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ISSUE 58

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e-STUDIO400AC series



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ARCHIVING

Ben Saxton makes the case for digital preservation platforms

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On the cover A superhero for every workgroup

Workgroups and small businesses that require the flexibility and sophisticated functionality of an A3 colour MFP but in a compact A4 device will find just what they are looking for in Toshiba's new e-STUDIO400AC series of A4 colour MFPs.

Meeting the diverse needs of busy workgroups, these productive devices incorporate Advanced Toshiba e-BRIDGE Next controller technology, offering seamless integration with a company's existing print infrastructure and business processes, as well as support for mobile and cloud printing.

A 10.1in touchscreen provides intuitive tablet-style operation for quick and easy interaction with workflows, embedded apps, third party solutions, smart MFP functionality and a built-in web browser.

The customisable display can be used to turn complicated multi-step processes into time-saving one-touch functions, helping to maximise productivity and avoid bottlenecks. It can also be personalised so that when each user authenticates themselves at a device the home screen displays their choice of apps and permissions.

There are two models in the range – the 33 pages per minute e-STUDIO330AC and the 40 pages per minute e-STUDIO400AC. Both produce high quality colour output on a range of print media, from envelopes to banners, and feature a dual scan document feeder capable of scanning both sides of the page in a single pass.

For security, the devices support NFC and/or card-based authentication and, as standard, come with a self-encrypting Toshiba Secure HDD that prevents sensitive information from falling into the wrong hands.

Like other Toshiba MFPs, the e-STUDIO400AC series is delivered carbon neutral through Toshiba's Carbon Zero Scheme. In addition, customers can use the e-BRIDGE Plus for Green Information app to save energy and paper costs through on-screen monitoring, reporting and advice.



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The paper used in this magazine is obtained from manufacturers who operate within internationally recognized standards and which is sourced from sustainable, properly managed forestation.

The e-STUDIO400AC series will be available at the end of August. To find out more about the machines and their many time-saving features, please visit toshibatec.co.uk or email marketing@toshibatec.co.uk

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Rugged tablet



Panasonic's most rugged and powerful Android tablet to date, the Toughbook A3 tablet with 10.1in display is also longer lasting than its predecessor (the A2), with a standard battery life of 9 hours or 15.5 hours with the optional large batteries. The fully rugged, water- and dust-resistant device is drop-tested to 1.5 metres, can be used with gloves and is viewable in all light and weather conditions, including rain. It has a front camera and mic for video conferencing; a back camera with flash for document and image capture; a range of interface and port options; and a vehicle dock. The Panasonic COMPASS 2.0 suite of enterprise management tools offers rapid configuration and enhanced security updates.

<https://www.panasonic.com/global>

what's new



iPad keyboards

Brydge has launched a range of wireless iPad keyboards in the UK. The premium aluminium models provide a laptop-style experience, with backlit keys, iOS short-cut keys, Bluetooth 4.0 & 4.1 for lag-free typing and up to 12-months' battery life from a single charge. The patented hinge provides viewing angles from 0-180°. The 10.5 (for the iPad Air), 10.2 (for the iPad) and 7.9 (for the iPad mini) are available from all Apple Stores across the UK, from Apple online and from Brydge's UK website.

<https://www.brydge.co.uk/>

No server required

With the launch of the ezeep for Azure cloud printing platform, developed specifically for Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop, ThinPrint has become the first cloud printing solution to enable print rendering to take place entirely in the cloud. Until now, cloud printing solutions have only connected printers with users, leaving print rendering to take place on the user's device or



on a company server. With ezeep for Azure cloud printing, users can install plug and play ezeep Hubs in branches and remote offices, giving users full access to almost any model of network printer without the need for costly and maintenance-intensive print servers. All print data is compressed, TLS encrypted and transferred to the ezeep Hub without the need for VPN connections.

www.ezeep.com/hub

Lens shift

ShiftCam's six-strong ProLens range of detachable smartphone lenses brings the quality of a DSLR camera to an iPhone 11 series smartphone. The range of DSLR-grade glass lenses includes telephoto, macro, wide angle and fisheye options, plus a deluxe kit containing five lenses and a premium carry bag. To take professional-grade, high quality photos, simply slide the appropriate lens onto a ShiftCam or MultiLens case.

www.shiftcam.uk



Gone in 60 seconds

The '60 Sec Desk' from Clever Closets gives home workers an ergonomic desk that they can assemble/disassemble in seconds and store under a bed or sofa when not needed. Measuring 95 x 50 x 75cm (WxDxH), the desk has five sustainable birch ply parts (with lacquered finish) that slot together without the need for fixtures, tools or screws. The '60 Sec Desk' has built-in smartphone and tablet holders and is available for the introductory price of £125 (ex VAT), including UK delivery.



Protective film

CHERRY WetEx protective film helps keep keyboards free of dirt and germs by stopping dust, crumbs and other matter from accumulating beneath the keys. Quick and easy to clean using standard disinfectants, the flexible cover can be fitted to a wide range of CHERRY products, including the KC 1000, G84-4100, KC 1000 SC and STREAM KEYBOARD models.

<https://www.cherry.co.uk/cherry-wetex.html>

Cloud scanners

Xenith Intelligent Workplace Services has partnered with Kodak Alaris to create a pre-configured Scan@Home Solution built on the latter's INfuse Smart Connected Scanning Solution. As part of a fully managed scanner-as-a-service offering, Xenith can provide remote workers with pre-configured scanners that allow them to scan documents directly to a specific person, repository, network drive, back-end system or line-of-business application, such as invoice processing, records management or customer account management, without the need for a PC connection or local software. Xenith manages and monitors the scanner fleet, sets up workflows, configures the devices and allocates licences. www.xenith.co.uk/scan-at-home



End to end encryption

Lifeseize is enhancing its cloud video conferencing solutions with end-to-end encryption (E2EE) for all paid for and free subscriptions. Due to be deployed automatically on a rolling basis in Q3 2020, Lifeseize E2EE will enable users of Lifeseize meeting room solutions and desktop/mobile/web apps to encrypt audio and video streams end-to-end using a key shared among meeting participants. Media will be encrypted from each participant, stay encrypted while in transit and on Lifeseize servers, and can only be decrypted on clients that have the key. When E2EE is applied, meeting recordings, PSTN call participants and support for third-party conference room devices will automatically be disabled. www.lifeseize.com



Doubling up

HANNspree portable monitors enable mobile workers to create a dual-display presentation in seconds. The super-slim 15.6inch displays connect to virtually any laptop or PC with a single Type-C USB 3.1 connector cable that also acts as a power supply. The Full HD monitors have a 170° viewing angle, making them ideal for mobile group presentations, built-in stereo speakers and toughened hard glass. They are available in standard (HL161CGB) and multi-touch (HT161CGB) versions and come with a foldable smart case that doubles as a stand.

<https://www.hannspree.eu/product-category/monitors/portable-monitors/>



On the grid

Swyx has enhanced its Swyx Meeting cloud-based collaboration solution with a grid view that shows up to 25 people simultaneously (with the ability to re-arrange views by 'drag and drop') and an 'active speaker' view that shows the person speaking in full-screen mode. The WebRTC-based solution allows users to organise browser-based web conferences with up to 25 internal and external participants, communicate via video, send messages in private or group chat, share their screen and exchange files. Participants can join meetings from any computer, mobile phone or tablet via a browser, without having to install any software or app. www.swyx.de



Home printers

HP has launched three new printers for families with school-age children and work from home parents. The stylish HP ENVY 6000 printer series (from £69.00), the functional HP Deskjet 2700 printer series (from £39) and the Deskjet Plus 4100 series (£59) are available with the HP Instant Ink subscription service. www.hp.com

Remote clocking in

STANLEY Security has updated its Time & Attendance Systems to support modern working practices, including remote working. An optional remote clocking-in module that can also detect the location of employees by GPS allows employees to log their working day and calculate their working hours from a computer or smartphone. There are four systems in the STANLEY Security Time & Attendance portfolio – Starter (up to 50 employees); Professional and Advanced (50-100 employees); and Enterprise (100+ employees) – plus a number of optional modules and add-ons that let customers tailor systems to their needs.

www.stanleysecurity.co.uk/services/time-attendance



Self-service deliveries

Quadient has announced the UK launch of Parcel Pending by Quadient Parcel Locker Solutions. Designed for multi-tenant residential buildings, but also applicable to multi-tenant offices, the solutions automate the receipt (and return) of parcels. Once a package has been placed in a locker by the carrier, the intended recipient receives a one-time PIN or barcode for self-service pick-up, via email, SMS or in-app notification. quadient.com



Antibacterial coating

An antibacterial nano-ionic silver screen coating that kills bacteria on touch and is resilient to heavy use and cleaning is one of the stand-out features of Benq's RP Series of interactive flat panel displays. Others include built-in sensors that measure air quality in a room and signal when CO2 levels are too high; smart eye-care technology that protects against blue-light and flicker irritation; EZWrite 5 collaboration software; and an NFC sensor on the front of each panel that allows users to gain access to any display within its network via an ID card or QR code, with users' personal workspaces and display settings loading instantly. The new 4K models are available in three sizes – 65in (RP6502), 75in (RP7502) and 86in (RP8602).

Video sharing

Blink, the smart employee app, has added a video sharing feature that allows users to share video news bulletins and policy updates from within the app. Already deployed in more than 100 organisations, including the NHS, the Prison Service and Stagecoach, Blink gives frontline workers access to all the information, systems and resources they need in a single app, along with the ability to interact with colleagues and give feedback to managers. Joinblink.com



London an ideal launchpad for global start-ups



London has one of the world's best ecosystems for globally ambitious start-ups, second only to Silicon Valley, according to *The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2020* from Startup Genome.

This year's study puts London in joint second place (with New York), up from

joint third place last year and ahead of Beijing (4th) and Boston (5th). In the inaugural report in 2012, London was ranked eighth.

Factors that make London an ideal launchpad to scale and grow internationally include its favourable time zone; high levels of

connectedness between different ecosystems (e.g. medtech, edtech and fintech); good access to capital and investment – an average seed round in London is \$650k, compared to \$494k globally; and a strong, global talent pool thanks in part to the startup visa program launched in 2019.

