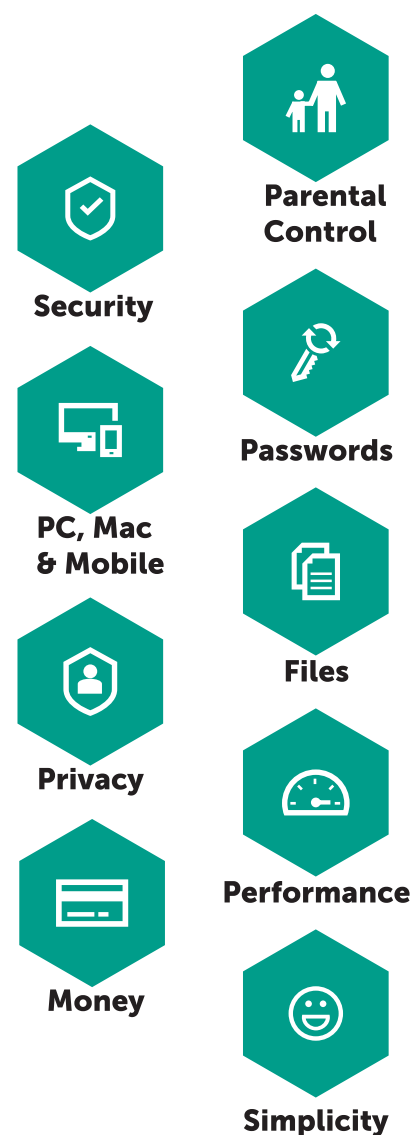
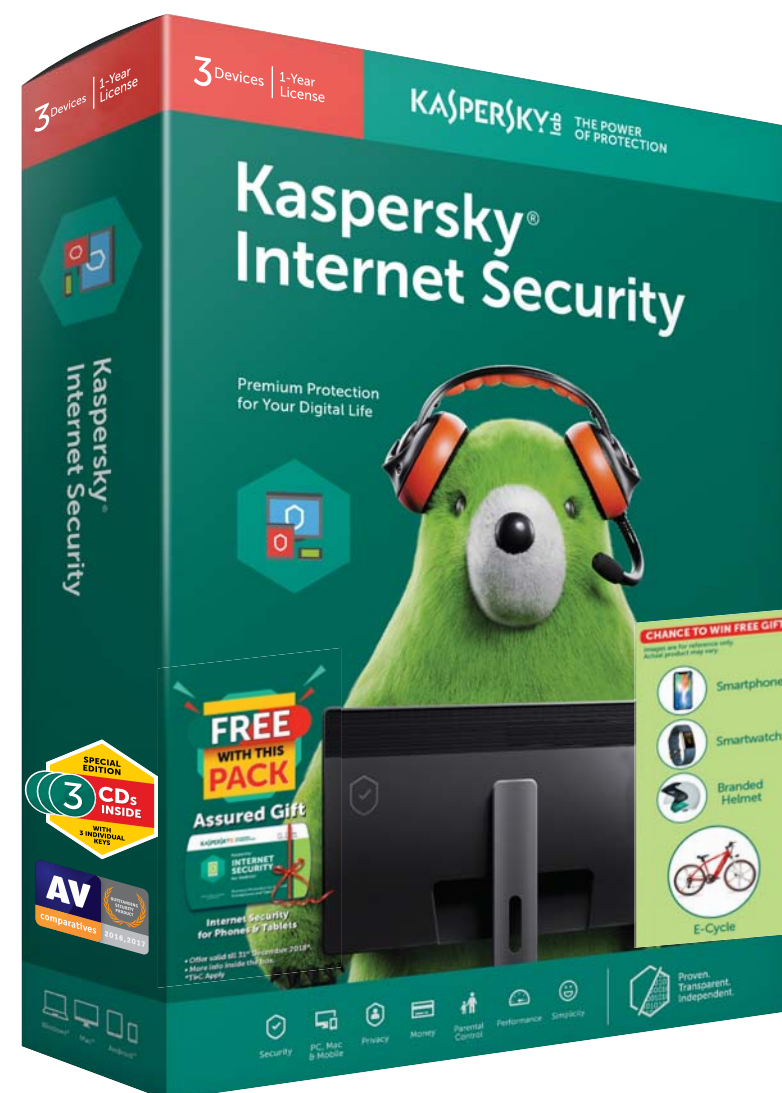


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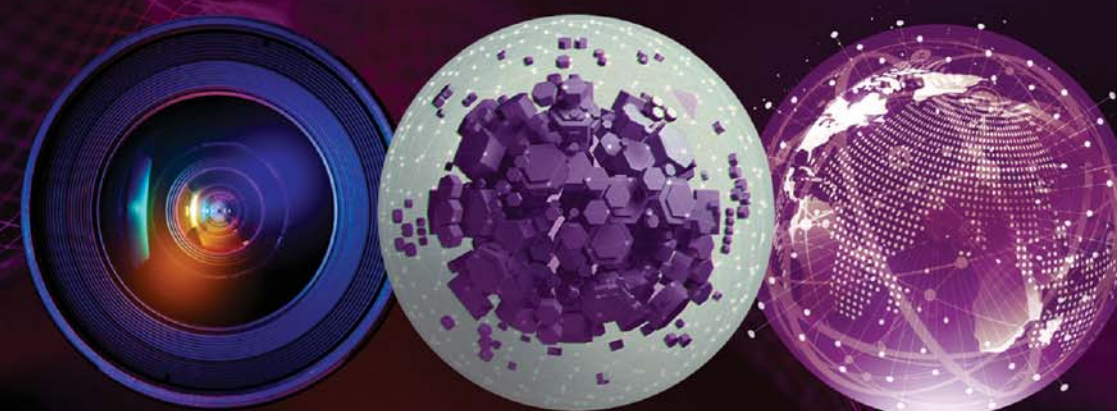
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2019 predictions for the Indian IT Industry

Padmanabhan-Iyer, Managing Director, Global-CEO, 3i-Infotech



In an era where advancements around technology have leapfrogged exponentially, the year ahead will see the Indian IT industry charter new frontiers, driven by innovation, speed and accuracy.

The IT industry would see enterprises move towards Industry 4.0, the convergence of Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing among others will enable them to be future-ready.

Driven by technological advancements and data security at the core, we foresee all sectors in the Indian industry in for exciting times and the Banking, Financial Services, Insurance (BFSI) and Healthcare segments will be no exception. Complexity brews herein, fuelled by regulatory challenges, uncertain economic cycles, risks, partnerships and alliances, talent management and above all ever-increasing customer expectations. With this backdrop, the top technology trends to watch out in 2019 would be –

Intelligent Digital Mesh

Intelligent digital mesh, the combination of humans, devices, content, and services is going to emerge as one of the major trends of the year 2019. Businesses have already started adapting this innovative technology to convey advanced results, where technology is embedded in almost every facet.

Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning

With AI and ML already playing a critical role in the assessment and treatment of business KPIs, the IT operations are further set to undergo transformation. In 2019, there will be continued progress toward the integration of AI, ML and deep learning in business applications. AI and ML will enable working with large swathes of data and help converge isolated or distributed data for more informed decisions. There will be a further

push to implement machine learning and artificial intelligence into smart devices.

As per a recent industry report, AI will boost India's annual growth rate by 1.3% by 2035. Some of the major growth drivers of AI/ML in 2019 would be – specialized chip optimized for speeding up the execution of AI-enabled applications and Industrial IoT, making it the biggest driver of artificial intelligence in any enterprise.

Internet of Things (IoT)

IoT is no longer viewed as a wonder but an enabler. The year 2019 will see incremental use cases of IoT in the Insurance space. Telematics, wearables, voice assistants and home control devices will mature further and will be increasingly adopted. There will be a continued rise in the demand for wearable devices and IoT.

The convergence of IoT and AI will create new opportunities for insurers and better and more customised premiums for the insured. It will enhance process transparency and service delivery.

Robotic Process Automation

The Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is seeing traction in the IT industry. The robots have been modernizing our way of administering business processes, IT support, workflow, remote infrastructure and back-office work.

In the upcoming year, the improvised RPA models will show some dramatic progress in accuracy, cycle-time and increased productivity in transaction processing. RPA will be efficient enough in providing answers to the queries in a natural language which will be a superior way to conserve resources for large call centres and for customer interactions. We will see the further adoption of tools like chatbots, straight through processing and robotic process automation for routine repetitive processes. Chabot will be integral to websites and mobile apps.

