structure to avoid complex and hidden charges.

ESDS on the other

hand provides all kinds of storage solutions to customers which are apt for their requirements. For large data volumes, the company has object storage offering “eCOS” which is highly elastic and secure without any compromise on performance. All the community cloud offerings by ESDS use All-Flash enterprise storages powered by NVMe and Solid-state drives that deliver high performance and can cater to applications that require large IOPS for smooth functioning.

Talking about the differentiating factor, Papneja of ESDS reinstates, “We do not compete with anyone in the market. While we have Tier 3 Datacentres in Nashik, Mumbai,

and Bengaluru, we are just not a colocation provider.”

The firm offers indigenously developed vertically auto-scalable cloud technology that holds USA and UK patents. eNlight’s vertical autoscaling technology has assisted the organizations running legacy systems, systems that were not cloud-ready, to reap the benefit of cloud scalability and cost-effectiveness without any change in their application.

Transparency Customers can expect? What About Security?

Schneider Electric ensures transparency by providing full access to customers for their

With 24x7 experts providing managed SOC services having all the latest technologies at their disposal, my take favors the commercial Data center.



DR. RAJEEV PAPNEJA
Chief Growth Officer, ESDS
Software Solution Pvt. Ltd.

infrastructure and also offers adequate training to manage it. Schneider works with an ecosystem of partners to design solutions, provide services such as Asset Advisor, where they remotely manage customer's infrastructure to

resolve their queries," says Waingankar.

Throwing more light on the security aspect, Papneja of ESDS Software pointed towards the statistics that show that insider threat is the most prevalent threat for data. This can only be

latest technologies because in many cases, the cost can be amortized between a number of their customers.

"With 24x7 experts providing managed SOC services having all the latest technologies at their disposal, my take

in the industry today, and a majority of the customers appreciate it," Papneja clarifies.

Conclusion

To sum up, there is no similarity between the two computing infrastructures and systems, barring their

Cloud makes an excellent choice for firms who don't wish to invest in capital expenditure for designing, building as well as operating an on-premise data center



VENKATRAMAN SWAMINATHAN
Vice President & Country GM,
Secure Power Division,
Schneider Electric India

predictive maintenance and services.

Web Werks, on the other hand, believes in having a transparent engagement with its customers, and thus has a flat pricing structure to avoid complex hidden charges.

"There are support and billing teams to clear your IT issues or billing issues. Many customers face trouble when they receive inflated bills and their account managers to

protected by having the right set of policies and access management in place. On the other hand, when it comes to infrastructure-level security, commercial data centers tend to score more points, simply because they need to always compete, and the competitors force them to be ahead of each other by staying updated. Secondly, commercial DCs can afford to be using the

favors the commercial Data center. We provide customers access to their infrastructure and service uptime metrics through eMagic DCIM so that they can monitor and also configure alerts according to their requirements and at their will. Giving the customers this kind of transparency is a must

data storing capabilities. Hence, there is no right or universal choice when it comes to choosing between a traditional data center and cloud services. A firm's choice depends on their budget and whether they have the IT staff trained enough to handle the physically integrated data center or not.

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