Since 1990, London's startup ecosystem has produced 38 unicorns (companies valued at over \$1bn), more than any other city in Europe, according to analysis by Dealroom.

startupgenome.com

Digital transformation advances by five years in just three months

Covid-19 has accelerated companies' digital communications strategies by an average of 5.3 years in the UK, according to a new study by cloud communications platform provider Twilio.

In its survey of enterprise decision-makers, 96% of UK respondents said that the pandemic had sped up their company's digital transformation, with 66% claiming it had done so 'a great deal'.

The *COVID-19 Digital Engagement Report* highlights the extent to which Covid-19 has broken down traditional barriers to adoption, with 77%

saying it has led to increases in their digital transformation budget – 'dramatically' so for 36% of respondents.

UK respondents also report an easing of barriers, such as lack of a clear strategy (37%), getting executive approval (35%), reluctance to replace legacy software (35%) and lack of time (33%).

Glenn Weinstein, Chief Customer Officer at Twilio, said: "Over the last few months, we've seen years-long digital transformation roadmaps compressed into days and weeks in order to adapt to the new normal as a result of COVID-19. Our



Glenn Weinstein

customers in nearly every industry have had to identify new ways to communicate with their customers and stakeholders essentially overnight. We believe the solutions being built today will be the standard for digital engagement in the future."

Twilio surveyed 2,500 enterprise decision-makers, of which 300 were in the UK.

[Twilio.com](http://twilio.com)

Coronavirus boosts cloud infrastructure investment

A survey of 250 IT leaders in the UK, US and Canada by Snow Software, a provider of technology intelligence solutions, highlights the extent to which the coronavirus pandemic and recession are changing organisations' use of technology.

More than three quarters (82%) say they have increased their cloud usage as a result of lockdown and 60% plan to continue to increase it now that people are returning to their workplaces. Two thirds (66%) say they plan to carry on using the cloud services and applications implemented during the crisis.

Snow Software points out that although video meeting apps (e.g. Zoom, Cisco WebEx and GoToMeeting) and communication apps (e.g. Slack, Teams and Google Chat) grabbed the headlines, being cited as 'lifesavers' by 73% and 65% of respondents respectively, the biggest contributor to the increase in cloud usage is cloud infrastructure, with 76% of respondents increasing their use of cloud platforms, such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure and private cloud.

Snow Software adds that the experience of lockdown and the economic outlook have caused 91% to alter their cloud strategy, with twice as many planning to accelerate cloud migration (45%) and digital transformation (41%) compared to people putting those initiatives on hold (22% and 21% respectively).

www.snowsoftware.com/int

Risk of IT outages higher if cloud migration is put on hold

The 30% of enterprises that halted cloud migration during the COVID-19 pandemic were two and a half times more likely to have experienced IT outages that negatively impacted their SLAs than those that continued their journey, reveals a new study by Virtana. *The Current State of Hybrid Cloud and IT* report also reveals that IT professionals who stopped their company's cloud migration process were twice as likely to over-provision to ensure performance.

UK workers struggle to master digital tools

Workers in the UK's 43,000 medium-sized businesses each waste 28 minutes per day, or 1.12 working hours over the course of a year, struggling with digital programmes or tools they don't know how to use properly. Yet, 81% still feel that digital tools make working life better, more productive and more

efficient. According to *The Modern Worklife* report from UX design and development agency Sigma, UK workers use an average of four digital tools in their working lives, with 6% using more than nine.

<https://www.wearesigma.com/modernworklife/>



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Agility replaces innovation as main driver of cloud communications

Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of agility for business survival, reinforcing what was already a growing requirement for modern organisations.

In Mitel's third annual European survey of 1,000+ IT decision-makers, conducted between November 2019 and January 2020, agility overtook innovation as the Number One driver for migration of communications to the cloud, cited by 35% of respondents (46% in the UK), up from 16%

in 2018. Innovation slipped to second place, with 28% of votes globally.

The requirement for agility is moving not only unified communications to the cloud but also the contact centre, with 44% of decision-makers surveyed by Mitel expressing a willingness to consider migrating their contact centre to the cloud, up from 15% in 2018.

Mitel's latest survey also reveals a growing maturity in businesses' approach to the



cloud, with a clear focus on reliability before innovation and a requirement for flexibility from suppliers.

Nearly one in three (32%) UK businesses say that feature-rich and reliable voice communications are the most important capabilities

of a first-class Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) system, ahead of presence, IM and video conferencing (23%) which topped the list last year.

Decision-makers also expect contractual flexibility. For example, 46% of UK respondents want the ability to change provider quickly if the service contract is not fulfilled, with 35% prioritising contract length to avoid vendor lock-in.

www.mitel.com

Data, data everywhere

More than half (51%) of senior decision-makers feel overwhelmed by the volume of data within their organisations, rising to 61% in companies with over 1,000 employees, according to new research from database management company InterSystems. The amount of data is slowing down decision-making, with 41% of respondents needing one or two weeks to analyse data before making a business decision and 16% requiring a month. One third (35%) say they need just a couple of days. www.intersystems.com

SentinelOne strengthens security at luxury car maker

Aston Martin Lagonda is deploying SentinelOne's next generation endpoint protection platform to secure its manufacturing, headquarters, supply chain and field offices after deciding that its legacy antivirus solution was no longer fit for purpose.

The luxury car manufacturer chose SentinelOne for its ability to perform across different operating systems, including Windows, Mac, Linux and cloud workloads, as well as high-specification CAD, CAE and design production workstations, and for its robust APIs offering seamless integration across the tech and cybersecurity stack.

In contrast, its legacy system required too much

manpower to manage and was detrimental to the end user experience.

Steve O'Connor, Director of Information Technology at Aston Martin Lagonda, said: "We couldn't have any solution that was going to get in the way of our users, particularly our engineers and designers. We wanted a platform that was simple to use and almost invisible to the users, but that would give us complete confidence and security. Most of all, we wanted something future-proof as Aston Martin Lagonda continues constantly innovating."

SentinelOne's Singularity platform, powered by patented AI and machine learning, is able to prevent attacks and autonomously reverse any threat, freeing up technical staff. Its Vigilance MDR (managed detection and response) service takes this to the next level, delivering global 24/7/365 SOC scalability and protection against the most advanced threats. sentinelone.com



Greener interviews

By removing the need for travel, virtual interviews can reduce the carbon impact of the initial phase of the hiring process by an average of 70%, claims virtual interviewing and assessment specialist HireVue. The company recently delivered its 15 millionth video-based interview, just 13 months after passing the 10 million milestone. HireVue estimates that it would take

120,000 trees to absorb the same amount of CO2 that its customers have saved by using its platform over the last year.

www.hirevue.com



Video interviews here to stay

Even enforced changes are sometimes for the better, and so it has proved for recruiters during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Independent job board CV-Library surveyed 100 of its most active clients and found that while 83.1% had been forced to change their recruitment processes, 83.8% believe the changes are here to stay. Examples include:

- Introducing video interviews where face-to-face meetings aren't an option (87%);
- Improving communication to ensure candidates are aware of delays (55.1%);

- Investing in new technologies to help manage the process effectively (26.1%);
- Investing in virtual onboarding to bring in new hires quickly and successfully (20.3%);
- Introducing more rounds of interviews to help build rapport with candidates (15.9%).

While 40% of employers say their time to hire has increased during the pandemic, 33% say the quality of applications has improved.

www.cv-library.co.uk

Expert tips

TCO Development, the organisation behind the TCO Certified sustainability certification, has released a new report explaining how anyone who buys and uses IT products can implement circular and more sustainable practices. *Impacts and Insights: Circular IT Management in Practice* includes 33 expert tips on circular IT management, covering IT procurement, use and disposal/resale. <https://tcocertified.com/impactsandinsights/>



Honey Bee
[Sterna paradisaea]

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IT sector resilient despite pause in software/hardware refreshes

Almost one third of technology professionals have paused planned software implementations and hardware refreshes since March 2020, according to a survey of 150 technology professionals by Microsoft specialist Crimson.

It believes this trend is indicative of a major priority realignment taking place within enterprises that plan to



accelerate Cloud, Automation and Cyber Security for more secure and effective remote working.

Crimson's research shows that while new projects may have paused since lockdown, the IT sector has shown remarkable resilience, with 70% of IT departments forgoing the Government's furlough scheme in order to continue to provide critical business operations.

Despite short-term delays, projected IT budgets have remained stable, with 41% of respondents intending to keep their budgets at pre-Coronavirus levels and 27% increasing overall budgets. Thirty-two per cent have cut budgets due to the pandemic.

Just over a quarter of survey respondents are looking to hire or on-board new IT staff in the next three months.

info.crimson.co.uk/covid-19-benchmarking-the-impact

Fewer meetings drive productivity gains

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of professionals surveyed by Korn Ferry, the organisational consulting firm, say they are more productive when they work from home than they are in the office, even with distractions such as children or a spouse. The vast majority (92%) believe there will be fewer in-person meetings post Covid-19 crisis, with 87% expecting to be more productive by spending less time in meetings.

The price of failure

Much is made of the benefits of a successful digital transformation project, but what happens when things go wrong?

A new study by enterprise software company IFS (*Digital Transformation Investment in 2020 and Beyond: Factors That Will Impact the Success or Failure of Technology Investments in the Post-Pandemic Era*) reveals that it takes almost all companies (92%) a minimum of a year to get over an IT project failure, with 34% requiring two to three years.

Ramifications of failure

cited by UK respondents include:

- Financial loss (25%);
- Loss of customers (24%);
- Loss of market share (23%);
- Reduced headcount (20%); and
- Complete shutdown of critical business departments (18%).

A failed IT project can deter future investment in similar projects (cited by 26%) and lead to budget cuts in other areas (46%).