Big data and analytics

Data and analytics have become daily aspects

of organisations today across industries, which improvises business processes and optimizes operations. Presently, it is estimated to be \$2.71 billion annually in revenues, which is growing at a healthy rate of 33.5% CAGR in India, as per a recent report. However, 2019 will bring a modern version of big data analytics which has evolved through adopting modern and breakthrough technologies. Speed and efficiency are the major benefits that big data analytics will bring to the industry.

Data and data value management is something that is going to dominate our industries over the next few decades at least. Estimates peg that the analytics, data science and big data industry in India is expected to reach \$20 billion, by 2025. Prescriptive analytics driving proactive decision making, cognitive technologies reiterating businesses, increasing adoption of cloud-based platforms for big data analytics by major enterprise and start-ups are some of the future trends that we can look forward to, in 2019.

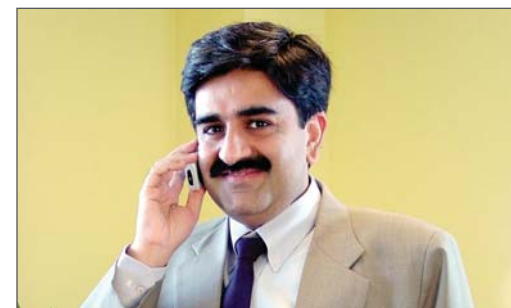
Blockchain

In 2019, blockchain will bring some enterprise applications into the main stream. The most innovative corporations will start using blockchain to improve collaboration. Blockchain will also see itself out of cryptocurrency transactions and will become an integral part of the business platform. Blockchain enables transactional transparency across a variety of business functions. Blockchain will also be present at the core of business innovation in many industries.

According to a recent report, an approximate of 56% of Indian businesses will be making the blockchain technology a part of their core business. Blockchain adoption will depend on regulatory concerns being addressed. The government and the regulators should take an active role in making this happen. In certain countries, we are already seeing action in this space, whereas most are yet to take their step forward. ■

Ease of Doing Business for Power Bank Manufacturers, GST rate of 18% is clarified by GST Council

Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA)



India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA) has dependably moved in the direction of the enhancing the 'Ease of Doing Business' and decrease the cost trouble on the portable handset industry to make it increasingly relative. ICEA is happy to report that their endeavours to give illumination to the business on GST rate on Power Banks has yielded an outcome.

Power bank industry was facing severe classification challenge from the GST authorities, which could have disastrous & grave consequences for the industry. The GST authorities have conducted surveys at a few power bank manufacturers. ICEA considered assessment was that lithium-ion power banks fall under HS 8507 60 00

and post accepting the illumination from TRU, ICEA as the summit body of the mobile handset and component industry has effectively drawn out the business players out of the superfluous agony. ICEA additionally needs to highlight that even the US and European Union sentiments likewise recommends that the Power Bank fall under HSN 8507 6000.

Commenting on the clarification, Mr. Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA) remarked, "We welcome the move that the GST council has clarified that the rate of GST on Lithium-ion power bank is 18%. It has been ICEA's technical interpretation that Lithium-ion power bank merits classification under Lithium-ion accumulator (HS code 8507 60 00) and GST @ 18% is applicable, although it was attempted to misclassify Power banks under HS 8507 80 00, GST @ 28%. At least now the path for the future is clear & this will allow the industry to function smoothly"

Mr. Mohindroo added, "India consumes about 33 million power banks a year worth about Rs.

2,000 crore. Currently, most of the Power Banks are imported and can be easily substituted by Power Banks made in India. Keeping this in view, ICEA has proposed a Strategy for a making India a global hub for manufacturing Power Banks to the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY). Given the right policy prescription, by 2025 the Power Banks can be built into Rs 18,000 crore industry, generate 80,000 jobs in India & exports can touch Rs. 5,800 crore". Before the clarification received, the GST authorities were insisting that power bank should be classified under: "Electric Accumulators, including separators thereof, whether or not rectangular (including square) – other accumulator" – HS 8507 80 00, whereas most of the industry classifies it under "Electric Accumulators, including separators thereof, whether or not rectangular (including square) – Lithium-ion" – HS 8507 60 00. The implication of this classification maize was that the GST rate applicable on "Electric Accumulators..... – Others" – HS 8507 80 00 is 28% whereas the GST rate on "Electric Accumulators.... Lithium-ion" HS 8507 60 00 is 18%.

NASSCOM'S PRODUCT COUNCIL ANNOUNCED THE SECOND BATCH OF THE DEEPTech CLUB

Debjani Ghosh, President, NASSCOM

As part of its efforts to encourage the niche industries and ensure they flourish, the Product Council has introduced the second batch of the NASSCOM



DeepTech Club. This is a program intended to promote the creation and evolution of world class DeepTech companies which have been identified and will be recognized, nurtured and promoted by NASSCOM through their various programs, platforms and events. There were initially 22 companies that benefitted from this program for 3-months and they each received 1:1 mentoring, connects and exposure to enterprises, investors and the global ecosystem.

NASSCOM has always focused on cutting edge technological advances. DeepTech would involve working with artificial intelligence, machine learning, immersive technologies such as augmented reality, virtual reality and mixed reality, robotics, natural language processing and similar such other technologies. DeepTech is a futuristic area and requires a lot more attention as compared to a conventional tech startup. Resources and expertise need to be provided to DeepTech startups in both the theoretical knowhow and their practical hand holding to ensure their success.

The second batch of the DeepTech Club includes a very diverse set of companies that have amalgamated multiple deep technology areas such as artificial intelligence, natural language processing, immersive technologies, Internet of Things, computer vision and quantum computing and have

built phenomenal use cases for several verticals including healthcare, manufacturing, marketing and customer experiences, cyber security, public safety, transport infrastructure, eGovernance, etc. The program was conceptualised by Mr Subinder Khurana, MD, Sage Accelerator and member of the NASSCOM Product Council and is now co-led by Mr Milind Hanchinmani, Director, Asia Pacific & Japan, Developer Relations, Intel Technologies and member, NASSCOM Product Council and Anupam Saronwala, mentor and advisor to many startups and former Country Leader, Business Development of IBM Research under aegis of NASSCOM Product Council. The program is chaired by Mr Atul Batra, CTO, Manthan systems.

Expressing his delight on the development, Mr. Milind Hanchinmani, Director, Asia Pacific & Japan, Developer Relations at Intel Technologies and Member, NASSCOM Product Council, said, "It was fantastic experience working with a diverse set of companies and such unique and innovative technologies and more than that it was an amazing learning experience interacting with the founders themselves. It is going to be an exciting phase for startups in India over the next 5 years and we will continue to engage with them and be part of this journey!"

Sharing her thoughts, Debjani Ghosh, President, NASSCOM, said, "Prowess in deep tech and artificial intelligence will be one of the main drivers of economic competitiveness in the near future and deep tech startups will drive innovation & spearhead the broad structural transformation of the economy. The DeepTech Club reaffirms efforts

in evangelizing and mentoring India's latent, untapped talent in emerging technologies. We will continue its drive towards catalysing deep tech start-ups, build category leaders and support start-ups to create not only for India but also scale up and solve for the world."

Speaking on the occasion, Anupam Saronwala, mentor and advisor to many startups and former Country Leader, Business Development of IBM Research under aegis of NASSCOM Product Council said, "I am delighted to engage with innovative companies that are leveraging state-of-the-art technologies to build products for global markets. It is an excellent initiative by the NASSCOM Deep Tech Club to engage mentors who share their rich experience and mentor startups by strengthening their technology offerings, shaping go-to-market strategies and sharpening their fund-raising proposals. We have had key successes with the first batch of companies and are looking forward to launching the next batch of 22 deep-tech start-ups."

Speaking on the occasion Subinder Khurana MD, Sage Accelerator and member of the NASSCOM Product Council has found the Deeptech Club to be an enriching experience for himself and said, "It has been such a pleasure working with bright and enthusiastic founders working on innovative solutions. I learn about new technology developments in every interaction. Engaging with the startups and watching them progress rapidly has been a very satisfying experience." ■

Vivo bolsters its manufacturing in India, announces additional investment of INR 40 Billion for New Plant



Vivo, the innovative global smartphone brand, is excited to announce the initialization of their second manufacturing facility in India. The company has acquired additional 169-acre of land in the Yamuna Expressway region in Uttar Pradesh with an estimated investment of INR 4000 crore (not including land cost). Hon'ble Chief Minister of

Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath welcomed the initiative and congratulated Vivo for the upcoming facility.

