TAG-ITI

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Information Technology International

Newsletter

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TAGITI Conducts Workshop for Banking Sector in Iraq

BAGHDAD – Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Information Technology International conducted an IT governance workshop for the banking sector in Iraq, highlighting the need for banks to adhere to international IT best practices.

The workshop was conducted as a result of a request from the Central Bank of Iraq, which is planning to implement an IT governance framework across the banking sector.

A detailed plan for the establishment of a country wide framework was presented, and how it can provide better assurance to authorities regarding banking IT systems.

Representatives from the League of Iraqi Banks also attended the workshop, in which the benefits of IT governance were discussed and how this aligns with the vision of the Iraqi Central Bank.

Mr. Berdj Vartanian said "The Iraqi Banking sector is at a stage where it needs to implement effective IT governance for banks to abide by. IT has now become the backbone of banking operations and it is therefore essential for regulatory bodies to attain assurance regarding the use of banking IT systems."

He went onto say "The workshops were attended by all major banks in Iraq, generating a lot of interest from participants regarding how IT can be effectively managed and controlled. We look forward to serving the Iraqi Banking sector to help it establish the needed IT governance framework."

Kaspersky Lab at the Frontline Against Cybercrime

MOSCOW - As it celebrates its 20-year anniversary, global cybersecurity company Kaspersky Lab has seen one man's mission grow into a global crusade against cybercrime. With innovation and vision at its heart, this year will see Kaspersky Lab take its fight to new heights - launching key initiatives such as the adaptive Kaspersky Security Cloud and the Kaspersky OS - to empower businesses and consumers to protect themselves from ever-evolving threats. From its Earth 2050 project, revealing what the future cyberthreat landscape might look like, through to its Sound of Safety experiment, which investigates the sounds people associate with the feeling of safety, Kaspersky Lab remains one step ahead of criminals, and at the forefront of the cybersecurity industry.

In 1989, a young software engineer discovered that his computer had been attacked by the infamous Cascade virus. Fascinated by the challenge, he decided to detect the virus, analyze it and create software that could neutralize it. That engineer was Eugene Kaspersky and this is how the story of Kaspersky Lab – now a 20-year old business employing over 3,700 people – began.

In 1997, Eugene and three other partners founded Kaspersky Lab. Starting out with just 19 people, Kaspersky Lab has grown

into an international leader in cybersecurity, operating in 200 countries and territories and with 35 offices in 31 countries. The company's products and technologies provide protection for over 400 million users and over 270,000 corporate clients worldwide.

Over its 20-year history, Kaspersky Lab has seen multiple changes to the threat landscape - as well as in the way people and organizations approach their security. The rapid proliferation of new technologies has meant that the computer Eugene first rescued from Cascade is obsolete, because like many others, he now users multiple devices every day. But while our connectivity has enhanced our lives and changed them forever, our growing dependence on IT has also made cyberthreats a global problem.

Since technology has become so important to consumers' every day experiences, expertise in IT security has become doubly so. Eugene and his team understand the world's cyberthreat landscape, and are among the best when it comes to detecting and neutralizing all forms of malicious programs. The wealth of expertise gained by the business after years of combating major IT threats is Kaspersky Lab's most valuable asset, and allows the team to remain one-step ahead of potential threats.

Today, the Kaspersky Lab portfolio encompasses IT security solutions to suit a wide range of customers. These protect consumers, small companies, medium-sized businesses and enterprises from different types of threats and provide them with convenient tools to control and manage their security.

One of Kaspersky Lab's key strengths is its team, as Eugene Kaspersky, CEO and co-founder of Kaspersky Lab, explains, "Twenty years in one business is a long time. But believe it or not, I still love it. I love our team, and the work we do. We've had good times and bad times and between us we have learned a lot. For the last 20 years we have been working around the clock every day - analyzing and combating all kinds of IT threats that have evolved in that time, and making the world a better place. I have been very lucky – my business is my passion. Even after two decades I'm still driven by curiosity: what's that, how's it work, and why? I'm fascinated by the technology and learn so much from the people around me."

"My aim is to have each of our team contribute as much as he or she can - to become a part of something bigger. It's beyond just having a job – it's more about being an actively involved member of the Kaspersky Lab community," concluded Eugene Kaspersky.

Source: https://www.itvoice.in/index.php/it-voice-news/kaspersky-lab-at-the-frontline-against-cybercrime-20-years-after-cascade

Google and Facebook Still Reign Over Digital Advertising

It was a very good week for two of the biggest tech companies on Earth.

Facebook announced it made $9.3 billion this quarter, a 45 percent increase compared with last year, while Google's parent company, Alphabet, posted earnings of $26 billion in the same time period, a 21-percent jump from a year ago. The vast majority of all this revenue came from advertising—87 percent for Google, and a whopping 98 percent for Facebook. Compare that with its struggling social media brethren: Twitter just had one of its worst quarters ever, with zero growth of

monthly users on its service, plus a decline of two million in its most prized demographic for advertisers, American users. And Snap, until very recently the buzziest IPO the tech industry had seen in ages, has seen its stock descend in a clear downward slope since going public.