On a more positive note, most digital transformation projects have been successful, with 71% completed on time and 53% delivering the planned results. ifs.com

Print to be productive

Working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic is leading to less printing overall as employees pivot to digital collaboration, but employees who do still print are more likely to report productivity gains, reveals new Home Worker research from Quocirca. Key findings from its survey of 501 UK home-working employees include:

- 77% of office workers based at home have access to a printer, though only 5% are supplied by their employer; 14% purchased a printer themselves when they started working from home.
- 52% print less than they did in the office, including 24% who don't print at all. More than one quarter (28%) say the amount they print has increased significantly.
- 75% of new home workers say their productivity has increased (41%) or stayed the same (34%). Among those who report higher levels of productivity, 64% state that they are printing more vs. 30% who say they are printing less or not at all.
- 41% of those who have reduced printing say they need fewer printed documents now that there are no face-



to-face meetings or physical signatures.

Quocirca's research suggests that office-based workers who may have been printing regularly out of habit are now adapting to digital alternatives. However, this trend varies by company size. While 44% of employees of large organisations have ceased printing entirely, this figure falls to 18% of SMEs and 10% of mid-sized organisations.

Quocirca Director Louella Fernandes said: "There is a concentration of printing among employees in mid-sized organisations. This may be because security policies at larger organisations prevent documents being printed at home" www.quocirca.com

The problem with remote working

Since lockdown, the transition to remote working has been both popular and successful. That doesn't mean it hasn't also had its fair share of problems, as a Nexthink survey into the impact of remote working on IT makes clear. According to its findings:

- 43% of IT teams saw an increase in the number of support tickets from employees
- 38% of workers have had issues with VPN access
- 37% of workers have had issues with Wi-Fi connectivity
- 35% of workers have had issues with video conferencing apps
- 37% of workers felt they didn't have the right tools to get their work done when the transition was first made
- 35% of IT leaders felt restricted in the support they could offer remote employees due to a reliance on on-premises software

Smarter collaboration: the Lenovo ThinkSmart View personal productivity assistant powered by Microsoft Teams can be used for voice and video calls, content viewing and administrative tasks, leaving the user's PC free for other work. www.exertis.co.uk



Always at your side

With remote work becoming the new normal, Realism Labs has brought out an 'always on' device designed to provide the spontaneous, frictionless communication that team members would have been used to in the office.

Instead of having to schedule a meeting, Sidekick provides an always-on video and audio connection between colleagues in remote locations, enabling users to bounce ideas off each other and have informal conversations just as if they

were all in the same office, with no app management or window switching to interrupt the flow.

Realism Labs claims that because Sidekick is a separate, dedicated device rather than another app on a PC it is easier to use and more effective than an 'always on' call in Zoom, for example. It is instantly accessible and not buried under other windows. It is not a distraction in the way that a sticky mode window is when working on other applications. It sits right next to your laptop and

when you want to talk to your teammate you just look over and talk — just like in real life.

In trials, users were keeping Sidekick on for an average of six hours a day, entering their team room first thing in the morning by tapping the 'Join Room' button and leaving it at the end of the day by pressing the 'Leave Room' button. Audio is muted by default to minimise distractions. When you want to speak to a team member, simply tap Sidekick to unmute the audio.

Sidekick boasts a number of useful features, including a multi-player whiteboard; notifications when team members join the room; a meeting mode that allows someone to stay in the room while taking a meeting on their laptop; and calendar integration. Conversations are encrypted and no video or audio is recorded.

Sidekick is currently being offered in the US on a subscription basis, at a list price of \$50 per user, per month.

<https://sidekick.video/#>

UK organisations resilient despite challenge of supporting remote workers

Following the events of the first six months of 2020, almost nine out of 10 IT decision-makers in the UK feel confident in their organisation's ability to withstand another unanticipated crisis, with 59% feeling 'somewhat confident' and 28% feeling 'very confident', according to the new Evolution of IT report from LogicMonitor.

The cloud-based provider of IT infrastructure monitoring surveyed 500 IT decision-makers in the UK, North America and Australia/New Zealand to find out how IT departments around the world were impacted by – and have responded to – the coronavirus pandemic.

Its findings show that 54% of IT leaders globally initially experienced IT disruptions or outages to software, productivity and collaboration tools as they shifted to remote work in the first half of 2020.

More than two thirds have since found the new remote

working model challenging:

- 70% find it hard to support a remote workforce;
- 70% find it challenging to keep data secure as their organisation increasingly relies on the cloud; and
- 69% find it challenging to ensure there is enough network bandwidth available to avoid service disruptions.

Based on what they have learnt during the current Covid-19 pandemic, IT decision-makers are investing in productivity tools and expanding their use of cloud-based solutions and platforms to maintain business continuity.

By 2025, UK IT leaders expect 79% of their workload to be in the cloud, compared to 62% prior to COVID-19. The corresponding global figures are 78% and 65%. In addition, 94% of respondents globally expect there to be more focus on automation.

While UK IT departments also expect greater IT automation, they appear to



lag behind counterparts in the US/Canada and Australia/New Zealand. Only 47% of IT leaders in the UK expect 'a great deal' of focus on automation in the next three years, compared to 63% in both the US/Canada and Australia/New Zealand.

Similarly, just 40% of UK IT decision-makers 'strongly agree' with the statement that automation allows IT leaders and their teams to focus on more strategic tasks and initiatives, compared to 52% in the US/Canada and 51% in Australia/New Zealand.

<https://www.logicmonitor.com/resource/evolution-of-it>

Testing times

Draxxon's DX-1000 Advanced Virology Testing Platform (AVTP) is a self-contained mobile testing truck designed to provide an instant response during COVID-19 and similar outbreaks/ events.

The AVTP features two Yamaha CS-700 devices integrated with the Draxxon DX-INTERCHANGE System, which provides video and audio communication between personnel. One is installed inside the truck; the other is integrated into the vehicle's rear DX-Outdoor Work Station used by medical personnel interacting with the public.

Draxxon Director of Business Development Tyler Ackerman says the CS-700 was chosen because it met the requirement for simple, one-button operation.

He said: "The CS-700 fit this objective perfectly. It delivers great audio and video quality in an all-in-one design that eliminates the configuration and operation of separate webcams, speakers and microphones."

www.yamaha.com



Home working security risk

Nearly two thirds (65%) of UK businesses are anticipating an increase in phishing and breach attempts, as half (48%) admit that their current cyber security policies are not fit for a 100% home-working model. In the survey of 200 senior decision-makers commissioned by privileged access management specialist Centrifry, 75% said they had provided employees with formal guidance or training on the security risks of working from home; 59% say they now treat outsourced IT and other third parties as an equal cyber security risk as 100% remote working employees. Half are planning to hire new IT staff or security experts to improve their security processes.



Guided by the light

To help employees keep their distance and stay healthy when they return to work, lighting specialist Signify has introduced new functionality to the smartphone apps it has developed for its Interact connected lighting system.

The Interact Office 'Space management' app, which monitors occupancy levels using data collected from the lighting system, can now be used to set occupancy limits and identify high-traffic areas that will need to be cleaned more frequently.

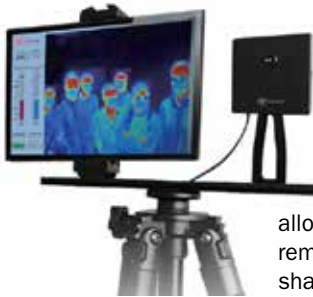
The Interact Office 'Workplace' app uses Visible Light Communication and Bluetooth-Low-Energy technology in ceiling luminaires to guide employees to areas of a building where occupancy is at acceptable levels and where they can book a desk. www.signify.com

Safer Working

A selection of new products, apps and services for a more Covid-secure workplace

Portable scanner

The product of a £3 million investment to develop temperature-check products for the NHS, the Thermavis Multi-Person Thermal Scanner from managed IT services provider Transputec reads the skin temperature of up to six people at once. The portable, smartphone-sized camera comes with a tablet computer and can be linked to any Windows machine, allowing multiple monitoring points, remote access, cloud connectivity and shareable screens.



Hand stand

Vision has designed a hand sanitiser bottle holder for its floor and desktop touchscreen stands so that users in offices, schools and retail can disinfect their hands before touching the screen or moving cables. The product fits Vision's F-10, F-30 and F-40 stands, as well as wall mounts and freestanding display mounts.



Stay alert

One of a number of very similar social distancing wearables now on the market, the eqWave from Equival alerts personnel if they move within two metres of a colleague. Because the alerting distance is configurable, it can also be set to 1 metre

plus in line with new Government guidelines. Based on Ultra Wide Band (UWB) radio and Bluetooth technology, the device offers 360-degree coverage and alerts the wearer via a bright LED and haptic vibration as soon as there is an infringement. The device

is complemented by an eqWave partner app, which provides 'over the air' firmware updates and access to new features such as contact tracing, and an API for integration with third party solutions. www.equival.com

Smarter workspace management

Smartway2 has added Covid-safe workplace functionality to its cloud-based workplace scheduling technology, which also shows enterprises precisely how their meeting rooms, desks and other resources are being utilised. **New functionality includes:**

- social distancing and sanitation checks. When someone books a desk in Smartway2, all desks within a specified radius are automatically taken out of service. After the desk has been vacated, it cannot be booked again until it has been sanitised, with fully automated desk/room sign-off and release procedures. Digital desk displays indicate whether a workstation is available,



awaiting cleaning or out of service.

- contact tracing reports. If someone falls ill, Smartway2 can identify colleagues that have been in close proximity to the infected person;
- 'low Covid risk' self-certification and management approval for employees who want to return to the office; and
- employee surveys. When someone books resources, Smartway2 lets you ask them questions to gauge employee sentiment across multiple areas.

www.smartway2.com

Customisable PPE kits

Online portal 'Where The Trade Buys' has introduced a series of single use PPE kits containing two three-ply disposable face masks, two hand sanitiser sachets



and one pair of disposable latex gloves. Suitable for re-sale, including via vending machines, the packs can be ordered with specific logos or branding on the outside, making them a useful marketing tool for businesses to hand out to customers or returning workers. Prices start at £92.72 (ex VAT) for a pack of 50 kits.

www.wherethetradebuys.co.uk

Contactless reception

TAAP Visitor Book is a cloud-based ‘no touch’ reception service that helps keep reception areas free of people. The system requires no special software or equipment and allows employees, contractors and guests to sign in in seconds. They simply use their smartphone to scan a QR code at a company site and then follow prompts to supply contact information and agree to site-specific policies and evacuation guidelines. The app automatically alerts the host when a visitor has checked in and retains the user’s name and contact details to save time on future visits.

ontaap.com/visitorbook



Added protection

Contour Heating Products has given its Covid-19 health check station an extra level of protection by adding BioCote antimicrobial technology to the unit’s paintwork. This prevents the growth of microbes, such as bacteria, fungi and some viruses, and makes it easier to keep clean. Designed so that people can safely take the temperatures of co-workers or members of the public, the partially enclosed, painted steel cubicle has a Perspex screen with a small slot for a digital thermometer that people stand in front of to receive a temperature reading. There is also a counter and document slot for exchanging paperwork.