The new acquisition has been acquired near the existing 50-acre manufacturing facility and will help expand Vivo's manufacturing capabilities and support Vivo's continued growth in India.

Commenting on the announcement, Nipun Marya, Director-Brand Strategy, Vivo India said, "Vivo entered India in 2014 with a commitment to bring product innovation, focus and value to our consumers. India is a key market for us, and today we have fulfilled this commitment by entering the next phase of growth in India, all the while aligning ourselves with the 'Make in India' initiative. Additionally, we're proud that the new

plant will offer a major benefit to the surrounding area through high-quality job creation and training opportunities."

All Vivo smartphones sold in the country are manufactured at the Greater Noida facility which is one of Vivo's four manufacturing facilities globally.

Vivo's new manufacturing facility will help achieve its vision of providing best-in-class mobile phones with an affordable pricing in addition to the facility already existing at Greater Noida. The existing manufacturing set-up, which saw an investment of INR 300 crore already functions at a capacity of 2 million units per month with more than 5,000 workforce. ■

D-Link charts growth strategy for its SMB & Enterprise business

Chetan Sabnis, Principal Consultant, D-Link partner community

In recent times D-Link (India) Ltd. has made some extensive plans to strengthen its Enterprise business segment. From expanding its product line, to establishing a dedicated vertical specific team, to investing in enhancing its support infrastructure for enterprise customers – D-Link has brought about significant transformation in its enterprise business operations. In line with its enterprise strategy to enhance focus on partner/ system integrator engagement, D-Link has now appointed Mr. Chetan Sabnis as Principal Consultant, D-Link partner community.



Sharing his thoughts on this new appointment Mr. Rohit Purushottam, VP – Enterprise Sales, D-Link (India) Ltd. said, “Enterprise business remains crucial to D-Link’s growth strategy for 2019. SMB, project business, large enterprise, Telcos are some of the key areas that we are focusing on and for which we have dedicated resources to deliver results. Chetan with his rich industry experience will be responsible for driving overall enterprise business, while creating an exclusive network of system integrators. I wish Chetan great success in his new role and look forward to seeing him contribute to our enterprise growth story.” Chetan is an accomplished professional with experience spanning 25 years in channel & end-customer enterprise sales. Having worked

with reputed organizations like Cisco, Ingram Micro, Savex, he bring with him vast knowledge and expertise in setting-up enterprise channel network. In his last assignment Chetan was part of Savex, and was responsible for developing channel for Aruba, Ubiquiti and Huawei.

“We stand committed to our partner centric business approach. Developing a robust enterprise partner network, engaging & synergizing with our existing partners, devising a strong go-to-market strategy are some of the key areas that I will be focusing on.” said Mr. Chetan Sabnis, Principal Consultant – D-Link partner community.

D-Link enterprise business encompasses projects, stock-n-sell, and large enterprises. Telcos, ISV’s, SMB’s, large enterprises are some of the customers D-Link caters to through its enterprise solution portfolio. D-Link is also working closely on government initiatives like Digital India, Smart city etc. and is actively present on GeM platform. At present D-Link has a strong network of national distributors and 80 plus business distributors pan India. ■

Realme partnering with 20,000 partners in 150 cities to improve offline sales



Realme is expanding the offline sales to 150 cities in the forthcoming year. The young brand will start with top cities of the country, gradually moving towards 150 cities phase by phase. The “Proud to be Young” brand has partnered with offline retailers which will be known as

REAL Partners and will give a value addition to customer experience.

Realme will start with ten cities across the country in January 2019, eventually adding 50 cities every quarter. With the city expansion the smartphone brand will establish 20,000 outlets throughout the country. The retail outlets will have all the models of that the smartphone brand has launched.

Commenting on the expansion, Madhav Sheth, Chief Executive Officer, Realme India said, “Realme as a young brand is committed to delivering the best consumer experience to our customers. Strengthening our commitment, we are expanding our footprints to meet the rapidly growing customer demands. With the new offline

store we are extending our sales channels reaching out to our offline customers in every region. This is the extension of our sales strategy and ultimate target of ‘Realme for Every Indian.’ Previously, Realme got in to an exclusive partnership with Reliance stores for offline sales of the products. Realme smartphones have been getting sold at more than 130 cities across 1300+ Reliance Digital & My Jio stores.

The brand has been successfully performing on e-commerce platforms from May 2018.

Realme has secured the position of No. 1 Emerging brand in the country as quoted by CMR and according to Counterpoint, Realme was No.3 in overall market share during Diwali, and specifically No.2 in online sales.

The latest Realme U1 sold 2 lakhs during its first sale. The 3+32GB variants of the SelfiePro are open for sales on Amazon.in, while 4+64 variants will be open sales every Wednesday at 12 noon onwards. ■

XIAOMI ANNOUNCES DUAL CORE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY OF SMARTPHONE & AIOT



Xiaomi has started incubating its ecosystem companies with smartphones at its core since 2013. Within five years, it has become the world’s largest consumer IoT platform, connecting more than 132 million smart devices (excluding mobile phones and laptops), including more than 20 million daily active devices as of September 30.

Xiaomi’s recent strategic cooperation with TCL

Corp. will further strengthen Xiaomi’s home appliance business in areas of supply chain and OEM, especially when it comes to air conditioners and washing machines.

Consolidate leading position in the smartphone markets across the world

Smartphone business has been Xiaomi’s core in the past years since the beginning. “Before the proliferation of 5G technology, Xiaomi’s success in smartphone business segment lies in striving to consolidate its leading position in the smartphone markets across the world,” said Lei.

In 2019, Xiaomi’s smartphone business will continue to focus on innovation and quality, as well as to optimize its product portfolio.

Xiaomi announced on Jan 10 in Beijing that Redmi will operate as an independent brand. It also released the latest iteration of its popular Redmi Note series—the Redmi Note 7. This sig-

nifies the arrival of a dual brand era for “Mi + Redmi”. Mi will strengthen its presence in the mid- to high-end smartphone markets and new retail channels, while Redmi will continue to focus on research and development of extremely cost-effective smartphones with superior quality, and accelerate the pace of global expansion. In addition to the two main smartphone brands, Xiaomi will adopt a multi-brand strategy including Black Shark, POCO and Meitu to better target different user segments.

In the third quarter of 2018, Xiaomi’s international revenue accounted for 43.9% of its total revenue. In 2019, Xiaomi will continue its global expansion with focus on the European and Latin America markets. Xiaomi will continue building an efficient new retail system by continuously developing efficient offline channels while enhancing its online channels. ■

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Brick & mortar retailers to get a 150-200 bps topline boost

The Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion's recent clarification on foreign direct investment (FDI) policy by e-retailers restricts equity ownership in sellers, caps the percentage procurement for sellers from e-marketplaces, and puts curbs on exclusive partnership with brands or providing favorable services to a few vendors. Further, the requirement of reporting compliance to the Reserve Bank of India on an annual basis would mean stringent implementation of these guidelines.

"Nearly 35-40% of e-retail industry sales, amounting to Rs 35,000-40,000 crore, could be impacted due to the tightened policy," said Anuj Sethi, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings. "The impact on e-retailers would be largely in the electronics and apparel segments, which account for a bulk of their revenues."

CRISIL's estimate suggests that if B&M retailers lap up even a fourth of the impacted sales of e-retailers, it would lead to topline gains of Rs 10,000-12,000 crore. That, in turn, would mean revenue growth would be 150-200 bps higher at ~19%, compared with CRISIL's earlier expectation

of 17% for fiscal 2020.

The top two e-retailers, accounting for about 70% of the e-retail industry revenue generate about half of their sales through group companies. Following the restriction on equity ownership in sellers, e-retailers will need to make changes in their supply chain and may alter business model in several ways, including adoption of franchisee model, thereby leading to increase in the cost of compliance as they strive to adhere to revised guidelines in less than 40 days.

Between fiscals 2014 and 2018, e-retail in India grew at 40% a year to reach Rs. 1 lakh crore, way faster than B&M's growth at 13%, during this period, that scaled to Rs 3.2 lakh crore.

