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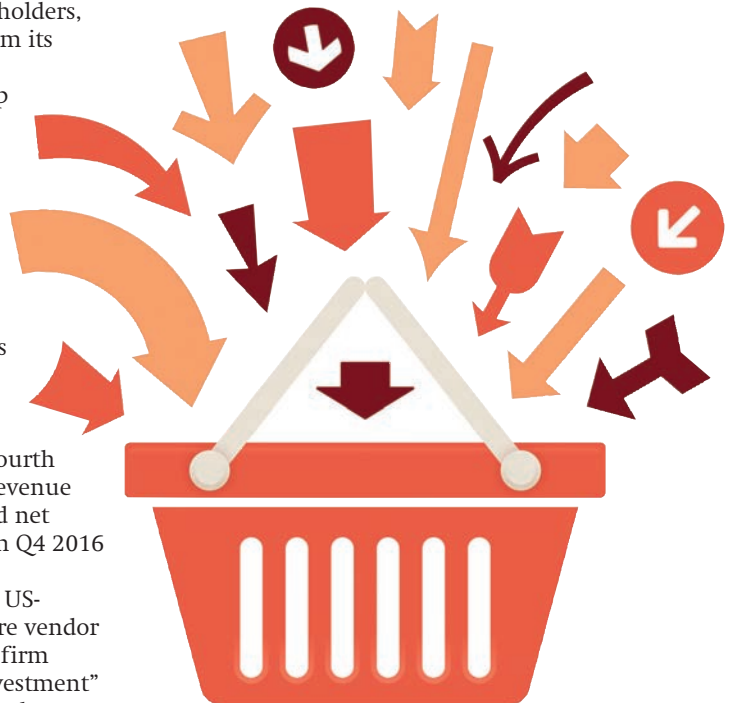
CHANNEL ROUND-UP

VENDOR

- WiFi specialist **Aerohive Networks** sought to make selling managed WiFi services easier for partners by offering new business terms for the channel, including the separation of hardware and software purchases, and also launched a 'flexible ownership model', allowing the partner to decide whether they or the customer owns the hardware.
- Virtual machine backup software vendor **Altaro** recorded 40 per cent year-over-year revenue growth. According to its announcement, the vendor has seen its global customer count pass 40,000 in the last year.
- **Amazon** and **Microsoft** announced they will be teaming up to allow their digital assistant products, Alexa and Cortana, to interact with each other. The devices will be 'talking to each other' later this year, the firms said.
- **AppDynamics** (which was acquired by Cisco in March) launched a new global two-tiered partner programme, offering top 'Titan' partners a range of benefits including tier-exclusive rebates. The vendor will also guarantee partner margins by paying an agreed percentage of the total contract value.
- **Avaya** will exit bankruptcy "in the near term", according to its former CEO, after it signed an agreement with some of its priority debt holders, which will see more than \$3bn wiped from its debts. [Click here for more.](#)
- **AWS** partnered with **Rackspace** to help "streamline" its customers' experience when moving over to AWS. Under the deal, the two firms will work closely to offer customers their respective expertise to make the journey as smooth as possible.
- **BT** signed a reseller agreement to supply Ixia's network testing, visibility and security solutions to customers across 180 countries.
- **Cisco's** quarterly GAAP revenues fell again for the seventh time in a row, down four per cent year on year for the fourth quarter to \$12.1bn. However, recurring revenue made up 31 per cent of total revenue, and net profit dropped 14 per cent from \$2.8bn in Q4 2016 to \$2.4bn in the same quarter this year.
- UK cloud specialist **Cloudreach** bought US-based data collection and analysis software vendor Cloudamize for an undisclosed sum. The firm revealed it would make a "substantial investment" in the company, to accelerate product development and develop an independent partner ecosystem.

- Enterprise software vendor **CollabNet** is set to merge with VersionOne to give customers a combined application development portfolio. Scant details were revealed, but the CollabNet name will be kept, and its CEO Flint Brenton will continue in his role. VersionOne CEO Robert Holler will become chief strategy officer once the deal is done.
- Cybersecurity vendor **Comodo** unveiled a new online educational portal for MSPs called Comodo Academy. The aim is to certify thousands of MSPs and IT department users around its Comodo ONE platform. It claims the academy will help MSPs grow revenue and cut expenses.
- **Extreme Networks'** CEO continued to blog about his **recent Avaya acquisition**, promising an expansion of existing products, and stressing that no product will be "prematurely retired". Extreme will also honour Avaya pricing support levels, and existing networking warranties will carry over to Extreme, he said.

Meanwhile, Extreme's CMO Norman Rice wrote an open letter to Brocade's partners after a delay in the acquisition, reassuring them that the vendor will continue to support Brocade's datacentre networking technology road map. →



■ **Google** is set to release a cheaper version of its cloud networking offering, claiming to be the first major cloud supplier to offer a tiered network service — splitting its Google Cloud Platform into a Premium Tier and a Standard Tier (available at a lower cost).

■ Market watchers were predicting the end of Meg Whitman's reign over **HPE** this month after it emerged she was in the running for the Uber CEO job. Whitman denied in July that she would be moving to the ride-sharing firm, but revealed she had been approached by the firm several times, including at the last minute before a new CEO was announced. One analyst said they expect her to be gone by the end of the year.