A sound investment

RATstands has used its expertise in the manufacture of sound protection screens for concert halls and recording studios to produce a range of screens designed to prevent the spread of bacteria and maintain social distancing within the workplace. The portable, stackable, height-adjustable Rshield BioScreen is made at the company’s manufacturing facilities in London and Essex.

www.ratstands.com

Sign guide

Drytac has produced a free, interactive guide explaining how retailers and installers can use floor, wall and window graphics to display information about social distancing, hand washing, queuing and updated services or opening hours. *Open, Innovating, Moving Forward* explains buying criteria, from fire ratings and slip ratings to FDA approvals, and includes information on Drytac products categorised by application e.g. window graphics, one-part and two-part floor graphics, writable media, wall graphics and antimicrobial films. <https://www.drytac.com/socialdistancingsolutions/>



Heat seeking camera

D-Link has become the latest company to launch a thermographic camera kit for use at entrances to schools, hospitals, transport hubs and office buildings. The DCS-9500T all-in-one fever screening kit comes complete with dual-lens thermographic camera and management software. It can screen up to 30 people at a time, with a response time of less than 30ms and accuracy to within 0.3°C, and automatically raises an alarm if a high skin temperature is detected. Facial recognition enables it to identify individuals on a preloaded facial image identification database.



Long-lasting protection

New from Hi-line Industries, Hi-KLEEN is an odourless, non-corrosive sanitiser that kills viruses (including coronavirus) and bacteria on hard and soft surfaces and provides up to five hours’ protection against re-contamination. Hi-line claims active biocides in the BS EN 1276-tested formulation provide longer-lasting protection than alcohol-based preparations. It is available in 500ml aerosols and disposable 17kg canisters that can be used to spray-clean entire rooms.

www.hilineindustries.com

Dynamic geozones

Wyld Networks is helping organisations engage with their employees as they return to work with a new mobile mesh and content delivery platform. Wyld Mesh and Fusion harnesses the power of peoples’ mobile devices by connecting smartphones to other smartphones and IoT devices without the need for cellular 4G/5G or Wi-Fi. Data finds the quickest route by hopping between phones powered by a company-branded app. When used with the Fusion cloud-streaming platform, it enables a company to create infrastructure-lite wireless networks and engage with employees through real-time, location-aware content delivery, messaging and notifications. The platform supports social distancing monitoring and contact tracing through the creation of one or two-metre dynamic geozones around employees and visitors.

<https://wyldmesh.net/register>



How to avoid the hype in hyperautomation

David Poole, CEO of enterprise transformation specialist Emergence Partners, explains what businesses must do to reap the benefits of hyperautomation



David Poole is CEO of Emergence Partners, a new breed of management consultants dedicated to helping businesses incorporate emerging technology into their operations

The business world has a history of trying and failing to keep pace with technology. But are things about to change?

The robotic process automation (RPA) market is taking the digital world by storm, with at least one unicorn and ever more products, services and add-ons being developed. Large corporations are queuing up to buy these tools, and there are already thousands of consultants designing and implementing process improvements.

Yet, even today, after six years of mainstream exposure, Gartner estimates that 95% of buyers of RPA systems have implemented five or fewer bots. Thus far, the hyperautomation story has consisted of plenty of hype, without the automation to match.

A similar pattern is emerging in the low-code/no-code (LCNC) market. With LCNC, apps that used to take months or even years to build can be configured, tested, adjusted, connected and launched in a few days by citizen developers with an acute knowledge of their business.

For years, this has been touted as the next big thing. But, again, take up has been slow. As recently as 2018, Forrester found that only 23% of 3,228 developers surveyed worldwide were using low-code. Even so, Gartner predicts that low-code will be responsible for more than 65% of application development activity by 2024.

RPA and LCNC have two things in common that give them huge potential to disrupt the whole software and technology sector:

- 1 They are generic tools that can be used in almost any kind of business to enable rapid and transformational change; and
- 2 They are democratising the enterprise-grade creation of new business systems, moving away

from development models that for decades have been the domain of the IT department.

Both technologies will be integral to the realisation of hyperautomation, which seamlessly combines multiple technologies and human intelligence into an interoperable system of automation. Hyperautomation tops Gartner's list of strategic technology trends for 2020, but the long gestation periods of RPA and LCNC, suggest that it won't be an overnight sensation.

Much like solar power and digital photography before them, RPA and automation tools in general exhibit the characteristics of exponential technologies that conform to Amara's Law. This states that we tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate its effect in the long run. Such technologies usually fail to deliver on their potential initially while the markets work out the best ways to extract their value, innovate new products, imagine new pricing models, refine implementation approaches and build ecosystems. But once the experimental phase is over and the technology achieves scaled-up exponential growth, the long-term results can be astonishing. In the US, after a slow start, solar power has grown 48x over the last 11 years.

Lessons to learn

As the RPA market begins to reach maturation and LCNC goes through the early stages of a similar journey, what lessons can be learnt from RPA's slow growth?

With nine out of ten enterprise adopters of RPA failing to get past piecemeal projects and pilots to achieve proper scale, according to KPMG, traditional operating models have clearly been too focused on

incremental improvements – on cost reduction over value creation. The risk with this approach is that businesses will hunt for short-term fixes to drive out further costs instead of designing an intelligent strategic journey that really benefits customers and employees.

In this context, beware:

- Old school software vendors rebadged with RPA digital business cards that are still only interested in shifting licences; and
- A lack of strategic thinking in the software buying process, encouraged by cheap offers and special deals from vendors, resulting in 'random acts of automation' syndrome.

Without a clear strategic direction and intent across the entire business and without frameworks to ensure that hyperautomation is achieved in a controlled manner, organisations will not reap the benefits.

Horses for Sources' Digital OneOffice is an excellent example of a framework that smashes through traditionally rigid organisational structures, unifying front, middle and back office processes with strategic automation. Such systems need to be designed for teams across an organisation to analyse, design, automate, measure, monitor and reassess. Conventional management and organisational structures will need to be changed, performance measurement and reward processes re-written, recruitment policies and standards reimaged.

We are well on our way towards a highly augmented human workforce, but RPA and low-code/no-code will only realise their exponential potential if businesses resist the temptation of short-term incremental gains and focus instead on strategically integrated automation initiatives carefully designed for long-term value creation.

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Flavour of the month

Virtual wine tastings over Microsoft Teams are helping one Italian winery strengthen relationships with trade customers and, for the first time, make direct contact with wine lovers. James Goulding reports



Gabriele Gorelli

With its veneration of terroir and, on its wilder fringes, a belief in biodynamics and the importance of the lunar calendar, not to mention the linguistic and procedural tics of wine appreciation, the wine industry can seem, to outsiders at least, as fusty as an old cellar.

The truth is very different, and in recent years producers have embraced technology at every stage of the wine-making process, from the use of Internet of Things (IoT) sensors for monitoring environmental conditions in vineyards to wine preservation technologies that keep wine fresh in opened bottles. It is, after all, a \$300 billion industry.

One area where technology has arguably had least impact is in the marketing of wine to the trade, a process that is still dependent on face-to-face contact with distributors, wine sellers and influencers at trade shows, wine fairs, comparative tastings and cellar tours.

Some of the most important of these are held in Europe in March, April and May. This year, with lockdowns and travel bans across the continent, key events couldn't take place, forcing winemakers to explore alternative ways to market their latest vintages.

Virtual wine-tastings via video meeting and collaboration

solutions like Microsoft Teams, with wines couriered to participants beforehand, have become a popular option.

Virtual tastings

The 5,000-acre Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona estate in Montalcino, Tuscany had been exploring the possibility of virtual tastings since September 2019 with the help of Milan-based IT services provider Si-Net. It conducted its first digital wine tasting before Covid-19, but, like businesses in other industries, found that the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of new processes.

It now uses virtual wine tastings to communicate with trade customers, opinion formers and, for the first time, end users.

According to consultant and wine producer Gabriele Gorelli, these Microsoft Teams sessions haven't just enabled Ciacci to introduce its new vintages to the wine trade during lockdown, they have also



allowed it to cultivate different and in some ways better relationships.

"We lost two major trade shows in March and April, ProWein in Dusseldorf and Vinitaly in Verona. We realised that when we went to those events, we were all on tight schedules and became very tired moving from one stand to another, from one pavilion to another. People had less time and relationships were less effective as a result," he said.

Virtual tastings, in contrast, let people experience wines in the comfort of their own home or office, in an unhurried manner, with more time to ask questions and to find out about the wines and ultimately to develop stronger relationships.

Gorelli adds that Microsoft Teams has also enabled Ciacci to engage with consumers, who can then buy wine (and the estate's olive oil) through a new e-shop, at a time when cellar tours, of which it normally conducts 6,000-8,000 a year, are not possible.

"What we realised after lockdown was that we had to shift focus from the trade – because the outlets were closed – and start dealing with regular customers, consumers who were buying comfort wine to drink at home. The launch of the e-shop of Ciacci is an interesting way to reach new, loyal consumers who want to buy a bit of Tuscany," he said.

After the success of its virtual wine-tasting, Ciacci, with the help of Si-Net, is planning to develop its online activities further, expanding what it does at wine fairs with subscription-based tasting events and virtual tours of its cellars.