"The strong growth in e-retail was driven by deeper market penetration and attractive pricing compared with B&M retailers," said Gautam Shahi, Director, CRISIL Ratings. "Robust FDI inflows of over Rs 95,000 crore in the past four fiscals have made this possible."

Given tightened regulatory policy and a probable moderation in revenue growth for e-retailers compared with the past, FDI inflows and conse-

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quently, discounting by e-retailers may see moderation in fiscal 2020, providing a more level playing field to B&M retailers. However, long term growth potential for Indian e-retail continues to remain strong driven by increasing internet penetration, growing household private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) and convenience offered by online shopping. ■

Foxconn to assemble Apple higher end phones in India

Foxconn for the first time may assemble Apple's handset in Sriperumbudur plant located in Tamil Nadu. The assembling partner plans to invest \$214.2 million in U.S. dollars which comes to 15 billion INR, on expanding its plant to make iPhone production, according to related source. Tamil Nadu's Industries Minister MC Sampath, in a statement to The Economic Times said the project will create 25,000 jobs for the local people which can be advantage to the state as well as country. Sources claim the state government may announce the deal in early 2019.

Currently, Wistron, the competitor of Foxconn is assembling only lower cost iPhones such as the iPhone SE and iPhone 6S. Also its known that Wistron will update and do the changes in its factory to put out Apple's higher-end handsets, specifically the iPhone X. This move would be similar to Apple's existing India strategy, which sees the big technology giant marketing older generation handsets at more affordable prices.

Also, there have been a number of hurdles for Apple's expansion plans in India, including a recently decision to allow the country's anti-spam app into the App Store to avoid a ban from the local cellular networks. An advisor to Narendra Modi also insisted the country should restrict its import of luxury goods like the iPhone and tax them heavily, further hurting Apple's outlook in the country for high-end sales. ■

INTERVIEWS

India's Tax Policies

Rajiv Memani, Chairman, CII National Committee on Taxation & Regional Managing Partner – India, EY

At the time of forming a new government in 2014, India's Hon'ble Prime Minister and Finance Minister shared a vision for India's economic growth, good governance and reforms for crucial sectors, including the manufacturing sector. In February 2019, Mr Jaitley shall be presenting the final set of economic policy proposals

of the current government, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. While doing so, he would undoubtedly be reassessing the reform measures undertaken in the past years and those that need renewed focus, for India to achieve its growth potential.

As compared to the rest of the world, India continues to witness steady growth and is the fastest-growing major economy. That said, this might fall short of the earlier expectations of 7.5 per cent or upwards and end somewhat closer to 7.0 per cent. This is largely due to the impact of crude oil prices and challenges in the financial services sector. The government is determined to adhere to the fiscal deficit target of 3.3 per cent of the GDP, but it will depend upon the movement in the crude oil prices. Growth in indirect tax collection during April-October FY19 was merely 1.2 per cent compared to the budgeted growth of 2.2 per cent. Also, disinvestment proceeds up to 8 November 2018 stood at about Rs. 15,000 crore which is only 19 per cent of the annual budgeted target of Rs 80,000 crore for 2018-19. Expenditure cuts may be difficult, given the proximity of elections. Therefore, to avoid any slippage in the fiscal deficit target, the government may focus more on augmenting non-tax revenues and continue its efforts to shore up the direct tax revenues.

Recognition of India, as one of the top achievers for the year 2018 in terms of ease of doing business by the World Bank has been a warm addition to the reform credentials. India climbed another 23 points in the World Bank's ease of doing business index to 77th place (as against 100th place in 2017), becoming the top ranked country in South Asia for the first time and third among the BRICS. Implementation of GST has perhaps been the most significant accomplishment of the government – a sterling example of cooperative federalism that has given shape to the vision of One Nation, One Tax. There have been some bumps in this journey, however, the fact that the GST Council held 30 meetings in 2 years and took 918 decisions, (96 per cent already implemented) is reflective of the seriousness of the government to ease any transition pains.

There are important areas that still need attention. For instance, there is considerable confusion about the scope of the term 'intermediary' under the GST law. Requisite clarification is required to provide that the services provided by an Indian company, under specified business models such as call-centres, BPOs, KPOs and other similar service providers are outside the ambit of 'intermediary

services'. This would ensure that the place of supply of the aforesaid services is determined on the basis of the location of the recipient. Certainty in taxation is crucial for this sector that has played a significant role in the country's economic growth, by bringing precious foreign exchange and investments, and more importantly, generating employment.

Many other issues concerning the determination of place of supply, input tax credits and refunds continue to be work in progress and will hopefully be ironed out soon.

On the direct taxes front, India's next reform measures will need to take into account the global tax developments that have impacted both businesses as well as tax authorities. Perhaps the most notable global tax trend is the acceleration of corporate income tax cuts. The year 2018 saw larger economies lowering their corporate income tax (CIT) rates. In 2018, eight OECD countries reduced their statutory CIT rates, with an average decrease of 4.8 per cent points. These countries include Argentina, Belgium, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United States. Some countries have been pre-emptive in announcing rate cuts e.g., United Kingdom proposes to reduce the CIT to 17 per cent by 2020.

In India, the reduction in tax rates for new manufacturing companies and those with turnover up to INR 250 crores has been a welcome measure. However, the larger businesses continue to suffer a high tax burden of more than 48 percent, if the combined burden of corporate tax and dividend distribution tax (DDT) is considered. India needs to significantly increase the rate of investments in the economy and given the global trends, would soon need to consider reduction of corporate tax rate across the board. Other associated measures such as replacing the DDT by a classical dividend tax regime and substituting MAT (Minimum Alternate Tax) with a far simpler AMT (Alternative Minimum Tax) regime may also need to be examined for a more rational tax burden on India Inc.

Taxpayers also look for certainty regarding India's response to the global tax developments as these changes are creating a ripple impact on businesses, across jurisdictions. For instance, in response to the US tax reform, many countries would be reviewing their own tax laws and introduce new rates or policies. The new US tax law has also given rise to considerable uncertainty. The statute needs a lot of interpretation, but the regulations to give effect to the law have been slow.

Similarly, as more jurisdictions sign the multilateral instrument (MLI), it is expected that the treaty-related BEPS changes will be included in a great number of bilateral treaties as of 1 January 2019. Countries are also trying to ensure that the digitalized businesses pay their fair share of tax. Many countries, including India, are already assessing their options for unilateral digital action. India was the first to introduce an equalisation levy of 6 per cent on certain digital transactions. More recently,

UK announced a new 2 per cent tax with effect from April 2020 on the revenues of certain digital businesses which derive value from their UK users. In this context, matters such as characterisation of income while taxing digital transactions, implementation of provisions relating to 'Significant Economic Presence' and issues such as attribution of profits to PEs are emerging as significant areas where taxpayers look for clarity on India's approach.

The changing shape of tax enforcement is another significant outcome of the global tax changes. Tax administration has now become more stringent, backed by technology and digitisation. The year 2018 was the first time that CbC reports were automatically exchanged between governments. These will be analyzed by tax administrations using data analytics routines. It is expected that this will lead to a significant rise in the number of questions asked by tax administrations. With that, there will be an increase in the compliance burden for the taxpayers. It may also see a rise in tax disputes.

The digital infrastructure being set up by the Government and the new reporting requirements have led to immense tax data being generated every year, making it almost compulsory for businesses and tax administration alike to leverage technology. Technology also means that tax authorities are now in a better position to spot potential high-risk areas, thereby enabling them to move quickly to analyze potential high-risk transactions and propose adjustments. Indian tax authorities too should increasingly use technology to plug tax leakages, widen tax base and reduce the interface between the taxpayers and tax authorities. Initiatives, such as making tax assessments digital (e-assessments and e-proceedings) need to be further established.

The Department has been making positive efforts to reduce litigation and improve alternate dispute resolution mechanisms. The success of APAs is an example of what sustained and focused efforts from the Department towards providing greater certainty can achieve. The total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT has gone up to 244, which includes 220 UAPAs and 24 BAPAs. However, the initial progress in APAs is now slowing down. More efficient capacity building will help strengthen these mechanisms further. Similarly, there are approximately 425 matters pending before AAR benches. Filling up of these vacancies and timely disposal of the cases will help taxpayers immensely.