■ **HP Inc** announced it was partnering with professional services firm Deloitte to implement the vendor's 3D printing systems into large-scale manufacturing environments. The alliance will combine HP's Jet Fusion 3D Printing portfolio and channel partners with Deloitte's manufacturing experience and global client list. It will cover the US initially and expand to other geographies.

■ **Reports speculate that** smartphone manufacturer **HTC** is considering selling off its VR business. The report noted that HTC has shed around 75 per cent of its value over the past five years, with its smartphone market share dropping below two per cent.

■ **IBM** took the wraps off its new data protection software — Spectrum Protect Plus — which it claims can offer data protection in as little as one hour. The product comes as either standalone software, or can be integrated into Big Blue's Spectrum Protect software.

■ The CEO of **Infosys**, Vishal Sikka, has resigned from his position citing "personal attacks" from the company's founders. In a letter posted on a blog site this week, Sikka said the "continuous drumbeat of distractions" contributed to his decision to resign. "Over the last many months and quarters, we have all been besieged by false, baseless, malicious and increasingly personal attacks," he wrote. Infosys COO UB Pravin Rao will take over as interim CEO, the firm said.

■ **Intel's** eighth generation of chips will be 40 per cent faster than its seventh-generation Kaby Lake chips, but it will a few months before the channel can access

enterprise devices that contain them. The first wave of eighth-generation Core processor-powered devices will come to market in September, with more than 145 designs to choose from.

■ Cloud application provider **Intermedia** has added six anti-phishing features to its Intermedia Email Protection solution to help customers fight the growing threat of phishing attacks. The firm claims there were more than 1.2 million phishing attacks in 2016.

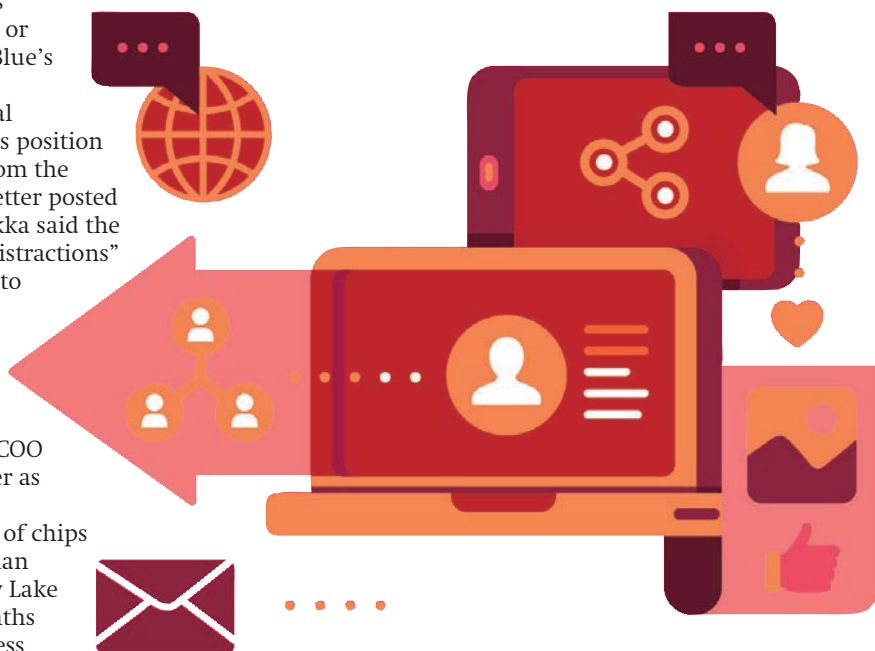
■ **Ipswitch** has updated its web automation software, iMacros, offering a redesigned user interface and macro editor, security enhancements and faster, more reliable image validation.

■ Flash storage vendor **Kaminario** showcased its K2.N all-flash solution, and its Flex software platform this month. The vendor said modern IT organisations are looking for storage solutions that can be optimised for specific applications, but that can deliver the flexibility of the public cloud.

■ **Kaseya** released the latest version of Traverse, its network monitoring and management platform. The vendor claims the platform will cut MSPs' customer onboarding time by over 90 per cent.

■ **Lenovo** posted its first quarterly loss since 2015, due to the increased costs of marketing new product launches. For the quarter (Q1) ended 30 June, the vendor posted pre-tax loss of \$69m, and a net loss of \$72m, compared with \$173m profit in the same quarter last year. Total sales were flat at \$10bn.

■ **M-Files** has acquired artificial intelligence and natural language processing technology vendor →



CHANNEL ROUND-UP

Apprento for an undisclosed sum. The deal is M-Files' second buy this summer, after it acquired language-based technology vendor ABBYY in June.

■ **McAfee** revealed it was offering users a free 72-hour trial of its Virtual Network Security Platform on AWS. As part of the "test drive", McAfee says users can simulate real-world attack use cases, configure policy and review reporting dashboards.

■ **Microsoft** acquired Cycle Computing as it continues to bolster its cloud offering. Experts predict the move will give Microsoft an advantage in its continuing battle with rivals, particularly in the high-performance computing space.