With that, how Facebook and Google talk about and measure advertising matters, not just because it shows where they're prioritizing money to shape the future of their business. It also gives you an insight into what the web you interact with will be soon, as advertising is perhaps the single most formative force online.

What's clear this week is that Facebook and Google will continue to play an outsized role in shaping the online world. Facebook drives revenue at a faster pace than other tech company, and it's doing that through its ad offerings—even as its rate of growth slows and the platform gets saturated with ads. Meanwhile, for Google, cost-per-click—the amount advertisers pay Google each time someone clicks on one of its ads—saw a bigger decline this quarter than analysts had predicted, because mobile ads cost less and Google's mobile search traffic is up. But the pair remain the clear duopoly in online advertising, and will be for the foreseeable future. "These are two of the fastest-growing consumer tech companies, despite the fact that they are mature businesses," says Jan Dawson, a principal analyst at Jackdaw Research. "And they are both almost entirely driven by advertising."

It's All About Growth

It's hard to overstate how big an impact advertising has on the tech products and the content you see online. It's what drove the fake news crisis: automated ad placement on sketchy websites that prized the number of eyeballs on stories above all funded dubiously sourced political news. And those stories often went viral on Facebook news feeds, where ads are placed in between friends' posts. It's also at the root of so many publishers currently laying off their staff as they pivot to video: the mobile video ad is the product that has propelled Facebook sales for the past few quarters.

Whenever you search for anything on Google, meanwhile, you'll likely see an ad come up as the very first search result—that's the ad Google sells to marketers and advertisers at a premium. It also offers video ads through YouTube—which is still by far the internet's biggest platform for video, in spite of the recent brand safety crisis it weathered. (YouTube had been inadvertently throwing up ads against hate-related content, causing legacy brands to ditch the platform.)

All of which underscores the value in understanding where Facebook and Google are putting their money. For Facebook, the News Feed and video ads are the primary products—and, the more targeted the ad is to a certain demographic, the more expensive it is. But as Facebook CFO David Wehner has been warning, including in its last earnings call this past week, ad revenue growth is expected to slow down in the second half of 2017, as Facebook runs out of spots to stuff new ads into.

To guard against that, Facebook has been investing in video content (reportedly even funding short-form original series itself), Instagram ads, and slowly flipping the switch to monetize its two messaging apps, which already rank number 1 and 2 in the most popular mobile messaging platforms worldwide. (Facebook Messenger has more than 1.2 billion monthly users, while WhatsApp has more than 1 billion users daily.)

Today, a Facebook ad costs 24 percent more than it did one year ago.

Facebook doesn't expect these new efforts in advertising to fully offset Facebook's slowing growth in ad revenue. But one thing is mitigating Facebook's risks: today, a Facebook ad costs 24 percent more than it did one year ago. "As Facebook's ad inventory becomes more constrained, the price of ad slots on Facebook is going up," says Dawson, adding that the prices for different kinds of ads online aren't set in a vacuum. The reason Facebook can charge this much is because Facebook has convinced marketers their ads actually work. Facebook takes pains to show marketers the "real-world impact of their ads," says Dawson. "And not just how many people click and see your ads, but how many people bought your ad."

No Other Choice

Google, meanwhile, derives most of its revenue from search advertising—the placing of ads against a certain term you search for online. It's a powerful advertising spot, because if you search for "pizza," you're likely to be looking to buy a pizza, instead of, just browsing around, like you might do on Facebook or Pinterest. But because so much of online traffic has moved to mobile, where ads are cheaper, Google saw a drop of 23 percent in its "cost-per-click" metric—what advertisers pay Google when someone clicks on their ad.

Not that it affected Google in a big way this quarter. Ad revenue at Google leapt by more than 18 percent to $23 billion in the past three months, and indeed, the biggest blip on Google's radar this earnings season came in the $2.7 billion fine imposed on the tech giant by the EU's antitrust regulators. But for now, Google's position in the advertising world is secure.

In the second quarter, as Tom Denford, chief strategy officer for the marketing consulting firm ID Comms points out, Google also suffered from the negative attention on YouTube. "Some large consumer packaged goods advertisers are still holding off investment on YouTube even now," he says. But as the news cycle moves on and Google earns back marketers' trust—slowly—YouTube could once again become a very attractive venue for ads, especially in the age of the mobile video craze.

The bottom line? Wherever Facebook and Google lead, the rest of the digital advertising world will follow. "Facebook and Google are the big platforms," says Dawson. Meanwhile, platforms like Snapchat and Twitter may have a heavily engaged, but narrow audience, and they're still struggling to prove their value to marketers, Dawson says. "If you want broad reach, and you want to reach big audiences using sophisticated targeting, you have go to Google and Facebook." Whatever the snags of their current businesses, the lack of other feasible alternatives for advertising online at scale—at least right now—means that advertisers' choice has already been made for them.