The current focus on improving the quality of law and providing certainty should continue. To take an example, there are many unresolved issues arising out of Ind-AS application. Just to illustrate one of them; there is no alignment between the definition of demerger under ITA as opposed to requirements of Ind-AS accounting. There is, therefore, a dilemma for a law-abiding citizen who wants to comply with both the provisions.

The government has implemented many economic reforms. Besides the GST, the passage of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and greater liberalization of India's foreign direct investment (FDI) regime have been positive measures. It's time to put a renewed focus on measures for boosting investments and improving the share of industrial growth in the GDP. ■

External Storage Market Witnessed an Exponential YoY Growth of 23.1%

India's external storage market witnessed a growth of 23.1% YoY (by vendor revenue) and stood at USD 81.8 million in Q3 2018. Increased storage spending from professional services organizations drove the incremental growth in Q3 2018. Professional services, banking, manufacturing, telecommunications and government industries contributed close to 82% of overall external storage market in Q3 2018.

"Infrastructure modernization to improve agility and scalability is of high importance for today's organizations. This trend is compelling organizations to deploy/consider new age storage solutions," says Dileep Nadimpalli, Research Manager, Enterprise Infrastructure, IDC India.

Organizational demand for high performance and low latency storage solutions led to a triple digit YoY growth of All Flash Arrays in Q3 2018. Majority of the vendors started offering NVMe based flash arrays to drive an incremental growth in the coming quarters.

Midrange external storage segment saw an exponential YoY growth and continued to lead the market constituting more than 66.9% of the total Q3 2018 external storage market, while

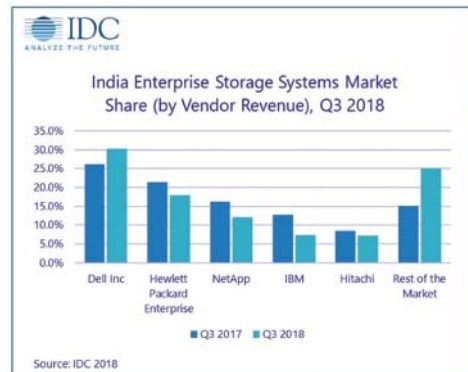
both entry-level and high-end storage segments declined YoY in Q3 2018.

"The Storage scene in India is seeing growth and leading the Information Transformation. Majority of the OEMs are focusing on new technologies and innovative pricing models to ensure traditional external storage consumption in the market in the wake of increasing acceptance of cloud storage solutions across organizations," says Ranganath Sadasiva, Director, Enterprise Solutions, IDC India."

Dell Inc continued to be the market leader with a 30.3% market share by vendor revenue, followed by Hewlett Packard Enterprise with 18.0% market share in Q3 2018. Smaller external storage OEMs witnessed a significant YoY growth due to large multi-million-dollar deals from professional services organizations in Q3 2018.

Forecast

The external enterprise storage systems market is expected to grow at a single digit compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) for the 2017 – 2022 time-period. Increased spending on digital transformation initiatives across industries would drive incremental revenues in the coming quarters. ■



Dell Latitude 7400 2-in-1 to be the world's smallest commercial 14" Laptop



Dell hinted that something big was coming in a recent blog, and Dell is excited to finally pull back the curtain. Say hello to the Latitude 7400 2-in-1. Their new Latitude flagship 2-in-1 represents the best on-demand experience available to the mobile professional, and is the perfect convergence of speed, security, mobility, versatility and productivity packed into the world's smallest commercial 14" 2-in-1 to be launched in CES 2019.

Today's employees are more demanding of their technology. Not only wanting portability and connectivity without sacrificing performance, they also look for a work machine that's beautiful and responsive, because work is where creativity and productivity need to shine. In fact, in our recent Gen Z survey, 91 percent of respondents said technology would influence their job choice when looking across similar employment offers. So we set out to create a work companion that was not only powerful and secure, but also beautiful and as close to friction-less as possible. Latitude 7400 2-in-1 uses Dell's new Express Sign-in to detect your presence, wake the system in about one second, and scan for facial recognition to log you in with Windows Hello. Just sit down at your desk and start working —without control-alt-delete or even reaching for the power button. ■

Acer Reinvents the Gaming Notebook with the New Convertible Predator Triton 900

Acer unveiled two new Windows 10 gaming notebooks, the Predator Triton 900, a 17-inch performance notebook featuring a slim design and convertible 4K display — and the Predator Triton 500 — a 15-inch all-metal gaming powerhouse measuring just 17.9 mm (0.70 inches) thin. Both gaming notebooks combine new, functional designs with powerful internals that rival gaming desktops.



"We are pushing the envelope on what a gaming notebook can be with designs that offer more uses while still packing in the computing power," said Jerry Hou, General Manager, Consumer Notebooks, IT Products Business at Acer. "The Predator Triton 900's one-of-a-kind flipping screen allows for multiple gaming scenarios and better ergonomics, while the Triton 500 offers superb gaming performance in a slim, all-metal body for gamers on the go.

"We're excited that our new GeForce RTX 2080 GPU is helping Acer redefine gaming experiences on notebooks," said Kaustubh Sanghani, General Manager, GeForce OEM at NVIDIA. "With breakthrough technologies including real time ray tracing and next-gen, and ultra-fast GDDR6 memory, gamers can confidently choose the Predator Triton 900 for a robust, feature-rich gaming platform." "8th Gen Intel Core H-series processors are designed as a complete platform that combines industry leading notebook computing performance and technologies that are increasingly critical for premium gaming and content creation," said Chris Walker, Vice President of Client Computing at Intel. "CPU performance is key to the best possible gaming experience, and the new Predator Triton gaming notebooks put this performance and robust platform on full display with innovative designs." ■

Samsung Unveils Two New PCs with Signature Style and Performance



Samsung Electronics unveiled two new Notebook PCs that combine style and power at the 2019 Consumer Electronics Show: the Samsung Notebook 9 Pro and the Samsung Notebook Flash. With its exquisite metal exterior, diamond-cut bezel and ultra slim size, the Samsung Notebook 9 Pro lets you represent your sense of style while

delivering top-of-the-line features you need. And the trendy-looking Samsung Notebook Flash combines select premium features at an affordable price point. "Our consumers want beautiful, modern devices that let them do more of what they want, when and where they want," said Younggyoo Choi, Senior Vice President of the PC Business Team, Mobile Communication Business at Samsung Electronics. "By offering two different PCs that are modern and sleek, put a premium on design and deliver Samsung's signature cutting-edge performance, we're offering our consumers even more choices so they can pick the PC that is specific to their needs." ■

D-Link Presents Latest Solutions with Zigbee Technology



D-Link announced their new DCS-8330LH Full HD Wi-Fi Camera and new mydlink devices with Zigbee technology. The new mydlink sensors and smart plug works with the smart home hub that is built-in to the DCS-8330LH. With the mydlink app, users can receive alerts from the mydlink sensors and trigger automations like recording video clips to the cloud and turning lights on with the mydlink Smart Plug. The DCS-8330LH supports Intelligent Video Analytics (IVA) features such as moving object detection and human detection to reduce false alarms. Additional features include Full HD Resolution, built-in IR LEDs with 5-meter night vision, two-way audio, a microSD/SDHC/SDXC card slot for local video recording, and Bluetooth support for easy setup. The DCS-8330LH is also compatible with the Google Assistant, Alexa, and IFTTT. ■

GIGABYTE Unveils GeForce RTX™ 2060 series graphics card



GIGABYTE, the world's leading premium gaming hardware manufacturer, announced the latest GeForce RTX™ 2060 graphics cards powered by NVIDIA Turing™ architecture. GIGABYTE launched 6 graphics cards — AORUS GeForce RTX™ 2060 XTREME 6G, GeForce RTX™ 2060 GAMING OC PRO 6G, GeForce RTX™ 2060 GAMING OC 6G, GeForce RTX™ 2060 WINDFORCE OC 6G G, GeForce RTX™ 2060 OC 6G, GeForce RTX™ 2060 MINI ITX OC 6G. These GeForce RTX™ 2060 graphics cards not only use overclocked GPUs certified by GIGABYTE, but also have real-time ray tracing and AI that can be played smoothly in most AAA game masterpieces. The top-of-the-line AORUS GeForce RTX™ 2060 XTREME 6G graphics card, featuring ultra-luxury components, demonstrates AORUS's pursuit of perfection. AORUS provides the all-around cooling solution for all key components of the graphics card. AORUS takes care of not only the GPU but also VRAM and MOSFET, to ensure a stable overclock operation and longer life. WINDFORCE STACK 3x 100mm cooling system is the most innovative cooling solution that provides the most efficient thermal performance for the graphics card. AORUS graphics are dedicated to perfect quality. ■

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2019 might mark the beginning of rapid adoption of new-technologies



▲ The Internet of Things (IoT) will become intelligent

IoT is advancing and evolving with each passing day. In 2019, a network of collaborative intelligent things will be created where multiple devices will work together developing IoT to its full potential. Connected to the global web and combined via wireless communication channels, things will turn into a one big integrated system driving a major shift in the human-machine interaction.