The vendor was also propelled into responding to criticism of its Surface products after a US-based consumer group criticised their reliability. Consumer Reports said it was removing its 'recommended' status from four devices after research found that 25 per cent of owners experienced problems in the first two years. **In a blog post** the vendor said it disagreed with the findings.

■ **Pure Storage** underwent a CEO change, with Charles Giancarlo replacing Scott Dietzen. Giancarlo had served in senior exec roles at Silver Lake Partners and Cisco, and stressed that under his leadership Pure's focus will remain on its cloud data platform, AI and the IoT, and helping enterprises "derive more value" from their data.

■ Cloud data management vendor **Rubrik** unveiled a new Service Delivery Partner programme aimed at MSPs, consultants and VARs. It has two levels, Select for SMB and mid-market partners, and Elite for enterprise-level partners, plus a range of support, marketing and partner portal options.

■ **Server Technology** claimed to be the first power distribution unit vendor to offer integrated zero-

touch provisioning. The firm announced its collaboration with Opendgear, which manufactures critical infrastructure management offerings via advanced console servers.

■ **SolarWinds MSP** acquired email security player SpamExperts B.V for an undisclosed sum. Amsterdam-based SpamExperts offers SaaS-based mail protection and mail archiving services for service providers.

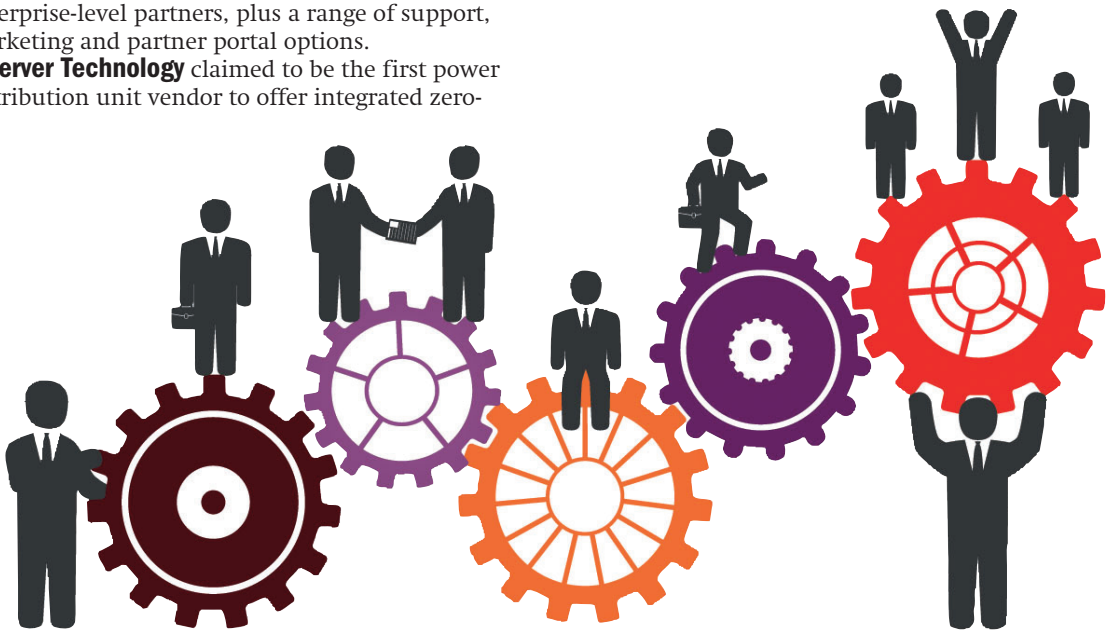
■ **Tegile Systems** unveiled a range of unified, memory-class storage arrays called N-Series. The product incorporates solid-state media with NVMe technology into its IntelliFlash storage portfolio.

■ **Webroot** is upping the training for MSPs after its acquisition of security awareness training platform Securecast. The vendor claims the training will help MSPs reduce the risks and costs of phishing, ransomware and other cyber threats through end-user education.

The vendor also extended its relationship with NinjaRMM — a provider of remote monitoring and management solutions for MSPs — to provide MSPs with real-time usage reports and the ability to set global web access policies.

■ **World Wide Technology** has snapped up airspace security company Dedrone, which claims to have developed the first software to detect drones and protect airspace from drone threats. The deal was for an undisclosed sum.

■ **Xerox** saw revenue drop 8.1 per cent for its second-quarter 2017 results, to \$2.57bn. Operating margin increased 13.3 per cent, and operating cashflow hit \$343m.



■ **Ingram Micro** teamed up with channel analyst firm The 2112 Group to launch the Cloud Altimeter, an online cloud intelligence programme aimed at helping resellers' cloud businesses. Initially available in the US, the scheme is set to be rolled out to other territories. The firms also joined with Microsoft to launch a *2017 State of the US Cloud Channel report*.

■ **Westcoast** launched a dedicated cloud partner programme this month, boldly claiming that some of its competitors are not doing enough to support resellers once they have sold cloud solutions. The **Westcoast Cloud Development Programme** is split into four levels (one star to four stars), offering a range of services around training, marketing and sales plus other areas, for VARs looking to build out their cloud services.



RESELLER

■ Comms specialist **4com** confirmed that a business review could result in a number of job cuts. The £40m-revenue business was voted the *Sunday Times*' best company to work for earlier this year.