Many businesses have used video meetings in Microsoft Teams and other platforms as a stop-gap measure until things return to normal. Others, like Ciacci, are using them to move forward with new business models and new forms of customer engagement and have no intention of going back to the old, time-consuming, energy-sapping way of doing things. To paraphrase Gorelli: "Why spend more time just to achieve less?"

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Avaya is encouraging customers to make the transition to the cloud with an all-in-one subscription-based unified communications solution

Speed and flexibility

Last month, the UK became the second region after the US to deploy Avaya Cloud Office by RingCentral (ACO), Avaya's new subscription-based, all-in-one UCaaS solution for calling, team messaging, video meetings and conferencing.

Avaya UK & Ireland Managing Director Steve Joyner described the launch of ACO as a 'milestone' and a 'key, key component' in Avaya's evolution into a software and services and transformation company.

"In our last quarter earnings, 88% of our revenues are represented by software and services – that's a record for Avaya. We saw a 5-point sequential growth on our recurring revenues and things like our cloud alliances are up to a record 23% as well. All these are key indicators of where we need to be as a software and services company. Avaya Cloud Office by RingCentral is an absolute perfect accelerator for the next motion," he said.

The product of a partnership between Avaya, a leader in unified communications and contact centre solutions, and RingCentral, a leader in unified communications as a service (UCaaS), ACO enables Avaya to provide customers with a public cloud UC solution in addition to its existing private and hybrid offerings.

Perfect timing

Joyner believes that with businesses looking at all aspects of their operations in light of Covid-19, the launch of a public UCaaS solution that will enable new and existing Avaya customers to make the transition from on-premises communications to the cloud could not be more timely.

He said: "The events of the last few months have shown that businesses absolutely need to show agility; they need to get speed to value; they need to understand how to control their costs. The last



three or four months have been the ultimate POC (proof of concept) of how businesses need to be able to transform very, very rapidly, with no notice. Public UCaaS delivers in all three areas."

A single platform

Avaya Cloud Office by RingCentral provides organisations with a single platform for calling, messaging, meeting, conferencing, file sharing and accessing business applications that could replace the mish-mash of collaboration solutions used by most businesses today. According to a 2019 TalkingPointz Research Note¹, 85% of companies use two or more disparate collaboration applications to meet customer and user requirements.

In this context, key selling points are ACO's flexibility and easy integration with third party applications.

■ **Flexibility.** Because ACO is available on multiple devices – PC, laptop, tablet, smartphone – users can switch easily between tasks and endpoints. For example, you could start a message in an app on the desktop and then move it over to an app on your smartphone or escalate team messaging to a voice call complete with files for sharing.

■ **Integration.** ACO provides out-of-the-box integrations with more than 130 widely used third party applications, including Salesforce, Slack, Box, Google, Microsoft and Amazon. This enables users to enhance existing processes with click-to-dial functionality or analytics

and eliminates the need to switch between applications. There are also open APIs that support custom-built integrations with specific customer environments.

An Avaya experience

In bringing ACO to market, Avaya has been eager to provide customers with a recognisably Avaya-like experience, to which end it has married the RingCentral UCaaS platform with the value that Avaya can bring in areas, such as:

- high touch customer support at every stage of the customer lifecycle;
- streamlined customer migration e.g. the ability to reuse J series phones and the provision of migration toolkits to take customers from Avaya UC on-premises solutions into the cloud;
- expanded support for Avaya endpoint devices, so that ACO functionality can be extended into conference rooms with high fidelity sound quality; and
- additional features, like Call Park and Page, that allow customers to transition from their existing Avaya platforms without changing the processes people are used to.

Avaya is promoting the launch of Avaya Cloud Office by RingCentral with the offer of a full free month of service and a 20% discount. In addition, customers will receive free Basic Avaya Cloud Office Implementation, discounts on Avaya Cloud Office Professional Migration Services and discounts on selected desk phones. www.avaya.com



Steve Joyner

¹ TalkingPointz Research Note, "The Firstline/deskless Opportunity 2019", by Dave Michels, July 2019

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ITAM moves centre stage

New body formed to raise profile of global ITAM industry



Martin Thompson

To date, IT Asset Management (ITAM) has not been given the attention many feel it deserves. This could change with the establishment of the ITAM Forum, a new not-for-profit body dedicated to the advancement of the global ITAM industry.

The new body has been founded by Martin Thompson, founder of the ITAM Review and the Campaign for Clear Licensing, to raise the profile of the ITAM industry and to establish a globally recognised Organisational Certification for ITAM based on the ISO standard for the ITAM industry – ISO19770 – first published in 2006.

Thompson argues that the establishment of the ITAM Forum comes at a time when IT teams are enjoying more seniority and board-level exposure than ever before, with Gartner now describing ITAM as a C-level imperative.

“Over the course of the last decade, IT Asset Management (ITAM) has been slowly rising out of the shadows. Once the back-office, operationally focused team that simply ‘counted computers’, ITAM has pulled itself out of the basement and up to the more senior levels of the business. According to research conducted by the ITAM Review, 37% of ITAM practitioners reported to the C-suite in 2018, compared with 45% reporting to the more operationally-focused ITSM in 2011. This is a significant change in just seven years.”

Thompson says this

transformation is being powered by several key trends.

“Digital transformation has made IT much more critical to the business, elevating it from the team that fixes your PCs to being the function that drives the business strategy. IT purchases are no longer the preserve of the IT department – Software-as-a-Service and cloud have made customers out of everyone in the business – and ITAM’s domain has had to expand across the business to accommodate this change. Thirdly, ITAM as a discipline has grown up. As it has become more sophisticated in its approach, the value it delivers to the business has become indispensable.”

Even so, Thompson points out that many organisations have not yet caught up with these changes, which is why there is still need for a body like the IT Forum.

“If you look at the Fortune 2000, not everyone has a mature practice or is realising the strategic benefits that ITAM brings. Our aim is to change that. ITAM has a key role to play in the 2020s, especially in the current economic climate. Our goal is to raise awareness of the discipline and to raise its profile within organisations.”

Thompson suggests that ITAM Forum is better equipped to do this than other ITAM industry bodies because, uniquely, it is led by end user organisations (see panel); it is not for profit; and it is committed to bringing an ISO certification programme to the industry.

“ISO standards are about industries coming together to identify ‘what good looks like’

and using standards to improve quality and outcomes. We felt that a not-for-profit trade body with a cross-industry trustee board to oversee its operation was the best way to build trust, rally a response and unify the ITAM industry,” he explains.

Initial priorities

In the short-term, the ITAM Forum will have a role to play in highlighting ITAM’s value to organisations as they manage the consequences of Covid-19 and the impending recession.

“The priority for many businesses at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic was to invest rapidly in remote working solutions so they could maintain day-to-day operations as best they could, whatever the cost. Now that the dust has settled and businesses adapt to the new normal, IT Asset Managers have a huge role to play in documenting and unpicking this rapid and unplanned investment. Looking longer term towards the onset of a global recession, cost cutting has become the priority for businesses and the ITAM industry will be on hand to help organisations achieve this.”

ITAM can do this by providing answers to questions like:

- What do we have? What’s being used? What can we cut?
- How do we cut out waste? How do we reduce and renegotiate what we can’t afford to cut?
- How do we return to core services that deliver for our business and cut away extraneous projects or distractions?

<http://www.itamf.org/>

Over the course of the last decade, IT Asset Management (ITAM) has been slowly rising out of the shadows

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The UK is facing an AI skills gap that could leave companies struggling to compete with rivals from across the world, a new Microsoft report has revealed.

UK faces AI skills gap



The research, entitled *AI Skills in the UK*, found that businesses in this country use less AI than firms overseas, and when they do it tends to be less advanced.

UK organisations are also less likely to be classed as ‘AI pros’ compared to the global average (15% versus 23%), and the UK has a higher failure rate of AI than the global average (measured by the number of projects generating no commercial value – 29% versus 19%).

The findings raise concerns that as the world starts its recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic, companies in the UK will fall behind rivals from Europe, the Americas and Australia because of a lack of AI skills. Analysis from IDC revealed that AI and cloud technology will play a significant role in helping businesses and societies deal with the disruption created by COVID-19, while separate research by Imperial College London highlighted that businesses must ensure they can respond to change and adapt.

Previous findings from Microsoft UK showed that organisations embracing AI outperform the competition by 11.5%.

AI skills gap in the next two years

AI Skills in the UK looked at the UK-specific data from a global AI skills study led by Microsoft EMEA. That survey included the views of more than 12,000 people in

20 countries, including Germany, Italy, Spain, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, the United States and Canada. It focused on AI capabilities and adoption levels around the world to understand the progress organisations are making, and the challenges they are facing in preparing their workforce for an AI-driven world.

Thirty-five percent of UK business leaders believe there will be an AI skills gap in the next two years, while 28% believe we’re already experiencing one (above the global average of 24%).

Lack of AI re-skilling

The research also uncovered a concerning lack of AI re-skilling of the UK workforce to address this skills gap. Only 17% of UK employees say they have been part of re-skilling efforts (far less than the global figure of 38%). Additionally, only 32% of UK employees feel their workplace is doing enough to prepare them for an AI-enabled future (well below the global average of 42%), compared to 68% who do not (compared to 58% globally).

Just over half (52%) of UK employees are using AI to work faster and smarter, compared to 69% of employees globally.

Companies in the UK are more likely to be using AI to drive operational efficiency and free up people from basic tasks but less likely to be deriving new product

innovations or happier customers from AI projects. Unfortunately, this puts the UK at a disadvantage, as businesses globally are shifting from focusing AI on driving short-term efficiencies to pursuing higher added-value benefits.

Sixty-one percent of UK managers say they’re focusing on the AI they implement, compared to 39% who say they’re focused on their people and how they work with AI.

Globally, this trend is reversed – 44% prioritise the technology, compared to 56% who focus on the people.

However, one encouraging result is that UK organisations are on par with their global peers when it comes to reported successful AI projects (68% versus 69%).

UK companies understand they need to use AI in order to remain competitive but many are not spending enough time or money to ensure their staff can use and build AI-based solutions effectively. A lack of budget (34%) was cited as the top barrier to AI reskilling in the UK, followed by unclear return on investment (28%).