As per the Forbes report, global IoT market will grow from US\$ 157 Billion in 2016 to US\$ 457 Billion by 2020, attaining a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 28.5%.

▲ Self-teaching Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be more confident

Since the invention of the first artificial intelligence, the field has witnessed some ground-breaking innovations. Artificial intelligence has done some revolutionary work in assisting human in tasks such as decision making, recognition of objects, emotion & speech, overall reinventing the customer experience. AI has been able to cope up with these tasks better, faster, and cheaper than people. The capability of algorithms for self-learning brings us closer to implementing the AI into many areas of human life.

Based on the forecast by Tractica, a market intelligence firm, the AI market is expected to grow more than US\$ 191 Billion by 2024.

▲ Augmented Reality

Augmented reality is one step ahead of virtual reality. In augmented reality, systems combine to give you a real-time 3D vision, sound, haptics (the sense of touch), location data and even other senses such as smell. All this enable people to immerse themselves in a created physical world, react to what's around them and alter their virtual environment in real time. Organizations are increasingly applying this technology across a wide spectrum of human activity from art & entertainment to commerce and education. 2019 will witness ground-breaking work in this field to make it readily available to people on their smart devices.

As per the Market Watch Study, Virtual and Augmented Reality market is expected to grow more than US\$ 117 Billion by 2022.

▲ Cyber Security

In this digital world, where everyone and everything is connected, information flows through the speed of light. Due to our increased digital footprints, cyber security has emerged as the gravest concern. There will be heavy investment in this field to adapt to new technologies to enhance security.

As per the Zion Market Research, global size of Cyber Security market is expected to rise to US\$ 181.77 Billion by 2021.

▲ Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

The ability of RPA to automate tedious and time consuming tasks has made it the most sought-after solution. It can automate mundane tasks, assist employees with the use of supervised automation. As a result, companies can save resource time and ensure productivity of the processes. In 2019, RPA would enable small businesses, not just enterprise business, to leverage the advantages of a digital workforce. ■

Two-Thirds of Organizations Intend to Deploy 5G by 2020

"In terms of 5G adoption, end-user organizations have clear demands and expectations for 5G use cases," said Sylvain Fabre, senior research director at Gartner. "However, one major issue that 5G users face is the lack of readiness of communications service providers (CSPs). Their 5G networks are not available or capable enough for the needs of organizations."

To fully exploit 5G, a new network topology is required, including new network elements such as edge computing, core network slicing and radio network densification. "In the short to medium term, organizations wanting to leverage 5G for use cases such as IoT communications, video, control and automation, fixed wireless access and high-performance edge analytics cannot fully rely on 5G public infrastructure for delivery," added Mr. Fabre.

Status of 5G Deployment

Gartner predicts that, by 2022, half of the CSPs that have completed commercial 5G deployments will fail to monetize their back-end technology infrastructure investments, due to systems not fully meeting 5G use case requirements. "Most CSPs will only achieve a complete end-to-end 5G infrastructure on their public networks during the 2025-to-2030 time frame — as they focus on 5G radio first, then core slicing and edge computing," said Mr. Fabre.

Mr. Fabre added that this is because CSPs' 5G public networks plans vary significantly in timing and scope. CSPs will initially focus on consumer broadband services, which may delay investments in edge computing and core slicing, which are much more relevant and valuable to 5G projects. Gartner advises that, to meet the demands of businesses, technology product managers planning 5G infrastructure solutions should focus on 5G networks that offer not only 5G radio but also core slicing and edge computing infrastructure and services for private networks. ■

Nubia unveils "Red Magic" smartphone, targets India's Gaming Segment

nubia, the global smartphone maker, announced the launch of its much-awaited gaming smartphone, Red Magic in the Indian market. The Red Magic will be exclusively available on Amazon.in starting Dec 20th at 12 AM for INR 29,999.

Red Magic is packed with an optimised Qualcomm® Snapdragon™ 835 chipset with 8GB of RAM and dual-lane 128GB UFS 2.1 storage, making the usage of Red Magic sail through intensive gaming and multi-functioning.

The ergonomically designed gaming phone sports world's first RGB strip that comes in 16 million colours. It has been optimised for 128 games for now to provide improved performance and faster

game loading speeds. GameBoost, the proprietary tuning software, propels your smartphone ahead of the competition by freeing up memory-intensive resources to provide higher frame rates. Red Magic is taking the gamers to infinity and beyond with its groundbreaking material innovation.

Red Magic is targeted at the gaming enthusiasts' community. The phone comes with an ultra large polymer battery and Full HD+ display that gives consumers a revolutionary experience to gaming, photography, presentation, editions etc. on their smartphone. To make the Red Magic into the real gaming phone, the design team came up with GameBoost Mode to unleash the inner beast. At the flick of a switch, this feature turns off any distracting notifications and stabilises the frame rate. One button to rule them all! The Red Magic packs a 24-megapixel primary camera on the rear and a 8-megapixel front shooter for selfies. ■

Asus Zenfone Max Pro M2

After the successful launch of the Zenfone Max Pro M1, Asus is out to enthrall Indian audiences once again with the Zenfone Max Pro M2 that promises



unrivalled performance in a slick body. Equipped with the Corning Gorilla Glass 6, the Max Pro M2 is easily the most durable smartphone in its price segment. Powered by the fastest Qualcomm Snapdragon processor, this phone can take on whatever you throw at it. All you multi-taskers out there, we're talking to you. When it comes to its cameras, you could not have asked for more. Boasting of the best-in-class Sony Sensor, the Max Pro M2 is every photographer's delight. The Sony Sensor allows for stunning bokeh and low-light photos turning you into a maestro of the art overnight. With a massive battery capacity that is capable of

running for 2 days, this phone is your gateway to uninterrupted entertainment.

Asus Zenfone Max Pro M2 is packed with dual rear camera involving 12 megapixel primary sensor alongside 5 megapixel dedicated depth sensor. There are 13 scene detection available in rear camera. In case of front camera, the phone features 13-megapixel sensor with an f/2.0 aperture, 1.12-micron pixels along with an LED flash module.

Going ahead, the phone has 15.9 cms large display experience, FHD+ display with 2280x1080 resolutions and 19:9 full view having smallest full-function notch. There is also 94% NTSC color gamut and 1500:1 contrast ratio packed in the phone.

There are two easy ways to unlock this phone either by facial recognition or fingerprint sensor. Apart from this, the phone has triple slot convenience like 2 sim card space along with 1 microSD. Asus Max Zenfone Pro M2 is also known for providing surreal and dynamic audio experience. ■

HONOR 10 LITE WITH 24-MP AI-POWERED SELFIE CAMERA



HONOR, the leading smartphone e-brand under the Huawei Group, launched the HONOR 10 Lite, the brand's latest flagship smartphone in the Middle East, off the back of what has been a hugely successful year for HONOR. Inspired by the HONOR 10, the HONOR 10 Lite is set to bring together the best of today's technology and set a new standard for smartphone design, with the stylish dewdrop notch on the 6.21" FHD screen and a body with vibrant gradient hues, and 24MP AI-Powered selfie camera and 13MP + 2MP dual rear cameras. It also features a 64MB internal storage.

In the last 12 months alone, HONOR has increased its market share in the region by 378% in the United Arab Emirates and 195% in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – and is ending the year a high with its latest device, HONOR 10 Lite. Packed with powerful hardware at an unbelievable price, the HONOR 10 Lite, is set to take the lead over its competitors.

Featuring a bezel-less display and artistic colors, the HONOR 10 Lite packs looks that will make heads turn.

Boasting high end hardware with the most modern chipsets and cameras that can rival most modern smartphones, the new device provides users with an extraordinary, stylish mobile experience.