■ **Adept Telecom** claimed to be number one in the UK education market after making its 24th acquisition this month in the form of Atomwide. The combined firm will boast over 4,000 schools as customers and more than two million users.

■ European giant **Bechtle** has shelled out a whopping €33m during the first six months of the year on "ensuring future competitiveness", according to its most recent financial report. It only spent €39.6m in the whole of 2016. Bechtle claims to have invested heavily in "strategic projects" including its digital marketplace,

cloud platforms and modernising its datacentres but it's expecting to spend around €60m on investments this year. Its Q2 (30 June 2017) profit grew 12.2 per cent to €36.5m, on sales of €822m.

■ German giant **Cancom** put the brakes on an ERP rollout due to concerns about negatively affecting the company's end-of-year business. For its H1 results, the firm posted sales of €535.9m, up nine per cent, with profit margin dropping slightly to 6.6 per cent from 6.7 per cent in the same period last year.

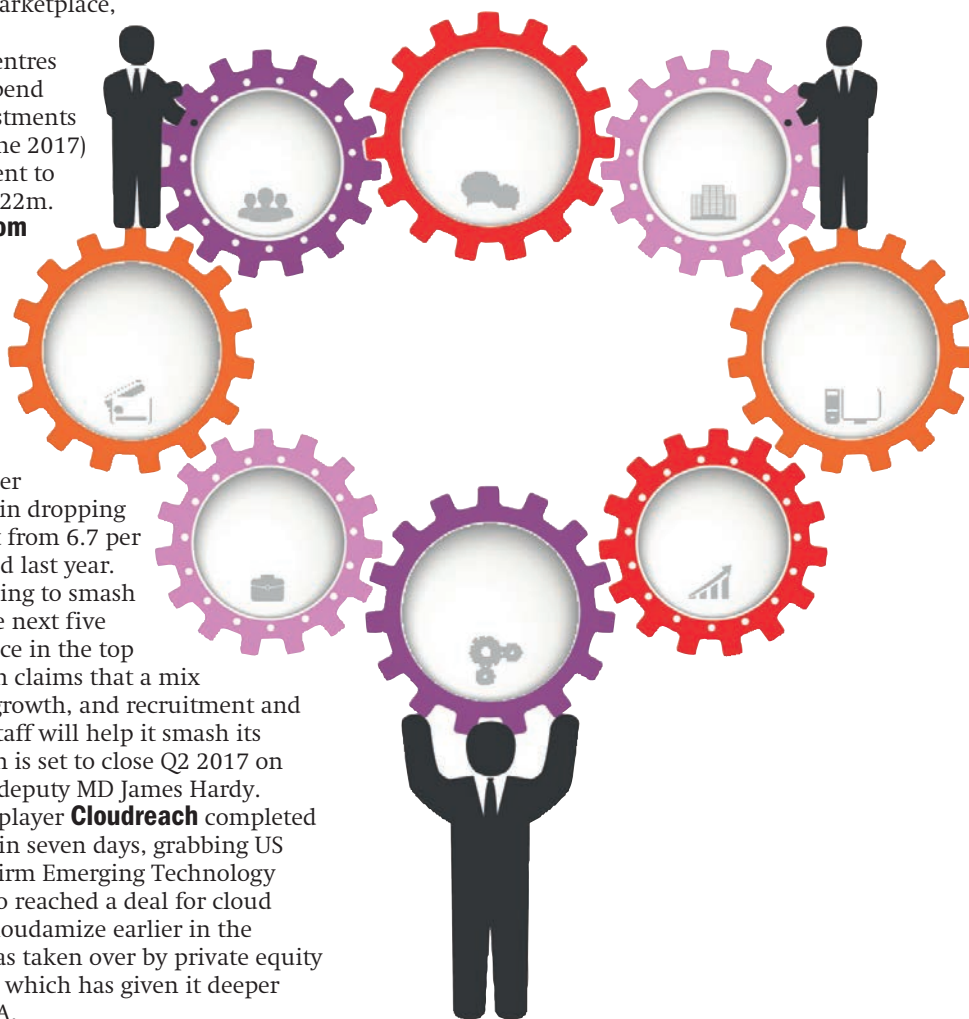
■ **CCS Media** is planning to smash £250m turnover in the next five years as it chases a place in the top five UK VARs. The firm claims that a mix of aggressive organic growth, and recruitment and retention of the best staff will help it smash its target sooner. The firm is set to close Q2 2017 on £170m turnover, said deputy MD James Hardy.

■ Acquisition-hungry player **Cloudreach** completed its second acquisition in seven days, grabbing US professional services firm Emerging Technology Advisors. The firm also reached a deal for cloud migration specialist Cloudamize earlier in the month. Cloudreach was taken over by private equity behemoth Blackstone, which has given it deeper pockets to pursue M&A.

■ **Computacenter's** H1 revenues (six months ended 30 June) saw German turnover soar €90m above the UK, despite a resurgence for the VAR giant's homeland. German revenues hit £762m — up 26 per cent, while UK sales were up five per cent to £678m. Computacenter's French business grew 14 per cent to £228m, while Belgium was up 24 per cent to £30.5m.