AI critical for business

Chris Withers, Head of AI and Advanced Analytics for UK Financial Services at EY, said: “Many companies struggle to move AI projects from proof of concept to production. To succeed, firms must put sufficient resource and expertise into educating employees, and help them to embrace new innovations, thereby creating champions for AI-enabled change.”

The use of AI is critical for businesses as they attempt to weather the economic storm created by COVID-19. The EY Item Club has predicted that the UK economy may not return to its pre-lockdown size until 2024, with the economy shrinking 11.5% this year.

Readers can download the Microsoft report *AI Skills in the UK* from <https://tinyurl.com/y4f65vns>

SAM in an age of remote working

Bryant Caldwell, trustee of The ITAM Forum, considers what the shift to remote working means for software asset managers



Bryant Caldwell

As COVID-19 continues to transform our personal and professional lives, one very noticeable change has been the rapid shift to remote working. For many organisations, this is a completely new way of working and the success of these enforced pilots suggests that in the future we are likely to see a higher level of remote working than we did before the pandemic.

For a software asset management (SAM) manager, the long-term shift to homeworking provides an opportunity to re-evaluate a SAM programme, tactically and strategically; to assess its overall health and scope; and to work out how SAM can capitalise on the benefits of a remote workforce.

So what effects are changing working practices likely to have on the three elements on which any SAM programme is based – People, Process and Technology?

■ **People.** Where does your team sit today? Were they all co-located in the same office? Have you adopted BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) principles for specific needs? What does your staffing look like under a fully remote worker concept?

In the past, the recruitment of SAM skillsets was typically restricted by geography, with many good candidates based too far away or not willing to re-locate. Today, recruiting quality candidates beyond your local market may be received very differently by management and HR than it would have been pre-COVID.

Imagine if you could design your SAM team with a fractional workforce in areas requiring depth of expertise and full-time employees for the balance of work. For example, you could hire a SAM Tool expert, at 25% demand, through an

external provider; hire key resources with depth of knowledge in licensing for Adobe, Oracle, Microsoft, at 50% demand, to help determine 'optimal' licensing positions and negotiate better terms/fees in renewals. The remaining 25% of the team could be full-time, spread across the program and overseeing inventory, discovery, reporting and general management.

In this way, a small team could, for a similar outlay, evolve into a medium-to-large team with deep expertise. If outsourcing isn't your game, reevaluate your program needs against current staff skillsets to suit a more mobile workforce.

■ **Process.** The days of conducting physical inventories to reconcile against SAM tools are rapidly becoming a thing of the past as software moves to the cloud. Have you already formulated a plan to embrace cloud technologies? If not, now is the time to do so.

This will most likely involve a change of approach, as you internally audit software and seek out each install in your discovery tools to reach a position where you know you're compliant. But what about under-use?

SaaS solutions are wonderful when it comes to maintaining compliance – you cannot be non-compliant. However, they require a different skillset and process to manage spend properly. Having users in those systems on a 'per seat' basis feels more economical since it's 'turnkey'. But what about users assigned a subscription who move to a new role and no longer use the product or use less of it? Do you have the processes needed to monitor and identify overspend? Once we were overly concerned with just being compliant. With SaaS, there is now the need to monitor

consumption levels.

You should also consider whether your software catalogue presents solutions to end users that match their changed working environment? Virtual whiteboards, cloud note taking, talk to text, report sharing, progress/metric tracking and similar productivity tools are all worth considering for remote teams.

■ **Tools/Technologies.** Traditionally, SAM Programs operate using on-premise, installed tools to conduct inventory, discovery and repository for entitlements and offer compliance positions through the SAM tool provider's proprietary logic. There are benefits in moving these to the cloud, but also much to consider when deciding to do so. You must understand the TCO (total cost of ownership) of your infrastructure – the licences to run your databases, support for the hardware, patching, your internal employees supporting the infrastructure, upgrades, not to mention maintenance and support contracts. A shift to the cloud might provide some peace of mind without any additional cost. Just understand what you're giving up. For example, how much control will you have over your company's data?

These are challenging times and external service providers and software publishers are pivoting to protect their revenue streams. Conduct a full SAM Program health check, lay out your roadmap and ask yourself whether it encompasses the coming changes. If it doesn't, seize this opportunity to move beyond performing daily cycles and status quo work to become a strategic business partner for those who invest in you.

Bryant Caldwell is global asset manager for P&G and a trustee of the newly-formed ITAM Forum. (see page 20)

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Something for everyone

Anti-microbial coatings are just one of the attractions of Acer's new notebook and tablet line-up for professionals, creatives and field workers

Against the background of lockdown and the need for people to stay connected, productive and safe, Acer has announced a new line-up of notebooks, desktops and monitors.

This includes new anti-microbial technology; the new Enduro brand of rugged notebooks and tablets; new models for designers and illustrators; new enterprise solutions; and a host of gaming desktops, monitors, notebooks, gaming rigs, gaming chairs and other accessories.

In this article, we are going to focus on four new products with business applications.



Creatives

Concept D Series for Designers

Acer has expanded its Concept D Series for professional designers, illustrators and other creatives with a trio of ConceptD 3 high-performance PANTONE validated monitors; a new desktop aimed at small design studios and creative enthusiasts; clamshell notebooks; and a convertible notebook featuring an Ezel hinge.

The ConceptD 3 Ezel is a hybrid of a work laptop and a graphic display tablet that can be used like a traditional laptop or as a tablet for drawing and other creative work. The Ezel hinge lets users switch between six usage modes, including stand mode for drawing content, display mode to present it, an adjustable float mode, traditional laptop mode, pad mode and share mode. Designers will appreciate the Pantone-validated screen, with delta E<2 colour accuracy, and the 18-hour battery life.



ConceptD 3 Ezel

Enterprise

Chromebook Enterprise Spin 713



Chromebook Enterprise Spin 713

Acer is the world's leading Chromebook manufacturer, and to meet the needs of cloud computing users in enterprises it has launched the Chromebook Enterprise Spin 713.

As a convertible Spin device, it offers the flexibility of multiple operating modes to support different tasks. Use it like a laptop or spin the screen around when you want to touch the screen, draw on it or share information.

The Chromebook Enterprise Spin 713 is impressively thin and light and easy to move between the workplace and home office. To provide users of shared devices with extra protection, its touchscreen has been treated with an anti-microbial coating embedded with silver ions that prevent bacteria from growing on the screen and being passed from one user to another.

Another useful feature for enterprise workloads is the 3:2 VertiView display, offering more vertical space for viewing websites, documents, spreadsheets and presentations.



Swift 5

Swift 5

The latest addition to Acer's successful Swift series of ultrathin and ultralight notebooks, the Acer Swift 5 extends the anti-bacterial protection offered by the Chromebook Enterprise Spin 713 to cover not just the screen but the whole device – covers, screen, keyboard and touchpad.

Built for professionals who are always on the move and require all-day performance, Swift 5 weighs less than 1kg; has the processing power to perform multiple applications simultaneously; and boasts ultra-narrow bezels for a 90% screen-to-body ratio.

Field workers

Enduro rugged notebooks and tablets



Enduro N7

Enduro is a new brand and product line for people who work outside, sometimes in extreme conditions. The military-grade notebooks (Enduro N3/N7) are MIL-810G certified and IP65 compliant for dust- and water-resistance. Combining toughness with a thin and light design, they come with a comfortable, convenient carrying handle and have a hot swappable battery for unlimited use. The Enduro series also includes tablets (Enduro T1/T5) designed for use with gloves in a range of industrial and warehouse applications.

Find out more about the products mentioned in this article and other new launches from Acer at www.acer.com

Standard Chartered Bank and Microsoft have announced a three-year strategic partnership to accelerate the bank's digital transformation through a cloud-first strategy

Cloud-first banking

The partnership marks a significant milestone for Standard Chartered in making its vision for virtual banking, next-generation payments, open banking and banking-as-a-service a reality. Leveraging Azure as a preferred cloud platform, the companies will also co-innovate in open banking and real-time payments to help the bank unlock new banking experiences for clients.

Embarking on a cloud-first strategy

As part of its digital transformation, Standard Chartered will adopt a multicloud approach, where significant applications, including its core banking and trading systems and new digital ventures such as virtual banking and banking-as-a-service, will be cloud-based by 2025, subject to regulatory approvals. The bank will also adopt a cloud-first principle for all new software developments and major enhancements.

As technology reshapes the banking industry, Standard Chartered recognizes that a cloud-first strategy is critical to the bank's ambition to make banking simpler, faster and more convenient. By being digital-first, the bank will be able to meet the demand for seamless banking virtually anytime, anywhere, and make banking more accessible to people across its network.

Michael Gorriz, Group Chief Information Officer of Standard Chartered, said: "Cloud is a cornerstone of Standard Chartered's strategy to meet the present and future banking needs of our clients. Cloud providers have invested massively in the reliability and automation of infrastructure and platforms. Using cloud services improves our ability to be agile and innovative, while increasing our operational efficiency and resilience. As disruption in the financial industry continues, we can focus on client benefits by deploying our solutions quicker and allowing for faster integration of



new business models and partners. To realize our digital ambitions, Standard Chartered has chosen Microsoft as a strategic partner and this partnership marks a major milestone for the bank in adopting a cloud-first approach."

Bhupendra Warathe, Chief Technology Officer, Cloud Transformation at Standard Chartered, added: "The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the need for businesses and banks to be resilient from a risk mitigation, cost and security perspective. With the increasing trend of an always-on digital economy, commercial and consumer clients are looking for applications and services that empower them to do online banking from anywhere, flexibly and efficiently. The speed and scale of continuous innovation offered by Azure allows us to innovate with the latest AI services to meet evolving client needs. We can pilot new apps in one market and scale them rapidly across others. This is especially important for a bank with a footprint as broad and diverse as ours."

Standard Chartered will adopt Microsoft Azure as a preferred cloud platform to meet the bank's need for resilient data centers and cloud services and addressing customers' security, privacy and compliance requirements across

the bank's global footprint.