Vivo Unveils Y91 with Halo FullView Display



Vivo, the global innovative smartphone brand, has launched the Y91 with a 15.80 cm (6.22) Halo FullView Display featuring an almost bezel-less screen to provide an immersive viewing experience for users.

With a massive 4030 mAh battery and a dual rear camera setup, the device has been aggressively priced at INR 10,990 pan India across offline and major e-commerce websites. The Y91 will be available in Starry Black and Ocean Blue color variants on Amazon India, PayTM, Vivo India E-store and all offline partner outlets. Like all Vivo devices, the Vivo Y91 will be manufactured at the company's Greater Noida facility.

Consumers will also get attractive offers* on the purchase of the Vivo Y91, such as–

· Benefits worth INR 4,000 along with 3 TB Data from Reliance Jio

· Instant Cash Back of INR 2,000 along with 240 GB data from Airtel

· Additional INR 500 off on Exchange & No cost EMI upto 6 months

Commenting on the launch, Jerome Chen, Senior Vice President, Vivo India said, "We at Vivo, are committed to fulfil consumer demands across price segments and have introduced the latest addition to our Y-Series portfolio – Vivo Y91 in the sub 12K category. The device has been ergonomically designed to best suit the needs of young consumers, equipped with the latest technology and several innovative features at a competitive price." ■

Fitbit Unveils Charge 3



Fitbit Charge 3 Special Edition will be available for INR 15,999. Charge 3, the latest evolution of the best-selling Charge family of devices, delivers a premium swimproof design with a large touchscreen display, our most advanced health and fitness features on a tracker, and is our smartest tracker yet – all powered by up to 7 days of battery life.

Charge 3 continues to build upon the success of the best-selling Charge franchise, with initial pre-order sales indicating strong adoption among both new and existing consumers. In fact, 54 percent of Fitbit.com pre-orders are from loyal and engaged customers who have owned two or more devices before ordering Charge 3. This initial consumer demand is supported by IDC estimates, which predict shipments of fitness trackers will continue to drive a significant portion of the overall wearables category for the next several years. ■

In 2019 public cloud security will become more automated

The public cloud market is maturing, and we expect to see a huge appetite for cloud security in 2019. Businesses aren't just experimenting with the public cloud anymore, and now that more customers have critical infrastructure and workloads on platforms like AWS and Microsoft Azure, they're realizing they need purpose-built cloud security solutions to help them protect workloads moving to these platforms.



As workload migration accelerates to the public cloud, security risk professionals will need to get more actively involved in their DevOps team's processes, so they can automate the application of governance and compliance controls. It's not about dictating what tools the team uses, but verifying that controls are being met and helping the builders build securely. After all, configuration errors can be easy to make as people try to use new cloud services they might not fully understand. That's why I expect to see more teams embracing automation to continuously monitor cloud security and remediate problems automatically.

Providing these types of automated cloud security controls will be more important than ever in the year ahead because cyber criminals are getting better at finding compromised credentials or access keys and exploiting them. In fact, Gartner predicts that by 2020, 80 percent of cloud breaches will be due to customer misconfiguration, mismanaged credentials, or insider theft, not cloud provider vulnerabilities. Cyber criminals will also get more clever at using compromised accounts in ways that will be difficult to detect. Instead of using a massive amount of new resources for cryptomining, which causes a noticeable spike in usage, they're starting to use already-approved resources and stealing some cycles from those instead, which is easier to hide. I expect to see more attacks like that in 2019. ■

25 Percent of Digital Workers Will Use Virtual Employee Assistants Daily by 2021



The use of virtual assistants (VAs) in the workplace is growing. By 2021, Gartner, Inc. predicts that 25 per cent of digital workers will use a virtual employee assistant (VEA) on a daily basis. This will be up from

less than 2 per cent in 2019.

The contact centre was the pilot and testing ground for many adopters of VAs, but with the democratisation of artificial intelligence (AI) and the development of accurate and clever conversational UIs, different types of VA have arisen: virtual personal assistants (VPAs), virtual customer assistants (VCAs) and VEAs.

"We expect VEAs to be used by an increasing number of organisations over the next three years," said Annette Jump, senior director at Gartner. "Industries such as insurance and financial services are showing strong interest in piloting VEAs internally. We've also witnessed VAs being used in IT, customer service and information queries." Examples include Amazon's Alexa for Business helping employees delegate tasks such as scheduling meetings and logistics operations, and Nokia's MIKA helping engineers find answers as they perform complex tasks or diagnose problems. "Ultimately, VAs used in the workplace and VEAs will increase employee productivity and foster constructive engagement," added Ms Jump. The market for conversational platforms — VAs and chatbots — includes more than 1,000 vendors worldwide. However, over the next couple of years, a race to provide new capabilities will result in the vendor landscape changing drastically. "IT

leaders looking to implement a conversation platform should determine the capabilities they need from such a platform in the short term, and select a vendor on that basis," said Ms Jump.

Voice Interfaces Built for Business Will Multiply Gartner predicts that, by 2023, 25 per cent of employee interactions with applications will be via voice, up from under 3 per cent in 2019. Although most chatbots and VAs are still text-based, AI-enabled speech-to-text and text-to-speech hosted services are improving rapidly. As a result, deployment of voice-based solutions will grow.

"We believe that the popularity of connected speakers in the home, such as the Amazon Echo, Apple HomePod and Google Home, will increase pressure on businesses to enable similar devices in the workplace," said Van Baker, vice president at Gartner. "While there are limitations on the actions that VPAs can perform, employees will readily expand the actions allowed as capabilities improve."

Gartner predicts that consumer and business spending on VPA speakers will top \$3.5 billion in 2021. ■

Key Channel Trends of 2018 In India

2018 was the first calendar year that had witnessed GST for the complete year. Some of the key trends in the channel included the partners across India refraining themselves from purchasing from the national distributors. On the channel front, here are some of top channel trends shared by the channel partners across India.

Champakraj Gurjar, President, Federation of IT Industries Association (FAIITA) :

This year, FAIITA has officially given advisory for all the associations across India to refrain purchase products from OEMs who ignore the traditional channel. I think this is the biggest measure taken by the channel fraternity as a whole this year. Licencing and other certifications are hurdling a ton in the market. Bigger giants are getting advantages of this while the small players are not able to manufacture locally.

Mahesh Kurup, Ozone Computers, Coimbatore:

The dealers felt the pricing challenge not only



between the conventional and online trade but also between markets. When I mean markets, it is both the capital as well as the upcountry markets, and bigger markets and smaller markets. The advantage for the OEM to prefer conventional distribution model is the vendor will have control or a hold on the market in terms of product, pricing, distribution and more which might not be available online. Another challenge and trend which we witnessed in the 2018 is the shrinking marketing budgets of the vendors towards the conventional channel. The vendors are ready to drive the products. This I see especially in the PC component business drives on solutions and new products. When the traditional business becomes transactional, it automatically paves way for strengthening online business.

Awanindra Singh, Computer Land, New Delhi

The current trend what I notice is the change in the mindset of channel partners and their approach towards the customers. The dealer fraternity had started understanding the fact that there is something beyond price which can thrill the customer. Thus many retailers had started



trying many things that will make the customer walk-in to the shops. The retailers are in a strong feeling that once the customer steps in the premises of the retailer, the conversion ratio is high. Of course, as a strong impact from the online sales, many retailers had started understanding the importance of value-addition and post-sale support. Retailers these days understand the product completely and more than selling a product, a retailer is now providing value addition to the customer in terms of educating them.

Arun Kumar Dey, Computer Professional, Cuttack

The biggest trend I noticed this year was the interaction with the government and channel partners came closer. Last year the channel partners made representation with their respective state and central governments. However, with the latest Government notification on the e-commerce is the big thing that had happened to the channel industry, in my point of view. Even though there has been a reaction from the governments for the past 4 years of struggle, according to me, this is the biggest blow for the unethical trade practice. However, according to me, this notification should immediately get reflected and should come as a law to ensure millions of small traders are protected.



Sudhakar TV, Lapis Technologies, Hyderabad

I see the biggest trend this year was the slash in the sale of networking products and increase in the CCTV and related products. Because, I remember, earlier, even small office wanted a networking connection and many were dependent on the cables and other routers. However, the increase in the institutional sales had made the customers reduce their dependence on channel partners. I hardly find organizations demanding a



wired product. While everything has become wireless, and the customers also go with the networking products which are suggested by the ISPs. On the other hand, there is a huge number of CCTV players who had entered in the market. In 2018, the biggest trend we notice is that everyone is so cautious about being secured. Even small offices had started demanding for a CCTV and want surveillance in their organization.