■ Growing MSP **CSI** revealed it has taken on extra investment from MML Capital Partners which will allow it to continue investing in organic and M&A growth. MML replaces Blackhawk Capital as CSI's private equity owner. Market watchers speculate that the deal now values CSI at £80m.

■ US reseller **DLT Solutions** unveiled its own big →



data, analytics and data science framework called the DLT AnalyticsStack, aimed at explaining to public sector clients how vendors fit into their big data strategies.

■ **Econocom** revealed it is considering further M&A in Europe after posting stellar H1 results, having snapped up three channel firms across the region in May — grabbing €50m-turnover Belgian player BIS, French consulting firm LP Digital Agency, plus a 40 per cent stake in UK education supplier JTRS. For the six months ended 30 June, the group's revenues grew 5.7 per cent to €1.28bn, with recurring operating profit at €58.2m, up nine per cent year on year.

■ **Ensono** extended its service portfolio with the addition of a new private cloud platform for customer workloads that are unsuitable for public clouds. The VAR said the new platform enables it to offer a "complete hybrid IT experience" to its customers.

■ Growing giant **Getronics** is plotting to double its turnover and become a \$1bn-turnover giant after it fell into new ownership under Bottega InvestCo this month. After a five-year stint under German PE firm Aurelius, Getronics was sold off to US-Brazilian consortium Bottega for €220m.

■ **Insight's** EMEA business recovered in Q2 after completing a \$3.5m restructure during the first three months of the year. Group operating profit grew 19 per cent to \$69.3m for the quarter ended 30 June, on net sales of \$1.68bn — up 16 per cent.

Read the full story here.

■ **Millgate** achieved ISO 9001 accreditation and snared £4m of public sector contracts, leading it to predict it would hit £55m in turnover for 2017, up 16 per cent on the previous year. The Sheffield-based firm was able to join the Crown Commercial Supplier framework as a result of the accreditation, which allows it to bid on public sector contracts.

■ **Misco** is to close its UK warehouse by the end of the year, citing the rise of drop-shipping as the main downfall. In a move aimed at saving £1.5m annually, the VAR is outsourcing its warehouse functions to a third-party logistics provider. A total of 65 jobs will be lost as a result.

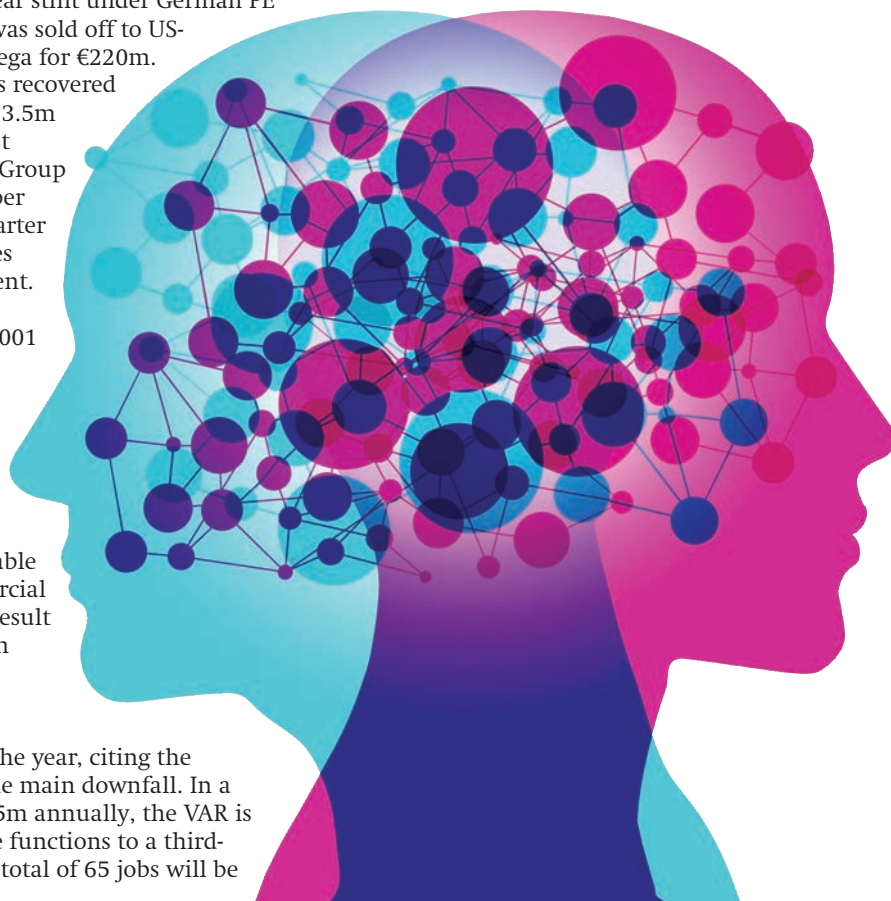
■ Ohio-based VAR **Park Place Technologies**

snapped up UK-based datacentre maintenance and repair outfit NCE Group Limited for an undisclosed sum. The move is the second UK investment for PPT, which also acquired Prestige Data Centre Solutions earlier this year.

■ New Jersey-based VAR **SHI** posted record revenue for Q1 — hitting \$1.7bn revenue and 13 per cent growth. Factors included growth in public cloud usage, with its Azure revenue mushrooming 147 per cent, and its AWS business growing 112 per cent.