The first set of capabilities to move to Microsoft Azure will be Standard Chartered's trade finance systems, allowing for seamless cross-border trade for the bank's corporate and institutional clients.

Co-innovating the future of banking

Standard Chartered will also use Microsoft Azure artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics capabilities to enhance and automate banking processes as well as deliver hyper-personalization of its client products and experiences. Co-innovation in open banking application programming interface (API) and Internet-of-Things-based, real-time payments will also help the bank unlock new banking experiences for clients. Bill Borden, Corporate Vice President of Worldwide Financial Services at Microsoft, said: "Cloud computing is an enabler for financial institutions to modernize their infrastructure and systems, to gain the agility they need to respond to competitive pressures, regulatory environments and customer demand. We are committed to helping Standard Chartered Bank in its ongoing digital transformation journey as it strives to address evolving customer needs and build the next generation of banking experiences."

Time to pull together

If the UK is to gain maximum benefit from new Government investment in the roll-out of full fibre and gigabit digital networks, everyone has to play their part, says telecoms law expert Sharon McDermott, including the general public



Sharon
McDermott

In early March, before Rishi Sunak became consumed with the financial fall-out of COVID-19, the Government reiterated its plan to invest £5bn to help spread gigabit-capable broadband networks across the UK by the end of 2025.

Not wishing to state the obvious, but this is extremely well timed, as the nation's need for connectivity is now more pressing than ever.

Entire workforces are trying to maintain 'business as usual' from home; the future of the traditional office is in doubt; friends and family have found new ways to stay in touch despite the physical distance between them; online shopping has spiked; and box-set bingeing looks like it's here to stay.

In short, bandwidth matters.

However, this second wave of digital growth will not be without its challenges – not least because only 22% of UK premises can currently access a gigabit-capable service, according to recent figures¹.

The industry is already debating how the numbers will be achieved. The indications are that Virgin Media's Hybrid Fibre Coax (HFC) and Full Fibre network upgrades, as well as Openreach's Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) plans, and the ever increasing surge in alternative network providers' projects will all

play a part in making the nation gigabit-ready. We need to see a diverse approach to feeding the country's connectivity hunger.

Tentative plans to help those in the hardest-to-reach areas have also been published. These appear to be based on a three-tiered, technology-agnostic Gigabit Broadband Framework (F20 project), comprising general demand side interventions, a voucher scheme for premises and a direct supplier side intervention.

Upfront investment

The next five years will certainly be demanding. And the upfront investment required to make all necessary roll-outs a reality cannot be underestimated.

In addition to the cost of the infrastructure itself, there are many wider 'hidden' costs. Usually 20-30% of properties in a build project require wayleave consents, for example, and these can be notoriously complex to navigate. Thankfully, emerging case law is proving helpful for operators and slowly changing the landscape for the better. But the process remains complicated.

Even though full fibre broadband increases the value of a property, landlords commonly ask for consideration to 'wire up' their premises. Throw in exorbitant legal fees – which in traditional law firms can be anything from £1,200-£1,500 per wayleave – along with surveyor rates, which vary from £750 to £950, and the costs soon build up. Furthermore, in many cases, these costs apply per unit in an MDU (Multiple Dwelling Unit), when a managing agent doesn't permit the wayleave for the whole building. And that's before work can even begin!

Add to that the costs and resource constraints associated with planning, surveying and the civils element of the works and it's clear these are not projects for the fainthearted. There are daily fines associated with unreasonably prolonged highway works, too, as well as penalties for not complying

with noticing requirements, amongst other things.

So, while it's reassuring that the roll-out of gigabit-ready networks has multi-billion-pound Government backing, it still won't be easy, and stalls seem likely without industry collaboration and suitably skilled project teams in place.

Adding value

This is a shame considering the value that such projects bring both to the national economy and to communities on an ultra-local level.

Earlier this year, the Centre for Economics & Business Research (CEBR) revealed that the Full Fibre roll-out, coupled with 25% of UK labour working from home by 2025, could create 1.2 million jobs. The economic impact of this employment uplift would be astronomical.

The speed and agility with which organisations – particularly in the digital sectors – could work, if empowered with faster connectivity, would also unlock vast growth potential for the nation. Innovations based on the Internet of Things (IoT) often require vast bandwidth, which would no longer be hampered by unreliable connectivity; the UK could push ahead with its ambition to be the digital centre of Europe; and, as already alluded to, the value of properties would surely rise.

It's no wonder so many people from the world of telecommunications were granted key worker status when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Reliance on the UK's digital infrastructure has rocketed and will probably rise further still.

So, from laying those all-important cables in the ground to recommending the best-fit connectivity solutions for businesses and homes throughout the UK, everyone has a role to play in ensuring the 2025 aspiration is not just a pipedream – even the general public.

Sharon McDermott is founder of Trenches Law, a specialist provider of legal support for the telecoms industry.

www.trencheslaw.co.uk

1. <https://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.php/2020/07/progress-on-bduk-plan-for-5bn-uk-gigabit-broadband-rollout.html>

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Photo: Beth Preston

MSPs

MSP Day 2020 highlights growth opportunities in managed services

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Smart displays into Covid-secure retail and workplace solutions

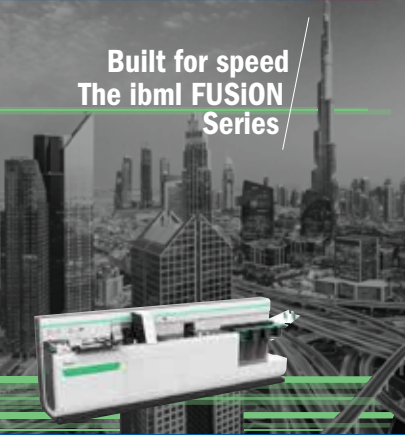
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Free your IT by moving to the cloud

How Cloudbox is helping organisations free their IT by moving to the cloud with no set-up costs

The Coronavirus pandemic has put business under enormous financial and organisational strain. Many organisations have been focussing on immediate survival but as lockdowns lift, it is clear that there is no immediate bounce back to the pre-COVID-19 world and key decisions need to be taken to adapt and thrive.

These are some of the key questions relating to IT:

- 1 How can we improve staff productively, wherever they are working?
- 2 Can our organisation make do with a smaller office/s, or do we even need an office?
- 3 How do we secure and control company data at a time of unprecedented cyberthreats and with GDPR fines on the increase?
- 4 Can we outsource services, reducing staff costs and still ensure service quality?
- 5 What costs can be reduced, and how can changes be made without capital expenditure?

Having the right IT solutions in place can make all the difference. Traditional IT is no longer fit for purpose, and can be unwieldy, capital intensive and can be tied to physical locations with clunky VPNs required for remote working. The pandemic has seen a coming of age for Cloud IT, with an exponential increase in the use of video conferencing and collaboration applications, but many of these services have not been securely implemented and managed, opening up further risk.

Managed IT spoke to a leading Cloud IT Provider, Cloudbox, to get their perspective. Cloudbox has been providing Cloud IT solutions since 2011 and are uniquely placed to implement highly secure, productive systems to reduce costs and transform productivity. Their business has been built on empowering other businesses to grow, and they do this by ensuring IT stays simple, that it complements the business's strategy and is cost-effective.

Cloudbox offers a complete Cloud IT managed service at a fixed monthly fee, taking the complexity

and hassle out of IT and ensuring that all customers benefit from secure, compliant and productive solutions.

Cloudbox provides solutions using Microsoft and leading cloud infrastructure providers. Their clients span a wide variety of industries, including accounting, charity, construction, creatives, education, finance, law, not-for-profit and retail. What unites them all is their appreciation and firm requirement for secure, efficient and easily budgeted IT.

Fixed cost cloud IT

CLOUDBOX BUSINESS is a fully comprehensive managed IT package with FREE SET-UP AND NO MINIMUM CONTRACT.

Cloudbox UK CEO, Nick Goodenough, had this to say, "We want to help organisations make the change to secure flexible working and to give their staff the very best IT tools. Our solution enables our clients to remove the high capital and variable ongoing costs in running their own IT, and to be able to clearly budget for IT on a per user basis whilst also ensuring the security and compliance of their data."

Goodenough continues, "COVID-19 has put unprecedented pressure on organisations to reduce costs and so we are offering a comprehensive IT solution with no set up fees and no contract tie-in. We are not cutting corners to do this – we consistently get client satisfaction scores of 98%+ and are confident that clients will love our service."

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- Full IT solution encompassing Office 365 with Teams collaboration, file sharing, back-ups, email, multi-layer security & proactive maintenance;
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securing PCs, Macs & mobiles from malware & other threats;

- Remote monitoring, software updates & reporting;
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- **Cybersecurity:** never fall victim to hackers with built-in antivirus, email security, website & URL protection;
- **Office 365 Essentials:** work from anywhere using Microsoft Office, Teams & collaboration tools;
- **Unlimited IT Support:** no additional charges for full support;
- **Network Management:** all devices proactively updated & monitored.

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 - Cybersecurity specialist services;
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Leaving nothing to chance

Ben Saxton, Digital Preservation Lead at Formpipe, explains how a digital preservation platform can help an organisation save money, improve compliance and shrink its carbon footprint



Ben Saxton

Organisations have come to rely on digital systems and applications for almost every aspect of their business. As well as reducing their environmental footprint and increasing content visibility, the move from manual, paper-based systems to digital provides greater flexibility and agility.

Data management has a vital role to play in this new, digital world. Being able to retrieve human-readable documents and data for business reasons, for clients or for external regulators is a key requirement. The more quickly and accurately this can be done, the greater the financial, compliance and commercial benefits.

As they pursue digitalisation projects and replace outdated applications and systems with modern alternatives, organisations must give consideration to the digital information that is left behind. There is a common misconception that creating information digitally will automatically guarantee its short-term and long-term visibility when what is actually required is a long-term digital preservation strategy.

Digital preservation is a critical element not just of data management but of corporate governance as more stringent regulations dictate how businesses store, protect and preserve digital content that might be spread across mobile devices and diverse corporate systems.