Rakesh Jain, Parshva Enterprises, Indore

According to me, the key trend I witnessed in the year 2018 was the increase in the sale of refurbished materials. Earlier, the attitude of the customer towards the refurbished laptop or mobile was not positive. Now with the awareness had increased and everyone is ready to adopt that.



The purchase trend is higher in the products which are of high-value. Instead of purchasing a new product for one Lakh rupees, a customer thinks there is no harm in buying the product which was refurb. However, the customers expect an established partner whom they can trust. With the sale of refurb materials increase, the need for having quality spare parts and post-sale comes hand in hand.

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The Next Phase of Transformation in 2019

Makarand Joshi, Area Vice President, Country Head, India-Subcontinent, Citrix



The dependence on technology has never been as pronounced as it is today. Mountains of data are generated each day and organizations across the world have been in the constant search to harvest this data, and analyze it to gain a competitive edge. It is all this, that has made the adoption of secure data management and collaboration tools that much more significant. AI, analytics and machine learning with existing cloud led platforms has opened new facets of efficiency in organizations across the globe, especially so in India.

We at Citrix have been on a journey of innovation that is taking us one step closer to a digitized future. While we continue our dedicated approach in helping our customer transform digitally, we have also been transforming internally. With offerings like the Citrix Workspace App and Citrix Analytics, we are aiding organizations in their workspace evolution journey. Having realized the steady shift of the industry toward solutions that can digitally enhance the workspace while also contributing to business growth, we believe that the following trends over the next year will play a critical role in shaping the next league of transformation.

Cloud Integration

Over the last decade, we witnessed the foundation of cloud and the steady transition from legacy systems to cloud-first. Having understood how this technology's efficiency can be maximized, cloud maturity levels have risen amongst businesses in India. This is further validated by the research firm Gartner's prediction that the revenue of SaaS (Software as a service) which is the largest segment of cloud,

is set to grow 17.8% in 2019.

The next wave of transformation through cloud technology will be through its integration with AI, machine learning, analytics and robotics.

Diverse needs of a multigenerational workforce

Further, with millennials and GenX comprising a major segment of employees across organizations, cloud enabled SaaS applications will be leading the way forward.

The workplace today has experienced a growth of millennials joining the ranks, who are eager to learn and grow with the organization. However, the shift can also create challenges. On the one hand we have digital natives who are tech savvy and tend not to let the location hamper their work, and on the other we have senior employees who have adapted themselves to legacy infrastructure. At a workplace like this, HR leaders are tasked with addressing the concerns of a multi-generational workforce. Companies must endeavor to understand the needs of their employees, the way they work and their thought processes. HR policies must be developed by both the business and HR heads and must have a spirit of inclusivity in them. Flexible or mobile working options can enable employees to avoid commute time and work from home, work on the go, from a customer site or even from home, removing the limitations of a physical workplace. This will boost productivity and also promote an adaptable culture. In 2019, enterprises would have

Tightening the Security Lens

to focus on their management practices for a remote working environment and consider changing their organizational infrastructure accordingly.

2018 has been crucial in terms of data generation, data management and security. Developments like the rolling out of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), draft bill and report for India's own Personal Data Protection Bill and the data localization regulation introduced by the government and RBI (Reserve Bank of India) have created a jolt of uncertainty across organizations in India and globally. The importance of securely managing personal data and ensuring consent is now more pronounced than it was before. The journey to data security is a marathon but the finish line is still a little

blurry. Enterprises have been in the process of completely understanding existing policies and the complexities that surround it as well as allocating resources to ensure compliance. Throughout the following year, organizations

AI: Making its presence felt across sectors

must make concerted efforts towards fully adapting to policies and regulations. Enterprises will need to view regulations like the GDPR as an opportunity to encapsulate their solutions and processes in a secure IT layer. Further, companies must also focus on placing the needs of consumers before anything else and treat data with respect.

Enterprises across sectors are increasingly looking toward this technology to enhance their internal and external processes. AI has recently gained prominence owing to its ability to integrate with technologies like cloud, analytics and security solutions. Further, owing to the rising storage costs and increase in the number of connected devices, AI has now taken a front seat in an IT set-up. This is further validated by a Gartner forecast that pegs AI-driven business value to reach \$3.9 trillion in 2022.

When analytics is integrated with machine learning and AI, it can bring forth profound changes for businesses. In the exceedingly competitive landscape that exists today, in 2019, analytics and AI will play a huge role in getting ahead of the curb. The scope for AI adoption will further expand with sectors like education, transport, healthcare as well as government owned entities taking up this technology to improve their efficiency.

2019 will witness the evolved transformation phase of technology adoption. Enterprises must ensure that they are reaping the most out of these offerings and are driving business growth with 'change' at the core of their processes. Change is constant and the only way to excel is to be a part of this change. ■



The traditional channel is transforming and expanding its business horizons to sustain in the industry



The year 2018 was the most volatile year for the channel fraternity in India. While the repercussions of the GST continued to affect the channel business, the storm created by E-Commerce during the festive season and the nationwide protest by the brick and mortar,

adversely impacted the channel business. The traditional channel is transforming and expanding its business horizons to sustain in the industry. Here are four key trends which will dominate the channel in 2019.

Security business to be the all-time high

With the advent of growing awareness about security (both physical and digital), the security and surveillance industry will continue to grow in 2019. The government initiatives like Smart City and Safe City projects have triggered a huge demand for security hardware such as CCTV cameras, storage and solutions such as cloud and AI. According to ResearchAndMarkets.com, India video surveillance market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 16.4% during 2018-2024. As the IT business is growing through stagnancy, security is the next growth destination, channel partners should head to. In 2019, we will see channel partners expanding verticals and stepping into the security area for better ROI and sustainable business in a big way.

Cloud computing to grow further

With minimum operating cost, the cloud has emerged as the most cost-effective option to manage the workloads and processes. As a result, many small and mid-level organizations are shifting on the cloud. Though public cloud still dominates

the market, the hybrid cloud and private cloud are also growing consistently. While enterprises have started their cloud journey, there is still a significant untapped segment of the market which provides huge opportunities for partners in the cloud business. Various cloud environments offer vast opportunities for partners. A right choice of platform and vendor along with domain expertise will be the key for the success for cloud channel partners in 2019.

Artificial Intelligence is the new wave

Though at a nascent phase currently, the AI business will bolster in 2019 due to rising demand for AI solutions from different industries. According to IDC, the worldwide market for AI and cognitive systems reached \$8 billion in 2016 and will expand to more than \$47 billion by 2020. While the adopters of AI are largely the enterprises, the trend will change as vendors embed the technology in software applications and make it available as service via the cloud for mass consumption. The enterprise channel has huge prospects in this flourishing business vertical which is the near future of the industry.

A retrospective of the business need of an hour

While the industry is transforming on a rapid pace and moving towards software define everything where technologies such as Cloud, IoT, AI will become a key part of business operations, the partners will be seen embracing the new wave of technological transformation. Value addition will continue to remain the key factor for growth and channel partners will focus more on services than mere box pushing. Customer satisfaction will be crucial and partners will focus on improvising the overall customer experience. In short, partners will pay attention towards overall organizational health check in 2019. ■

Using big databases to find the superconductors of the future

Japanese researchers have found an approach to more quickly and successfully identify superconducting materials.



"The data-driven approach shows promising power to accelerate the discovery of new thermoelectric and superconducting materials," the researchers say in their study published in the journal Science and Technology of Advanced Materials.

Superconductors are materials that conduct electricity with virtually no resistance. Superconducting materials have improved the field of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and have led to the development of particle colliders that can be used for research related to splitting atoms. Currently available superconducting materials can only perform at extremely low temperatures. If researchers can find superconducting materials that work at ambient temperature, electricity could be conducted over large distances without energy loss.

Current approaches to searching for these materials are somewhat random, and results strongly depend on researcher's intuition, experience and luck. Materials scientist Yoshihiko Takano of Japan's National Institute for Materials Science and colleagues have shown that sifting through an inorganic materials database using specific search parameters can provide a more systematic way to finding superconducting materials. ■



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