■ Global SI **Wipro** revealed it was to open a multimillion-dollar Silicon Valley Innovation Centre in California designed to develop and showcase next-generation technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, robotics and automation. The firm has invested \$2bn in the US over the last decade and has 40 facilities across 23 states, employing 14,000 people in the US alone.

It also developed a Big Data Analytics-as-a-Service platform running on Microsoft Azure, which it claimed would help customers make faster data-driven decisions.



RESEARCH

■ Webroot-sponsored research revealed that 80 per cent of SMBs in the US, UK and Australia that don't already outsource IT security support, will likely do so this year. **According to the report** 96 per cent of the SMBs surveyed believed they would be vulnerable to external threats, but 71 per cent said they are not ready to address the dangers.

■ A survey of nearly 400 security and IT professionals in the US by forensic security firm Guidance Software revealed that 72 per cent of respondents were set to increase security budgets over the coming year, with 32 per cent labelling the increase as "substantial".

■ A report from Vanson Bourne revealed that more than one third of energy companies lack the skills to deploy IoT technology. **The research** — on behalf of satellite comms firm Innarsat — discovered that 88 per cent of respondents expect to deploy IoT technologies within the next two years, but 53 per cent of those believe they need additional skills at a strategic level.

■ Analyst **Strategy Analytics' latest research** revealed that both Apple and Fitbit were overtaken by Chinese firm Xiaomi in the wearables market in Q2 2017. These figures were backed by rival analyst house Canalys, which also put Xiaomi in the top spot, with Fitbit in second and Apple in third.

■ The US IT sector has added 9,600 jobs so far in 2017, according to numbers released by trade organisation CompTIA. The majority of those positions were in the IT and software services bracket, the research claims.

■ More than a third of cyber attacks targeted manufacturing in Q2, according to NTT Security's latest *Global Threat*

Intelligence report. In total, 34 per cent of all documented attacks targeted manufacturers. And of those, 37 per cent of manufacturers did not have an incident response plan in place.

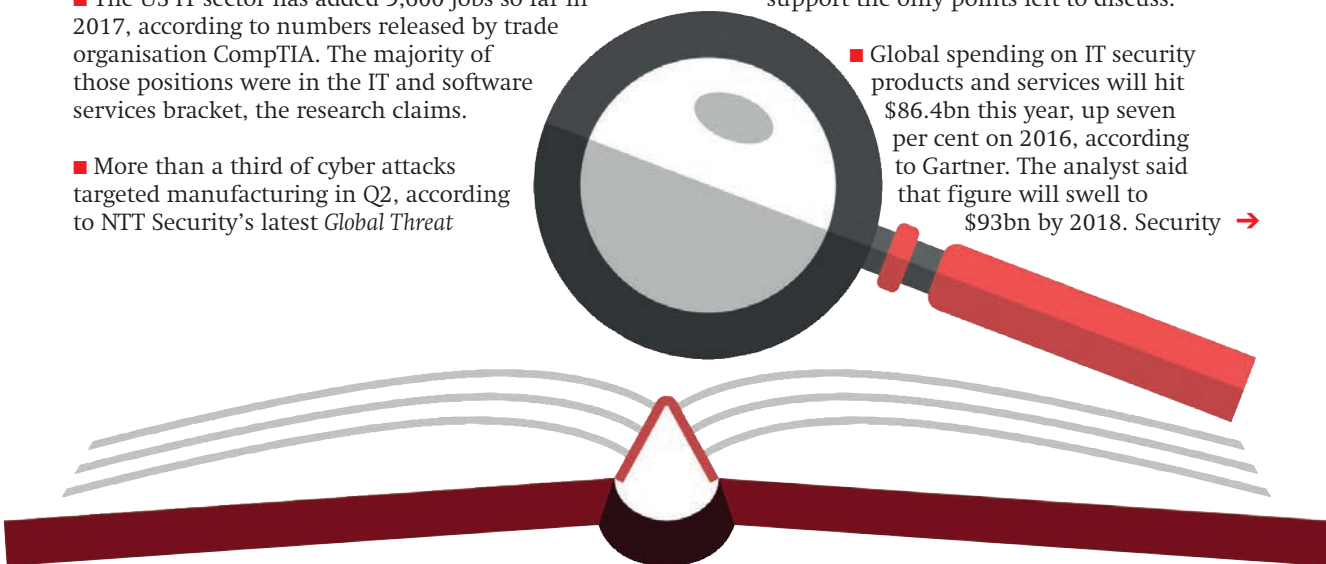
■ Figures from Kantar Worldpanel ComTech revealed that Samsung knocked arch rival Apple off the number one spot in the US smartphone market in Q1. This was fuelled by the launch of the Galaxy S8, which saw Samsung take 36 per cent market share compared with Apple's 34 per cent.

■ Two thirds of MSPs could struggle to meet customer security demands in the future because of a shortage of qualified IT security professionals, according to a **report by Kaspersky Lab**.

■ A survey by Commvault revealed that CEOs, CIOs and CTOs are suffering from FOMO (fear of missing out) when it comes to new cloud advancements. According to the figures, 81 per cent of C-level and other IT leaders are either extremely or very concerned about missing out. In turn this is driving them to the cloud, with 93 per cent revealing that they are moving "at least some" processes to the cloud.