Companies spend a huge

amount of money and resources on maintaining legacy systems that are no longer used on a day-to-day basis simply to ensure access to content stored within them. As the volume of data and assets increases so does the price paid by organisations, from higher storage costs and rising fees for data licences to an expanding environmental footprint.

The alternative is a proven approach to system retirement that allows content to be migrated to a dedicated preservation platform, achieving long-term (50 years+) preservation and the ability to reduce costs by retiring multiple legacy systems onto the same platform.

Buying tips

Purchasing a digital preservation platform can be daunting. There is usually a need for internal buy-in to ensure the project has the right level of resource and financial backing, as well as support from senior management, practitioners and other departments, especially IT.

In making the case for a project, it is vital to identify the key driving factor, which could be a positive aim or an action to correct an underperforming aspect of your business, and, at the procurement stage, to develop a User Requirement Specification (URS).

The Data Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a good source of advice on purchasing a digital preservation platform. It can provide examples of a URS and highlight questions that should be asked in any software procurement, as well as key decisions that need to be considered when searching for a data preservation tool, such as open source versus commercial software, whether to take on an enterprise or micro approach and how to approach workflow alignment to the current organisational structure.

In choosing a vendor, it is important to assess their cultural and behavioural compatibility, as

the relationship will, by definition, be long-term. Question whether you feel comfortable working with the vendor, whether you trust their guidance and whether it is an organisation that can grow with you. The people who form the vendor's delivery team need to share your project goals and believe in meeting the project's driving factor.

Similarly, consider the product's and the vendor's long-term prospects three, five or 10 years hence. What is their view on adopting new technology and how do they introduce that to their product and clients? Current examples can be seen around the transition from on-prem to the cloud or advancements in automated testing and data assessment. Get an idea of their track record in futureproofing and make sure this is part of the URS or documented alongside it.

One last piece of advice: don't be afraid to be different! With software procurement, many organisations look to their peers and implement the systems they are using. This can be reassuring, but it might also mean missing out on functionality or a better commercial deal, especially in a sector still in its infancy, like digital preservation.

The Lasernet approach

Our approach to digital preservation is the product of 10 years' experience in addressing the needs of national archives, government agencies and municipalities in Europe's most digitised societies, Denmark and Sweden.

The demands placed on the Long-Term Archive digital preservation platform gives us confidence that we can meet all preservation needs, while also providing a repository where customers implementing data migration projects can store data until they decide on its ultimate destination. For the short-term or long-term, it provides a secure and low cost GDPR-compliant solution.

We are now bringing this proven preservation method to commercial businesses, so that they too can enjoy its benefits. These include:

- Cost savings from retiring multiple legacy systems, including hosting, maintenance and staffing costs;
- Better compliance from the ability to search for phrases or metadata and ensure that data and objects are not degraded, lost or accessed incorrectly; and
- Speedy retrieval of information, thanks to features such as the retention of previously saved and shared searches.

A particular benefit of Long-Term Archive is its smooth data migration and ingestion process, even from old and rare source systems – an area where many preservation projects fall down. A visual workflow tool delivers an easy to understand migration plan, with the option of rule-based gateways for data validation, metadata enrichment and file conversions.

Ultimately, Long-Term Archive brings digital preservation best practice to the commercial world, embracing all the tools and functions available and presenting them in a business friendly manner. www.formpipe.com

Formpipe is a leading developer of ECM-software and Information Quality Management and eQMS software solutions, with thousands of customers worldwide, in both the public and private sectors. Its software enables organisations to capture, process, store, archive and supply information in a systematic and controlled manner. In addition to Long-Term Archive, Formpipe's product portfolio includes Lasernet, which offers unrivalled integration with Microsoft Dynamics 365, NAV, SAP and Infor, along with other ERP solutions and delivers business documents in almost any format. Its intuitive drag-and-drop capabilities ensure that creating layouts for print or electronic distribution is simple and accurate. Additional functionality supports faster ERP system upgrades; easier maintenance of visual identity, archiving and scanning; more effective management of existing legislation and standards, such as SOX, EuroSox and Basel II. A Microsoft Gold Partner and member of Microsoft's Technology Adoption Program (TAP), Formpipe Lasetnet is sold and supported through a certified network of global partners.

Confidence in the cloud

As organisations start to formulate long-term remote working strategies, IGEL is hoping to ease the transition to VDI and Desktop as a Service with a new product testing and verification programme. James Goulding reports

Lockdown has been something of a double-edged sword for IGEL, provider of a next generation operating system for accessing, managing and securing cloud workspaces. On one hand, Covid's social distancing and economic ramifications have made the act of selling software harder and slower. On the other, the shift to homeworking has renewed focus on end user computing and encouraged organisations to look at long-term work from home (WFH) strategies.

This, says IGEL Chief Marketing Officer Simon Townsend, has given the company a real boost and more pipeline and more opportunity in the first six months of 2020 than in the whole of 2019.

"When Work From Home came about, people grabbed their laptops and IT scrambled around to give them access, perhaps not worrying too much about security or performance. Now, organisations realise that the future will be a blend of working from home and working from the office. So, VDI and Desktop as a Service (DaaS) – the concept of having a Windows desktop hosted somewhere in the cloud and using an endpoint equipped with IGEL software to connect to it – has given us a tailwind," he said.

Townsend argues that as businesses start to recover from the initial panic of equipping a remote workforce and consider more secure, resilient, flexible and productive ways to support a hybrid workforce in the long-term, many are revisiting virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and DaaS.

"Typically, an organisation has only got a couple of options. One is to go out and buy 1,000 laptops for the 1,000 employees who are now working from home. But that's expensive in terms

of capital expenditure and is a nightmare to manage. Secondly, you can deploy something like VDI, but you've then got to invest in all the hardware in your datacentre and the infrastructure. Or, you can implement Desktop as a Service, which you can scale up and down and switch on and off.

"COVID-19 has prompted organisations to say 'We just need to go to a provider and switch on a service in the same way we would a Zoom account or an Office 365 account. We just want to turn around to Microsoft and say spin me up 1,000 desktops. I will pay monthly for them and I don't want to worry about infrastructure'. So Desktop as a Service is seeing significant growth," he said.

Management and control

IGEL benefits from this trend because its Linux-based operating system, which it describes as the OS for next generation workspaces, helps organisations migrate to the cloud very quickly and address some of the issues associated with implementing VDI and DaaS.

As well as providing secure access to cloud workspaces from the likes of Citrix, Amazon, Microsoft and VMware, the IGEL OS offers centralised management and control of a distributed portfolio of endpoints, supports a large ecosystem of compatible hardware, software and applications, and can be installed on any existing x86-64 computer, laptop/MacBook or thin client, removing the need for organisations to invest in new hardware.

"Ultimately, organisations are looking at how they can save money. What they don't want to have to do is go out and buy a ton of kit for every single employee.



Simon Townsend

Continued...

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I couldn't do my job without...



Simon Walker flying a Parajet paramotor during the Icarus X UK (photo: Clive Mason)

Simon Walker is Managing Director of Parajet, the world's largest manufacturer of paramotors – backpack aircraft that fit in your car, require minimal training and no licence to fly. His career has spanned professional yacht racing, tech start ups and 'future of work' consulting. Here, he picks the five things he couldn't do his job without

in our hands. There is something magic about having a physical object in your hands and being able to offer it up to other components. It certainly helps make the creativity and problem-solving juices flow. We also have a full spec CNC unit with 5 axis milling machines running at £100,000 plus each, so we can get the final pieces machined and in production quickly too.

3 A standing desk

I haven't sat down at work for almost a decade – I'm absolutely certain it keeps me fitter, sharper and more productive. It certainly encourages me to move around more, helping with energy levels and better posture.

Interestingly, it's also contagious. When I started at Parajet I was the only one standing. Now, I'd say 80% of the team are at standing desks and they love it too. We have the type that can be lowered if need be, but most people opt to keep them raised.

4 Parajet Maverick Paramotor

A bit like a company car scheme, we really do have a fly-to-work scheme at Parajet. Here, staff can buy discounted gear, paid for monthly via salary sacrifice. Over half our team are on the scheme. For me it's actually faster to fly to work from a field near my home than to drive, and in the summer months there is no better way to put a grin on one's face at the start of the day.



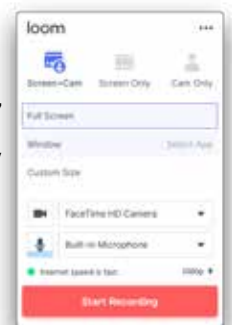
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Trello

5 Loom

When I was a professional yacht skipper, I realised that constant briefings were essential to get everyone on the same page. Now, with a worldwide dealer and supply network, the ability to record asynchronous presentations, sharing data and pictures, but with the human touch of the team actually seeing me is a real boon. Loom makes this easy and quick.



1 Trello

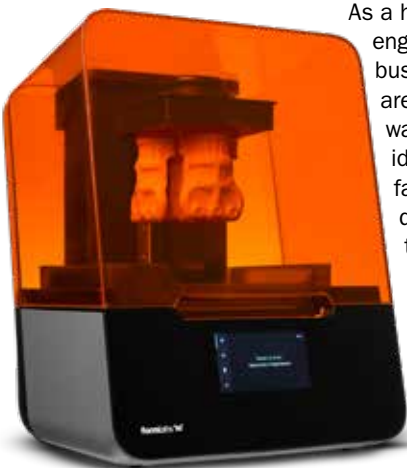
I love the flexibility of Trello as it can be a Kanban, a project plan, an ideas board or just a simple set of lists. Working with many tech businesses and projects, I find it particularly good at tracking complex, agile projects collaboratively and very visually.

I often drive to work early, which is great thinking time. Using an IFTTT integration to link Trello to Google Assistant voice control means all those great ideas are captured and easily sorted when I get to my desk.

2 3D printers

As a high-tech engineering business, we are constantly wanting to test ideas. I love the fact that we can quickly CAD these up (we use SolidWorks) and within a few hours have a 3D-printed prototype

Formlabs Form3 3D printers



To find out more about Parajet and learning to paramotor, visit www.parajet.com



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