Source: https://www.wired.com/story/google-facebook-online-ad-kings/

Microsoft Adds AI to HoloLens Silicon

The next version of Microsoft's HoloLens may be better at navigating reality than the current version of the mixed-reality headset, thanks to a new coprocessor the company announced Sunday.

The second version of HoloLens' custom multiprocessor -- called a "holographic processing unit," or HPU -- will incorporate artificial intelligence technology, Harry Shum, executive vice president of the Artificial Intelligence and Research Group, said at the annual CVPR computer vision event.

The new HPU will enable HoloLens to do the kind of deep learning processing that typically is done only in the cloud.

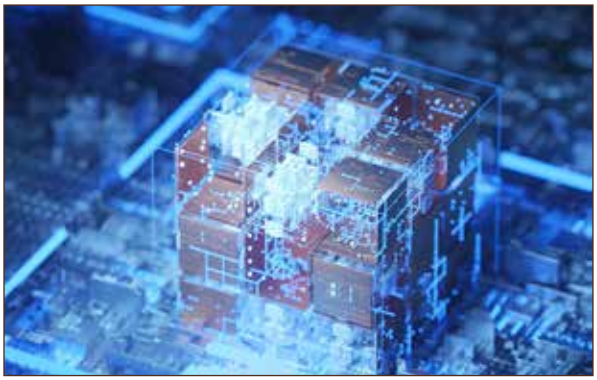
HoloLens is designed to be a self-contained holographic computer -- battery, sensors and display are contained in the headset. The HPU allows the headset to negotiate reality without experience-killing latency.

"Once you get the pattern algorithms straightened out, you want to run them locally because users can't deal with any information lag," said Jack E. Gold, principal analyst at J.Gold Associates.

"It's got to be local and instantaneous," he told TechNewsWorld. "Latency kills you in these mixed-reality applications."

Adding an AI coprocessor to HoloLens "is the kind of thinking you need if you're going to develop mixed reality devices that are themselves intelligent," noted Marc Pollefeys, director of science at HoloLens.

"Mixed reality and artificial intelligence represent the future of computing, and we're excited to be advancing this frontier," he added.



Beneficial Addition

HoloLens will benefit from the addition of AI silicon, according to Eric Abbruzzese, a senior analyst with ABI Research.

"Higher accuracy in head tracking and georegistering content -- locking digital content to the real world -- is the primary benefit, with the side effect of a platform gradually growing in capability," he told TechNewsWorld.

The additional silicon could boost performance and user safety, said Patrick Moorhead, principal analyst at Moor Insights and Strategy.

"With a high performance AI chip, less processing needs to be done in the cloud, and therefore HoloLens could be faster, more secure and more private," he told TechNewsWorld.

That speed could have another benefit to the HoloLens ecosystem.

"It could lead to entirely new kinds and classes of [augmented reality] solutions for consumers and businesses," said Charles King, principal analyst at Pund-IT.

Trending Approach

Microsoft isn't alone in thinking that more processing has to be done at the endpoints of a network, especially in light of the projected growth of the Internet of Things.

"We're seeing people bringing artificial intelligence and machine learning to specific silicon at the endpoint," said Bob O'Donnell, chief analyst at Technalysis Research.

"We're seeing efforts to take real-time sensor input and apply algorithms to that without having to go to the cloud," he told TechNewsWorld. "Companies are increasingly realizing that to do cutting-edge products, they have to do their own silicon."

Microsoft and others are recognizing that when doing compute-intensive tasks at the network's edge, they should be done as close to the source of the data as possible, noted Mark Hung, a research vice president at Gartner.

"It makes for a better experience for the user and reduces latency and the costs of communication, and the burden on cloud services," he told TechNewsWorld.

"Microsoft is thinking long-term and saying let's do this now and get ahead of the curve," Gold added. "Everyone at the high end of the AR market is going to have to do something similar."

Impact on AR Market

The addition of AI silicon to HoloLens will help Microsoft maintain its leading position in the AR/MR market, noted Ian Hughes, an Internet of Things analyst at 451 Research.

"Adding to the next device's processing power with additional AI will keep the company at the forefront of AR development," he told TechNewsWorld.

Maintaining that leadership position is very important to Microsoft.

"That's a critical issue considering the fact that every major Microsoft competitor, including Apple and Google, are developing similar platforms in-house," Pund-IT's King told TechNewsWorld.

Beefing up HoloLens' AI chops could have a significant impact on the AR market, noted David MacQueen, executive director for apps and media at Strategy Analytics.

"I think having such a major player -- and a very serious player when it comes to the enterprise sector -- building in this technology will see it become more commonplace in the AR market," he told TechNewsWorld.
"It could push AR ahead of VR," said King, "in terms of market share and impact."

Source: http://www.technewsworld.com/story/84695.html

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