■ A **blog post from Techaisle** quoted research which questioned 1,120 US SMBs, and revealed that 50 per cent of them engage with an IT supplier at the decision stage only, with price, deployment and support the only points left to discuss.

■ Global spending on IT security products and services will hit \$86.4bn this year, up seven per cent on 2016, according to Gartner. The analyst said that figure will swell to \$93bn by 2018. Security →



services will be the fastest-growing segment, the analyst added.

■ Around 70 per cent of DevOps professionals feel they are not receiving enough education in integrating security into software development and testing, and 65 per cent say they are learning on the job. This is according to Veracode and DevOps.com *DevSecOps Global Skills Survey*.

■ Most IT service management professionals believe that working in the sector will become harder over the next few years, according to figures released by IT management firm ManageEngine. Its figures revealed 82 per cent of those questioned believe IT roles will become more challenging, and factors such as Brexit, the US election and Australian immigration policies will hamper recruitment.

■ Contactless payments will rocket in the US over the coming five years, according to Juniper Research, rising from two per cent of transactions currently to 34 per cent by 2022.

■ Artificial intelligence has sped up the level of M&A activity in the tech sector. According to data from M&A advisory firm Hambleton Partners, acquisitions of AI targets rose 179 per cent year on year. However, cybersecurity was another hot area, with 80 security-related acquisitions in the first half of the year. Augmented reality and virtual reality sales also increased, with the majority of deals taking place in the US.

■ Macs are increasingly becoming infected with malware, according to research by security player Malwarebytes. The firm claimed more Mac malware was detected in Q2 2017 than in all of 2016. Additionally, Android ransomware incidents have increased 137.8 per cent already in 2017, the vendor stated.

■ **Research from Spiceworks** found that 60 per cent of employees are still using desktops as their primary work device, with 27 per cent using laptops, five per cent

thin clients, three per cent tablets, two per cent smartphones and a further two per cent using two-in-ones. The report — *The Future of the PC* — predicted that desktop investments will remain “relatively flat” in the coming year, but said 43 per cent of respondents plan to increase investment in laptops.

■ Global smartphone shipments will grow from 1.47 billion in 2016 to over 1.7 billion in 2021, according to IDC’s **Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker**. The main drivers for growth will be first-time buyers and life cycles lasting just two years, the analyst said.

■ The wearable technology market is poised to surge again this year, according to analyst Gartner. The firm predicts that over 310 million devices will be sold globally, leading to a 16.7 per cent growth on the previous year, generating revenues of \$30.5bn. Leading the initial charge will be smartwatches and fitness trackers, but Bluetooth headsets are set to be the real winners in the coming years, the analyst said.



ANALYSIS

The traditional summer slowdown finally hit in August, although compared with some years, it was a slowdown in the loosest sense of the term.

Analysts certainly took advantage of the quieter time to release a slew of research, covering the usual suspects: security, the PC market, wearables and smartphones.

Despite smartphone adoption seemingly at saturation point in developed nations, it appears the devices are due for a resurgence thanks to shorter refresh cycles and a large number of new customers coming onto the market. Good news for those involved in that segment of the market.

Apple was knocked off the top spot by arch rival Samsung — something that is bound to leave a sour taste in the mouth of the Cupertino-based giant. But in more positive news for the fruity vendor, its position in the smartwatch market is practically unreachable, with one analyst predicting the firm would ship over 40 million watches in 2018. Wearable tech is set to continue growing, powered by demand for not only smartwatches, but also fitness trackers. However, the top seller in the wearable tech space will be Bluetooth headsets.

Global IT spending is predicted to rise seven per cent in the year ahead, which is welcome news for the channel, as customers continue to invest in technology. However, as *CRN* has been saying for many years, customers are wiser about spending their budgets now, so it is actually harder work convincing them to part with their cash.

Channel firms that invest in the right staff training and are prepared to take the time to listen to what their customers need will be the ones to benefit most from deeper customer pockets. Vendors would also do well to listen to their partners, who are the front line when it comes to the majority of end-user customers.

Most interesting of the research is that the demand for artificial intelligence (AI) has actually fuelled M&A activity in the industry over the past year, with AI-related acquisitions up 179 per cent year on

year. Unsurprisingly, security is still an M&A driver, with acquisitions well up over 100 per cent on the previous year.

August saw a much-needed slowdown in the pace of acquisition after a frenetic couple of months, but as we head into Q4, there will doubtless be some who are loosening their purse strings.

Apple was not the only vendor to suffer a tricky month — Lenovo posted its first loss since 2015 — caused by heavy investment in marketing new technology, and Cisco suffered its seventh quarter of decline.

However, both vendors remained stoic, with Lenovo predicting a pick-up and Cisco seeing a greater rate of recurring revenue — a positive position to be in. Cisco's partners certainly seem optimistic despite the setbacks.

Speculation was also rife over the fate of HPE's Meg Whitman, who was embroiled in a 'will she, won't she' saga over the top spot at ride-sharing firm Uber. Whitman had strenuously denied her involvement or interest in the post, but it emerged at the end of the month that she had been approached and had been in talks over the position.

While she claimed she had not actively sought involvement in the process, that position of trust has been broken and whether she can survive the storm remains to be seen. She has lasted longer than most of HP's recent CEOs who left under a cloud, and not of the technology kind. Perhaps she can turn it around; her actions in turning the company's fortunes around over the past six years have been commendable, but once faith is lost, it is a difficult path back.



August was certainly quieter on the distribution front, last month's manic acquisition activity having obviously taken its toll. Westcoast took advantage of the calmer waters to launch a new cloud platform aimed at helping partners navigate the next steps once they have sold cloud solutions to their customers.

There is such a strong competitive vibe between the major distributors in the cloud space. Several years ago there was a clear frontrunner, but the others have certainly pulled out all the stops to catch up as distribution continues to prove it has a vital role in the cloudy future of the channel. Considering many market watchers proclaimed back in the day that distribution would be dead by now, disties continue to prove the sceptics wrong by constantly reinventing themselves and their business models, while still providing the traditional logistics and credit services expected by their customers.

Tech Data reported impressive Q2 financials, boosted significantly by the **acquisition of Avnet Technology Solutions** last year, which created a true industry behemoth. But its gross margins and earnings are not as high as they were expected to be, so the firm has its work cut out to convince some of Avnet's stalwart vendor partners to stick with it.

And on the subject of disappointing results, Arrow ECS saw enterprise computing sales slide

in Europe and had a change of leadership in the UK. The player has been the subject of a lot of acquisition speculation for the last year or so, which intensified after the Tech Data/Avnet merger.

Overall, despite a few blips, the industry once again appears to be in a solid position as the pace begins to pick up in preparation for Q4. There are some big-name players that will need to roll up their sleeves for the remainder of the year, but as before, the mood is a positive one.

It will be interesting to see if the consolidation pace picks up again in the coming months. This rapid and prolonged M&A activity has not been seen in the industry for many years, and some have argued that it is just the natural balance being re-established, as the older players consolidate and the new kids on the block continue to emerge and disrupt the status quo with their different ideas and technology.

Whatever happens, we are in for an interesting ride once again.



EVENTS

■ **VMworld 2017** took place in Las Vegas this month, with the vendor announcing a raft of initiatives including the launch of VMware Cloud to Amazon Web Services (AWS). The offering will first be available in the AWS US West (Oregon) region before hitting AWS regions across the globe next year. It also debuted new releases of VMware Integrated OpenStack and VMware vRealize Network Insight and a new VMware vSAN solution known as the HCI (hyperconverged infrastructure) Acceleration Kit.

Other launches included AppDefense, which uses vSphere's virtual infrastructure to monitor running applications against their intended state and can integrate with third-party offerings, including solutions



from IBM Security, RSA, CarbonBlack, SecureWorks and Puppet; and it revealed VMware Workspace ONE will be added to HP Inc's Device as a Service platform, as well as a new set of products and services for VMware Cloud that aim to bring end-to-end visibility into cloud usage, costs and networks.

■ **ADTRAN's Connect 2017**, held in conjunction with the Broadband and Business Solutions Summit, took place in Alabama this month. Covering the

whole networking market, the event touched on growing sectors such as business intelligence, mobility and IoT. Topics discussed also included central management, cloud networking, and the implications that the next generation of networking solutions will have on the channel as a whole.

MISCELLANEOUS

■ Rumours abounded that Apple is working on a watch that will operate independently of the iPhone. Reports claimed the watch will connect directly to LTE networks. A separate report claimed the vendor could ship 20 million Apple Watches next year, with the 2017 total hitting 14 million units.

The vendor was also **mentioned in reports** revealing it is close to reaching an agreement that will protect the Irish government from any potential losses while it holds back €15bn of the company's money in a battle over tax with EU regulators.

Apple also removed several apps designed by Iranian developers due to US sanctions claiming the App Store cannot host, distribute or do business with apps or developers connected to certain US-embargoed countries.

■ Kaspersky Lab revealed it would withdraw its antitrust complaint against Microsoft in Europe, after the software giant agreed to **change anti-virus notifications** in the Windows 10 Fall Creators Update. Kaspersky said in a blog that it was happy with the changes.

■ Bitcoin's value hit a record high, smashing past the \$4,000 barrier for the first time. The digital currency's value has risen over 300 per cent since the start of the year.

■ Android co-creator Andy Rubin has unveiled a new smartphone to challenge the likes of Apple and Samsung. During an event at his company's Silicon Valley headquarters this month, Rubin said the new Essential smartphone has a "radically different form factor", according to CNBC.

■ Researchers at Check Point claimed they had discovered multiple vulnerabilities in the LinkedIn messenger platform. If

exploited, the flaws could enable attackers to spread malicious files, the vendor claimed in a blog post.

■ More than 100 leading AI experts from around the world, including SpaceX's Elon Musk, have written a letter urging the United Nations (UN) to act in order to prevent the development of "killer robots". It asked that the UN's Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems "work hard at finding means to prevent an arms race in these weapons, to protect civilians from their misuse and to avoid the destabilising effects of these technologies". The BBC reported that killer robots can choose and "engage targets without human intervention".

■ CompTIA pledged to raise money to help victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana. The trade association said it would donate \$2 for every \$1 donated up to \$200,000, and encouraged its members and partners to help where they could.



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